THE GROUNDS OF THEISTIC AND CHRISTIAN BELIEF

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TO

WILLIAM FORBES FISHER

THE SON WHO WAS MY HOUSEHOLD COMPANION

WHILE I WAS PREPARING

THIS VOLUME

PREFACE.

This volume embraces a discussion of the evidences of both natural and revealed religion. Prominence is given to topics having special interest at present from their connection with modern theories and difficulties. With respect to the first division of the work, the grounds of the belief in God, it hardly need be said that theists are not all agreed as to the method to be pursued, and as to what arguments are of most weight, in the defence of this fundamental truth. I can only say of these introductory chapters, that they are the product of long study and reflection. The argument of design, and the bearing of evolutionary doctrine on its validity, are fully considered. It is made clear, I believe, that no theory of evolution which is not pushed to the extreme of materialism and fatalism — dogmas which lack all scientific warrant — weakens the proof from final causes. In dealing with anti-theistic theories, the agnostic philosophy, partly from the show of logic and of system which it presents, partly from the guise of humility which it wears, — not to speak of the countenance given it by some naturalists of note, — seemed to call for particular attention. One radical question in the conflict with atheism is whether man himself is really a personal being, whether he has a moral history distinct from

a merely natural history. If he has not, then it is idle to talk about theism, but equally idle to talk about the data of ethics. Ethics must share the fate of religion. How can there be serious belief in responsible action, when man is not free, and is not even a substantial entity? If this question were disposed of, further difficulties, to be sure, would be left in the path of agnostic ethics. How can self-seeking breed benevolence, or self-sacrifice and the sense of duty spring out of the "struggle for existence"? Another radical question is that of the reality of knowledge. Are things truly knowable? Or is what we call knowledge a mere phantasmagoria, produced we know not by what? This is the creed which some one has aptly formulated in the Shakspearian lines: —

> "We *are* such stuff
> As dreams are made of, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep."

In the second division of the work the course pursued is different from that usually taken by writers on the Evidences of Revelation. A natural effect of launching an ordinary inquirer at once upon a critical investigation of the authorship of the Gospels is to bewilder his mind among patristic authorities that are strange to him. I have preferred to follow, though with an opposite result, the general method adopted of late by noted writers of the sceptical schools. I have undertaken to show that when we take the Gospels as they stand, prior to researches into the origin of them, the miraculous element in the record is found to carry in it a self-verifying character. On the basis of what must be, and actually is, conceded, the conclusion cannot be avoided that the miracles occurred. This vantage-ground once fairly

gained, the matter of the authorship and date of the Gospels can be explored without the bias which a prejudice against the miraculous elements in the narrative creates against its apostolic origin. Then it remains to establish the truthfulness of the apostolic witnesses, and, further, to vindicate the supernatural features of the Gospel history from the objection that is suggested by the stories of pagan miracles and by the legends of the saints. The concluding chapters, up to the last, contain a variety of corroborative arguments, and enter into topics relating to the Scriptures and the canon. In preparing these chapters, I have sought to direct the reader into lines of reflection which may serve to impress him with the truth contained in the remark that the strongest proof of Christianity is afforded by Christianity itself and by Christendom as an existing fact. The final chapter considers the bearing of the natural and physical sciences upon the Christian faith and the authority of the Scriptures.

It has become the fashion of a class of writers to decry all works having for their aim to vindicate the truth of Christianity: it is considered enough to say that they emanate from "Apologists." The design would seem to be to connect with this technical word of theology a taint carried over from the meaning attached to it in its ordinary use. But an "Apologist," in the usage of the Greek authors, is simply one who stands for the defence of himself or of his cause. When Paul began his address to the mob at Jerusalem, he called on them to hear his "Defence;" that is, as the Greek reads, his "Apology." When Agrippa gave him leave to defend himself against the charges made against him, he "stretched forth his hand," and *apologized;* as it is rendered in the English version, "answered for himself." It might

be convenient, but it is hardly magnanimous, for the assailants of Christianity to invite its disciples to leave the field wholly to them, or to endeavor to secure this result by calling names. It is quite true that the advocates of any opinion in which the feelings are enlisted are liable to forget the obligation they are under to rid themselves of every unscientific bias, and to carry into all their reasonings the spirit of candor and uprightness. But, whatever faults on this score have been committed by some of the defenders of the faith, it can scarcely be claimed that their antagonists, as a rule, have shown a greater exemption from these partisan vices. The remark is sometimes rashly thrown out, that defences of religious truth are of no value in convincing those who read them. The contrary, as regards especially their effect on inquiring minds not steeled against persuasion, is shown by experience to be the fact. Certain it is, that from the era of Celsus and Porphyry, to the days of Voltaire and Strauss, Christian believers have felt bound to meet the challenge of disbelief, as an apostle directs, by giving a reason for the hope that is in them (1 Peter, iii, 15).

I must expect, that, among the readers who may be interested in the general subject of this volume, some will be less attracted by the sections that are concerned with the philosophical objections to theism, or with the critical evidence in behalf of the genuineness of the Gospels. But even this class, I trust, will find the major part of the book not altogether ill-suited to their wants. I venture to indulge the hope, that they may derive from it some aid in clearing up perplexities, and some new light upon the nature of the Christian faith and its relation to the Scriptures.

It should be stated that a portion of this volume has been

published, mostly as a connected series of articles, in the *Princeton Review*. These, however, have been much altered, and in some cases largely rewritten. More than half of the chapters have not before appeared in print in any form.

NEW HAVEN, Aug. 8, 1883.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD AND OF MAN.

	Page.
The Two Beliefs Associated	1
The Essentials of Personality	2
The Reality of Self	2
Self-determination	3
Theories of Necessity and Determinism	6
The Consciousness of Moral Law	18
Religion not of Empirical Origin	19
H. Spencer on the Origin of Religion	21
The Feelings of Dependence and of Obligation	26
The Consciousness of God and Self-consciousness	28
The Tendency to Worship	33
The Element of Will in Religious Faith	35
Religious Presentiment	35

CHAPTER II.

THE ARGUMENTS FOR THE BEING OF GOD.

The Ultimate Source of Faith in God	37
The Intuition of the Unconditioned	38
The Ontological Argument	39
The Cosmological Argument	41
The Argument of Design	42
Order and Design	43
Mind in Nature	44
The Immanence of Design	47
Use and Intention	48
Criticisms by Kant	48
The Atomic Theory of Chance	51

PAGE.

Evolution and Design 52
Variability in Organisms 56
Darwin on Variability and Design 57
Is Final Cause an *a priori* Principle? 64
The Moral Argument 67
The Historical Argument 69
Personality consistent with Infinity 69
Atheism an Affront to Humanity 72

CHAPTER III.

THE PRINCIPAL ANTI-THEISTIC THEORIES: PANTHEISM, POSITIVISM, MATERIALISM, AGNOSTICISM.

What is Pantheism? 73
The System of Spinoza 73
The German Ideal Pantheism 75
Pantheism involves Necessity 77
Positivism 78
Materialism 79
Relation of Consciousness to Physical States 80
The Mind and the Brain 83
Spencer's Agnostic System 85
The Question of the Reality of Knowledge 95
Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Reid, Kant 96
Hamilton and Mansel 98
J. S. Mill and H. Spencer 100

CHAPTER IV.

THE POSSIBILITY AND THE FUNCTION OF MIRACLES, WITH A REVIEW OF PROFESSOR HUXLEY'S COMMENTS ON HUME.

Natural and Supernatural Revelation 103
Christianity and the Light of Nature 104
Christianity an Historical Religion 105
Christianity not an Afterthought of God 107
Miracles a Constituent of Revelation 107
The Relation of Miracles to Natural Law 108
Hume's Argument 109
Huxley's Modification of Hume's Position 111
The "Order of Nature" 115
The Relation of Miracles to Internal Evidence 116
Indispensable Need of Miracles 118

CHAPTER V.

CHRIST'S CONSCIOUSNESS OF A SUPERNATURAL CALLING VERIFIED BY HIS SINLESS CHARACTER.

PAGE

Proofs of Christianity outside of the Scriptures 121
The Claims made by Jesus 124
Hypothesis of Mental Aberration 126
No Parallel in other Religious Founders 128
The Sobriety of Jesus 132
The Sinlessness of Jesus 134
No Consciousness of Evil in Him 137
The Ordeal through which He went 142
Miraculous Aspect of his Sinless Character 145

CHAPTER VI.

PROOF OF THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST INDEPENDENTLY OF SPECIAL INQUIRY INTO THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE GOSPELS.

The Apostles professed to work Miracles 148
Injunctions not to report the Miracles 151
Excessive Esteem of Miracles forbidden 153
Teaching that is inseparable from Miracles 155
No Miracles ascribed to John the Baptist 161
No Miracles of Jesus prior to his Baptism 162
The Persistence of the Apostles in their Faith 162
The Mythical Theory of Strauss 163
The Miracles are Links in the Nexus of Events 164
The Resurrection of Jesus 166
The "Vision-Theory" 168
Hallucination disproved 170
Keim's Admission of the Miracle 173
Concessions of the Ablest Disbelievers 175
Renan's Idea as to the Miracles 177

CHAPTER VII.

THE GOSPELS A FAITHFUL RECORD OF THE TESTIMONY GIVEN BY THE APOSTLES.

The Reception of the Gospels in the Second Century 182
The Value of the Testimony of Irenæus 185
Froude on the Testimony of Irenæus 187
Justin Martyr's Testimony 188
References to the Gospels in Justin 190

PAGE.

His "Memoirs" were the Canonical Gospels 202
Early Non-canonical Writings 205
Apocryphal Gospels 206
Testimony from the Gnostics 207
Celsus 209
Papias 210
Marcion a Witness to Luke's Gospel 214
The Tübingen Premise untenable 215
Internal Proof of the Early Date of the Synoptists 216
Origin of the Synoptical Gospels 217
The Integrity of the Gospels 219

CHAPTER VIII.

THE APOSTOLIC AUTHORSHIP OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

It was one of the "Homologoumena" 221
The Modern Attack by the Tübingen School 225
The Testimony of Irenæus 226
John's Residence at Ephesus 227
Patristic Testimonies to this Gospel 230
The Internal Evidence 235
The Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel 237
The Fourth Gospel and Philo 238
The Author a Palestinian Jew 241
Relation of the Fourth Gospel to the Synoptists 242
Discourses of Christ in the Fourth Gospel 247
Alleged Dualism in the Fourth Gospel 255
View taken of Miracles 257
Indirect Proofs of Personal Recollection 258
Not a Pseudonymous Writing 259
Disclosure of the Author's Personal Traits 261

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE APOSTLES' TESTIMONY AS PRESENTED BY THE EVANGELISTS.

The Apostles regarded by themselves as Witnesses 267
Always conscious of being Disciples 269
Relate Instances of their own Weakness 270
Relate their Serious Faults and Sins 272
Describe the Human Infirmities of Jesus 273
Submit to Suffering and Death 274
Not Victims of Self-delusion 276
The Gospels not moulded by Doctrinal Bias 277
The Gospel Narratives not Mythical 278
The Life of Jesus prior to his Ministry 279

CHAPTER X.

THE MIRACLES OF THE GOSPEL IN CONTRAST WITH HEATHEN AND ECCLESIASTICAL MIRACLES.

PAGE.
The Gospel Miracles are to attest Revelation 281
They are wrought in Opposition to Prevailing Beliefs 283
Absence of Motives to Fraud 284
Ecclesiastical Miracles explained by Natural Causes 285
Incompetence of Witnesses to Ecclesiastical Miracles 286
Gospel Miracles not Tentative 288
Grotesque Character of Ecclesiastical Miracles 289
Possibility of Post-apostolic Miracles 291
Alleged Miracles in the Early Church 292
Miracles reported by Augustine 295
The Biographies of St. Francis 300
Sort of Miracles ascribed to St. Francis 302
The Truthfulness of the Apostles 304

CHAPTER XI.

THE ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIANITY FROM THE CONVERSION OF SAUL OF TARSUS, WITH AN EXAMINATION OF RENAN'S THEORY OF THAT EVENT.

Personal Characteristics of Paul 306
Naturalistic Explanation of his Conversion 307
None of the Antecedents of Hallucination 309
His Conversion not a "Vision" 310
The Moral and Spiritual Change in him 311

CHAPTER XII.

THE ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIANITY FROM PROPHECY, WITH COMMENTS ON THE THEORY OF KUENEN.

The Main Design of Prophecy 314
Characteristics of the Prophet 316
The Predictive Element in Prophecy 317
The Relation of Prediction to Chronology 320
Messianic Prophecy 321
Particular Predictions 325
Dr. Kuenen's Theory 326
True Prophets and "False Prophets" 329
Criteria of the True Prophet 332
Deistic Spirit of Dr. Kuenen's Theory 332
Prophecies in the New Testament 334

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIANITY FROM ITS ADAPTEDNESS TO THE NECESSITIES OF HUMAN NATURE.

	PAGE.
Practical Character of Christianity	336
The Conscious Need of God	337
The Consciousness of Sin and Guilt	340
The Miseries of Life	343
Recognition in the Bible of the Facts of Life	344
Reconciliation to God	345
The Life of Faith	347
The Testimony of Experience	348

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIANITY FROM THE CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN SYSTEM OF DOCTRINE.

Christianity a System	349
Relation of Reason to the Gospel	351
The Pure Theism of Christianity	352
The Christian Doctrine of Providence	354
The Christian Doctrine of Man	355
The Christian Doctrine of Sin	356
The Christian Doctrine of Salvation	358
The Incarnation and Atonement	360
The Influence of the Spirit of God	361
The Theodicy	361

CHAPTER XV.

THE ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIANITY FROM CHRISTENDOM AS AN EFFECT OF CHRIST'S AGENCY.

The Progress of Christianity	367
Character of its Influence	368
New Ideal of Man and of Society	369
Effect of Christianity on the Family	372
Christianity and the State	373
Christianity and Liberty	374
Christianity and Charity	379
Christianity and Slavery	384

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIANITY FROM A COMPARISON OF IT WITH OTHER RELIGIONS.

PAGE.

Character of Heathen Religions 388
Peculiarity of the Christian Religion 390
Confucianism 391
Buddhism 392
The Religion of Egypt 392
The Religion of the Greeks 393
Mohammedanism 393
Polytheism and Monotheism 394
Christianity fitted to be Universal 401
Hebrew and Christian Monotheism 402

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RELATION OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

The Practical Influence of the Bible 407
The Place for Criticism 408
Revelation is through Redemption 410
Revelation is Historical 411
Revelation precedes Scripture 414
The Old Testament Literature 417
The Authority of Christ and the Apostles 423

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IN ITS RELATION TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

Significance of "Canon" 427
The Need of Historical Inquiry 428
Gradual Formation of the Canon 428
The Syrian Canon 430
The Old Latin Version 430
The Muratorian Canon 431
Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement, Origen 432
Authority of Apostolic Fathers 433
Eusebius on the Canon 435
Jerome and Augustine 436
Luther on the Books of the New Testament 437
Calvin and Tyndale 438
The Disputed Books 440

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CONGRUITY OF THE NATURAL AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES WITH THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

	PAGE.
Alleged Hostility of Christianity to Science	445
Persecution of Scientific Men	447
The Case of Galileo	448
Opposition to Geology and to other Sciences	450
Causes of Intolerance toward Science	452
Wrong Position taken by Theologians	455
The School of Buckle	457
The Historical Theory of Draper	458
Arabic and Christian Science	460
Christianity has promoted Science	462
Distinction of Science and Philosophy	467
Views of Nature in the Old Testament	469
The Unity of Nature recognized	470
The Reality of Second Causes recognized	471
Nature viewed as a System	471
The Narrative of the Creation in Genesis	473
The Bible and Evolution	478
The Idea of Creation	479
The Fact of Death	479
The Transfiguration of Nature	481
The Greatness and the Littleness of Man	482

THE GROUNDS OF THEISTIC AND CHRISTIAN BELIEF.

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CHAPTER I.

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD AND OF MAN.

THEISM signifies not only that there is a ground or cause of all things,—so much every one who makes an attempt to account for himself and for the world around him admits,—but also that the Cause of all things is a Personal Being, of whom an image is presented in the human mind. This image falls short of being adequate, only as it involves limits,—limits, however, which belong not to intelligence in itself, but simply to intelligence in its finite form.

Belief in the personality of man, and belief in the personality of God, stand or fall together. A glance at the history of religion would suggest that these two beliefs are for some reason inseparable. Where faith in the personality of God is weak, or is altogether wanting, as in the case of the pantheistic religions of the East, the perception which men have of their own personality is found to be in an equal degree indistinct. The feeling of individuality is dormant. The soul indolently ascribes to itself a merely phenomenal being. It conceives of itself as appearing for a moment, like a wave

let on the ocean, to vanish again in the all-ingulfing essence whence it emerged. Recent philosophical theories which substitute matter, or an "Unknowable," for the self-conscious Deity, likewise dissipate the personality of man as ordinarily conceived. If they deny that God is a Spirit, they deny with equal emphasis that man is a spirit. The pantheistic and atheistic schemes are in this respect consistent in their logic. Out of man's perception of his own personal attributes arises the belief in a personal God. On this fact of our own personality the validity of the arguments for theism depends.

The essential characteristics of personality are self-consciousness and self-determination: that is to say, these are the elements common to all spiritual beings. Perception, whether its object be material or mental, involves a perceiving subject. The "cogito ergo sum" of Descartes is not properly an argument. I do not deduce my existence from the fact of my putting forth an act of thought. The Cartesian maxim simply denotes that in the act the agent is of necessity brought to light, or disclosed to himself. He becomes cognizant of himself in the fluctuating states of thought, feeling and volition. This apprehension of self is intuitive. It is not an *idea* of self that emerges, not a bare phenomenon, as some philosophers have contended; but the *ego* is immediately presented, and there is an inexpugnable conviction of its reality. Idealism, or the doctrine that sense-perception is a modification of the mind that is due exclusively to its own nature, and is elicited by no object exterior to itself, is less repugnant to reason than is the denial of the reality of the *ego*. Whatever may be true of external things, of self we have an intuitive knowledge. If I judge that there is no real table before me

on which I seem to be writing, and no corporeal organs for seeing or touching it, I nevertheless cannot escape the conviction that it is I who thus judge. To talk of thought without a thinker, of belief without a believer, is to utter words void of meaning. The unity and enduring identity of the *ego* are necessarily involved in self-consciousness. I know myself as a single, separate entity. Personal identity is presupposed in every act of memory. Go back as far as recollection can carry us, it is the same self who was the subject of all the mental experiences which memory can recall. When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but I who utter these words am the same being that I was a score or threescore years ago. I look forward to the future, and know that it is upon *me*, and not upon another, that the consequences of my actions will be visited. In the endless succession of thoughts, feelings, choices, in all the mutations of opinion and of character, the identity of the *ego* abides. From the dawn of consciousness to my last breath, I do not part with myself. "If we speak of the mind as a series of feelings which is aware of itself as past and future, we are reduced to the alternative of believing that the mind, or *ego*, is something different from any series of feelings, or of accepting the paradox that something which is *ex hypothesi* but a series of feelings can be aware of itself as a series." So writes Stuart Mill. Yet, on the basis of this astounding assumption, that a series can be self-conscious, he was minded to frame his philosophy, and was only deterred by the insurmountable difficulty of supposing memory with no being capable of remembering.

The second constituent element of personality is self-determination. This act is likewise essential to distinct

self-consciousness. Were there no exercise of will, were the mind wholly passive under all impressions from without, the clear consciousness of self would never be evoked. In truth, self in that case would have only an inchoate being. That I originate my voluntary actions in the sense that they are not the effect or necessary consequence of antecedents, whether in the mind or out of it, is a fact of consciousness. This is what is meant by the freedom of the will. It is a definition of "choice." Thoughts spring up in the mind, and succeed one another under laws of association whose absolute control is limited only by the power we have of fastening the attention on one object or another within the horizon of consciousness. Desires reaching out to various forms of good spring up unbidden: they, too, are subject to regulation through no power inherent in themselves. But self-determination, as the very term signifies, is attended with an irresistible conviction that the direction of the will is self-imparted. We leave out of account here the nature of habit, or the tendency of choice once made or often repeated to perpetuate itself. That a moral bondage may ensue from an abuse of liberty is conceded. The mode and degree in which habit affects freedom is an important topic; but it is one which we do not need to consider in this place. That the will is free — that is, both exempt from constraint by causes exterior, which is fatalism, and not a mere spontaneity, confined to one path by a force acting from within, which is determinism — is immediately evident to every unsophisticated mind. We can initiate action by an efficiency which is neither irresistibly controlled by motives, nor determined, without any capacity of alternative action, by a proneness inherent in its nature. No truth is more definitely sanc-

tioned by the common sense of mankind. Those who in theory reject it, continually assert it in practice. The languages of men would have to be reconstructed, the business of the world would come to a stand-still, if the denial of the freedom of the will were to be carried out with rigorous consistency. This freedom is not only attested in consciousness; it is proved by that ability to resist inducements brought to bear on the mind which we are conscious of exerting. We can withstand temptation to wrong by the exertion of an energy which consciously emanates from ourselves, and which we know that, the circumstances remaining the same, we could abstain from exerting. Motives have an *influence*, but *influence* is not to be confounded with causal efficiency. Praise and blame, and the punishments and rewards, of whatever kind, which imply these judgments, are plainly irrational, save on the tacit assumption of the autonomy of the will. Deny free-will, and remorse, as well as self-approbation, is deprived of an essential ingredient. It is then impossible to distinguish remorse from regret. Ill-desert becomes a fiction. This is not to argue against the necessarian doctrine, merely on the ground of its bad tendencies. It is true that the debasement of the individual, and the wreck of social order, would follow upon the unflinching adoption of the necessarian theory in the judgments and conduct of men. Virtue would no more be thought to *deserve* love: crime would no longer be felt to *deserve* hatred. But, independently of this aspect of the subject, there is, to say the least, a strong presumption against the truth of a theorem in philosophy that clashes with the common sense and moral sentiments of the race. The awe-inspiring sense of responsibility, the sting of remorse, emotions of moral

condemnation and moral approval, ought not to be treated as deceptive, unless they can be demonstrated to be so. Here are phenomena which no metaphysical scheme can afford to ignore. Surely a theory can never look for general acceptance which is obliged to misinterpret or explain away these familiar facts of human nature.

How shall the feeling that we are free be accounted for if it be contrary to the fact? Let us glance at what famous necessarians have to say in answer to this inquiry. First, let us hear one of the foremost representatives of this school. His solution is one that has often been repeated. "Men believe themselves to be free," says Spinoza, "entirely from this, that, though conscious of their acts, they are ignorant of the causes by which their acts are determined. The idea of freedom, therefore, comes of men not knowing the cause of their acts."[1] This is a bare assertion, confidently made, but absolutely without proof. It surely is not a self-evident truth that our belief in freedom arises in this manner. Further: when we make the motives preceding any particular act of choice the object of deliberate attention, the sense of freedom is not in the least weakened. The motives are distinctly seen; yet the consciousness of liberty, or of a pluripotential power, remains in full vigor. Moreover, choice is not the resultant of motives, as in a case of the composition of forces. One motive is followed, and its rival rejected. Hume has another explanation of what he considers the delusive feeling of freedom. "Our idea," he says, "of necessity and causation arises entirely from the uniformity observable in the operations of nature, where similar objects are constantly conjoined together, and

[1] Ethics, P. ii. prop. xxxv.

the mind is determined by custom to infer the one from the appearance of the other."[1] This constant conjunction of things is all that we know; but men have "a strong propensity" to believe in "something like a necessary connection" between the antecedent and the consequent. "When, again, they turn their reflections towards the operations of their own minds, and *feel* no such connection of the motive and the action, they are thence apt to suppose that there is a difference between the effects which result from material force, and those which arise from thought and intelligence."[2] In other words, a double delusion is asserted. First, the mind, for some unexplained reason, falsely imagines a tie between the material antecedent and consequent, and then, missing such a bond between motive and choice, it rashly infers freedom. This solution depends on the theory that nothing properly called power exists. It is assumed that there is no power, either in motives or in the will. Hume's necessity, unlike that of Spinoza, is mere uniformity of succession, choice following motive with regularity, but with no nexus between the two.

Since we are conscious of exerting energy, this theory, which holds to mere sequence without connection, we know to be false. J. S. Mill, adopting an identical theory of causation, from which power is eliminated, lands in the same general conclusion, on this question of free-will, as that reached by Hume. Herbert Spencer holds that the fact "that every one is at liberty to do what he desires to do (supposing there are no external hinderances)" is the sum of our liberty. He states that "the dogma of free-will" is the proposi-

[1] An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding, P. i. § 8 (Essays, ed. Green and Grose, vol. ii. p. 67).

[2] Ibid., p. 75.

tion "that every one is at liberty to desire or not to desire." That is, he confounds choice and volition with desire, denies the existence of an elective power distinct from the desires, and imputes a definition of free-will to the advocates of freedom which they unanimously repudiate. As to the feeling of freedom, Mr. Spencer says, "The illusion consists in supposing that at each moment the *ego* is something more than the aggregate of feelings and ideas, actual and nascent, which then exists."[1] When a man says that he determined to perform a certain action, his error is in supposing his conscious self to have been "something separate from the group of psychical states" constituting his "psychical self." The "composite psychical state which excites the action is at the same time the *ego* which is said to will the action." The soul is resolved into a group of psychical states due to "motor changes" excited by an impression received from without. If there is no personal agent, if *I* is a collective noun, meaning a "group" of sensations, it is a waste of time to argue that there is no freedom. "What we call a mind," wrote Hume long ago, "is nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions, united together by certain relations, and supposed, though falsely, to be endowed with a perfect simplicity and identity." Professor Huxley, who quotes this passage, would make no other correction than to substitute an assertion of nescience for the positive denial. He would rather say, "that we know nothing more of the mind than that it is a series of perceptions."[2]

Before commenting on this definition of the mind, which robs it of its unity, it is worth while to notice

[1] Principles of Psychology, vol. i. p. 500.
[2] Huxley's Hume, p. 61.

what account the advocates of necessity have to give of the feelings of praise and blame, tenants of the soul which appear to claim a right to be there, and which it is very hard even for speculative philosophers to dislodge. On this topic Spinoza is remarkably chary of explanation. "I designate as *gratitude*," he says, "the feeling we experience from the acting of another, done, as we imagine, to gratify us; and *aversion*, the uneasy sense we experience when we imagine any thing done with a view to our disadvantage; and, whilst we *praise* the former, we are disposed to *blame* the latter."[1] What does Spinoza mean by the phrase "with a view to our advantage" or "disadvantage"? As the acts done, in either case, were unavoidable on the part of the doer, — as much so as the circulation of blood in his veins, — it is impossible to see any reasonableness in praise or blame, thankfulness or resentment. Why should we resent the blow of an assassin more than the kick of a horse? Why should we be any more grateful to a benefactor than we are to the sun for shining on us? If the sun were conscious of shining on us, and of shining on us "with a view" to warm us, in Spinoza's meaning of the phrase, but with not the least power to do otherwise, how would that consciousness found a claim to our gratitude? When Spinoza proceeds to define "just" and "unjust," "sin" and "merit," he broaches a theory not dissimilar to that of Hobbes, that there is no natural law but the desires, that "in the state of nature there is nothing done that can properly be characterized as just or unjust," that in "the natural state," prior to the organization of society, "faults, offences, crimes, cannot be conceived."[2] As

[1] Ethics, P. iii. prop. xxix. schol.
[2] Ethics, P. iv. prop. xxxvii. schol. 2.

for repentance, Spinoza does not hesitate to lay down the thesis that "repentance is not a virtue, or does not arise from reason; but he who repents of any deed he has done is twice miserable or impotent."[1] Penitence is defined as "sorrow accompanying the idea of something we believe we have done of free-will."[2] It mainly depends, he tells us, on education. Since free-will is an illusive notion, penitence must be inferred to be in the same degree irrational. To these immoral opinions the advocates of necessity are driven when they stand face to face with the phenomena of conscience.

Mill, in seeking to vindicate the consistency of punishment with his doctrine of determinism, maintains that it is right to punish; first, as penalty tends to restrain and cure an evil-doer, and secondly, as it tends to secure society from aggression. "It is just to punish," he says, "so far as it is necessary for this purpose," for the security of society, "exactly as it is just to put a wild beast to death (without unnecessary suffering) for the same object."[3] It will hardly be asserted by any one that a brute *deserves* punishment, in the accepted meaning of the terms. Later, Mill attempts to find a basis for a true responsibility; but in doing so he virtually, though unwittingly, surrenders his necessarian theory. "The true doctrine of the causation of human actions maintains," he says, "that not only our conduct, but our character, is in part amenable to our will; that we can, by employing the proper means, improve our character; and that if our character is such, that, while it remains what it is, it necessitates us to do wrong, it will be just to apply motives which will necessitate us

[1] Ethics, P. iv. prop. liv. [2] P. iii. def. 27.
[3] Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy, vol. ii. p. 292

to strive for its improvement, and to *emancipate ourselves* from the other necessity." [1] Here, while verbally holding to his theory of the deterministic agency of motives, he introduces the phrases which I have put in italics, — phrases which carry in them to every mind the idea of free personal endeavor, and exclude that of determinism. "The true doctrine of necessity," says Mill, "while maintaining that our character is formed by our circumstances, asserts at the same time that our desires can do much to alter our circumstances." But how about our control over our desires? Have we any more control, direct or indirect, over them than over our circumstances? If not, "the true doctrine of necessity" no more founds responsibility than does the naked fatalism which Mill disavows. It is not uncommon for necessarian writers, it may be unconsciously to themselves, to cover up their theory by affirming that actions are the necessary fruit of a character already formed; while they leave room for the supposition, that, in the forming of that character, the will exerted at some time an independent agency. But such an agency, it need not be said, at whatever point it is placed, is incompatible with their main doctrine.

The standing argument for necessity, drawn out by Hobbes, Collins, *et id omne genus*, is based on the law of cause and effect. It is alleged, that if motives are not efficient in determining the will, then an event — namely, the particular direction of the will in a case of choice, or the choice of one object *rather than* another — is without a cause. This has been supposed to be an invincible argument. In truth, however, the event in question is not without a cause in the sense that would be true of an event wholly disconnected from an effi-

[1] Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy, vol. ii. p. 299.

cient antecedent, — of a world, for example, springing into being without a Creator. The mind is endued with the power to act in either of two directions, the proper circumstances being present; and, whichever way it may actually move, its motion is its own, the result of its own power. That the mind is not subject to the law of causation which holds good elsewhere than in the sphere of intelligent, voluntary action, is the very thing asserted. Self-motion, initial motion, is the distinctive attribute of spiritual agents. The prime error of the necessarian is in unwarrantably assuming that the mind in its voluntary action is subject to the same law which prevails in the realm of things material and unintelligent. This opinion is not only false, but shallow. For where do we first get our idea of power or causal energy? Where but from the exertion of our own wills? If we exerted no voluntary agency, we should have no idea of causal efficiency. Being outside of the circle of our experience, causation would be utterly unknown. Necessarians, among whom are included at the present day many students of physical science, frequently restrict their observation to things without themselves, and, having formulated a law of causation for the objects with which they are chiefly conversant, they forthwith extend it over the mind, — an entity *toto genere* different. They should remember that the very terms "free," "power," "energy," "cause," are only intelligible from the experience we have of the exercise of will. They are applied in some modified sense to things external. But we are immediately cognizant of no cause but will: and the nature of that cause must be learned from consciousness; it can never be learned from an inspection of things heterogeneous to the mind, and incapable by themselves of imparting to it the faintest notion of power.

But it is objected, that if the operations of the will are not governed by law, psychologic science is impossible. "Psychical changes," says Herbert Spencer, "either conform to law, or they do not. If they do not conform to law, this work, in common with all works on the subject, is sheer nonsense: no science of psychology is possible. If they do conform to law, there cannot be any such thing as free-will."[1] Were uniformity found to characterize the self-determinations of the mind, even then necessity would not be proved. Suppose the will always to determine itself in strict conformity with reason: this would not prove constraint, or disprove freedom. If it were shown, that, as a matter of fact, the mind always chooses in the same way, the antecedents being precisely the same, neither fatalism nor determinism would be a legitimate inference. If it be meant, by the conformity of the will to law, that no man has the power to choose otherwise than he actually chooses; that, to take an example from moral conduct, no thief, or seducer, or assassin, was capable of any such previous exertion of will as would have resulted in his abstaining from the crimes which he has perpetrated, — then every reasonable, not to say righteous, person will deny the assertion. The alternative that a work on psychology, so far as it rests on a theory of fatalism, is "sheer nonsense," it is far better to endure than to fly in the face of common sense and of the conscience of the race. A book of ethics constructed on the assumption that the free and responsible nature of man is an illusive notion merits no higher respect than the postulate on which it is founded.

Besides the argument against freedom from the

[1] Psychology, i. 503.

alleged violation of the law of causation which it involves, there is a second objection which is frequently urged. We are reminded that there is an order of history. Events, we are told, within the sphere of voluntary agency succeed each other with regularity of sequence. We can predict what individuals will do with a considerable degree of confidence, — with as much confidence as could be expected, considering the complexity of the phenomena. There is a progress of a community and of mankind which evinces a reign of law within the compass of personal action. The conduct of one generation is shaped by the conduct of that which precedes it.

That there is a plan in the course of human affairs, all believers in Providence hold. History does not exhibit a chaotic succession of occurrences, but a system, a progressive order, to be more or less clearly discerned. The inference, however, that the wills of men are not free, is rashly drawn. If it be thought that we are confronted with two apparently antagonistic truths, whose point of reconciliation is beyond our ken, the situation would have its parallels in other branches of human inquiry. We should be justified in holding to each truth on its own grounds, since each is sufficiently verified, and in waiting for the solution of the problem. But the whole objection can be shown to rest, in great part, on misunderstanding of the doctrine of free-will, Freedom does not involve, of necessity, a wild departure from all regularity in the actual choices of men under the same circumstances. That men *do* act in one way, in the presence of given circumstances, does not prove that they *must* so act. Again: those who propound this objection fail to discern the real points along the path of developing character where freedom

is exercised. They often fail to perceive that there are habits of will which are the result of self-determination, — habits for which men are responsible so far as they are morally right or wrong, but which exist within them as abiding purposes or voluntary principles of conduct. Of a man who loves money better than any thing else, it may be predicted that he will seize upon any occasion that offers itself to make an advantageous bargain. But this love of money is a voluntary principle which he can curb, and, influenced by moral considerations, supplant by a higher motive of conduct. The fact of habit, voluntary habit, founded ultimately on choice, practically circumscribes the variableness of action, and contributes powerfully to the production of a certain degree of uniformity of conduct, on which prediction as to what individuals will do is founded. But all prophecies in regard to the future conduct of men, or societies of men, are liable to fail, not merely because of the varied and complicated data in the case of human action, but because new influences, not in the least coercive, may set at defiance all statistical vaticinations. A religious reform, like that of Wesley, gives rise to the alteration of the conduct of multitudes, changes the face of society in extensive districts, and upsets previous calculations as to the percentage of crime, for example, to be expected in the regions affected. The seat of moral freedom is deep in the radical self-determinations by which the supreme ends of conduct, the motives of life in the aggregate, are fixed. Kant had a profound perception of this truth, although he erred in limiting absolutely the operations of free-will to the "noumenal" sphere, and in relegating all moral conduct, except the primal choice, to the realm of phenomenal and therefore necessary action. A theist finds

no difficulty in ascribing moral evil wholly to the will of the creature, and in accounting for the orderly succession of events, or the plan of history, by the overruling agency of God, which has no need to interfere with human liberty, or to coerce or crush the free and responsible nature of man, but knows how to pilot the race onward, be the rocks and cross-currents where and what they may.

Self-consciousness and self-determination, each involving the other, are the essential peculiarities of mind. With self-determination is inseparably connected purpose. The intelligent action of the will is for an end; and this preconceived end — which is last in the order of time, though first in thought — is termed the final cause. It is the goal to which the volitions dictated by it point and lead. So simple an act of will as the volition to lift a finger is for a purpose. The thought of the result to be effected precedes that efficient act of the will by which, in some inscrutable way, the requisite muscular motion is produced. I purpose to send a letter to a friend. There is a plan present in thought, before it is resolved upon, or converted into an intention, and prior to the several exertions of voluntary power by which it is accomplished. Guided by this plan, I enter my library, open a drawer, find the proper writing-materials, compose the letter, seal it, and despatch it. Here is a series of voluntary actions done in pursuance of a plan which antedated them in consciousness, and through them is realized. The movements of brain and muscle which take place in the course of the proceeding are subservient to the conscious plan by which all the power employed in realizing it is directed. This is rational voluntary action: it is action for an end. In this way the whole business of human

life is carried forward. All that is termed "art," in the broadest meaning of the word, — that is, all that is not included either in the products of material nature, which the wit and power of men can neither produce nor modify, or in the strictly involuntary states of mind with their physical effects, — comes into being in the way described. The conduct of men in their individual capacity, the organization of families and states, the government of nations, the management of armies, the diversified pursuits of industry, whatever is because men have willed it to be, is due to self-determination involving design.

There have been philosophers to maintain that man is an automaton. All that he does, they have ascribed to a chain of causes wholly embraced within a circle of nervous and muscular movements. Some, finding it impossible to ignore consciousness, have contented themselves with denying to conscious states causal agency. On this view it follows that the plan to take a journey, to build a house, or to do any thing else which presupposes design, has no influence whatever upon the result. The same efforts would be produced if we were utterly unconscious of any intention to bring them to pass. The design, not being credited with the least influence or control over the instruments through which the particular end is reached, might be subtracted without affecting the result. Since consciousness neither originates nor transmits motion, and thus exerts no power, the effects of what we call voluntary agency would take place as well without it. This creed, when it is once clearly understood, is not likely to win many adherents.[1]

[1] For a clear exposition of the consequences of denying the agency of mind, see Herbert, The Realistic Assumptions of Modern Science etc., pp. 103 seq., 128 seq.

The scientific doctrine of the conservation of energy is entirely consistent with the freedom of the will and with the reciprocal influence of mind and body. The doctrine is, that as the sum of matter remains the same, so is it with the sum of energy, potential or in action, in any body or system of bodies. Energy may be transmitted; that is, lost in one body, it re-appears undiminished in another, or, ceasing in one form, it is exerted in another, and this according to definite ratios. In other words, there is a correlation of the physical forces. While this is true, there is not the slightest evidence that mental action is caused by the transmitting of energy from the physical system. Nor is there any proof that the mind transfers additional energy to matter. Nor, again, is there the slightest evidence that mental action is correlated with physical. That mental action is affected by physical change is evident. That the mind acts upon the brain, modifying its state, exerting a directive power upon the nerve-centres, is equally certain. The doctrine of conservation, as its best expounders — Clerk Maxwell, for example — have perceived, does not militate in the least against the limited control of the human will and the supreme control of the divine.

Attending the inward assurance of freedom is the consciousness of moral law. While I know that I *can* do or forbear, I feel that I *ought* or *ought not*. The desires of human nature are various. They go forth to external good, which reaches the mind through the channel of the senses. They go out also to objects less tangible, as power, fame, knowledge, the esteem of others. But distinct from these diverse, and, it may be, conflicting desires, a law manifests itself in conscious-

ness, and lays its authoritative mandate on the will. The requirement of that law in the concrete may be differently conceived. It may often be grossly misapprehended. But the feeling of obligation is an ineradicable element of our being. It is universal, or as nearly so as the perception of beauty or any other essential attribute of the soul. No ethical theory can dispense with it. It implies an ideal or end which the will is freely to realize. Be this end clearly or dimly discerned, and though it be in a great degree misconceived, its existence is implied in the imperative character of the law within. The confusion that may arise in respect to the contents of the law and the end to which the law points does not disprove the reality of either. A darkened and perverted conscience is still a conscience.

All explanations of the origin of religion which refer it to an empirical or accidental source are superficial. The theory that religious beliefs spring from tradition fails to give any account of their origin, to say nothing of their chronic continuance and of the tremendous power which they exert among men. The notion that religions are the invention of shrewd statesmen and rulers, devised as a means of managing the populace, probably has no advocates at present. It belongs among the obsolete theories of free-thinkers in the last century. How could religion be made so potent an instrument if its roots were not deep in human nature? "Timor facit deos," is another opinion. It has the sanction of Lucretius. Religion is supposed, on this view, to be due to the effect on rude minds of storms, convulsions of nature, and other phenomena which inspired terror, and were referred to supernatural beings. It is a shallow hypothesis, which overlooks the

fact that impressions of this kind are fleeting. They alternate, also, with aspects of nature of an entirely different character. If nature is terrific, it is also gracious and bountiful. Moreover, as far back as we can trace the history of mythological religions, we find that the divinities which the mythopœic fancy calls into being are of a protecting or beneficent character. A favorite view of a school of anthropologists at present is, that religion began in fetich-worship, and rose by degrees through the worship of animals to a conception of loftier deities conceived of as clothed in human form. Against this speculation lies the fact, that the earliest mythological deities which history brings to our notice were heavenly beings whose loftiness impressed the mind with awe. Even where fetich-worship exists, it is not the material object itself which is the god. Rather is it true that the stick or stone is considered the vehicle or embodiment of divine agencies acting through it. "The external objects of nature never appear to the childish fantasy as mere things of sense, but always as animated beings, which, therefore, in some way or other, include in themselves a spirit."[1] The doctrine that religion begins in a worship of ancestors, not to dwell on other objections to it, does not correspond with the facts of history; since divinities in human shape were not the earliest objects of heathen worship. The earliest supreme divinity of the Indo-European race was the shining heaven, which was clothed with the attributes of personality. The same answer avails against the supposition that religion has its origin in dreams, wherein the images of the dead are presented as if alive. Influences of this sort have had some effect, during the long history of polytheism, in

[1] Pfleiderer, Religionsphilosophie, p 319

determining the particular shape which mythologies have assumed. As an explanation of the origin of religion itself, and of its hold on mankind, they are miserably insufficient.

Herbert Spencer is one of the writers who make religion spring proximately out of ancestor-worship.[1] Ancestor-worship itself he would explain by a dream-theory and a ghost-theory combined. The "primitive man," who is so far off as to give room for any number of guesses about him, mistakes his shadow for another man, the duplicate of himself. Whether he makes the same mistake about every rock and wigwam from which a shadow is cast, we are not told. His image seen in the water gives him a more definite idea of his other self. Echoes help still more in the same direction. Then there is the distinction between "the animate," or, rather, animals, and "the inanimate." Here Spencer rejects what the soundest writers on mythology all hold, that the personifying imagination of men, who as regards reflection are children, confounds the inanimate with the living. The lower animals, dogs and horses, do not; and is man below them in knowledge? This position of Spencer is characteristic of his whole theory. If man were on the level of the dog or the horse, if he were not conscious, in some degree, of will and personality, then, like them, he might never impute to rivers and streams and trees personal life. Dreams, according to Spencer, create the fixed belief that there is a duplicate man, or soul, that wanders off from the body: hence the belief that the dead survive. Naturally they become objects of reverence. So worship begins. Epilepsy, insanity, and the like, confirm the notion that ghosts come and go. Temples were first the tombs of the dead. Fetiches

[1] The Principles of Sociology, vol. i. chap. viii seq.

were parts of their clothing. Idols were their images. The belief somehow arises that human beings disguise themselves as animals. Animal-worship is explained, in part, in this way, but mainly by a blunder of "the primitive man." There is a dearth of names: human beings are named after beasts: gradually the notion takes root that the animal who gave the name was the parent of the family. Plants with strange intoxicating qualities are assumed to be inhabited by ghosts. Plant-worship is the result. The worship of nature, the worship, for example, of the heavenly bodies, is the result, likewise, of a linguistic blunder. There is a scanty supply of words. Terms applied to life and motion are figuratively attached to natural objects. The moon is said to run away. These phrases are subsequently taken as literal. The exploded solution of Euemerus, that the gods were human beings, magnified in the fancy of later times, is brought in as auxiliary to the other imagined sources of religion. Thus the Pantheon is filled out.

Mr. Spencer, in his *First Principles*, favored the idea that religion sprang out of a mistaken application of the causal principle to the explanation of nature and of man. The later theory sketched above is what he conceives that the evolution doctrine demands. He differs, as will be perceived, from the archæologists who make religion start with fetichism. He administers a solemn rebuke to those evolutionists who allow, what they, like most scholars, feel compelled to hold, that among the Aryans and Semites religion cannot be traced back to ancestor-worship. Such evolutionists, Mr. Spencer gravely observes, are not loyal to their theory: they are heterodox.[1] The circumstance that they cannot find facts to sustain the theory as regards these branches of

[1] Principles of Sociology, i. 313.

the human race ought not to be allowed to shake their faith.

The ingenious mode in which this theory is wrought out scarcely avails to give it even plausibility. The transitions from point to point, especially from the lower to the higher types of religion, have an artificial, far-fetched character. The resort for evidence is not to history, the source whence, if anywhere, satisfactory evidence must be derived. The proofs are ethnographic. They consist of scraps of information respecting scattered tribes of savages, mostly tribes which now exist. In this way, isolated phenomena may, no doubt, be collected, lending a show of support to the speculation about shadows, dreams, and ghosts. But a generalization respecting savage races cannot be safely made from miscellaneous data of this sort What proof is there that "the primitive man" was a savage? This assumption is made at the outset. That he was unlearned, uncivilized, is one thing. That he was a fool, that he was not much above the brute, is an unverified assertion. Degeneracy is not only a possible fact, it is a fact which history and observation prove to have been actual in the case of different peoples. Not only is Mr. Spencer's theory without the requisite historical proof; it is refuted by history. The worship of the objects of nature, as far as can be ascertained, was not preceded by the worship of ancestors. It is a false analogy which Mr. Spencer adduces from the worship of saints in the Church of Rome. This practice did not precede the worship of God: primitive Christianity did not come after mediæval.[1] It is remarkable, that, in an elaborate

[1] Sir Henry Maine, who recognizes the prevalence of ancestor-worship, remarks that the theory attached to it "has been made to account for more than it will readily explain." — Dissertations on Early Law and Custom, vol. i. p. 69.

attempt to explain the rise of religion, Mr. Spencer should say nothing of the great founders whose teaching has been so potent that eras are dated from them, and multitudes of men, for ages, have enrolled themselves among their disciples. One would think that Confucius, Buddha, Mohammed, with whatever of peculiar illumination each possessed, should be counted among the forces concerned in developing the religions of mankind. But the evolution doctrine, in the phase of it which Mr. Spencer advocates, is cut off from doing justice to the influence of individuals. Here, again, history is ignored. If religion had no deeper roots than are given to it in Mr. Spencer's theory, it could never have gained, much less have maintained, its hold upon men. The offspring, at every step, of error and delusion, it would have been short-lived. Mr. Spencer has presented suggestions here and there, of value in the study of the origin of superstitions; but his view as a whole is a signal instance of the mischievous consequences of servile adhesion to a metaphysical theory, to the neglect of facts, and even of the deeper principles of human nature. Even as an account of the rise of certain superstitions, his theory needs to bring in as one element a sense of the supernatural, a yearning for a higher communion. The dog dreams. The dog may dream of dogs that have died, or even of deceased men, but he does not worship any more than he becomes conscious of having within him a soul.

There is a wide interval between hypotheses of this character and the more elevated theory that religion arises from the perception of marks of design in nature. But even this falls short of being a satisfactory solution of the problem. Not to dwell on the fact that the adaptations of nature impress different minds with

unequal degrees of force, or on the fact that they fail to exhibit the infinitude and the moral attributes of Deity, it is evident that the phenomena of religion require us to assume a profounder and more spiritual source to account for them. This must be found in primitive perceptions and aspirations of the human soul.

A capital defect in many of the hypotheses broached to explain the origin of religion, is that they make it the fruit of an intellectual curiosity. It is regarded as being the product of an attempt to account for the world as it presents itself before the human intelligence. It is true that religion as a practical experience contains an ingredient of knowledge; yet it is a great mistake to regard the intellectual or scientific tendency as the main root of religious faith and devotion. Belief in God does not lie at the end of a path of inquiry of which the motive is the desire to explore the causes of things. It arises in the soul in a more spontaneous way, and in a form in which feeling plays a more prominent part. "Those who lay exclusive stress on the proof of the existence of God from the marks of design in the world, or from the necessity of supposing a first cause for all phenomena, overlook the fact that man learns to pray before he learns to reason; that he feels within him the consciousness of a Supreme Being and the instinct of worship, before he can argue from effects to causes, or estimate the traces of wisdom and benevolence scattered through the creation." [1]

Religion is communion with God. How is the reality of the object known to us? Not as the intuitions, space and time, cause, etc., are known to us. These are conditioned on experience. They do not assert the exist-

[1] Mansel, The Limits of Religious Thought, etc., p. 115.

ence of a real object, but only that, in case it exists, it conforms to these conditions. Moreover, they describe the nature of reason itself, of its procedure when brought into contact with realities, — a procedure at first unconscious, and then generalized by reflection. The being of God is not an axiom of this sort.

It is in sense-perception that external objects are brought directly to our knowledge. Through sensations compared and combined by reason, we perceive outward things in their qualities and relations. There are perceptions of the spirit as well as of sense. The being whom we call God may, in like manner, come in contact with the soul. As the soul, on the basis of sensations, posits the outer world of sense, so, on the basis of analogous inward experiences, it posits God. The inward feelings, yearnings, aspirations, which are the ground of the spiritual perception, are not continuous, as in the perceptions of matter: they vary in liveliness; they are contingent, in a remarkable degree, on character. Hence religious faith has not the clearness, the uniform and abiding character, which belongs to our recognition of outward things.[1]

Religion is communion with God. If we look attentively at religion in its ripe form, — as, for example, we find it expressing itself in the Psalms of the Old Testament, — we shall get some help towards discerning the elements that compose it, and the sources within man out of which it springs.

Such a study suggests that it is through the feeling of dependence and the feeling of obligation that the

[1] On the subject of the immediate manifestation of God to the soul, and the analogy of sense-perception, the reader may be referred to Lotze, Grundzüge d. Religionsphil., p. 3, Mikrokosmos, vol. iii. chap. iv.; Ulrici, Gott u. die Natur, pp. 605–624, Gott u. der Mensch, vol. i.; Bowne, Studies in Theism, chap. ii. pp. 75 seq.

existence of a Supreme Being in whom we live, and to whose law we are subject, is revealed to the soul, and that intimately connected with the recognition of this being is a native tendency to rest upon and hold converse with Him in whom we live, and who thus discloses himself to the soul. A closer psychological attention to these experiences in which religion takes its origin is requisite. This may serve to dispel the impression, if it exist, that there is a lack of solidity or an unscientific mysticism in these propositions pertaining to the foundations of religious faith.

The psychological facts at the basis of theism are not less truly than forcibly stated in the following extracts from Sir William Hamilton: —

"The phenomena of the material world are subject to immutable laws, are produced and reproduced in the same invariable succession, and manifest only the blind force of a mechanical necessity.

"The phenomena of man are, in part, subjected to the laws of the external universe. As dependent upon a bodily organization, as actuated by sensual propensities and animal wants, he belongs to matter, and in this respect he is the slave of necessity. But what man holds of matter does not make up his personality. They are his, not he. Man is not an organism: he is an intelligence served by organs. For in man there are tendencies — there is a law — which continually urge him to prove that he is more powerful than the nature by which he is surrounded and penetrated. He is conscious to himself of faculties not comprised in the chain of physical necessity; his intelligence reveals prescriptive principles of action, absolute and universal, in the Law of Duty, and a liberty capable of carrying that law into effect in opposition to the solicitations, the impulsions, of his material nature. . . .

"It is only as man is a free intelligence, a moral power, that he is created after the image of God; and it is only as a spark of divinity glows as the life of our life in us, that we can rationally believe in an intelligent Creator and moral Governor of the universe. . . .

"If in man intelligence be a free power, in so far as its liberty extends intelligence must be independent of necessity and matter;

and a power independent of matter necessarily implies the existence of an immaterial subject; that is, a spirit. If, then, the original independence of intelligence on matter in the human constitution — in other words, if the spirituality of mind in man — be supposed a datum of observation, in this datum is also given both the condition and the proof of a God. . . .

"It is evident, in the first place, that, if there be no moral world, there can be no moral Governor of such a world; and, in the second, that we have and can have no ground on which to believe in the reality of a moral world, except in so far as we ourselves are moral agents."[1]

These statements commend themselves to reason, whatever doubt may attach to Hamilton's inference, made on the ground of analogy, that "intelligence holds the same relative supremacy in the universe which it holds in us." The origin of the belief in God, a Power above us intelligent and moral, needs to be more definitely explained.

One fact respecting consciousness is, that we cannot be conscious without being conscious of something. In opposition to the use of terms in Reid and Stewart, Hamilton has conclusively vindicated that view which includes in consciousness the object. "It is palpably impossible," he truly says, "that we can be conscious of an act without being conscious of the object to which that act is relative."[2] If I am conscious of perceiving a tree, I am conscious of the tree. If I am conscious of feeling a pain in the head, I am conscious of the pain. If I am conscious of any modification of the mind, be it a thought, feeling or desire, this mental object is a part of the conscious act.

Another fact respecting consciousness is, that inseparable from it is a knowledge of self — the *ego*. Consciousness is a relation between the subject and object,

[1] Metaphysics, pp. 21–23. [2] Ibid., p. 14.

its two constituent parts. Neither can be dropped out without annihilating consciousness. Mind is known to itself only in contrast with matter; or, as Hamilton expresses this established truth of philosophy, "mind and matter are never known apart and by themselves, but always in mutual correlation and contrast."[1] This antithesis can never be excluded. It is present when the object is purely mental. "The act which affirms that this particular phenomenon is a modification of me, virtually affirms that the phenomenon is not a modification of any thing different from me, and consequently implies a common cognizance of not-self and self." "The *ego* and *non-ego* are known and discriminated in the same indivisible act of knowledge."[2]

From this constitution of the mind it follows, that it is impossible for man to think of himself without thinking of the external world, of something outside of himself. In other words, the object, material existence, cannot be excluded from consciousness. In every modification of mind, in every state of thought, feeling, or will, it is a co-determining factor. Man may struggle to escape from it, but he struggles in vain. To destroy the external object is to destroy self-consciousness. The human mind can take no cognizance of itself without in the very act taking cognizance of matter. This relation of self-consciousness results from the connection in which we necessarily stand with the material world, including a physical organism, and with other individuals of the same species.[3]

It is strictly true then, on a rigorous analysis, that the *non-ego* is a co-agent in giving existence to every mental state. Without its presence as a co-determin-

[1] Metaphysics, p. 157. [2] Ibid., pp. 156, 157.
[3] Müller, Lehre von d. Sünde, i. 102.

ing factor, self-consciousness would be a bare faculty void of contents; that is, would have only a potential being. It is an unavoidable inference, that self-consciousness is not an original, independent existence, but is conditioned, derived. The limitations which have been described are not accidental, but essential. Imagine them absent, and self-consciousness in man would be inconceivable. It would be as impossible as vision without light. Hence the principle or ground of self-consciousness in man is not in itself. It inheres in some other being.

Is this source and ground of self-consciousness in the object the world without? Is it in Nature? This cannot be. "Nature cannot give that which she does not herself possess. She cannot give birth to that which is *toto genere* different from her. In Nature the canon holds good, 'Only like can produce like.'" Nature can take no such leap. A new beginning on a plane above Nature it is beyond the power of Nature to make. Self-consciousness can only be explained by self-consciousness as its author and source. It can have its ground in nothing that is itself void of consciousness. Only that personal Power which is exalted above Nature, the creative principle to which every new beginning is due, can account for self-consciousness in man. It presupposes an original, an unconditioned because original, self-consciousness. This spark of a divine fire is deposited in Nature: it is in it, but not of it.

Thus the consciousness of God enters inseparably into the consciousness of self as its hidden background. "The descent into our inmost being is at the same time an ascent to God." All profound reflection in which the soul withdraws from the world to contemplate its own being brings us to God, in whom we live and move.

We are conscious of God in a more intimate sense than we are conscious of finite things. As they themselves are derived, so is our knowledge of them.

In order to know a limit *as* a limit, it is often said we must already be in some sense beyond it. "We should not be able," says Julius Müller, "in the remotest degree to surmise that our personality — that in us whereby we are exalted, not in degree only, but in kind, above all other existence — is limited, were not the consciousness of the Absolute Personality originally stamped, however obscure and however effaced the outlines may often be, upon our souls." It is in the knowledge of the Infinite One that we know ourselves as finite.

To self-determination, the second element of personality, like self-consciousness, a limit is also set. The limit is the moral law to which the will is bound, though not necessitated, to conform. We find this law within us, a rule for the regulation of the will. It is not merely independent of the will — this is true of the emotions generally — it speaks with *authority*. It is a voice of command and of prohibition. This rule man spontaneously identifies with the will of Him who declares himself in consciousness as the Author of his being. The unconditional nature of the demand which we are conscious that the moral law makes on us, against all rebellious desires and passions, against our own opposing will, can only be explained by identifying it thus with a higher Will from which it emanates. In self-consciousness God reveals his being: in conscience he reveals his authority and his will concerning man. Through this recognition of the law of conscience as the will of God in whom we live, morality and religion coalesce.[1]

[1] This analysis substantially coincides with the exposition of Julius Müller, Lehre v. d. Sünde, *ut supra*.

There is an eloquent passage which has often been quoted from Jacobi. How far it is true, and how far it needs correction or supplement, will appear: —

"*Nature conceals God;* for through her whole domain Nature reveals only fate, only an indissoluble chain of mere efficient causes without beginning and without end, excluding with equal necessity both providence and chance. An independent agency, a free, original commencement within her sphere, and proceeding from her powers, is absolutely impossible. . . .

"*Man reveals God;* for man by his intelligence rises above Nature, and in virtue of this intelligence is conscious of himself as a power not only independent of, but opposed to, Nature, and capable of resisting, conquering, and controlling her. As man has a living faith in this power, superior to Nature, which dwells in him, so has he a belief in God, a feeling, an experience, of his existence. As he does not believe in this power, so does he not believe in God: he sees nought in existence but nature, necessity, fate."[1]

It is true that Nature, except so far as Nature is interpreted by the light thrown upon it from our own conscious personal agency, "conceals God." There is exhibited no exercise of freedom, no morality, but only efficient causation. It is true that only through the feeling of our own personality, of an intelligence acting freely in ourselves, of a law of righteousness and love for the guidance of will, have we any notion of God, or the slightest comprehension of his attributes. But this consciousness of self, as described above, is not of itself "a feeling, an experience," of God's existence. It is the consciousness of self *as dependent* as well as free, which involves this feeling and experience. There is no identification of self with God: this, Jacobi does not mean, although his language might be construed to imply it. Self is distinguished from God, as from the world, in the same undivided act of consciousness.

[1] Werke, iii. pp. 424–426.

Shall the conviction of the being of God that arises in the soul in connection with the feeling of dependence be regarded as the product of inference? It is more reasonable to say that the recognition of God, more or less obscure, is something involved and even presupposed in this feeling.[1] How can there be a sense of self as dependent, unless there be an underlying sense of a somewhat, however vaguely apprehended, on which we depend? The one feeling is implicated in the other.

The error of many who have adhered too closely to Schleiermacher is in representing the feeling of dependence as wholly void of an intellectual element. Ulrici and some other German writers avoid this mistake by using the term "Gefühls-perception" to desginate that state of mind in which feeling is the predominant element, and perception is still rudimental and obscure.

Inseparable from the recognition of God is the tendency, which forms an essential part of the religious constitution of man, to commune with him. To pray to him for help, to lean on him for support, to worship him, are native and spontaneous movements of the human spirit. Man feels himself drawn to the Being who reveals himself to him in the primitive operations of intelligence and conscience. As man was made for God, there is a *nisus* in the direction of this union to his Creator. This tendency, which may take the form of an intense craving, may be compared to the social instinct with which it is akin. As man was made not to be alone, but to commune with other beings like himself, solitude would be an unnatural and almost

[1] Cf. Ulrici, Gott u. die Natur, pp. 606 seq. "The general conviction of a divine existence we regard as less an inference than a perception." — Bowne, Studies in Theism, p. 79.

unbearable state; and a longing for converse with other men is a part of his nature. In like manner, as man was made to commune with God, he is drawn to God by an inward tendency, the strength of which is derived from the vacuum left in the soul and the unsatisfied yearning consequent on an exclusion of God as the supreme object of love and trust.

This suggests the remark, that to the actual realization of religion there must be an *acknowledgment* of God which involves an active concurrence of the will. The will utters its "yea" and "amen" to the attractive power exerted by God within the soul. It gives consent to the relation of dependence and of obligation in which the soul stands to God. The refusal thus practically to acknowledge God is to enthrone the false principle of self-assertion or self-sufficiency in the soul, — false because it is contrary to the reality of things. It is a kind of self-deification. Man may refuse "to retain God in his knowledge." The result is, that the feelings out of which religion springs, and in which it is rationally founded, are not extirpated, but are driven to fasten on finite objects in the world, or on fictitious creations of the imagination. Hence arise the countless forms of polytheism and idolatry. Hence arises, too, the idolatry of which the world, in the form of power, fame, riches, pleasure, or knowledge, is the object. When the proper food is wanting, the attempt is mad. to appease the appetite with drugs and stimulants.

Theology has deemed itself warranted by sound philosophy, as well as by the teaching of Scripture, in maintaining, that, but for the intrusion of moral evil or the practical substitution of a finite object, real or imaginary, for God as the supreme good, the knowledge

of him would shine brightly in the soul, would begin with the dawn of intelligence, and would keep pace with its advancing development. The more one turns the eye within, and fastens his attention on the characteristic elements of his own spirit, the more clear and firm is found to be his belief in God. And the more completely the will follows the law that is written on the heart, the more vivid is the conviction of the reality of the Lawgiver, whose authority is expressed in it. The experience of religion carries with it a constantly growing sense of the reality of its object.

But we have to look at men as they are. As a matter of fact, "the consciousness of God" is obscure, latent rather than explicit, germinant rather than developed. It waits to be evoked and illuminated by the manifestation of God in nature and providence, and by instruction.

Writers on psychology have frequently neglected to give an account of *presentiment*, a state of consciousness in which feeling is predominant, and knowledge is indistinct. There are vague anticipations of truth not yet clearly discerned. It is possible to seek for something, one knows not precisely what. It is not found, else it would not be sought. Yet it is not utterly beyond our ken, else how could we seek for it? Explorers and inventors may feel themselves on the threshold of great discoveries just before they are made. Poets, at least, have recognized the deep import of occult, vague feelings which almost baffle analysis. The German psychologists who have most satisfactorily handled the subject before us, as Lotze, Ulrici, Julius Müller, Nitzsch, find in their language an expressive term to designate our primitive sense or apprehension of God. It is *ahnung*, of which our word "presage" is a partial

equivalent. The apostle Paul refers to the providential control of nations as intended to incite men "to seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him."[1] He is not known, but sought for. Rather do men *feel after him*, as a blind man moves about in quest of something, or as we grope in the dark. The cause of their comparative failure the same apostle elsewhere points out.[2] This philosophy of religion is conformed to the observed facts. There is that in man which makes him restless without God, discontented with every substitute for him. The subjective basis for religion, inherent in the very constitution of the soul, is the spur to the search for God, the condition of apprehending him when revealed (whether in nature, or in providence, or in Christianity), and the ultimate ground of certitude as to the things of faith.

The validity of the arguments for the being of God has been questioned in modern times. In particular, objections have been made from the side of philosophy and natural science to the great argument of design. These objections we hold to be without good foundation. At the same time, neither the design argument nor any other is demonstrative. The actual effect of it depends on the activity in man of that religious nature, and the presence of those immediate impressions of God, which it has been the object of this chapter partially to unfold.

[1] Acts xvii. 27. [2] Rom. i. 21.

CHAPTER II.

THE ARGUMENTS FOR THE BEING OF GOD.

It will be clear, from the foregoing chapter, that the belief in God is not ultimately founded on processes of argument. His presence is more immediately disclosed. There is a native and universal belief, emerging spontaneously in connection with the feeling of dependence and the phenomena of conscience, however obscure, inconstant, and perverted that faith may be. The arguments for the being of God do not originate this faith: they justify at the same time that they elucidate and define it. They are so many different points of view from which we contemplate the object of faith. Each one of them tends to show, not simply *that* God is, but *what* he is. They complete the conception by pointing out particular predicates brought to light in the manifestation which God has made of himself.

We begin with the intuition of the Unconditioned, the Absolute. By "the Absolute" is signified, in philosophy, that which is complete in itself, that which stands in no necessary relation to other beings. It denotes being which is independent as to its existence and action. A cognate idea is that of the Infinite, which designates being without limit. The Unconditioned is more generic. It means freedom from all restriction. It is often used as synonymous with "the Absolute."

We have an immediate conviction of the reality of the Absolute, that is, of being which is dependent upon no other as the condition of its existence and activity. When we look abroad upon the world, we find a multitude of objects, each bounded by others, each conditioned by beings outside of itself, none of them complete or independent. There is everywhere demarcation, mutual dependence, and reciprocal action. Turning the eye within, we find that our own minds and our own mental processes are in the same way restricted, conditioned. The mind has a definite constitution: the act of knowledge requires an object as its necessary condition. The universe is a vast complexity of beings, neither of which is independent, self-originated, self-sustained.

Inseparably connected with this perception of the relative, the limited, the dependent, is the idea of the Unconditioned, the Absolute. It is the correlate of the finite and conditioned. Its reality is known as being implied in the reality of the world of finite, interacting, dependent existences. The Unconditioned is not a mere negative. It is negative in its verbal form, because it is antithetical to the conditioned, and is known through it. But the idea is positive, though it be incomplete; that is to say, although we fall short of a complete grasp of the object. The Unconditioned, almost all philosophers except Positivists of an extreme type, admit. Metaphysicians of the school of Hamilton and Mansel hold, that, as a reality, it is an object of immediate and necessary belief, although they refuse to consider it an object of conceptive thought. But some sort of knowledge of it there must be in order to such a belief. The Unconditioned is not merely subjective, it is not a mere idea, as Kant, in the theoretical part of

his philosophy alleges. He makes this idea necessary to the order, connection, and unity of our knowledge. We can ask for no surer criterion of real existence than this.[1] Unconditioned being is the silent presupposition of all our knowing. Be it observed that the idea of the Absolute is not that of "the sum of all reality," — a quantitative notion. It is not the idea of the Unrelated, but of that which is not necessarily related. It does not exclude other beings, but other beings only when conceived of as a necessary complement of itself, or as the product of its necessary activity, or as existing independently alongside of itself. The Absolute which is given in the intuition is one. It is infinite, not as comprehending in itself of necessity all beings, but as incapable of any conceivable augmentation of its powers. It is free from all restrictions not self-imposed. Any thing more respecting the Absolute, we cannot affirm. It might be, as far as we have gone now, the universal substance of Spinoza, or "the Unknowable" of Spencer. For the refutation of such hypotheses, we depend on the cosmological and other arguments.[2]

The arguments for the being of God are usually classed as the ontological, the cosmological, the physico-theological or the argument of design, the moral, and the historical.

I. The ontological. This makes the existence of God involved in the idea of him. This argument must not be confounded with the intuition of the Absolute which is evoked in conjunction with our perceptions of rela-

[1] Cf. Trendelenburg, Logische Untersuchungen, ii. 426.

[2] For instructive observations respecting the Absolute and the kindred ideas, see Calderwood's Philosophy of the Infinite (2d ed.); Porter, The Human Intellect, pp. 645 seq.; Flint, Theism, p. 264; McCosh The Intuitions of the Mind, chap. iii.

tive and dependent existence. The ontological proof begins and ends with the analysis of the idea. It claims that the existence of God is necessarily involved in a necessary notion. As presented by Anselm, it affirms that the most perfect *conceivable* being must be *actual:* otherwise a property — that of actuality, or objective being — is wanting. It appears to be a valid answer to this reasoning, that existence *in re* is not a constituent of a concept. How can we infer the existence of a thing from the definition of a word? Given the most perfect being, its mode of existence is no doubt necessary. But from the mere idea, except on the basis of philosophical realism, the actuality of a corresponding entity cannot be concluded with demonstrative certainty. The same objection is applicable to the ontological argument of Descartes, who brings forward the analogy of a triangle, the idea of which involves the equality of its three angles to two right angles. So, it is said, the idea of God implies that he exists necessarily. Certainly, if there be a God; but the hypothesis must first be established. The inference of Descartes, from the presence of the idea of the infinite in the human mind, that an infinite Author must have originated it, is rather an *a posteriori* than an *a priori* argument. As an argument from effect to cause, it is not without weight.

The argument from the idea of "the most perfect being," though failing in strict logic, is not without an evidential value. The soul does not willingly consent to regard so inspiring a conception as a *mere* thought. To consider it as unreal, with no counterpart in the realm of actual existence, is felt as a bereavement and a pain. The importance which eminent thinkers have attached to this argument has not been wholly void of foundation.[1] The idea of a being infinite and perfect

[1] See McCosh, The Intuitions of the Mind, p. 191, *n.*

attaches itself, by a spontaneous movement of the mind, to that image of God which the other arguments call forth.

Of more cogency is what has been called the logical form of the *a priori* proof. It is found in Anselm and Aquinas. It is impossible to deny that there is Truth: the denial would be self-contradictory. But those ideas and truths which are the ground-work of all our knowing — the laws of our intellectual and moral constitution — have their source without us and beyond us. They inhere in God. A like indirect proof has been thus presented by Trendelenburg. The human mind goes out of itself to know the world, and also, by exertions of the will, to mould and subdue it. Yet the world is independent of the mind that seeks thus to comprehend it, and shape it to its purposes. This freedom of the mind implies that the world is intelligible, that there is thought in things. It implies that there is a common bond — namely, God, the Truth — between thoughts and things, mind and the world. Thought and thing, subject and object, each matched to the other, presuppose an intelligible ground of both. This presupposition is latent in all attempts to explore and comprehend, to bring within the domain of knowledge, and to shape to rational ends, the world without.[1]

II. The cosmological proof is more clear. It stands on a solid foundation. Finite things have not their origin in themselves. We trace effects back to their causes; but these causes are found to be, also, effects. The path is endless. There is no goal. There is no rest or satisfaction, save in the assumption of being

[1] Trendelenburg, ibid., p. 430. For an interesting review of the *a priori* proofs, see Flint, Theism, Lect. ix. Dr. Flint attaches more validity to the Anselmic argument than I am able to discern in it.

that is causative without being caused, or being which has the ground of existence in itself. If there is not self-existent being, or being which is *causa sui*, then cause is a phantom, forever chased, but never caught. It has no reality. A phenomenon — call it *a* — calls for explanation: it demands a cause. If we are told that its cause is *b*, but told at the same time that in *b* there is no fount of causal energy, so that we have precisely the same demand to satisfy respecting *b* as *a*, then no answer has been given to our first question: we are put off with an evasion. That question takes for granted the reality of aboriginal causal energy. It proceeds from a demand of intelligence which is illegitimate and irrational, unless there be a cause in the absolute sense, — a cause uncaused.

Yet, in postulating a *causa sui*, we surpass the limits of experience; for all our experience is of causes distinct from their effects. The cosmological proof is negative or indirect. The supposition of a First Cause is impressed on us by the absurdity of an endless regress, — an infinite series in the succession of whose limits no causal energy, or cause answering to the demand of reason, is contained.

The intuition of cause determines the relation of the Absolute to the world. Are we not led farther by the idea of *causa sui*, naturally and logically to the ascription of personality to the First Cause? Does not this idea require that will, the fountain-head of aboriginal activity, should be considered the prius of all existence? This has been the conclusion of the most profound thinkers.[1]

III. The personality of God is proved by the argu-

[1] That *causa sui* also implies personality is shown by Julius Müller, Lehre von der Sünde, b. iii. p. 1, chap. iv.

ment of design, — the physico-theological argument The First Cause is known to be intelligent and free by the manifest traces of intelligent purpose in the constitution of the world.

When we attend to the various objects of which the knowing faculty takes cognizance, including the human mind, we discover something more than the properties which distinguish them one from another and the causes which bring them into being. In this very process of investigation we are struck with the fact that there is a coincidence and co-operation of physical or efficient causes for the production of definite effects. These causes are perceived to be so constituted and disposed as to concur in the production of the effect, and to concur in such a way that the particular result follows *of necessity*. This conjunction of disparate agencies, of which a definite product is the necessary outcome, is the *finality* which is observed in Nature. But our observation extends farther: we involuntarily assume that this coincidence of causes is *in order that* the peculiar and specific result may follow. This assumption of design is the result of no effort — it is not an arbitrary act — on our part. It is spontaneous. The conviction of design is brought home to us by the objects themselves. We see a thought realized, and thus recognize in it a forethought.

It admits of no question that the observation of order and adaptation in Nature, inspiring the conviction of a designing mind concerned in its origination, is natural to mankind. It has impressed the philosopher and the peasant alike. Socrates enforced the argument by the illustration of a statue, as Paley, two thousand years later, by the illustration of a watch.

The distinction between order and design, in the pop-

ular sense of the term, — meaning special adaptations, — is a valid and important one. Especially is this discrimination important since the advent of the modern theories of evolution. By order we mean the reign of law and the harmony of the world resulting from it. Both order and the relation of means to special intelligible ends imply design. They both imply intelligent purpose. Both order and special adaptation may and do co-exist, but they are distinguishable from one another. For example, the typical unity of animals of the vertebrate class, or their conformity in structure to a typical idea, is an example of order. The fitness of the foot for walking, the wing for flying, the fin for swimming, is an instance of special adaptation.

What are the laws of Nature? They are the rules conformably to which the forces of Nature act. We cannot think of them otherwise than as prescribed, as ordained to the end that these forces may work out their effects. In other words, the order of Nature is an arrangement of intelligence. This accounts for the joy that springs up in the mind on the discovery of some great law which gives simplicity to the seemingly complex operations of Nature. The mind recognizes something akin to itself. It recognizes a thought of God. The norms according to which the knowing faculty discriminates, connects, and classifies the objects in Nature, imply that Nature herself has been pre-arranged according to the same norms, or is the product of mind. In conformity to the categories — time, space, quantity, quality, etc. — according to which the mind distinguishes natural objects, and thus comprehends Nature, Nature is already framed. That is to say, there is mind expressed in Nature. It is from consciousness in ourselves that we derive the ideas which we find embodied

in the framework of Nature, and by which it is understood and described. Unity is known from the unity of consciousness in the variety of its modifications; substance, from the intuition of self; order, from the harmony in the inner world of thought; cause, from the exertion of the will.

Science is the discernment of the expressions of mind which are incorporated in Nature. A dog sees on a printed page only meaningless marks on a white ground. To us they contain and convey thoughts, and bring us into communion with the mind of the author. So it is with Nature. Take a book of astronomy. If the stellar world were not an intellectual system, such a work would be impossible. The sky itself is the book which the astronomer reads, and the written treatise is merely the transcript of the thoughts which he finds there. "How powerful and wise must He be," says Fénelon, "who makes worlds as innumerable as the grains of sand that cover the seashore, and who leads all these wandering worlds without difficulty during so many ages, as a shepherd leads his flock!" Science is the reflex of mind in Nature.[1] Nature is a complex whole, made up of interacting powers and activities which constitute together one complete system. Order reigns in Nature, and universal harmony. Hence

[1] This truth is presented with much force and eloquence by one of the most eminent mathematicians of the age, — the late Professor B. Peirce, in his Ideality in the Physical Sciences (1883). He speaks of Nature as "imbued with intelligible thought" (p. 19), of "the amazing intellectuality inwrought into the unconscious material world" (p. 20), in which there is "no dark corner of hopeless obscurity" (p. 21), of the "dominion of intellectual order everywhere found" (p. 25), "of the vast intellectual conceptions in Nature" (p. 26). To ignore God as the author of Nature as well as of mind is as absurd as to make "the anthem the offspring of unconscious sound" (p. 32). "If the common origin of mind and matter is conceded to reside in the decree of a Creator, the identity ceases to be a mystery" (p. 31).

all these separate powers must be so fashioned and guided that they shall conspire to sustain and promote, and not to convulse and subvert, the complex whole. It follows that the existence and preservation of the system are an end for the realizing of which the particular forces and their special activities are the means. Moreover, if all the forces of Nature are so interlinked in a system, that any single occurrence involves the more immediate or the more remote participation of all, we must infer that all are made and controlled with reference to it; that is, the forces of Nature exhibit design.

There is no province of Nature where order, and thus design, are not discoverable. But the most striking evidences of controlling intelligence are found in the organic kingdom. Here order and special adaptation meet together. Naturalists, whatever may be their theory as to final causes, cannot describe plants and animals without constantly using language which implies an intention as revealed in their structure. The "provisions" of Nature, the "purpose of an organ," the possession of a part "in order that" something may be done or averted, — such phraseology is not only common, it is almost unavoidable. No writer uses it more abundantly than Mr. Darwin. It corresponds to the impression which is naturally and irresistibly made upon the mind.

It is when we consider the human body in its relation to the mind, that the most vivid perception of design is experienced. To one who does not hold that the mind is itself the product of organization, and every purpose which the mind forms a phenomenon of matter, — a phenomenon as necessary in its origin as the motion of the lungs, — that is, to every one who is conscious of being able to begin action, the adaptation

of his bodily organs to the service of his intelligence is obvious and striking. The hand bears marks of being designed, more clearly than the tools which the hand makes. The eye displays contrivance, more impressively than all the optical instruments which man can contrive. I distinguish myself from the eye, and from my body of which the eye is a part; and I know that the eye was made for me to see with. When we consider the adaptation of the sexes to one another, the physical and moral arrangements of Nature which result in the family, in the production and rearing of offspring; and when we contemplate the relation of the family to the state, and the relation of the family and the state to the kingdom of God, where the ideas and affections developed in the family and in the state find a broader scope and higher objects to rest upon, — the evidences of a preconceived plan are overwhelming.

It is objected that in Nature design is immanent, the efficient cause reaches its ends without going out of itself; whereas in all the works of man the efficient cause is distinct and separate from the object in which the end is realized. In Nature the efficient cause operates from within, and appears to work out the end without conscious purpose. The forces of Nature appear to achieve the order and variety and beauty which we behold, of themselves, through no external compulsion, and at the same time without consciousness. In an organism every part is both means and end: the structure grows up, repairs itself, and perpetuates itself by reproduction; but the active force by which these ends are fulfilled is not in the least aware of what it is doing. Thus, it is contended, the analogy fails between the artificial products of human ingenuity and the works of Nature. These works

arise, we are told, through forces which operate in the manner of instinct. It is a *blind* intelligence, it is said, performing works resembling those which man does, often less perfectly, with conscious design. But for the very reason that instinct is blind, incapable of foreseeing the end which it is to attain, and of choosing the appropriate means, we are obliged to connect it with a conscious wisdom of which it is the instrument. A "blind intelligence" is a contradiction in terms. When we see a purpose carried out, we are impelled to trace the operation to an intelligent Author, whether the end is attained by an agency acting from within or from without. The accurate mathematics of the planetary bodies, marking out for themselves their orbits, the unerring path of the birds, the geometry of the bee, the seed-corn sending upward the blossoming and fruit-bearing stalk, excite a wonder the secret of which is the insufficiency of the operative cause to effect these marvels of intelligence and foresight.

The popular objection to the argument of design imputes to it the fallacy of confounding *use* with *forethought* or *intention*. Is not the eye for seeing? Yes, it is answered, that is its use or function; but this is not to say that it was *planned* for this use or function, for, when you affirm design, you go back to a mental act. The rejoinder is, that we are *driven* back to such a mental act, and thus to a designing intelligence. The relation of the constitution of the organ to the use irresistibly suggests the inference. The inference is no arbitrary fancy. Design is brought home to us, just as the relation of the structure of a telescope to its use would compel us of itself to attribute it to a contriving intelligence.

Kant has two criticisms on the argument of design

The first is, that it can go no farther than to prove an architect or framer of the world, not a creator of matter. But the special function of the argument is to prove that the First Cause is intelligent. The conclusion that the author of the wonderful order which is wrought in and through matter is also the author of matter itself, appears, however, probable. For how can the properties of matter through which it is adapted to the use of being moulded by intelligence, be separated from matter itself? What is matter divorced from its properties? We cannot understand creation, because we cannot create. The nearest approach to creative activity is in the production of good and evil by our own voluntary action. *How* God creates is a mystery which cannot be fathomed, at least until we know better what matter is. There are philosophers of high repute who favor the Berkeleian hypothesis, which dispenses with a substratum of matter, and ascribes the percepts of sense to the will of the Almighty, exerted according to a uniform rule. Whatever matter may be in its essence, we know that there is an ultimate, unconditioned Cause. We know that this Cause is intelligent and free. To suppose that by the side of the eternal Spirit there is another eternal and self-existent being, the raw matter of the world, "without form, and void," involves the absurdity of two Absolutes limiting one another. Moreover, scientific study favors the view that matter itself is an effect. If we accept the hypothesis of molecules as the ultimate forms of matter, Sir John Herschel finds in each of these, as related to the others "the essential quality of a manufactured article." Our intuition of the Infinite and Absolute is not contradicted, but rather corroborated, by the evidence which science affords of a supramundane though immanent Deity.

The second difficulty raised by Kant is, that a strictly infinite being cannot be inferred from a finite creation, however extensive or wondrous. All that can be inferred with certainty is an inconceivably vast power and wisdom. The validity of this objection may be conceded. The infinitude of the attributes of God is involved in the intuition of an unconditioned being, — the being glimpses of whose attributes are disclosed to us in the order of the finite world.

These objections of Kant are in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Elsewhere he brings forward an additional consideration. Admitting that the idea of design is essential to our comprehension of the world, he raises the point that it may be subjective only, regulative of our perceptions, but not objective or "constitutive." Not regarding the idea of design as *a priori*, like the idea of causation, he inquires whether it may not be a mere supposition, a working hypothesis, which a deeper penetration of Nature might dispense with. The answer to this doubt is, that the thought of design is not artificially originated by ourselves: it is a conviction which the objects of Nature themselves "imperiously" suggest and bring home to us. As Janet has pointed out, there are two classes of hypotheses. Of one class it is true that they are regarded as corresponding with the true nature of things; of the other, that they are only a convenient means for the mind to conceive them. The question is, whether the hypothesis is warranted by the facts, and is perceived veritably to represent Nature. In the proportion in which it does this, its probability grows until it becomes a truth of science. Of this character is the hypothesis of design.

We infer the existence of an intelligent Deity, as we infer the existence of intelligence in our fellow-men,

and on grounds equally cogent. My senses take no cognizance of the minds of other men. I perceive certain motions of their bodies. I hear certain sounds emanating from their lips. What right have I, from these purely physical phenomena, to infer the presence of an intelligence behind them? What proof is there of the consciousness in the friend at my side? How can I be assured that he is not a mere automaton, totally unconscious of its own movements? The warrant for the contrary inference lies in the fact, that being possessed of consciousness, and acquainted with its effects in myself, I regard like effects as evidence of a like principle in others. But in this inference I transcend the limits of sense and physical experiment. In truth, in admitting the reality of consciousness in myself, I take a step which no physical observation can justify. Were the brain opened to view, no microscope, were its power infinitely augmented, could discover the least trace of it.

The alternative of design is chance. The Epicurean theory, as expounded by Lucretius, made the world the result of the fortuitous concourse of atoms, which in their motions and concussions, at length fell into the orderly forms in which they abide. The postulate of this theory is the infinite duration of the world. But "no time can really exhaust chance: chance is as infinite as time." And the postulate of infinite time is excluded if the nebular hypothesis is well founded. The time in which the primitive material has consumed in arriving at the present system is finite. It is sometimes said that the order of the universe is *possible*, because it actually is. The question, however, is not whether it is possible, but whether it is possible without an intelligent Cause. The Strasbourg Minster is

possible, but not possible without an architect and builder.

If we admit the Lucretian hypothesis of the origin of the material universe, as we behold it, from the combination of atoms without special acts of creation, we do not get rid of the proof of design. Why did the multitudinous atoms fail to combine in an orderly and stable way up to the moment when the existing cosmos was reached? Manifestly they must have been, in their constitution and mutual relations, *adapted* to the present structure of things, and to no other. The present system was anticipated in the very make of the atoms, the constituent elements of the universe. The atoms, then, present the same evidences of design which the outcome of their revolutions presents. We might be at a loss to explain why the Author of Nature chose this circuitous way, through abortive experiments, to the goal; but that the goal was in view from the beginning is evident.

The doctrine of evolution (unless materialism is connected with it) is not inconsistent with the argument from design. Evolution is antithetical to special acts of creation, and professes to explain the origin of the different species of animals and plants by the agency of second causes. It is held that they are descendants of a few progenitors with which they stand in a genetic connection. Some would extend the theory, and make life itself the natural product of inorganic forms, — a proposition for which, however, there is no scientific proof. But the evolution theory, even in its broadest form, — in which the network of genetic causation is stretched over all forms, whether living or lifeless, as far back as a nebulous vapor, — gives, and pretends to give, no explanation, either of the origin of the world as a whole.

or of the order and adaptations that characterize it. The different theories of evolution should not be confounded. There is the generic doctrine of a common descent of animal organisms, the earliest of which may or may not have been created outright. This doctrine is held by many who do not subscribe to the theory of gradual or imperceptible variations as an explanation, at least as a complete explanation, of the origin of species. These prefer the hypothesis of "heterogenetic generation," — origin by leaps, or the metamorphosis of germs. Some would not exclude from continued activity, especially in producing the lowest species, the primitive power of organization, whatever it was, through which the lowest species first sprung.[1] Darwin's theory is that of natural selection. This hypothesis refers the animal kingdom to the operation of a few agencies acting upon one or more primitive living forms, and producing from them the numerous species, as well as varieties of species, which have existed in the past, and now exist, on the earth. It is obvious that these agencies are blind instrumentalities, of which it is true, in the first place, that the origin of each requires to be explained; in the second place, that their concurrence requires to be accounted for; and, in the third place, that neither separately considered nor taken in combination — since they are blind, unintelligent forces — do they avail in the least to explain the order and adaptation of Nature which result from them. Why do living beings engender offspring like themselves? Why do the offspring slightly vary from the parents and from one another? How account for the desire of food?

[1] The different forms of the evolution theory are lucidly and instructively considered in the excellent work of Rudolf Schmid, The Theories of Darwin, etc. (Chicago, 1883).

How explain the disposition to struggle to obtain it? Why is beauty preferred, leading to "sexual selection"? How is it that these laws co-exist and co-operate? We see that they lead, according to the Darwinian view, necessarily to a grand result, a *system* of living beings. They are actually means to an intelligible end. They appear to exist, to be ordained and established, with reference to it. There is a "survival of the fittest;" but how were "the fittest" produced? Natural selection merely weeds out and destroys the products which are not the fittest. It produces nothing. But it works, in conjunction with the force described as "heredity" and the force described as "variability," to work out an order of things which plainly shows itself to have been preconceived. The fallacy of excluding design or final causes where it is possible to trace out efficient or instrumental causes would be astonishing if it were not so frequently met with. It were to be wished that all naturalists were as discriminating as Professor Owen, who says, —

"Natural evolution by means of slow physical and organic operations through long ages is not the less clearly recognizable as the act of all-adaptive mind, because we have abandoned the old error of supposing it to be the result of a primary, direct, and sudden act of creational construction. . . . The succession of species by continuously operating law is not necessarily a 'blind operation.' Such law, however discerned in the properties of natural objects, intimates, nevertheless, a preconceived progress. Organisms may be evolved in orderly manner, stage after stage, towards a foreseen goal, and the broad features of the course may still show the unmistakable impress of divine volition."[1]

Evolution has to do with the *how*, and not the *why*, of phenomena: hence the evolutionist is powerless against

[1] Transactions of the Geological Society, v. 90, quoted by Mivart, The Genesis of Species, p. 274.

the teleological argument. This is true of the theory of evolution in the widest stretch that has been given it. This consistency of evolution with design is affirmed by Professor Huxley: —

"The teleological and the mechanical views of nature are not necessarily mutually exclusive. On the contrary, the more purely a mechanist the speculator is, the more firmly does he affirm primordial nebular arrangement, of which all the phenomena of the universe are consequences, the more completely is he thereby at the mercy of the teleologist, who can always defy him to disprove that this primordial nebular arrangement was not intended to evolve the phenomena of the universe." [1]

This intention is recognized in the outcome as related to the unconscious agencies leading to it, as well as in the constitution of these primordial agencies, — recognized by the same faculty of reason through which we are made capable of tracing phenomena to their appropriate causes.

In another place, writing in a less philosophical spirit, Professor Huxley, by way of comment on Paley's illustration from the watch, says: —

"Suppose only that one had been able to show that the watch had not been made directly by any person, but that it was the result of the modification of another watch, which kept time but poorly; and that this, again, had proceeded from a structure which could hardly be called a watch at all, seeing that it had no figures on the dial and the hands were rudimentary; and that, going back and back, in time we came at last to a revolving barrel as the earliest traceable rudiment of the whole fabric. And imagine that all these changes had resulted, first, from a tendency of the structure to vary indefinitely, and, secondly, from something in the surrounding world which helped all variations in the direction of an accurate time-keeper, and checked all these in other directions, and then it is obvious that the force of Paley's argument would be

[1] Critiques, p. 307.

gone; for it would be demonstrated that an apparatus thoroughly well adapted to a particular purpose might be the result of a method of trial and error worked by unintelligent agents, as well as of the direct application of the means appropriate to that end." [1]

Here we have "a revolving barrel" at one end of the line, and a watch with its complex apparatus, by which it is fitted to record time, at the other. At the outset, the barrel, with its inherent capacities, requires to be accounted for, then the tendency to vary indefinitely, then that something which limits the course of variation to one path. This combination of means implies the presence and action of intelligence. The actual end evinces that "the means appropriate to that end" were applied to the production of it.

Whether natural selection really plays so important a part in the origin of species as Mr. Darwin thinks, is, to say the least, doubtful. The acknowledged mystery that hangs about the facts of correlation, to say nothing of the difficulties connected with the infertility of hybrids, may warrant the surmise that the laws of growth have not been fathomed, and that the theory of natural selection may have to be qualified, even more than its author, with all his liberality of concession in his later editions, allowed. Be this as it may, the analogy between the operation of natural selection and the action of intelligence Mr. Darwin's language abundantly implies.

If there is any place where, on the Darwinian philosophy, chance is to be met with, it is in the sphere of variability. It is a topic, therefore, which requires attentive consideration. On this subject Mr. Darwin says: —

[1] Lay Sermons, pp. 330, 331.

"I have hitherto sometimes spoken as if the variations — so common and multiform with organic beings under domestication, and, in a lesser degree, with those in a state of nature — had been due to chance. This, of course, is a wholly incorrect expression; but it serves to acknowledge plainly our ignorance of the cause of each particular variation."[1]

Nothing occurs without a cause. But it is another question whether, in this department of the action of natural forces, *design* is discoverable. Mr. Darwin appears to hold that variability furnishes the materials for natural selection to act upon, but without reference to such prospective action. In regard to the observation of Dr. Asa Gray,[2] that "variation has been led along certain beneficial lines," he says: —

"The shape of the fragments of stone at the base of our precipice may be called accidental; but this is not strictly correct, for the shape of each depends on a long sequence of events, all obeying natural laws, — on the nature of the rock, on the lines of stratification or cleavage, on the form of the mountain which depends on its upheaval and subsequent denudation, and, lastly, on the storm and earthquake which threw down the fragments. But, in regard to the use to which the fragments may be put, their shape may strictly be said to be accidental. And here we are led to face a great difficulty, in alluding to which I am aware that I am travelling beyond my proper province.

"An omniscient Creator must have foreseen every consequence which results from the laws imposed by him; but can it be reasonably maintained that the Creator intentionally ordered, if we use the words in any ordinary sense, that certain fragments of rock should assume certain shapes, so that the builder might erect his edifice? If the various laws which have determined the shape of each fragment were not predetermined for the builder's sake, can it with any greater probability be maintained that he specially ordained, for the sake of the breeder, each of the innumerable variations in our domestic animals and plants; many of these variations being of no service to man, and not beneficial, far more

[1] Origin of Species, p. 137. [2] Darwiniana, p. 148

often injurious, to the creatures themselves? Did he ordain that the crop and tail-feathers of the pigeon should vary, in order that the fancier might make his grotesque powter and fantail breeds? Did he cause the frame and mental qualities of the dog to vary, in order that a breed might be formed of indomitable ferocity, with jaws fitted to pin down the bull for man's brutal sport? But if we give up the principle in one case; if we do not admit that the variations of the primeval dog were intentionally guided, in order that the greyhound, for instance, that perfect image of symmetry and vigor, might be formed, — no shadow of reason can be assigned for the belief that the variations, alike in nature, and the result of the same general laws which have been the groundwork through natural selection of the formation of the most perfectly adapted animals in the world, man included, were intentionally and specially guided. However much we may wish it, we can hardly follow Professor Asa Gray in his belief that 'variation has been led along certain beneficial lines,' like a stream 'along definite and useful lines of irrigation.'

"If we assume that each particular variation was from the beginning of all time pre-ordained, the plasticity of the organization, which leads to many injurious deviations of structure, as well as that redundant power of reproduction which inevitably leads to a struggle for existence, and, as a consequence, to the natural selection, and survival of the fittest, must appear to us superfluous laws of nature. On the other hand, an omnipotent and omniscient Creator ordains every thing, and foresees every thing. Thus we are brought face to face with a difficulty as insoluble as is that of free-will and predestination."[1]

Here Mr. Darwin appears to find evidences of design in the agencies which are concerned in natural selection; but with reference to variability, which furnishes the materials on which natural selection operates, he can see no proof of design as regards the use to be made of its results in building up animal structures. Yet foresight and plan must be assumed everywhere: hence he is brought to an antinomy, an irreconcilable contradiction.

[1] Animals and Plants under Domestication, ii. 431.

This is a strange conclusion. Indefinite variability is the assumed fact on which this reasoning proceeds. Granting, for the moment, that there is ground for this assumption, let us look closely at the inferences connected with it. In the first place, what if the same Agent which broke in pieces the rock, and cast its fragments down at the base of the precipice, were the architect and builder of the edifice? Should we question that this providing of the materials had reference to the purpose in view? Even if the method chosen by the Agent for creating the materials struck us as wasteful, or otherwise wanting in skill, should we doubt that it was part of a plan? It is the same Agent, the same Universal Power, which is manifest in natural selection, that is exerted in producing the phenomena of variability on which natural selection acts. In the second place, Mr. Darwin mixes up a moral question, a question pertaining to the theodicy, with the distinct problem whether design is, or is not, manifest in the origination of animal structures. *Why* God should plan to give existence to this or that animal, or frame nature so that man may direct and combine laws in such a way as to modify animal structures in this or that direction, is a question apart. It is one question whether there is arrangement: it is another question whether that arrangement is merciful or not. Here general laws — the consideration of order — comes in, and evolution may help natural theology. In the third place, Mr. Darwin's remarks seem to imply that only a single purpose can be aimed at in the creative activity. The rocks which are heaped up at the foot of the precipice, if they were intended for the benefit of the builder who uses them, may also serve other uses, — uses possibly inscrutable to us. The laws, to say the least, under

which they come to be what they are, were the whole sweep of their operation and results understood, might be seen to be for the best.

Teleology is not disproved by gradualness of development. The evolution theory is not laid under the necessity of so far contradicting the natural convictions of the race as to make the human eye an undesigned result of unthinking forces. Design is recognized by able naturalists who give large room for the potentiality of protoplasm; and its plasticity under the influence of environment is one of the phases of evolution doctrine which is not without eminent advocates among the students of nature. Function or future use becomes, under this view, the formative idea which specializes organs, and determines structure. An acute naturalist who favors this hypothesis thus writes upon sexual differences, one of the most impressive illustrations of design: —

"Instead of thus eliminating by degrees every trace of finality in sexuality, till we merge into merely mechanical results, is it not just as logical to say that the sexuality of mammalia and flowering plants was potentially visible in the conjugation of *monera* and *plasmodia?* and that the 'sexual idea' has reigned throughout, function ever dominating structure, till the latter had conformed to the more complete function by becoming specialized more and more? Or, in the words of Janet, 'The agreement of several phenomena, bound together with a future determinate phenomenon, supposes a cause in which that future phenomenon is ideally represented; and the probability of the presumption increases with the complexity of the concordant phenomena and the number of relations which unite them to the final phenomena.'"[1]

The writer last named also observes: —

"Finality is certainly not destroyed, whether we believe organs to have been developed by evolution, or to have been created in

[1] Janet, Final Causes, p. 55: Final Causes, by Mr. George Henslow, in Modern Review, January, 1881.

some analogous manner to the fabrication of a steam-engine by man. For my own part, I still hold to the theory that *uses* cause *adaptations*, on the principle that *function precedes structure*. Thus as a graminivorous animal has its food already (so to say) cut up into slices in grass-blades, it does not require scissors to reduce it to small pieces in order to make a convenient mouthful. But a carnivorous animal has a large lump of flesh in the shape of a carcass. It requires to cut it up. The action of biting, in order to do this previous to masticating, has converted its teeth into scissor-like carnassials; and, as it can no longer masticate, it bolts the pieces whole. So, too, man would never have thought of making scissors, unless he had had something that he wanted to cut up. The parallel is complete: only in the one case it is spontaneously effected by the plasticity and adaptability of living matter, and in the other case it is artificially produced by the consciousness and skill of man."[1]

It is plain that the extreme form of Darwinian theory, which holds to a boundless variability in protoplasm, and puts the whole differentiating power in the environment, does not get rid of design. The outer conditions are made to determine every thing. But since there is an upward progress from the simplest organisms to the most complicated and perfect; since, moreover, this process of building up an orderly system, as regards the proximate causes, is necessary, — chance is excluded. The alternative of chance is design.

But the assumption of limitless variability is untenable. Out of variations numberless there must appear individual peculiarities adapted to give success in the struggle for existence. Then, in "this ocean of fluctuation and metamorphosis," variations coinciding with these must appear, from generation to generation, to join on to them and to build up a highly organized species. The series of chances required to be overcome

[1] Modern Review, *ut sup.*, p. 56.

is infinite.[1] Such a miracle of luck is incredible. Moreover, mere selection on the basis of lawless variability will not account for organs and members, which, however useful when fully grown, in their beginnings do not help, and may hinder, the animal in its struggle for existence. Variation is under restraint. It is the result of an internal as well as external factor. Professor Huxley himself suggests that "further inquiries may prove that variability is definite, and is determined in certain directions rather than others. It is quite conceivable that every species tends to produce varieties of a limited number and kind," etc.[2] The response of the organism to exterior influences is determined by impulses within itself. This is the teaching of eminent naturalists, as Mivart, Owen, and Virchow. Dana, in his lectures to his classes, shows that variation is limited by "fundamental laws." Gray teaches that "variations" — in other words, "the differences between plants and animals — are evidently not from without, but from within; not physical, but physiological." The occult power "does not act vaguely, producing all sorts of variations from a common centre," etc. He affirms, that "as species do not now vary at all times and places, and in all directions, nor produce crude, vague, imperfect, and useless forms, there is no reason for supposing that they ever did."[3] The philosopher Von Hartmann ingeniously compares natural selection to the bolt and coupling in a machine, but affirms that "the driving principle," which called new species into existence, lay or originated in the organisms.[4] Darwin himself, in his *Descent of Man*, frankly allows that he

[1] See Schmid, p. 103; Mozley, Essays, vol. ii. pp. 387 seq.
[2] Encycl. Brit., art. "Evolution," vol. viii. p. 751.
[3] Darwiniana, pp. 386, 387.
[4] See Schmid, p. 107.

has exaggerated natural selection as a cause, since it fails to account for structures which are neither beneficial nor injurious.[1] Here, as in regard to the correlation of parts and organs, he falls back on mystery. "The causes and conditions of variation," writes Professor Huxley, "have yet to be thoroughly explored; and the importance of natural selection will not be impaired, even if further inquiries should prove that variability is definite, and is determined in certain directions rather than others by conditions inherent in that which varies. It is quite conceivable that every species tends to produce varieties of a limited number and kind, and that the effect of natural selection is to favor the development of some of these, while it opposes the development of others along their predetermined lines of modification."[2] The upshot of the matter is, that there is no occasion for puzzling over the design of chaotic and purposeless variations, — the stones of all shapes at the base of the precipice, — since they have only an imaginary existence. Variation is according to law: it tends, like the direct agents in natural selection, to the actual issue, — an orderly and beautiful system of organized beings.

The argument of design is generally considered to be an argument from analogy. Mr. Mill says, —

"This argument is not drawn from mere resemblances in nature to the works of human intelligence, but from the special character of these resemblances. The circumstances in which it is alleged that the world resembles the works of man are not circumstances taken at random, but are particular instances of a circumstance which experience shows to have a real connection with an intelligent origin, — the fact of conspiring to an end. The argument is not

[1] Engl. ed., p. 146. See Schmid, p. 106.
[2] Encycl. Brit., vol. viii. p. 751.

one, therefore, of mere analogy. As mere analogy, it has weight; but it is more than analogy, it is an inductive argument."[1]

This explanation of the character of the argument is open to criticism in at least one particular. If the argument is one of analogy, it is not an inference from what we observe in products which we have ascertained by experience to be of human manufacture. The evidence of design is not less directly manifest in the human eye or ear than it would be in a watch when seen for the first time. The analogy is not between things in nature and things made by human art. The proper statement is, that, knowing what design is by the experience of our own voluntary action, we recognize its marks wherever we meet with them, — whether in the products of nature, or in works made by men.

But there is much to be said in behalf of the position maintained by Trendelenburg, Dorner, and Porter, that final cause is an *a priori* principle on a level with the idea of efficient cause. Is not design taken for granted in all our approaches to nature? Is not the question "What for?" as native to the mind as the questions "What?" or "Whence?" If there are many objects with regard to which we never inquire why they exist, or why they exist where and when they do, the same is true as regards the efficient causes that produce them. With regard to things generally, there are sluggish minds which seldom are stirred with a curiosity to know what causes brought them into being; yet the *a priori* character of the principle of efficient cause is manifest. When the question "What for?" is answered, when we discover the use or end of something in nature, we

[1] Essays on Theism, etc., p. 170.

are struck with a sensation of pleasure like that experienced in a successful search for causal antecedents. Does not this indicate that to the comprehension of nature the perception of design is necessary? Inquisitive students of nature, as Harvey, Copernicus, and Newton, have been guided to important discoveries by the expectation that nature would be conformed to a plan. Robert Boyle tells us, —

"I remember that when I asked our famous Harvey what were the things that induced him to think of the circulation of the blood, he answered me, that when he took notice of the valves in many parts of the body, so placed that they gave free passage to the blood towards the heart, but opposed to the passage of the venous blood the contrary way, he was invited to think that so prudent a cause as nature had not placed so many valves without a design, and no design seemed more probable than that, since the blood could not well, because of the intervening valves, be sent by the veins to the limits, it should be sent through the arteries, and returned through the veins, whose valves did not oppose its course that way."

Kepler was moved to his discoveries by "an exalted faith, anterior and superior to all science, in the existence of intimate relations between the constitution of man's mind and that of God's firmament."[1] Such a faith is at the root of "the prophetic inspiration of the geometers," which the progress of observation verifies. Does not induction rest on the assumption of design? It is assumed that nature is a system of thought-relations: it is an orderly, intelligible system. This implies tha things are harmoniously adjusted to one another, and that there is a mutual interdependence between nature and mind. There is an adaptation of the object of investigation to the organ of knowledge, and *vice*

[1] Peirce, Ideality in the Physical Sciences, p. 17.

versa. At the basis of induction is the postulate of the uniformity of nature. This principle is not the result of induction: it is the silent premise in every inductive argument. Induction does not give validity to it, but borrows validity from it. But this uniformity of nature, or stated recurrence of phenomena, involves a plan. What is meant by the *explanation* of any object of nature? What is to explain any particular organ in a living being? It is requisite to define its end. There can be no explanation of an organism which does not presuppose adaptation. Says Janet, —

"Laplace perceived that the simplest laws are the most likely to be true. But I do not see why it should be so on the supposition of an absolutely blind cause; for, after all, the inconceivable swiftness which the system of Ptolemy supposed has nothing physically impossible in it, and the complication of movements has nothing incompatible with the idea of a mechanical cause. Why, then, do we expect to find simple movements in nature, and speed in proportion, except because we instinctively attribute a sort of intelligence and choice to the First Cause?"

Janet does not consider the idea of design to be *a priori*. But does not this question, and the whole paragraph which we are quoting, imply it? He goes on to say, —

"Now, experience justifies this hypothesis: at least it did so with Copernicus and Galileo. It did so, according to Laplace, in the debate between Clairaut and Buffon; the latter maintaining against the former that the law of attraction remained the same at all distances. 'This time,' says Laplace, 'the metaphysician was right as against the geometrician.'"[1]

The intuition of the Unconditioned Being involves the infinitude of his natural attributes. He is independent of temporal limitations; that is, he is eternal.

[1] Final Causes, p. 168.

He is independent of spatial limitations; that is, he is omnipresent. The categories of space and time cannot be applied to him, — a truth which we can only express by saying that he is *above* time and space. His power is infinite; that is, it can do every thing which is an object of power, and admits of no imaginable increase. His knowledge, since final causes reveal his personality, is equally without limit.

IV. The moral argument. The righteousness and goodness of God are evident from conscience. Right is the supreme, sole authoritative impulse in the soul. He who planted it there, and gave it this imperative character, must himself be righteous. From the testimony of "the vicegerent within the heart" we infer "the righteousness of the Sovereign who placed it there."

But what are the contents of the law? What has he bidden man, by "the law written on the heart," to be and to do? He has enjoined goodness. When we discover that the precept of the unwritten law of conscience is love, we have the clearest and most undeniable evidence that love is the preference of the Lawgiver, and that he is love.

The argument from conscience is a branch of the argument from final causes. In this inward law there is revealed the end of our being, — an end not to be realized, as in physical nature, by a method of necessity, but freely. We are to make ourselves what our Maker designed us to be. The law is the ideal, the thought of the Creator, and a spur to its realization. It discloses the holiness of God, as design in the external world reveals his intelligence. This truth is forcibly expressed by Erskine of Linlathen: "When I attentively consider what is going on in my conscience, the chief thing forced on my notice is, that I find

myself face to face with a purpose — not my own, for I am often conscious of resisting it, but which dominates me, and makes itself felt as ever present, as the very root and reason of my being." "This consciousness of a purpose concerning me that I should be a good man — right, true, and unselfish — is the first firm footing I have in the region of religious thought; for I cannot dissociate the idea of a purpose from that of a purposer; and I cannot but identify this Purposer with the Author of my being and the being of all beings; and, further, I cannot but regard his purpose towards me as the unmistakable indication of his own character."[1]

Is this conviction, which the very constitution of our being compels us to cherish, contradicted by the course of the world? There is moral evil in the world. But moral evil, though he permits, he does not cause. Nor can this permission be challenged as unrighteous or unjust, until it is proved that there are not incompatibilities between the most desirable system of created things, including beings endowed with free agency, and the exclusion, by direct power, of the abuse of that divine gift by which man resembles his Creator. If it were made probable that the permission of moral evil is inconsistent with infinite power and infinite goodness, or with both, the result would simply be a contradiction between the revelation of God in our intuition of unconditioned being and in our own moral nature, and the disclosure of him in the course of the world.

If we are content to leave the permission of moral evil, the problem of the theodicy, an unfathomable mystery, which only ignorance will bring foward as an

[1] The Spiritual Order and other Papers, pp. 47, 48. See Flint, Theism, p. 402.

objection to divine power and goodness, we may discern abundant traces of God's rectitude and benevolence in the career of individuals, families, and nations.

V. History, as containing at once a providential order and a moral order enclosed within it, discovers God. Events do not take place in a chaotic series. A progress is discernible, an orderly succession of phenomena, the accomplishment of ends by the concurrence of agencies beyond the power of individuals to originate or combine. There is a power that "makes for righteousness." Amid all the disorder of the world, as Bishop Butler has convincingly shown, there is manifested, on the part of the Power which governs, an approbation of right and a condemnation of wrong, analogous to the manifestation of justice and holiness which emanates from righteous rulers among men. If righteousness appears to be but imperfectly carried out, it is an indication that in this life the system is incomplete, and that here we see only its beginnings.

It is objected to the belief that God is personal, that personality implies limitation, and that, if personal, God could not be infinite and absolute. "Infinite" (and the same is true of "absolute") is an adjective, not a substantive. When used as a noun, preceded by the definite article, it signifies, not a being, but an abstraction. When it stands as a predicate, it means that the subject, be it space, time, or some quality of a being, is without limit. Thus, when I affirm that space is infinite, I express a positive perception, or thought. I mean not only that imagination can set no bounds to space, but also that this inability is owing, not to any defect in the imagination or conceptive faculty, but to the nature of the object. When I say that God is infinite in power,

I mean that he can do all things which are objects of power, or that his power is incapable of increase. No amount of power can be added to the power of which he is possessed. It is only when "the Infinite" is taken as the synonyme of the sum of all existence, that personality is made to be incompatible with God's infinitude. No such conception of him is needed for the satisfaction of the reason or the heart of man. Enough that he is the ground of the existence of all beings outside of himself, or the creative and sustaining power. There are no limitations upon his power which he has not voluntarily set. Such limitation — as in giving being to rational agents capable of self-determination, and in allowing them scope for its exercise — is not imposed on him, but depends on his own choice.

An absolute being is independent of all other beings for its existence and for the full realization of its nature. It is contended, that inasmuch as self-consciousness is conditioned on the distinction of the *ego* from the *non-ego*, the subject from the object, a personal being cannot have the attribute of self-existence, cannot be absolute. Without some other existence than himself, a being cannot be self-conscious. The answer to this is, that the premise is an unwarranted generalization from what is true in the case of the human, finite personality of man, which is developed in connection with a body, and is only one of numerous finite personalities under the same class. To assert that self-consciousness cannot exist independently of such conditions, because it is through them that I come to a knowledge of myself, is a great leap in logic. The proposition that man is in the image of God does not necessarily imply that the divine intelligence is subject to the restrictions and infirmities that belong to the human. It is not

implied that God ascertains truth by a gradual process of investigation or of reasoning, or that he deliberates on a plan of action, and casts about for the appropriate means of executing it. These limitations are characteristic, not of intelligence in itself, but of finite intelligence. It is meant that he is not an impersonal principal or occult force, but is self-conscious and self-determining. Nor is it asserted that he is perfectly comprehensible by us. It is not pretended that we are able fully to think away the limitations which cleave to us in our character as dependent and finite, and to frame thus an adequate conception of a person infinite and absolute. Nevertheless, the existence of such a person, whom we can apprehend if not comprehend, is verified to our minds by sufficient evidence. Pantheism, with its immanent Absolute, void of personal attributes, and its self-developing universe, postulates a deity limited, subject to change, and reaching self-consciousness — if it is ever reached — only in men. And Pantheism, by denying the free and responsible nature of man, maims the creature whom it pretends to deify, and annihilates not only morality, but religion also, in any proper sense of the term.

The citadel of Theism is in the consciousness of our own personality. Within ourselves God reveals himself more directly than through any other channel. He impinges, so to speak, on the soul which finds in its primitive activity an intimation and implication of an unconditioned Cause on whom it is dependent, — a Cause self-conscious like itself, and speaking with holy authority in conscience, wherein also is presented the end which the soul is to pursue through its own free self-determination, — an end which could only be set by a Being both intelligent and holy. The yearning for

fellowship with the Being thus revealed — indistinct though it be, well-nigh stifled by absorption in finite objects and in the vain quest for rest and joy in them — is inseparable from human nature. There is an unappeased thirst in the soul when cut off from God. It seeks for "living water."

Atheism is an insult to humanity. A good man is a man with a purpose, a righteous purpose. He aims at well-being, — at the well-being of himself and of the world of which he forms a part. This end he pursues seriously and earnestly, and feels bound to pursue, let the cost to himself be what it may. To tell him that while he is under a sacred obligation to have this purpose, and pursue this end, there is yet no purpose or end in the universe in which he is acting his part — what is this but to offer a gross affront to his reason and moral sense? He is to abstain from frivolity; he is to act from an intelligent purpose, for the accomplishment of rational ends: but the universe, he is told, is the offspring of gigantic frivolity. The latter is without purpose or end: there chance or blind fate rules.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRINCIPAL ANTI-THEISTIC THEORIES: PANTHEISM, POSITIVISM, MATERIALISM, AGNOSTICISM.

PANTHEISM identifies God with the world, or the sum total of being. It differs from Atheism in holding to something besides and beneath finite things, — an all-pervading Cause or Essence. It differs from Deism in denying that God is separate from the world, and that the world is sustained and guided by energies imparted from without, though inherent in it. It does not differ from Theism in affirming the immanence of God, for this Theism likewise teaches; but it differs from Theism in denying to the immanent Power personal consciousness and will, and an existence independent of the world. Pantheism denies, and Theism asserts, creation. With the denial of will and conscious intelligence, Pantheism excludes design or final causes. Finite things emerge into being, and pass away, and the course of nature proceeds through the perpetual operation of an agency which takes no cognizance of its work except so far as it may arrive at self-consciousness in man.

In the system of Spinoza, the most celebrated and influential of modern Pantheists, it is asserted that there is, and can be, but one substance, — *una et unica substantia*. Of the infinite number of infinite attributes which constitute the one substance, two are discerned by us, — extension and thought. These, distinct in our percep

tion, are not disparate in the substance. Both being manifestations of a simple identical essence, the order of existence is parallel to the order of thought. All individual things are modes of one or other of the attributes, that is, of the substance as far as it is discerned by us. There is a complete correspondence or harmony, although there is no reciprocal influence, between bodies and minds. But the modes do not make up the substance, which is prior to them: they are transient as ripples on the surface of the sea. The imagination regards them as entities; but reason looks beneath them, to the eternal essence of which they are but a fleeting manifestation.

No philosopher, with the possible exception of Aristotle, has been more lauded for his rigorous logic than Spinoza. In truth, few philosophers have included more fallacies in the exposition of their systems. The pages of the *Ethics* swarm with paralogisms, all veiled under the forms of rigid mathematical statement. His fundamental definitions, whatever verbal precision may belong to them, are, as regards the realities of being, unproved assumptions. His reasoning, from beginning to end, is vitiated by the realistic presupposition which underlies the *a priori* arguments of Anselm and Descartes for the being of God, that the actual existence of a being can be inferred from the definition of a word.[1] He falls into this mistake of finding proof of the reality of a thing from the contents of a conception, in his very first definition, where he says, "By that which is the cause of itself, I understand that whose essence involves existence, or that whose nature can only be conceived as existent." His argument is an argument from definitions, without having offered proof of the existence of

[1] See Ueberweg, History of Philosophy, ii. 69.

the thing defined. Spinoza fails to prove that only one substance can exist, and that no other substance can be brought into being which is capable of self-activity, though dependent for the origin and continuance of its existence upon another. Why the one and simple substance should have modes; why it should have these discoverable modes, and no other; how the modes of thought and extension are made to run parallel with each other; how the infinite variety of modes, embracing stars and suns, men and animals, minds and bodies, and all other finite things, are derived in their order and place, — these are problems with regard to which the system of Spinoza, though professing to explain the universe by a method purely deductive, leaves us wholly in the dark.[1]

The ideal Pantheism of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, pursues a different path. It undertakes still to unveil the Absolute Being, and from the Absolute to trace the evolution of all concrete existences, mental and material. The Absolute in Fichte is the universal *ego*, of which individual minds, together with external things, the objects of thoughts, are the phenomenal product, — a universal *ego* which is void of consciousness, and of which it is vain to attempt to form a conception. Schelling, avoiding idealism, made the Absolute the point of indifference, and common basis of subject and object; and for the perception of this impersonal Deity, which is assumed to be indefinable, and not an object of thought, he postulated an impossible faculty of intellectual intuition, wherein the individual escapes from

[1] One of the hard questions proposed to Spinoza by Tschirnhausern, his correspondent, was, how the existence and variety of external things is to be deduced from the attribute of extension. See Pollock's Spinoza, His Life and Philosophy, p. 173.

himself, and soars above the conditions or essential limits of conscious thinking. Hegel, starting, like Schelling, with the assumption that subject and object, thought and thing, are identical, ventures on the bold emprise of setting down all the successive stages through which thought in its absolute or most general form, by means of a kind of momentum assumed to inhere in it, develops the entire chain of concepts, or the whole variety and aggregate of particular existences, up to the point where, in the brain of the philosopher, the universe thus constituted attains to complete self-consciousness. In the logic of Hegel, we are told, the universe reveals itself to the spectator with no aid from experience in the process of its self-unfolding. The complex organism of thought, which is identical with the world of being, evolves itself under his eye.

There is a difficulty, to begin with, in this self-evolving of "the idea." Motion is presupposed, and motion is a conception derived from experience. Moreover, few critics at present would contend that all the links in this metaphysical chain are forged of solid metal. There are breaks which are filled up with an unsubstantial substitute for it. Transitions are effected — for example, where matter, or life, or mind emerge — rather by sleight of hand than by a legitimate application of the logical method. But if it were granted that the edifice is compact, and coherent in all its parts, it is still only a ghostly castle. It is an ideal skeleton of a universe. Its value is at best hypothetical and negative. If a world were to exist, and to be rationally framed, it might possibly be conformed to this conception or outline. Whether the world is a reality, experience alone can determine. The highest merit which can be claimed for the ideal scheme of Hegel is such as

belongs to the plans of an architect as they are conceived in his mind, before a beginning has been made of the edifice, or the spade has touched the ground.

Independently of other difficulties in the way of the various theories of Pantheism which have been propounded in ancient and modern times, it is a sufficient refutation of them that they stand in contradiction to consciousness, and that they are at variance with conscience. It is through self-consciousness that our first notion of substance and of unity is derived. The manifold operations of thought, feeling, imagination, memory, affection, consciously proceed from a single source within. The mind is revealed to itself as a separate, substantial, undivided entity. Pantheism, in resolving personal being into a mere phenomenon, or transient phase of an impersonal essence, and in abolishing the gulf of separation between the subject and the object, clashes with the first and clearest affirmation of consciousness.

Every system of Pantheism is necessarian. It is vain to say, that, where there is no constraint from without, there is freedom of the will. A plant growing out of a seed would not become free by becoming conscious. The determinism which refers all voluntary action to a force within which is capable of moving only on one line, and is incapable of alternative action, is equivalent, in its bearing on responsibility, to fatalism. On this theory, moral accountableness is an illusion.[1] No distinction is left between natural history and moral history. Pantheism sweeps away the absolute antithesis between good and evil, the perception of which is the very life of conscience. Under that philosophy, evil, wherever it occurs, is normal. Evil, when viewed in all

[1] See Martineau, A Study of Spinoza, p. 233.

its relations, is good. It appears to be the opposite of good, only when it is contemplated in a more restricted relation, and from a point of view too confined. Such a judgment respecting moral evil undermines morality in theory, and, were it acted on, would corrupt society. It would dissolve the bonds of obligation. In the proportion in which the unperverted moral sense corresponds to the reality of things, to that extent is Pantheism in all of its forms disproved.

Positivism is the antipode of Pantheistic philosophy. So far from laying claim to omniscience, it goes to the other extreme of disclaiming all knowledge of the origin of things or of their interior nature. A fundamental principle of Positivism, as expounded by Comte, is the ignoring of both efficient and final causes. There is no proof, it is affirmed, that such causes exist. Science takes notice of naught but phenomena presented to the senses. The whole function of science is to classify facts under the rubrics of similarity and sequence. The sum of human knowledge hath this extent, no more. As for any links of connection between phenomena, or any plan under which they occur, science knows nothing of either.

But where do we get the notion of similarity, and of simultaneity and succession in time? The senses do not provide us with these ideas. At the threshold, then, Positivism violates its own primary maxim. The principle of causation and the perception of design have a genesis which entitle them to not less credit than is given to the recognition of likeness and temporal sequence. A Positivist, however disposed, with M. Comte, to discard psychology, must admit that there are mental phenomena. He must admit that they form together a group having a distinct character. He

must refer them to a distinct entity, or he must refer them to a material origin. In the latter case, he lapses into materialism.

The law of three successive states, — the religious, the metaphysical, and the positive, — which Comte asserted to belong to the history of thought, — this law, in the form in which it was proclaimed by Comte, is without foundation in historical fact. Belief in a personal God has co-existed, and does now co-exist, in connection with a belief in second causes, and loyalty to the maxims of inductive investigation.

Mr. Mill, while adhering to the proposition that we know only phenomena, attempted to rescue the Positivist scheme from scepticism, which is its proper corollary, by holding to something exterior to us, which is "the permanent possibility of sensations," and by speaking of "a thread of consciousness." But matter cannot be made a something which produces sensations, without giving up the Positivist denial both of causation and of our knowledge of any thing save phenomena. Nor is it possible to speak of a "thread of consciousness," if there be nothing in the mind but successive states of consciousness. Mr. Mill was bound by a logical necessity to deny the existence of any thing except mental sensations, — phenomena of his own individual consciousness; or if he overstepped the limit of phenomena, and believed in "a something," whether material or mental, he did it at the sacrifice of his fundamental doctrine.[1]

The principal adversaries of Theism at the present day are Materialism and Agnosticism. Materialism is the doctrine that mind has no existence except as a function of the body: it is a product of organization.

[1] See, on this topic, Flint, Antitheistic Theories, pp. 185, 186

In its crass form, Materialism affirms that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile. This exploded view involves the notion that thought is a material substance somehow contained in the brain. In its more refined statement, Materialism asserts that thought, feeling, volition, are phenomena of the nervous organism, as magnetism is the property of the loadstone. Thought is compared to a flame, which first burns faintly, then more brightly, then flickers, and at length goes out, as the material source of combustion is consumed or dissipated.

Materialism is a theory which was brought forward in very ancient times. It is not open to the reproach, nor can it boast of the attraction, of novelty. And it deserves to be remarked, that the data on which its merit as a theory is to be judged remain substantially unaltered. It is a serious though frequent mistake to think that modern physiology, in its microscopic examination of the brain, has discovered any new clew to the solution of the problem of the relation of the brain to the mind. The evidences of the close connection and interaction of mind and body, or of mental and physical states, are not more numerous or more plain now than they have always been. That fatigue dulls the attention, that narcotics stimulate or stupefy the powers of thought and emotion, that fever may produce delirium, and a blow on the head may suspend consciousness, are facts with which mankind have always been familiar. The influence of the body on the mind is in countless ways manifest. On the contrary, that the physical organism is affected by mental states is an equally common experience. The feeling of guilt sends the blood to the cheek; fear makes the knees quake; joy and love brighten the eye; the will curbs and con-

trols the bodily organs, or puts them in motion in obedience to its behest.

Not only are the facts on either side familiar to everybody, but no nearer approach has been made towards bridging the gulf between physical states — in particular, molecular movements of the brain — and consciousness. Says Professor Tyndall, "The passage from the physics of the brain to the corresponding facts of consciousness is unthinkable. Granted that a definite thought and a definite molecular action in the brain occur simultaneously, we do not possess the intellectual organ, nor apparently any rudiment of the organ, which would enable us to pass by a process of reasoning from the one to the other. They appear together, but we do not know why. Were our minds and senses so expanded, strengthened, and illuminated as to enable us to see and feel the very molecules of the brain; were we capable of following their motions, all their groupings, all their electric discharges, if such there be; and were we intimately acquainted with the corresponding states of thought and feeling, — we should be as far as ever from the solution of the problem, How are these physical states connected with the facts of consciousness?"[1] There is a class of phenomena which no physical observation is capable of revealing. If the brain of Sophocles, when he was composing the Antigone, had been laid bare, and the observer had possessed an organ of vision capable of discerning every movement within it, he would have perceived not the faintest trace of the thoughts which enter into that poem, — or of the sentiments that inspired the author. One might as well cut open a bean-stalk, or search a handful of sand, in the hope of finding thought and emotion.

[1] Fragments of Science, p. 121.

It is easy to prove, and it has been proved, that Materialism regarded as a theory is self-destructive. If opinion is merely a product of the molecular motion of nervous substance, on what ground is one opinion preferred to another? Is not one shuffle of atoms as normal as another? if not, by what criterion is one to be approved, and the other rejected? How can either be said to be true or false, when both are equally necessary, and there is no norm to serve as a touchstone of their validity? It is impossible to pronounce one kind of brain normal, and another abnormal; since the rule on which the distinction is to be made is itself a mere product of molecular action, and therefore possessed of no independent, objective validity. To declare a given doctrine true, and another false, when each has the same justification as the rule on which they are judged, is a suicidal proceeding. Like absurdities follow the assertion by a materialist that one thing is morally right, and another morally wrong, one thing noble, and another base, one thing wise, and another foolish. There is no objective truth, no criterion having any surer warrant than the objects to which it is applied. There is no judge between the parties: the judge is himself a party on trial. Thus Materialism lapses into scepticism. Physiology is powerless to explain the simple fact of sense-perception, or the rudimental feeling at the basis of it. A wave of tenuous ether strikes on the retina of the eye. The impact of the ether induces a molecular motion in the optic nerve, which, in turn, produces a corresponding effect in the sensorium lodged in the skull. On this condition there ensues a *feeling;* but this feeling, a moment's reflection will show, is something totally dissimilar to the wave-motions which preceded and pro-

voked it. But, further, in the act of perception the mind attends to the sensation, and compares one sensation with another. This discrimination is a mental act on which Materialism sheds not the faintest ray of light. The facts of memory, of conception and reasoning, the phenomena of conscience, the operations of the will, — of these the materialistic theory can give no reasonable or intelligible account. The materialist is obliged to deny moral freedom. Voluntary action he holds to be necessitated action. The consciousness of liberty with the corresponding feelings of self-approbation or guilt are stigmatized as delusive. No man could have chosen or acted otherwise than in fact he did choose or act, any more than he could have added a cubit to his stature. Of the origin and persistency of these ideas and convictions of the soul, Materialism hopelessly fails to give any rational account.

Materialism, as it is usually held at present, starts with the fact of the simultaneity of thoughts and molecular changes. The task which it has to fulfil is that of showing how the former are produced by the latter. How do brain-movements produce thought-movements? If consciousness enters as an effect into the chain of molecular motion, then, by the accepted law of conservation and correlation, consciousness, in turn, is a cause re-acting upon the brain. But this conclusion is directly contrary to the materialistic theory, and is accordingly rejected. It will not do to allow that force is convertible into consciousness. There must be no break in the physical chain. Consciousness is excluded from being a link in this chain. Consciousness can subtract no force from matter. It will not do to answer that consciousness is the attendant of the motions of matter. What causes it to attend? What is the ground of the

parallelism which exists between the series of mental and the series of material manifestations? Is it from the nature of matter that both alike arise? Then, how can thought be denied to be a link in the physical series? If it be some form of being neither material nor mental, the same consequence follows, and all the additional difficulties are incurred which belong to the monistic doctrine of Spinoza.

Such are the perplexities which ensue upon the attempt to hold that man is a conscious automaton. They are not avoided by imagining matter to be endowed with mystical and marvellous capacities, which would make it different from itself, and endue it with a heterogeneous nature. Secret potencies, after the manner of the hylozoist Pantheism of the ancients, are attributed to the primeval atoms. "Mind-stuff," or an occult mentality, is imagined to reside in the clod, or, to make the idea more attractive, in the effulgent sun. The Platonic philosophy is said to lurk potentially in its beams. This is fancy, not science. The reality of a mental subject, in which the modes of consciousness have their unity, is implied in the language of materialists, even when they are advocating their theory. The presence of a personal agent by whom thoughts and things are compared, their order of succession observed, and their origin investigated, is constantly assumed.

The proposition that the ideas of cause and effect, substance, self, etc., which are commonly held to be of subjective origin, are the product of sensations, and derived from experience, is disproved by the fact that experience is impossible without them. In establishing the *a priori* character of the intuitions, Kant accomplished a work which forever excludes materialism from being the creed of any but confused and illogical reasoners.

Agnosticism, the system of Herbert Spencer, includes disbelief in the personality of God, but also equally in the personality of man. There is, of course, the verbal admission of a subject and object of knowledge. This distinction, it is even said, is "the consciousness of a difference transcending all other differences."[1] But subject and object, knower and thing known, are pronounced to be purely phenomenal. The reality behind them is said to be utterly incognizable. Nothing is known of it but its bare existence. So, too, we are utterly in the dark as to the relations subsisting among things as distinguished from their transfigured manifestations in consciousness; for these manifestations reveal nothing save the bare existence of objects, together with relations between them which are perfectly inscrutable. The phenomena are symbols, but they are symbols only in the algebraic sense. They are not pictures, they are not representations of the objects that produce them. They are effects, in consciousness, of unknown agencies. The order in which the effects occur suggests, we are told, a corresponding order in these agencies. But what is "order," what is regularity of succession, when predicated of noumena, but words void of meaning? "What we are conscious of as properties of matter, even down to its weight and resistance, are but subjective affections produced by objective agencies which are unknown and unknowable."[2] These effects are generically classified as matter, motion, and force. These terms express certain "likenesses of kind," the most general likenesses, in the subjective affections thus produced. There are certain likenesses of connection in these effects, which we class as laws. Matter and motion, space and time, are reducible to

[1] Principles of Psychology, 2d ed., i. 157. [2] Ibid., i. 493.

force; but "force" only designates the subjective affection in its ultimate or most general expression. Of force as an objective reality we know nothing. It follows that the same is true of cause, and of every other term descriptive of power. There *is* power, there *is* cause, apart from our feeling; but as to *what* they are we are entirely in the dark. "The interpretation of all phenomena in terms of matter, motion, and force, is nothing more than the reduction of our complex symbols of thought to the simplest symbols; and when the equation is brought to its lowest terms, the symbols remain symbols still."[1] Further: the world of consciousness, and the world of things as apprehended in consciousness, are symbols of a Reality to which both in common are to be attributed. "A Power of which the nature remains forever inconceivable, and to which no limits in Time or Space can be imagined, works in us certain effects."[2] Thus all our science consists in a classification of states of consciousness which are the product of the inscrutable Cause. It is a "transfigured Realism." Reality, in any other sense, is a *terra incognita*.

With these views is associated Mr. Spencer's doctrine of evolution. Evolution is the method of action of the inscrutable force. Homogeneous matter diversifies or differentiates itself. The development goes on until nervous organism arises, and reaches a certain stage of complexity, when sentience appears, and at length personal consciousness, with all its complexity of contents. But consciousness is a growth. All our mental life is woven out of sensations. Intuitions are the product of experience, — not of the individual merely, but of the race, since the law of heredity transmits the acqui-

[1] First Principles, 2d ed., p. 558. [2] Ibid., p. 557.

sitions of the ancester to his progeny. So mind is built up from rudimental sensations. The lowest form of life issues at last in the intellect of a Bacon or a Newton. And life, it seems to be held, is evolved from unorganized matter.

What, according to Spencer's own principles, are "matter," and "nervous organism," and "life," independently of consciousness, and when there is no consciousness to apprehend them? How can Nature be used to beget consciousness, and consciousness be used, in turn, to beget Nature? How are reason, imagination, memory, conscience, and the entire stock of mental experiences of which a Leibnitz or Dante is capable, evolved from nerve-substance? These and like questions we waive, and direct our attention to the doctrine of "the Unknowable."

What is "the Absolute" and "the Infinite" which are declared to be out of the reach of knowledge, and which, the moment the knowing faculty attempts to deal with them, lead to manifold contradictions? They are mere abstractions. They have no other than a merely verbal existence. They are reached by thinking away all limits, all conditions, all specific qualities: in short, "the Absolute" as thus described is nothing. If this fictitious absolute be treated as real, absurdities follow. The antinomies which Kant and Hamilton derive from a quantitative conception of the Infinite are the result.[1]

[1] The antinomies of Kant, and of Hamilton and Mansel, are capable of being resolved. They involve fallacies. A quantitative idea of the Infinite is frequently at the basis of the assertion that contradictions belong to the conception of it. The Infinite is treated as if it were a complete whole, i.e., as if it were a finite. Hamilton's doctrine of nescience depends partly on the idea of "the Infinite" and "the Absolute" as mere *abstractions*, and *unrelated*, and partly on a restricted definition of knowledge. We cannot know space, he tells us, as absolutely

But this is not the Absolute which Spencer actually places at the foundation of his system. The Absolute which he puts to this use is antithetical to relative being: it is correlated to the relative. Moreover, the Absolute comes within the pale of consciousness, be the cognition of it however vague. Only so far as we are conscious of it, have we any evidence of its reality. Moreover, it is the *cause* of the relative. It is to the agency of the Absolute that all states of consciousness are referable. "It *works in us*," says Spencer, "certain effects." Plainly, the Absolute, the real Absolute, is *related*. Only as related in the ways just stated is its existence known. Mr. Spencer says himself that the mind must in "some dim mode of consciousness posit a non-relative, and, in some similarly dim mode of consciousness, *a relation between it and the relative*." [1]

Plainly, we know not only *that* the Absolute is, but also, to the same extent, *what* it is. But let us look more narrowly at the function assigned to the Absolute, and the mode in which we ascertain it. Here Mr. Spencer brings in the principle of CAUSE. The Absolute is the cause of both subject and object. And the idea of cause we derive, according to his own teaching, from the changes of consciousness which imply causation. "The force," he says, "by which we ourselves produce changes, and which serves to symbolize the

bounded, or as infinitely unbounded. The first, to be sure, is impossible, because it is contrary to the known reality. The second is not impossible. True, we cannot imagine space as *complete;* we cannot imagine *all* space, space as a *whole*, because this, too, is contrary to the reality. But we know space as infinite; that is, we know space, and know not only that we cannot limit it, but positively that there is no limit to it. We know what power is. We do not lose our notion of power when we predicate infinitude of it. It is power still, but power incapable of limit.

[1] Essays, iii. 293 seq.

cause of changes in general, is the final disclosure of analysis."[1] In other words, the experience of conscious causal agency in ourselves gives us the idea of "force." This is "the original datum of consciousness." This is all we know of force. Only as we are ourselves conscious of power, do we know any thing of power in the universe. Now, Mr. Spencer chooses to name the ultimate reality "Force" — "the Absolute Force." He declares it to be inscrutable; since the force which we are immediately conscious of is not persistent, is a relative. Yet he says that he means by it "the persistence of *some cause* which transcends our knowledge and conception." Take away *cause* from the Absolute, and nothing is left; and the only cause of which we have any idea is our own conscious activity. If Mr. Spencer would make the causal idea, as thus derived, the symbol for the interpretation of "changes in general," he would be a Theist. By deftly resolving cause into the physical idea of "force," he gives to his system a Pantheistic character. It is only by converting the *a priori* idea of cause, as given in consciousness, into a "force" which we "cannot form any idea of," and which he has no warrant for assuming, that he avoids Theism.[2]

Let us observe the consequences of holding the Agnostic rigidly to his own principles.

According to Mr. Spencer's numerous and explicit avowals, all of our conceptions and language respecting nature are vitiated by the same anthropomorphism which he finds in the ascribing of personality to God. All science is made out to be a mental picture to which there is no likeness in realities outside of conscious-

[1] First Principles, p. 169.

[2] There are clear remarks of Mr. A. M. Fairbairn on this point, Contemporary Review, vol. xl. p. 214.

ness. To speak of matter as impenetrable, to make statements respecting an imponderable ether, molecular movements, atoms, even respecting space, time, motion, cause, force, is to talk in figures, *without the least knowledge* of the realities denoted by them. It is not a case where a symbol is adopted to signify *known* reality. We cannot compare the reality with the symbol or notion, because of the reality we have not the faintest knowledge. When we speak, for example, of the vibrations of the air, we have not the least knowledge either of what the air is, or of what vibrations are. We are merely giving name to an unknown cause of mental states; but even of *cause* itself, predicated of the object in itself, and of what is meant by its *agency* in giving rise to effects in us, we are as ignorant as a blind man of colors. Mr. Spencer says that matter is probably composed of ultimate, homogeneous units.[1] He appears, in various places, to think well of the atomic theory of matter. But if he is speaking of matter as it is, independently of our sensations, he forgets, when he talks thus, the fundamental doctrine of his philosophy. He undertakes to tell us about realities, when he cannot consistently speak of aught but their algebraic symbols, or the phenomena of consciousness. The atomic theory of matter carries us as far into the unknown realm of ontology as the doctrine of the personality of the Absolute, or any other proposition embraced in Christian Theism.

It is impossible for the Agnostic to limit his knowledge to experience, and to reject as unverified the implications of experience, without abandoning nearly all that he holds true. If he sticks to his principle, his creed will be a short one. Consciousness is confined to

[1] Principles of Psychology, p. 157.

the present moment. I am conscious of remembering an experience in the past. This consciousness as a present fact I cannot deny without a contradiction. But how do I know that the object of the recollection — be it a thought, or feeling, or experience of any sort — ever had a reality? How do I know any thing past, or that there is a past? Now, memory is necessary to the comparison of sensations, to reasoning, to our whole mental life. Yet to believe in memory is to transcend experience. I have certain sensations which I attribute collectively to a cause named my "body." Like sensations lead me to recognize the existence of other bodies like my own. But how do I know that there is consciousness within these bodies? How do I know that my fellow-men whom I see about me have minds like my own? The senses cannot perceive the intelligence of the friends about me. I infer that they are intelligent, but in this inference I transcend experience. Experience reduced to its exact terms, according to the methods of Agnosticism, is confined to the present feeling, — the feeling of the transient moment. When the Agnostic goes beyond this, when he infers that what is remembered was once presented in consciousness, that his fellow-men are thinking beings, and not mindless puppets, that any intelligent beings exist outside of himself, he transcends experience. If he were to predicate intelligence of God, he would be guilty of no graver assumption than when he ascribes intelligence to the fellow-men whom he sees moving about, and with whom he is conversing.

The Spencerian identification of subject and object, mind and matter, is illusive and groundless. They are declared to be "the subjective and objective faces of the same thing." They are said to be "the opposite

faces" of one reality. Sometimes they are spoken of as its "inner and outer side." On the one side, we are told, there are nerve-waves; on the other there are feelings. What is the fact, or the reality, of which these two are "faces" or "sides"? From much of the language which Mr. Spencer uses — it might be said, from the general drift of his remarks — the impression would be gained, that the reality is material, and that feeling is the mere concomitant or effect. But this theorem he disavows. He even says, that, as between idealism and materialism, the former is to be preferred.[1] More, he tells us, can be alleged for it than for the opposite theory. The nerve-movement is phenomenal not less than the feeling. The two are co-ordinate. The fact or the reality is to be distinguished from both. As phenomena, there are two. There are two facts, and these two are the only realities accessible to us. The supposed power, or thing in itself, is behind, and is absolutely hidden. The difference between the *ego* and the *non-ego* "transcends all other differences." A unit of motion a unit of feeling have nothing in common.

"Belief in the reality of self," it is confessed by Mr. Spencer, is "a belief which no hypothesis enables us to escape."[2] It is impossible, he proceeds to argue, that the impressions and ideas "which constitute consciousness" can be thought to be the only existences: this is "really unthinkable." If there is an impression, there is "something impressed." The sceptic must hold that the ideas and impressions into which he has decomposed consciousness are *his* ideas and impressions. Moreover, if he has an impression of his personal existence, why reject this impression alone as unreal? The belief in one's personal existence, Mr. Spencer assures us, is

[1] Principles of Psychology, i. 159. [2] First Principles, pp. 64, 65

"unavoidable;" it is indorsed by "the assent of mankind at large;" it is indorsed, too, by the "suicide of the sceptical argument against it." Yet the surprising declaration is added, that "reason rejects" this belief. Reason rejects a belief which it is impossible to abandon, and against which the adverse reasoning of the doubter shatters itself in pieces. On what ground is this strange conclusion reached? Why, "the cognition of self," it is asserted, is negatived by the laws of thought. The condition of thought is the antithesis of subject and object. Hence the mental act in which self is known implies "a perceiving subject and a perceived object." If it is the true self that thinks, what other self can it be that is thought of? If subject and object are one and the same, thought is annihilated.

If the two factors of consciousness, the *ego* and the *non-ego*, are irreducible, the reality of self is the natural inference. The "unavoidable" belief that self is a reality is still further confirmed by the absolute impossibility of thinking without attributing the act to self.

But let us look at the psychological difficulty which moves Mr. Spencer instantly to lay down his arms, and surrender an "unavoidable" belief. In every mental act there is an implicit consciousness of self, whether the object is a thing external or a mental affection. From this cognition of self there is no escape. Suppose, now, that self is the direct object. To know is to distinguish an object from other things, and from the knowing subject. When self is the object, this distinguishing activity is exerted by the subject, while the object is self, distinguished alike from other things and from the distinguishing subject. The subject distinguishes, the object differs in being distinguished or discerned. Yet both subject and object notwithstanding this formal

distinction, are known in consciousness as identical. If, again, self as the subject of this activity is made the object, then it is to one form of activity, distinguished in thought from the agent, that attention is directed, while at the same time there is a consciousness that the distinction of the agent from the power or function is in thought merely, not in reality. That self-consciousness is a fact, every one can convince himself by looking within. No psychological objection, were it much more solid than the one just noticed, could avail against an experience of the fact. We are fortunately not called upon by logic to part with an "unavoidable" belief.[1]

To explain the complex operations of the intellect as due to a combination of units of sensation is a task sufficiently arduous. But, when it comes to the will and the moral feelings, the difficulties increase. The illusive idea of freedom, as was explained above, is supposed by Mr. Spencer to spring from the supposition that "the *ego* is something more than the aggregate of feelings and ideas, actual and nascent, which then exists," — exists at the moment of action. The mistake is made of thinking that the *ego* is any thing but "the entire group of psychical states which constituted the action" supposed to be free.[2] Yet the same writer elsewhere, and with truth, asserts that this idea of the *ego* is "verbally intelligible, but really unthinkable."[3]

Mr. Spencer's system has been correctly described by Mansel as a union of the Positivist doctrine, that we know only the relations of phenomena, with the Pantheist assumption of the name of God to denote the

[1] This objection of Spencer is a part of Herbart's system. It is confuted by Ulrici, Gott .. der Mensch, pp. 321, 322.

[2] Principles of Psychology, i. 500, 501. [3] First Principles, p. 64

substance or power which lies beyond phenomena.[1] The doctrine, which is so essential in the system, that mental phenomena emerge from nervous organism when it reaches a certain point of development, is materialistic. Motion, heat, light, chemical affinity, Mr. Spencer holds, are transformable into sensation, emotion, thought. He holds that no idea or feeling arises save as a result of some physical force expended in producing it. "How this metamorphosis takes place; how a force existing as motion, heat, or light, can become a mode of consciousness; how it is possible for the forces liberated by chemical changes in the brain to give rise to emotion, — these are mysteries which it is impossible to fathom."[2] They are mysteries which ought to shake the writer's faith in the assumed fact which creates them. If forces liberated by chemical action produce thought, then thought, by the law of conservation, must exert the force thus absorbed by it. This makes thought a link in the chain of causes, giving to it ar agency which the theory denies it to possess. If chem ical action does not "give rise to" thought, by producing it, then it can only be an occasional cause, and the efficient cause of thought is left untold. This evolu tion of mind from matter as the prius, even though matter be defined as a mode of "the Unknowable," and the subjection of mental phenomena to material laws, stamp the system as essentially materialistic. The arguments which confute materialism are applicable to it.

Underneath modern discussions on the grounds of religious belief is the fundamental question as to the reality of human knowledge. The doctrine of the relativity of knowledge has been made one of the chief

[1] The Philosophy of the Conditioned, p. 40.
[2] First Principles, 2d ed., p. 217.

props of scepticism and atheism. If the proposition that knowledge is relative, simply means that we can know only through the organ of knowledge, it is a truism. We can know nothing of the universe as a whole, or of any thing in it, beyond what the knowing agent by its constitution is capable of discerning. The important question is, whether things are known as they are, or whether they undergo a metamorphosis, converting them into things unlike themselves, by being brought into contact with the perceiving and thinking subject. It is tantamount to the question whether our mental constitution is, or is not, an instrument for perceiving truth. The idealist would explain all the objects of knowledge as modifications of the thinking subject. Knowledge is thus made an inward process, having no real counterpart in a world without. Nothing is known, nothing exists, beyond this internal process. Others, who stop short of idealism, attribute to the mind such a transforming work upon the objects furnished it, or acting upon it from without, that their nature is veiled from discovery. The mirror of consciousness is so made that things reflected in it may, for aught we can say, lose all resemblance to things in themselves. That which is true of sense-perception, at least as regards the secondary qualities, color, flavor, etc., — which are proximately affections of man's physical organism, — is assumed to be true of all things and of their relations. This is a denial of the reality of knowledge in the sense in which the terms are taken by the common sense of mankind. The doctrine was propounded in the maxim of the sophist Protagoras, that "man is the measure of all things."

Locke made sensation the ultimate source of knowledge. Berkeley withstood materialism by making sen

sations to be affections of the spirit, ideas impressed by the will of God, acting by uniform rule. Hume, from the premises of Locke, resolved our knowledge into sensations, which combine in certain orders of sequence, through custom, of which no explanation is to be given. Customary association gives rise to the delusive notion of necessary ideas, — such as cause and effect, substance, power, the *ego*, etc. Reid, through the doctrine of common sense, rescued rational intuitions and human knowledge, which is built on them, from the gulf of scepticism. There is another source of knowledge, a subjective source, possessed of a self-verifying authority. Kant performed a like service by demonstrating that space and time, and the ideas of cause, substance, etc., the concepts or categories of the understanding, are not the product of sense-perception. They are necessary and universal; not the product, but the condition, of sense-perception. They are presupposed in our perceptions and judgments. Moreover, Kant showed that there are ideas of reason. The mind is impelled to unify the concepts of the understanding by which it conceives, classifies, and connects the objects of knowledge. These ideas are of the world as a totality, embracing all phenomena, the *ego* or personal subject, and God, the unconditioned ground of all possible existences.

But Kant founded a scepticism of a peculiar sort. Space, time, and the categories, cause, substance, and the like, he made to be purely subjective, characteristics of the thinker, and not of the thing. They reveal to us, not things in themselves, but rather the hidden mechanism of thought. Of the thing itself, the object of perception, we only know its existence. Even this we cannot affirm of the *ego*, which is not presented in sense-perception. The same exclusively subjective

validity belongs to the other ideas of reason. They signify a tentative effort which is never complete. They designate a *nisus* which is never realized. Since the concepts of the understanding are rules for forming and ordering the materials furnished in sense-perception, they cannot be applied to any thing super-sensible. The attempt to do so lands us in logical contradictions, or antinomies, which is an additional proof that we are guilty of an illegitimate procedure.

From the consequences of this organized scepticism, the natural as well as actual outcome of which was the systems of Pantheistic idealism, Kant delivered himself by his doctrine of the Practical Reason. He called attention to another department of our nature. We are conscious of a moral law, an imperative mandate, distinguished from the desires, and elevated above them. This implies, and compels us to acknowledge, the freedom of the will, and our own personality which is involved in it. Knowing that we are made for morality, and also for happiness, or that these are the ends towards which the constitution of our nature points, we must assume that there is a God by whose government these ends are made to meet, and are reconciled in a future life. God, free-will, and immortality are thus verified to us on practical grounds. Religion is the recognition of the moral law as a divine command. Religion and ethics are thus identified. Love, the contents of the law, is ignored, or retreats into the background. Rectitude in its abstract quality, or as an imperative mandate, is the sum of virtue.

The doctrine of the relativity of knowledge is presented by Sir William Hamilton in a form somewhat different from the Kantian theory. The Infinite and the Absolute — existence unconditionally unlimited, and

existence unconditionally limited — are neither of them conceivable. For example, we cannot conceive of infinite space, or of space so small that it cannot be divided: we cannot conceive of infinite increase or infinite division. Positive thought is of things limited or conditioned. The object is limited by its contrast with other things and by its relation to the subject. Only as thus limited can it be an object of knowledge. The object in sense-perception is a phenomenon of the *non-ego:* the *non-ego* is a reality, but is not known as it is in itself. Thought is shut up between two inaccessible extremes. But although each is inconceivable, yet, since they are contradictories, one or the other must be accepted. For example, space must be either infinite, or bounded by ultimate limits. An essential point in Hamilton's doctrine is the distinction between conception and belief. The two are not co-extensive. That may be an object of belief which is not a concept. This distinction is elucidated by Mansel, who says, "We may believe *that* a thing is, without being able to conceive *how* it is." "I believe in an infinite God; i.e., I believe *that* God is infinite. I believe that the attributes which I ascribe to God exist in him in an infinite degree. Now, to believe this proposition, I must be conscious of its meaning; but I am not therefore conscious of the infinite God as an object of conception; for this would require, further, an apprehension of the manner in which these infinite attributes coexist so as to form one object."[1] But in this case do I not *know* the meaning of "infinite"? Does it not signify more than the absence of *imaginable* limit, a mere negation of power in me? Does it not include the positive idea, that there *is* no limit? In the case

[1] **The Philosophy of the Conditioned, pp. 127, 129, cf. p. 18 seq.**

of opposite inconceivables, extraneous considerations, according to Hamilton, determine which ought to be believed. Both necessity and freedom are inconceivable, since one involves an endless series, the other a new commencement; but moral feeling — self-approbation, remorse, the consciousness of obligation — oblige us to believe in freedom, although we cannot conceive of it as possible. The fact is an object of thought, and so far intelligible, but not the *quo modo*. This dilemma in which we are placed, where we have to choose between two contradictory inconceivables, does not imply that our reason is false, but that it is weak, or limited in its range. When we attempt to *conceive* of the Infinite and the Absolute, we wade beyond our depth. They are terms signifying, not thought, but the negation of thought. Our belief in the existence of God and in his perfection rests on the suggestions and demands of our moral nature. In this general view Hamilton was in accord with Kant. Mr. Mansel differed from Sir William Hamilton in holding that we have an intuition of the *ego* as an entity, and in holding that the idea of cause is a positive notion, and not a mere inability to conceive of a new beginning, or of an addition to the sum of existence. But Mr. Mansel applied the doctrine of relativity to our knowledge of God, which was thus made to be only anthropopathic, approximative, symbolic; and he founded our belief in God ultimately on conscience and the emotions.

Under the auspices of James Mill, and of his son John Stuart Mill, the philosophical speculations of Hume were revived. Intuitions are affirmed to be empirical in their origin. They are impressions, which through the medium of sense-perception, and under the laws of association, stamp themselves upon us in

early childhood, and thus wear the semblance of *a priori* ideas. But this is only a semblance. There are, possibly, regions in the universe where two and two make five. Causation is nothing but uniformity of sequence. The Positivist theory of J. S. Mill led him to the conclusion that matter is only "the permanent possibility of sensations;" but all these groups of possibilities which constitute matter are states of the *ego*. And Mill was only prevented from concluding that the mind is nothing but a bundle of sensations by the intractable facts of memory. On his view of mind and matter, it is impossible to see how a man can know the existence of anybody but himself. He says that he does "not believe that the real externality to us of any thing except other minds is capable of proof." But as we become acquainted with the existence of other minds only as we perceive their bodies, and since this perception must be held to be, like all our perceptions of matter, only a group of sensations, we have no proof that such bodies exist.

The Agnostic scheme of Herbert Spencer accords with the theory of Hume and Mill in tracing intuitions to an empirical source. But the experience which gives them being is not that of the individual, but of the race. Heredity furnishes the clew to the solution of the problem of their emergence in the consciousness of the individual. He inherits the acquisitions of remote ancestors. Then the notion of energy is superadded to the Positivist creed. With it comes the postulate of a primal Power, of which we are said to have an indefinite consciousness, or "the Unknowable,"—the Pantheistic tenet grafted on Positivism. The doctrine of the relativity of knowledge is taken up from Hamilton and Mansel as the ground of nescience

respecting realities as distinct from phenomena, and respecting God. The facts of conscience which have furnished to Kant and Hamilton, and to deep-thinking philosophers generally who have advocated the relativity of knowledge, a foundation for belief in free-will and for faith in God, meet with no adequate recognition. Little account is made of moral feeling, and its necessary postulates are discarded as fictions.

The rescue of philosophy from its aberrations must begin in a full and consistent recognition of the reality of knowledge. Intuitions are the counterpart of realities. The categories are objective: they are modes of existence as well as modes of knowledge. Distinct as mind and nature are, there is such an affinity in the constitution of both, and such an adaptation of each to each, that knowledge is not a bare product of subjective activity, but a reflex of reality. Dependent existences imply independent self-existent Being. The postulate of all causal connection discerned among finite things is the First Cause. From the will we derive our notion of causation. Among dependent existences the will is the only fountain of power of which we have any experience. It is natural to believe that the First Cause is a Will. The First Cause is disclosed as personal in conscience, to which our wills are subject. The law as an imperative impulse to free action and as a pre-appointed end implies that the First Cause is Personal. Order and design in the world without — not found there merely, but instinctively sought there — corroborate the evidence of God, of whom we are implicitly conscious, and whose holy authority is manifest in conscience.

CHAPTER IV.

THE POSSIBILITY AND THE FUNCTION OF MIRACLES WITH A REVIEW OF PROFESSOR HUXLEY'S COMMENTS ON HUME.

CHRISTIANITY, from its first promulgation, has professed to have a supernatural origin and sanction. It has claimed to have God for its author, and to be a revelation of him and by him. Nothing in history is more certain than that the apostles denied, and with all sincerity, that the religion which they were proclaiming was the work of man, or owed its being exclusively to natural causes, unmixed with divine intervention. That the Founder of Christianity preceded them in propounding this claim admits of no question.

At the same time, Christianity allows and asserts a prior revelation of God, made through the consciences of men, through the material creation, and through the moral order to be discerned in the course of history. The Scriptures in which Christianity is authoritatively set forth do not undervalue the natural revelation, however misinterpreted, and practically ineffectual, they may declare it to be. Its comparative failure to accomplish its end they attribute to the power of sin to dull the perceptions of mankind. Yet the discontent, self-accusation, and yearning for a lost birthright, which constitute a preparation to receive the new revelation,

are pronounced the effect of the earlier revelation through nature and conscience.

Nor is there any thing incongruous between the two revelations. If a miracle — for example, the healing of a man born blind — brings God vividly to view, it is not another God than he whose power is exerted in the natural growth of the eye, and in the cure of disease when it takes place by natural means. Christianity partly consists of a republication of truth respecting God and respecting human duties, — truth which the light of nature makes known, or would make known if reason were faithful to her function. To take a single instance — the obligation of veracity is more or less felt by men who have never been taught the gospel. There have been whole nations, like the ancient Persians, who have been celebrated for their abhorrence of falsehood. Even the forgiveness of injuries, though not so commonly inculcated or practised outside of the pale of Christianity, is not confined within this limit. Forbearance was enjoined by certain heathen sages. Marcus Aurelius, and Seneca and Epictetus, are earnest in their laudation of this virtue. There is a large catalogue of particular duties — duties of the individual to himself, to the family, to the state, even to humanity at large — which were known to mankind, were to some extent defined, and more or less practised among men. The virtues of character which have shed lustre on individuals or communities that have lived in ignorance of Christianity are, to a large extent, identical with those which Christianity enjoins. The difference here is, that these duties appear in Christian teaching in a different setting: they are ingrafted on new motives, are connected with peculiar incentives to their performance; and they come home

to the heart and conscience with a force of appeal, which, as long as they were disconnected with Christianity, never belonged to them. Thus the obligation to forgive, when linked to the truth that God for Christ's sake has forgiven us, or as we find it expressed in the Sermon on the Mount and in the Lord's Prayer, is vastly aided in its fulfilment. Ethical justice and benevolence are placed in vital connection with religion: the obligations of man to man are illumined, as well as re-enforced, by being seen in the light of the common relation of men to God, and of their united participation in an inestimable gift bestowed by him.

But the essential part of Christianity is not contained in the doctrines which belong to it in common with natural religion, or in the ethical precepts, which, if not actually discerned, are still verifiable, by the light of nature. If we would understand what is signified by the Christian revelation, we must consider the end which Christianity aims at. This end is the restoration of men to communion with God. The purpose is to bring men out of the state of separation from God into the state of reconciliation and filial union to the Being in whom they live. The broken connection between God and man is to be re-established. God is to make such an approach to man as will place pardon and purification within his reach, and will found upon the earth a kingdom of righteousness and peace.

In such an achievement mere doctrinal communications are inadequate. The manifestation of God is primarily in act and deed. Christianity is an historical religion; that is to say, its groundwork is in events and transactions on the stage of history in connection with which the supernatural agency of God is manifestly exerted, and the outcome of which is an objective

salvation from sin. Indeed, the method of Revelation is pre-eminently historical. God manifests himself in events which evidently spring from a commingling of supernatural agency with natural causes. These are not isolated occurrences. They are connected with one another; and they are of such a character as to awaken a living perception of those attributes of God which are fitted to attract to him, and to purify, those with whose lives this course of supernatural history is intimately concerned. A current of history is established, and carried forward in a channel marked out for it. A community is created, evidently owing its origin and preservation to supernatural power and guidance, and so ordered that in it true religion may be kept alive and perfected. The merciful intention of God to save men shines with an increasing brightness through that long course of historical development which attains its consummation in the death and resurrection of Him who is the image, or complete manifestation, of God. When Stephen, the first martyr, stood up before the Jewish council to defend the Christian faith, he began his argument with referring to the separation of Abraham, by the call of God, from his kindred, and proceeded to describe the deliverance of the Israelites from bondage by Moses, whom God had supernaturally designated for this leadership, and at length came to the divine mission and the rejection of the "Righteous One." Paul at Athens, having set forth the first truths of natural religion, asserted the resurrection of Jesus in proof of the commission given him of God to judge the world. Every one knows that the recital of facts formed everywhere the basis of the preaching of the apostles. The same thing is true of the prophets of the Old Testament. Connected with all rebuke and exhortation,

and with the songs of devotion, are references to the way in which God had made himself known by things done for the welfare of his people. The doctrinal part of Scripture rests upon an underlying foundation of facts. Doctrine sets forth the significance of that history in which, from age to age, the just and merciful God had manifested himself to men.

When this view is taken of Revelation, it no longer wears the appearance of having sprung from an afterthought of the Creator. Revelation inheres essentially in phenomena which form an integral part of the history of mankind. That history is a connected whole. As such, Revelation is the realization of an eternal purpose in the divine mind. In this light it is regarded by the writers of the New Testament. To be sure, inasmuch as sin is no part of the creation, but is the perverse act of the creature, and since the consequences of sin in the natural order are thus brought in, it may be said with truth that redemption is the remedy of a disorder. It may be truly affirmed that Revelation, in the forms which it actually assumed, is made possible and necessary by the infraction of an ideal order. In this sense it may be called a provision for an emergency. It was, however, none the less pre-ordained. It entered into the original plan of human history, conditioned on the foreseen fact of sin, as that plan was formed from eternity by the Creator. The Christian believer finds in the purpose of redemption through Jesus Christ the only clew to the understanding of history in its entire compass.

Miracles are thus seen to be, not appendages, but constitutive parts, of Revelation. It is in the deviation of nature from its ordinary course that the personal agency — the justice, the mercy, the benevolent pur-

pose, of God — is revealed, and the deliverance of men from their ignorance, and wilful desertion of God, and from its penal consequences, is effected. Through the agency of God immediately and manifestly exerted at the proper junctures, the kingdom of God is introduced, and built up in its consecutive stages. Miracles, it is true, may be called "the credentials" of apostles. As such, they are auxiliaries in the first promulgation of Christianity. They procure a hearing and credence for the founders of the Church. They are a visible sanction given by God to their teaching and work. But the primary office of miracles in connection with Revelation is that before defined.

These views render it easy to point out the relation of miracles to the uniformities of nature. Were the vision not clouded, the regular sequences of nature, its wise and beneficent order, would discover its Author, and call out emotions of love and adoration. The departure of nature from its beaten path is required to impress on the minds of men the half-forgotten fact, that behind the forces of nature, even in its ordinary movement, is the will of God. What are natural laws? They are not a code super-imposed upon natural objects. They are a generalized statement of the way in which the objects of nature are observed to act and interact. Thus the miracle does not clash with natural laws. It is a modification in the effect due to a change in the antecedents. If there is a new phenomenon, it is due to the interposition of an external cause. There is not a violation of the law of gravitation when a ball is thrown into the air. A force is counteracted and overcome by the interposition of a force that is superior. The forces of nature are, within limits, subject to the *human* will. The intervention of the human will gives

rise to phenomena which the forces of matter, independently of the heterogeneous agent, would never produce. Yet such effects following upon volition are not properly considered violations of law. Law describes the action of natural forces when that action is not modified and controlled by voluntary agency. If the efficiency of the divine will infinitely outstrips that of the will of man, still miracles are no more inconsistent with natural laws than is the lifting of a man's hand in obedience to a volition.

The question whether the miracles described in the New Testament, by which it is alleged that Christianity was ushered into the world, actually occurred, is to be settled by an examination of the evidence. It is an historical question, and is to be determined by an application of the canons applicable to historical inquiry. The great sceptical philosopher of the last century displayed his ingenuity in an attempt to show that a miracle is from its very nature, and therefore under all circumstances, incapable of proof. His argument has often been reviewed, and its fallacies have been repeatedly pointed out. It is only a late discussion of Hume's argument by Professor Huxley that prompts us to subject it anew to a brief examination.

It will be remembered that Hume founds our belief in testimony solely on experience. "The reason," he says, "why we place any credit in witnesses and historians is not derived from any *connection* which we perceive *a priori* between testimony and reality, but because we are accustomed to find a conformity between them." This is far from being a correct account of the origin of our belief in testimony. Custom is not the source of credence. The truth is, that we instinctively give credit to what is told us; that is, we assume that the facts

accord with testimony. Experience serves to modify this natural expectation, and we learn to give or withhold credence according to circumstances. The circumstance which determines us to believe or disbelieve is our conviction respecting the capacity of the witness for ascertaining the truth on the subject of his narration, and respecting his honesty. If we are persuaded that he could not have been deceived, and that he is truthful, we believe his story. No doubt one thing which helps to determine his title to credit is the probability or improbability of the occurrences related. The circumstance that such occurrences have never taken place before, or are "contrary to experience" in Hume's sense of the phrase, does not of necessity destroy the credibility of testimony to them. An event is not rendered incapable of proof because it occurs, if it occurs at all, for the first time. Unless it can be shown to be impossible, or incredible on some other account than because it is an unexampled event, it is capable of being proved by witnesses. Hume is not justified in assuming that miracles are "contrary to experience," as he defines this term. This is the very question in dispute. The evidence for the affirmative, as Mill has correctly stated, is diminished in force by whatever weight belongs to the evidence that certain miracles have taken place. The gist of Hume's argumentation is contained in this remark: "Let us suppose that the fact which they [the witnesses] affirm, instead of being only marvellous, is really miraculous; and suppose, also, that the testimony, considered apart and in itself, amounts to an entire proof: in that case, there is proof against proof, of which the strongest must prevail," etc. At the best, according to Hume, in every instance where a miracle is alleged, proof balances proof. One flaw in this argument has just been pointed

out. The fundamental fallacy of this reasoning is in the premises, which base belief on naked "experience" divorced from all rational expectations drawn from any other source. The argument proceeds on the assumption that a miracle is just as likely to occur in one place as in another; that a miracle whereby the marks of truthfulness are transformed into a mask of error and falsehood is as likely to occur, as (for example) the healing of a blind man by a touch of the hand. This might be so if the Power that governs the world were destitute of moral attributes. "The presumption against miracles as mere physical phenomena is rebutted by the presumption in favor of miracles as related to infinite benevolence."[1] Hume's argument is valid only on the theory of Atheism.

We give credit to our own senses when we have taken the requisite pains to test the accuracy of the observations made by them, and have convinced ourselves that these organs are in a sound and healthy condition. If a number of witnesses, in whose carefulness and honesty we have entire confidence, testify to phenomena which they declare that they have witnessed, we lend, and are bound to lend, to their testimony the same credence which we give to our own eyes and ears. Whether the phenomena are of natural or supernatural origin is a subsequent question, to be decided upon a consideration of all the circumstances.

Professor Huxley objects to Hume's definition of a miracle as a violation of the order of nature, "because all we know of the order of nature is derived from our observation of the course of events of which the so-called miracle is a part."[2] The laws of nature, he

[1] Professor E. A. Park, Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, iii. 1965.
[2] Huxley's Hume, p. 131.

adds, "are necessarily based on incomplete knowledge, and are to be held only as grounds of a more or less justifiable expectation." He reduces Hume's doctrine, so far as it is tenable, to the canon, — "the more a statement of fact conflicts with previous experience, the more complete must be the evidence which is to justify us in believing it." By "more complete" evidence he apparently means evidence greater in amount, and tested by a more searching scrutiny. One of the examples which is given is the alleged existence of a centaur. The possibility of a centaur, Professor Huxley is far from denying, contrary as the existence of such an animal would be to those "generalizations of our present experience which we are pleased to call the laws of nature." Professor Huxley does not deny that such events as the conversion of water into wine, and the raising of a dead man to life, are within the limits of possibility. Being, for aught we can say, possible, we can conceive evidence to exist of such an amount and character as to place them beyond reasonable doubt. Wherein is Professor Huxley's position on this question faulty? He is right in requiring that no link shall be wanting in the chain of proof. He is right in demanding that a *mere* "coincidence" shall not be taken for an efficacious exertion of power. It is certainly possible that a man apparently dead should awake simultaneously with a command to arise. If the person who uttered the command knew that the death was only apparent, the awakening would be easily explained. If he did not know it, and if the sleep were a swoon where the sense of hearing is suspended, it is still possible that the recovery of consciousness might occur at the moment when the injunction to arise was spoken. It would be, to be sure, a startling coincidence; yet it

might be nothing more. But, if there were decisive reason to conclude that the man was dead, then his awakening at the command of another does not admit of being explained by natural causes. The conjunction of the return of life and the direction to awake cannot be considered a mere coincidence. If other events of the same character take place, where the moral honesty of all the persons concerned, and other circumstances, exclude mistake as to the facts, the proof of miracles is complete and overwhelming. Canon Mozley says, —

"The evidential function of a miracle is based upon the common argument of design as proved by coincidence. The greatest marvel or interruption of the order of nature occurring by itself, as the very consequence of being connected with nothing, proves nothing. But, if it takes place in connection with the word or act of a person, that coincidence proves design in the marvel, and makes it a miracle; and, if that person professes to report a message or revelation from Heaven, the coincidence again of the miracle with the professed message of God proves design on the part of God to warrant and authorize the message."[1]

It is plain that if events of the kind referred to, which cannot be due to mere coincidence, occur, they call for no revisal of our conception of "the order of nature," if by this is meant that material forces previously unknown are to be assumed to exist in order to account for them. Such phenomena, it is obvious, might occur as would render the materialistic explanation quite irrational. The work done might so far surpass the power of the natural means employed, that the ascription of it to a material agency would be absurd. Or, if the supposition of an occult material agency hitherto undiscovered were tenable, we should be driven to the conclusion that the person who had

[1] Bampton Lectures, pp. 5, 6.

become aware of it, and was thus able to give the signal for the occurrence of the phenomena, was possessed of supernatural knowledge; and then we should have, if not a miracle of power, a miracle of knowledge. The answer to Professor Huxley, then, is, that the circumstances of an alleged miracle may be such as to exclude the supposition, either that there is a remarkable coincidence merely, or that the order of nature — the natural system — is utterly different from what has been previously observed. The circumstances may be such that the only reasonable conclusion is the hypothesis of divine intervention.

Professor Huxley, like Hume, treats the miracle as an isolated event. He looks at it exclusively from the point of view of a naturalist, as if material nature were known to be the sum of all being and the repository of all force. He shuts his eyes to all evidence in its favor which it is possible to derive from its ostensible design and use and from the circumstances surrounding it. He shuts his eyes to the truth, and even to the possible truth, of the being of God. Like Hume, he contemplates the miracle as an isolated marvel. He confines his attention to a single quality of the event, — its *unusual* character, or to the fact that it is without a precedent. This method of regarding historical occurrences would give an air of improbability to innumerable events that are known to have taken place. If we are told that the enlightened rulers of a nation on a certain day deliberately set fire to their capital, and consumed its palaces and treasures in the flames, the narrative would excite the utmost surprise, if not incredulity. But incredulity vanishes when it is added that the capital was Moscow, and that it was held by an invading army which Russians were willing to

make every sacrifice to destroy. Extraordinary actions, whether beneficent or destructive, may fail to obtain, or even to deserve, credence, until the motives of the actors, and the occasions that led to them, are brought to light. The fact of the Moscow fire is not disproved by showing that it could not have kindled itself. The method of spontaneous combustion is not the only possible method of accounting for such an event. Yet this assumption fairly describes Professor Huxley's philosophy on the subject before us.

Ignoring supernatural agency altogether, Professor Huxley is obliged to ascribe miracles, on the supposition that they occur, to natural causes, and thus to make them at variance with the constitution of nature as at present understood. They are events parallel to the discovery of a centaur. This is an entirely gratuitous supposition. A miracle does not disturb our conception of the system of nature. On the contrary, if there were not a system of nature, there could not be a miracle, or, rather, all phenomena would be alike miraculous. A miracle, we repeat, being the act of God, does not compel us to alter our conception of the constitution of nature; for natural forces, or second causes, remain just what they were, and the method of their action is unchanged.

The "order of nature" is an ambiguous phrase. It may mean that arrangement, or mutual adjustment of parts, which constitutes the harmony of nature. The "order of nature, in the sense of harmony," as Mozley observes, "is not disturbed by a miracle. The interruption of a train of relations, in one instance, leaves them standing in every other; i.e., leaves the system, as such, untouched."[1] To this it may be added, that a miracle

[1] Bampton Lectures, p. 43.

is not inharmonious with the comprehensive system which is established and maintained by the Author of nature, and in which nature is but a single department.

By the "order of nature" is sometimes signified the stated manner of the recurrence of physical phenomena. On this order rests the expectation that things will be in the future as they have been in the past, and the belief that they have been as they now are. This belief and expectation, though natural, and, we may say, instinctive, do not partake in the least of the character of necessary truth. The habitual expectation that the "order of nature," embracing the sequences of phenomena which usually pass under our observation, will be subject to no interruption in the future, is capable of being subverted whenever proof is furnished to the contrary. The same is true as to the course of things in the past. The principles of Theism bring to view the cause which is adequate to produce such an interruption. The moral condition and exigencies of mankind constitute a sufficient motive for the exertion of this power by the merciful Being to whom it belongs. The characteristics of Christianity, apart from the alleged miracles connected with it, predispose the mind to give credit to the testimony on which these miracles rest.

The relation of miracles to the internal proof of divine revelation merits more particular attention. In the last century it was the evidence of miracles which the defenders of Christianity principally relied on. The work of Paley is constructed on this basis. The argument for miracles is placed by him in the foreground; the testimony in behalf of them is set forth with admirable clearness and vigor, and objections are parried with much skill. The internal evidence takes a subor-

dinate place. This whole method of presenting the case has been regarded in later times with misgivings and opposition. Coleridge may be mentioned as one of its ablest censors. The contents of Christianity as a system of truth, and the transcendent excellence of Christ, have been considered the main evidence of the supernatural origin of the gospel. The old method has not been without conspicuous representatives, of whom the late Canon Mozley is one of the most notable. But, on the whole, it is upon the internal argument, in its various branches, that the main stress has been laid in recent days in the conflict with doubt and disbelief. In Germany, Schleiermacher, whose profound appreciation of the character of Jesus is the key-note in his system, held that a belief in miracles is not directly involved in the faith of a Christian; although the denial of miracles is evidently destructive, as implying such a distrust of the capacity or integrity of the apostles as would invalidate all their testimony respecting Christ, and thus prevent us from gaining an authentic impression of his person and character.[1] Rothe, who was a firm believer in the miracles, as actual historical occurrences, nevertheless maintains that the acceptance of them is not indispensable to the attainment of the benefits of the gospel. They were, in point of fact, essential to the introduction of Christianity into the world: the rejection of them is unphilosophical, and contrary to the conclusion warranted by historical evidence. But now that Christ is known, and Christianity is introduced as a working power into history, it is possible for those who doubt about the miracles to receive him in faith, and through him to enter into communion with God.[2]

There can be no question, that, at the present day,

[1] Christl. Glaube, vol. ii. p. 88. [2] Zur Dogmatik, p.111.

minds which are disquieted by doubt, or are more or less disinclined to believe in revelation, should first give heed to the internal evidence. It is not by witnesses to miracles, even if they stood before us, that scepticism is overcome, where there is an absence of any living discernment of the peculiarity of the gospel and of the perfection of its Founder. How can a greater effect be expected from miracles alleged to have taken place at a remote date, be the proofs what they may, than the same miracles produced upon those in whose presence they were wrought? Those who disparage the internal evidence, and place their reliance on the argument from miracles, forget the declaration of Christ himself, that there are moods of disbelief which the resurrection of a man from the dead, under their own observation, would not dispel. They forget the attitude of many who had the highest possible proof of an external nature that miracles were done by him and by the apostles. Moreover, they fail to consider, that, for the establishment of miracles as matters of fact, something more is required than a scrutiny such as would avail for the proof of ordinary occurrences. It is manifest that all those characteristics of Christ and of Christianity which predispose us to attribute it to a miraculous origin are of weight as proof of the particular miracles said to have taken place in connection with it.

At the same time, miracles, and the proof of miracles from testimony, cannot be spared. When the peculiarities which distinguished Christianity from all other religions have impressed our minds, when the character of Christ in its unique and supernal quality has risen before us in its full attractive power, and when, from these influences, we are almost persuaded, at least not a little inclined, to believe in the gospel as a revela-

tion of God, we crave some attestation of an objective character. We naturally expect, that, if all this be really upon a plane above nature, there will be some explicit sign and attestation of the fact. Such attestation being wanting, the question recurs whether there may not be, after all, some occult power of nature to which the moral phenomena of Christianity might be traced. Can we be sure that we are not still among second causes alone, in contact with a human wisdom, which, however exalted, is still human, and mixed with error? Are we certain that we have not here merely a flower in the garden of nature, — a flower, perhaps, of consummate beauty and delicious fragrance, yet a product of the earth? It is just at this point that the record of miracles comes in to satisfy a rational expectation, to give their full effect to other considerations where the suspicion of a subjective bias may intrude, and to corroborate a belief which needs a support of just this nature. The agency of God in connection with the origin of Christianity is manifested to the senses, as well as to the reason and the heart. Not simply a wisdom that is more than human, a virtue of which there is no parallel in human experience, a merciful, renovating influence not referable to any creed or philosophy of man's device, make their appeal to the sense of the supernatural and divine; yet also, not disconnected from these supernatural tokens, but mingling with them, are manifestations of a power exceeding that of nature, — a power equally characteristic of God, and identifying the Author of nature with the Being of whom Christ is the messenger. Strip the manifestation of this ingredient of power, and an element is lacking for its full effect. The other parts of the manifestation inspire a willingness to believe, a rational anticipation that the

one missing element is associated with them. When this anticipation is verified by answering proof, the argument is complete. An inchoate faith rises into an assured confidence.

The importance of the evidence for miracles, then, does not rest solely on the ground, that, if it be discredited, the value of the apostles' testimony respecting other aspects of the life of Christ is fatally weakened. The several proofs need the miracles as a complement in order to give them full efficacy, and to remove a difficulty which otherwise stands in the way of the conviction which they tend to create. Miracles, it may also be affirmed, are component parts of that gospel which is the object of belief. Not only are they parts, and not merely accessories, of the act of revelation, but they are comprehended within the work of deliverance through Christ, — the redemption which is the object of the Christian faith. This is evidently true of his resurrection, in which his victory over sin was seen in its appropriate fruit, and his victory over death was realized, — realized, as well as demonstrated to man.

In fine, miracles are the complement of the internal evidence. The two sorts of proof lend support each to the other, and they conspire together to satisfy the candid inquirer that Christianity is of supernatural origin.

CHAPTER V.

CHRIST'S CONSCIOUSNESS OF A SUPERNATURAL CALLING VERIFIED BY HIS SINLESS CHARACTER.

WRITERS on the evidences of Christianity, after some introductory observations on natural theology, generally take up at once the subject of the genuineness and credibility of the Gospels, for the obvious reason that in these books, if anywhere, is preserved the testimony to the facts connected with the life of Jesus. There are reasons, however, which have special force at present, why this leading topic may well be deferred to a somewhat later stage of the discussion. Independently of differences of opinion respecting the authorship and date of the New-Testament narratives, there are not wanting grounds for believing the essential facts which form the ground-work of the Christian faith. It is important to remember, that, besides these books, there exist other memorials, written and unwritten, of the events with which we are concerned. We have Paul's Epistles, — the most prominent of which are not contested even by the sceptically disposed, — the oldest of which, the first to the Thessalonians, was written at Corinth as early as the year 53. But, more than this, there are cogent proofs, and there are strong probabilities, which may be gathered from known and conceded consequences of the life of Jesus among men. We can reason backwards. Even a cursory glance at

Christianity in the course of its acknowledged history, and as an existing phenomenon standing before the eyes of all, is enough to convince everybody that something very weighty and momentous took place in Palestine in connection with the short career of Jesus. There followed, for example, indisputably, the preaching, the character, the martyrdom, of the apostles. The church started into being. The composition of the Gospels themselves, whenever and by whomsoever it took place, was an effect traceable ultimately to the life of Jesus. How came they to be written? How did what they relate of him come to be believed? How came miracles to be attributed to him, and not to John the Baptist and to Palestinian rabbis of the time? Effects imply adequate causes. A pool of water in the street may be explained by a summer shower, but not so the Gulf Stream. Effects imply such causes as are adapted to produce them. The results of a movement disclose its nature. When we are confronted by historical phenomena, complex and far-reaching in their character, we find that no solution will hold which subtracts any thing essential from the actual historic antecedents. If we eliminate any of the conjoined causes, we discover that something in the aggregate effect is left unexplained. Moreover, the elements that compose a state of things which gives rise to definite historical consequences are braided together. They do not easily allow themselves to be separated from one another. Pry out one stone from an arch, and the entire structure will fall. It is a proverb that a liar must have a long memory. It is equally true that an historical critic exposes himself to peril whenever he ventures on the task of constructing a situation in the past, a combination of circumstances, materially diverse from the reality.

Events as they actually occur constitute a web from which no part can be torn without being instantly missed. History, then, has a double verification; first, in the palpable effects that are open to everybody's inspection; and, secondly, in the connected relation, the internal cohesion, of the particulars that compose the scene. Let any one try the experiment of subtracting from the world's history any signal event, like the battle of Marathon, the teaching of Aristotle, or the usurpation of Julius Cæsar. He will soon be convinced of the futility of the attempt; and this apart from the violence that must be done to direct historical testimonies.

Matthew Arnold tells us, that "there is no evidence of the establishment of our four Gospels as a gospel canon, or even of their existence as they now finally stand at all, before the last quarter of the second century."[1] I believe that this statement in both of its parts is incorrect; that the theory at the basis of such views, of a gradual selection of the four out of a larger group of competitive Gospels, and of the growth of them by slow accretion, is a false one. It can be proved to rest on a misconception of the state of things in the early church, and to be open to other insuperable objections. But let the assumption contained in the quotation above be allowed, for the present, to stand. Such authors as Strauss, Renan, Keim, notwithstanding their rejection of received opinions respecting the authorship and date of the Gospels, do not hesitate to draw the materials for their biographies of Jesus from them. They undertake, to be sure, to subject them to a sifting process. We have to complain that their dissection is often arbitrary, being guided by

[1] God and the Bible, p. 224.

some predilection merely subjective, or determined by the exigencies of a theory. Professing to be scientific, they are warped by an unscientific bias. But large portions of the evangelic narratives they admit to be authentic. If they did not do this, they would have to lay down the pen. Their vocation as historians would be gone. Now, then, we may see what will follow, if we take for granted no more of the contents of the Gospels than what is conceded to be true, — no more, at any rate, than what can be proved on the spot to be veritable history. Waiving, for the moment, controverted questions about the origin of these books, let us see what conclusions can be fairly deduced from portions of them which no rational critic will consider fictitious. Having proceeded as far as we may on this path, it will then be in order to vindicate for the Gospels the rank of genuine and trustworthy narratives, in opposition to the opinion that they are of later origin, and compounded of fact and fiction.

I. The known assertions of Jesus respecting his calling, and his authority among men, if they are not well founded, imply either a lack of mental sanity, or a deep perversion of character; but neither of these last alternatives can be reasonably accepted.

No one doubts that Jesus professed to be the Christ, — the Messiah. This the apostles from the first, in their preaching, declared him to be. They went out preaching, first of all, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah. It was on account of this claim that he was put to death. Before his judges, Jewish and Roman, he for the most part kept silent. Seeing that they were blinded by passion, or governed by purely selfish motives, he forbore useless appeals to reason and conscience. But he broke silence to avow that he was indeed the king, the "Son

of God," — a familiar title of the Messiah.[1] It was held by the Jewish magistrates to be a blasphemous pretension.[2] He made it clear, then and at other times, what sort of a kingship it was which he asserted for himself. It was not a temporal sovereignty, "a kingdom of this world:" no force was to be used in the defence or extension of it. It was, however, a control far deeper and wider than any secular rule. He was the monarch of souls. His right was derived immediately from God. His legislation extended to the inmost motives of action, and covered in its wide sweep all the particulars of conduct. In the Sermon on the Mount he spoke with an authority which was expressly contrasted with that of all previous lawgivers — "But *I* say unto you," etc.[3] To his precepts he annexed penalties and rewards which were to be endured and received beyond the grave. Nay, his call was to all to come to him, to repose in him implicit trust as a moral and religious guide. He laid claim to the absolute allegiance of every soul. To those who complied he promised blessedness in the life to come. There can be no doubt that he assumed to exercise the prerogative of pardoning sin. Apart from declarations, uttered in an authoritative tone, of the terms on which God would forgive sin,[4] he assured individuals of the pardon of their transgressions. He taught that his death stood in the closest relation to the remission of sins. The divine clemency towards the sinful is somehow linked to it. He founded a rite on this efficacy of his death, — a part of his teaching which is not only recorded by three of the Gospel writers, but is further

[1] Matt. xxvi. 64, xxvii. 11, cf. vers. 29, 37; Mark xiv. 62, xv. 2, cf. vers. 9, 12, 18, 26; Luke xxii. 70, xxiii. 2, cf. vers. 2, 38; John xviii. 33, 37, cf. ver. 39, xix. 3, 14, 19, 21.

[2] Matt. xxvi. 65; Mark xiv. 64.

[3] Matt. v. 22, 28, 34, 39, 44.

[4] Matt. v. 26, vi. 14, 15.

placed beyond doubt by the testimony of the apostle Paul.[1] He uttered, there is no reason to doubt, the largest predictions concerning the prospective growth of his spiritual empire. It was to be as leaven, as a grain of mustard-seed.[2] The agency of God would be directed to securing its progress and triumph. The government of the world would be shaped with reference to this end.

I have stated in moderate terms the claims put forth by Jesus. These statements, or their equivalent, enter into the very substance of the evangelic tradition. Not only are they admitted to be authentic passages in the Gospels, but their historic reality is presupposed in the first teaching of Christianity by the apostles, and must be assumed in order to account for the rise of the church.

Let it be remembered that these pretensions are put forth by a person whose social position is that of a peasant. He is brought up in a village which enjoys no very good repute in the region around it. Among his fellow-villagers he has made no extraordinary impression. When he comes among them as a teacher, they refer to his connection with a family in the midst of them in a tone to imply that they had known of nothing adapted to excite a remarkable expectation concerning him.[3] For this passage in the Gospel narrative bears indisputable marks of authenticity.

What shall be said of such claims, put forth by such a person, or by any human being? No doubt the first impression in such a case would be, that he had lost his reason. If there is not wilful imposture, it would be said there must be insanity. Nothing else can explain

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 25. [2] Matt. xiii. 31–33; Luke xiii. 19–21.
[3] Matt. xiii. 55–57; Mark vi. 3, 4; Luke iv. 22.

so monstrous a delusion. We have only to imagine that a young man who has always lived in some obscure country town presents himself in one of our large cities, and announces himself there, and to his fellow-townsmen, and wherever else he can gain a hearing, as the Son of God, or Messiah; summons all, the high and low, the educated and ignorant, to accept him as a special messenger from Heaven, to obey him implicitly, to break every tie which interferes with absolute obedience to him, — to hate, as it were, father and mother, wife and children, for his cause. He proceeds, we will suppose, in the name of God, to issue injunctions for the regulation of the thoughts even, as well as of external conduct, to forgive the sins of one and another evil-doer, and to warn all who disbelieve in him, and disregard his commandments, that retribution awaits them in the future life. It being made clear that he is not an impostor, the inference would be drawn at once that his reason is unsettled. This, in fact, is the common judgment in such cases. To entertain the belief that one is the Messiah is a recognized species of insanity. It is taken as proof positive of mental aberration. This is the verdict of the courts. Erskine, in one of his celebrated speeches,[1] adverts to an instance of this kind of lunacy. A man who had been confined in a mad-house prosecuted the keeper, Dr. Sims, and his own brother, for unlawful detention. Erskine, before he had been informed of the precise nature of his delusion, examined the prosecutor without eliciting any signs of mental unsoundness. At length, learning what the particular character of the mental disorder was, the great lawyer, with affected reverence, apologized for his unbecoming treatment of the witness in presuming thus to examine

[1] In behalf of Hadfield, indicted for firing a pistol at the king.

him. The man expressed his forgiveness, and then, with the utmost gravity, in the face of the whole court, said, "I am the Christ." He deemed himself "the Lord and Saviour of mankind." Nothing further, of course, was required for the acquittal of the persons charged with unjustly confining him.

When it is said that claims like those of Jesus, unless they can be sustained, are indicative of mental derangement, we may be pointed, by way of objection, to founders of other systems of religion. But among these no parallel instance can be adduced to disprove the position here taken. Confucius can hardly be styled a religious teacher: he avoided, as far as he could, all reference to the supernatural. His wisdom was of man, and professed no higher origin. A sage, a sagacious moralist, he is not to be classified with pretenders to divine illumination. Of Zoroaster we know so little, that it is utterly impossible to tell what he affirmed respecting his relation to God. The very date of his birth is now set back by scholars to a point at least five hundred years earlier than the time previously assigned for it. Of him, one of the recent authorities remarks, "The events of his life are almost all enshrouded in darkness, to dispel which will be forever impossible, should no authentic historical records be discovered in Bactria, his home."[1] A still later writer goes farther: "When he lived, no one knows; and every one agrees that all that the Parsis and the Greeks tell of him is mere legend, through which no solid historical facts can be arrived at."[2] Thus the history of the principal teacher of one of the purest and most ancient

[1] Haug, Essays on the Laws, Writings, and Religion of the Parsis (2d ed., Boston, 1868), p. 295.

[2] The Zend-Avesta, translated by J. Darmestetter (Oxford, 1880), Intr., p. lxxvi.

of the ethnic religions is veiled in hopeless obscurity. With respect to Buddha, or Çâkyamuni, it is not impossible to separate main facts in his career from the mass of legendary matter which has accumulated about them. But the office which he took on himself was not even that of a prophet. He was a philanthropist, a reformer. The supernatural features of his history have been grafted upon it by later generations. An able scholar has lately described Buddhism as "a religion which ignores the existence of God, and denies the existence of the soul."[1] "Buddhism is no religion at all, and certainly no theology, but rather a system of duty, morality, and benevolence, without real deity, prayer, or priest."[2] Mohammed unquestionably believed himself inspired, and clothed with a divine commission. Beyond the ferment excited in his mind by the vivid perception of a single great, half-forgotten truth, we are aided in explaining his self-delusion, as far as it was a delusion, by due attention to the morbid constitutional tendencies which led to epileptic fits, as well as to reveries and trances. Moreover, there were vices of character which played an important part in nourishing his fanatical convictions; and these must be taken into the account. It is not maintained here that religious enthusiasm which passes the limits of truth should always raise a suspicion of insanity. We are not called upon by the necessities of the argument to point out the boundary-line where reason is unhinged. Socrates was persuaded that a demon or spirit within kept him back from unwise actions. Whether right or wrong in this belief, he was no doubt a man of sound mind. One may erroneously conceive himself to be under

[1] See Encycl. Britannica, art. "Buddhism," by J. W. Rhys Davis.
[2] Monier Williams, Hinduism (London, 1877), p. 74.

supernatural guidance without being literally irrational. But if Socrates, a mortal like the men about him, had solemnly and persistently declared himself to be the vicegerent of the Almighty, and to have the authority and the prerogatives which Jesus claimed for himself; had he declared, just before drinking the hemlock, that his death was the means or the guaranty of the forgiveness of sins, — the sanity of his mind would not have been so clear.

Nor is there validity in the objection that times have changed, so that an inference which would justly follow upon the assertion of so exalted claims by a person living now would not be warranted in the case of one living in that remote age, and in the community to which Jesus belonged. The differences between that day and this, and between Palestine, and America or England, are not of a quality to lessen materially the difficulty of supposing that a man in his right mind could falsely believe himself to be the King and Redeemer of mankind. The conclusive answer to the objection is, that the claims of Jesus were actually treated as in the highest degree presumptuous. They were scoffed at as monstrous by his contemporaries. He was put to death for bringing them forward. Shocking blasphemy was thought to be involved in such pretensions. It is true that individuals in that era set up to be the Messiah, especially in the tremendous contest that ensued with the Romans. But these false Messiahs were impostors, or men in whom imposture and wild fanaticism were equally mingled.

Mental disorder has actually been imputed to Jesus. At the beginning of his public labors at Capernaum, his relatives, hearing what excitement he was causing, and how the people thronged upon him, so that he and

his disciples could not snatch a few minutes in which to take refreshment, for the moment feared that he was "beside himself."[1] No doubt will be raised about the truth of this incident: it is not a circumstance which any disciple, earlier or later, would have been disposed to invent. The Pharisees and scribes charged that he was possessed of a demon. According to the fourth Gospel, they said, "He hath a demon, and is mad."[2] The credibility of the fourth evangelist here is assumed by Renan.[3] In Mark, the charge that he is possessed by the prince of evil spirits immediately follows the record of the attempt of his relatives "to lay hold on him."[4] Not improbably, the evangelist means to imply that mental aberration was involved in the accusation of the scribes, as it is expressly said to have been imputed to him by his family. This idea of mental alienation has not come alone from the Galilean family in their first amazement at the commotion excited by Jesus, and in their solicitude on account of his unremitting devotion to his work. Nor has it been confined to the adversaries who were stung by his rebukes, and dreaded the loss of their hold on the people. A recent writer, after speaking of Jesus as swept onward, in the latter part of his career, by a tide of enthusiasm, says, "Sometimes one would have said that his reason was disturbed." "The grand vision of the kingdom of God made him dizzy."[5] "His temperament, inordinately impassioned, carried him every moment beyond the

[1] Mark iii. 21, cf. ver. 32. In ver. 21 ἔλεγον may have an indefinite subject, and refer to a spreading report which the relatives — οἱ παρ αὐτοῦ — had heard: so Ewald, Weiss, *Marcusevangelium, ad loc.* Or it may denote what was said by the relatives themselves: so Meyer.

[2] μαίνεται, John x. 20.

[3] Vie de Jésus, 13me ed. p. 331.

[4] Mark iii. 21

[5] "Lui donnait le vertige."

limits of human nature."[1] These suggestions of Renan are cautiously expressed. He broaches, as will be seen hereafter, an hypothesis still more revolting, for the sake of clearing away difficulties which his Atheistic or Pantheistic philosophy does not enable him otherwise to surmount. Yet he does, though not without some signs of timidity, more than insinuate that enthusiasm was carried to the pitch of derangement. Reason is said to have lost its balance.

The words and conduct of Jesus can be considered extravagant only on the supposition that his claims, his assertions respecting himself, were exaggerated. His words and actions were not out of harmony with these claims. It is in these pretensions, if anywhere, that the proof of mental alienation must be sought. There is nothing in the teaching of Christ, there is nothing in his actions, to countenance the notion that he was dazed and deluded by morbidly excited feeling. Who can read the Sermon on the Mount, and not be impressed with the perfect sobriety of his temperament? Everywhere, in discourse and dialogue, there is a vein of deep reflection. He meets opponents, and even cavillers, with arguments. When he is moved to indignation, there is the most complete self-possession. There is no vague outpouring of anger, as of a torrent bursting its barriers. Every item in the denunciation of the Pharisees is coupled with a distinct specification justifying it.[2] No single idea is seized upon and magnified at the expense of other truths of equal moment. No one-sided view of human nature is held up for acceptance. A broad, humane spirit pervades the precepts which he uttered. Asceticism, the snare of religious reformers, is foreign both to his teaching and his

[1] Vie de Jésus, p. 331. [2] Matt. xxiii.

example. Shall the predictions relative to the spread of his kingdom, and to its influence on the world of mankind, be attributed to a distempered fancy? But how has history vindicated them! What is the history of the Christian ages but the verification of that forecast which Jesus had of the effect of his work, brief though it was? Men who give up important parts of the Christian creed discern, nevertheless, "the sweet reasonableness" which characterizes the teaching, and, equally so, the actions, of Jesus. The calm wisdom, the inexhaustible depth of which becomes more and more apparent as time flows on — is that the offspring of a disordered brain? That penetration into human nature which laid bare the secret springs of action, which knew men better than they knew themselves, piercing through every disguise — did that belong to an intellect diseased?

If we reject the hypothesis of mental alienation, we are driven to the alternative of accepting the consciousness of Jesus with respect to his office and calling as veracious, or of attributing to him a deep moral depravation. He exalts himself above the level of mankind. He places himself on an eminence inaccessible to all other mortals. He conceives himself to stand in a relation both to God and to the human race to which no other human being can aspire. It would be the wildest dream for any other human being to imagine himself to be possessed of the prerogatives which Jesus quietly assumes to exercise. Is this mere assumption? What an amount of self-ignorance does it not involve! What self-exaggeration is implied in it! If moral rectitude contains the least guaranty of self-knowledge, if purity of character tends to make a man know himself, and guard himself from seizing on an elevation

that does not belong to him, then what shall be said of him who is guilty of self-deification, or of what is almost equivalent? On the contrary, the holiness of Jesus, if he was holy, is a ground for giving credence to his convictions respecting himself.

If there is good reason to conclude that Jesus was a sinless man, there is an equal reason for believing in him. It has been said, even by individuals among the defenders of the faith, that, independently of miracles, his perfect sinlessness cannot be established. "But where," writes Dr. Mozley, "is the proof of perfect sinlessness? No outward life and conduct could prove this, because goodness depends on the inward motive, and the perfection of the inward motive is not proved by the outward act. Exactly the same act may be perfect or imperfect, according to the spirit of the doer. The same language of indignation against the wicked which issues from our Lord's mouth might be uttered by an imperfect good man who mixed human frailty with the emotion." [1] The importance of miracles as the counterpart and complement of evidence of a different nature is not questioned. It is not denied, that if, by proof, demonstration is meant, such proof of the sinlessness of Jesus is precluded. Reasoning on such a matter is, of course, probable. Nevertheless, it may be fully convincing. How do we judge, respecting any one whom we well know, whether he possesses one trait of character, or lacks another? How do we form a decided opinion, in many cases, with regard to the motives of a particular act, or in respect to his habitual temper? It is by processes of inference precisely similar to those by which we conclude that Jesus was pure and holy. There are indications of *perfect* purity and holiness which

[1] Mozley, Lectures on Miracles, p. 11.

exclude rational doubt upon the point. There are phenomena, positive and negative, which presuppose sinless perfection, which baffle explanation on any other hypothesis. If there are facts which it is impossible to account for, in case moral fault is admitted to exist, then the existence of moral fault is disproved.

It may be thought that we are at least disabled from proving the sinlessness of Jesus until we have first established the ordinary belief as to the origin of the Gospels. This idea is also a mistake. Our impression of the character of Christ results from a great number of incidents and conversations recorded of him. The data of the tradition are miscellaneous, multiform. If there had been matter, which, if handed down, would have tended to an estimate of Jesus in the smallest degree less favorable than is deducible from the tradition as it stands, who was competent, even if anybody had been disposed, to eliminate it? What disciples, earlier or later, had the keenness of moral discernment which would have been requisite in order thus to sift the evangelic narrative? Something, to say the least, — some words, some actions, or omissions to act, — would have been left to stain the fair picture. Moreover, the conception of the character of Jesus which grows up in the mind on a perusal of the gospel records has a unity, a harmony, a unique individuality, a verisimilitude. This proves that the narrative passages which call forth this image in the reader's mind are substantially faithful. The characteristics of Jesus which are collected from them must have belonged to an actual person.

In an exhaustive argument for the sinlessness of Jesus, one point would be the impression which his character made on others. What were the reproaches

of his enemies? If there were faults, vulnerable places, his enemies would find them out. But the things which they laid to his charge are virtues. He associated with the poor and with evil-doers. But this was from love, and from a desire to do them good. He was willing to do good on the sabbath; that is, he was not a slave to ceremony. He honored the spirit, not the letter, of law. He did not bow to the authority of pretenders to superior sanctity. Leaving out of view his claim to be the Christ, we cannot think of a single accusation that does not redound to his credit. There is no reason to distrust the evangelic tradition, which tells us that a thief at his side on the cross was struck with his innocence, and said, "This man hath done nothing amiss." The centurion exclaimed, "Truly, this was a righteous man!" Since the narratives do not conceal the insults offered to Jesus by the Roman soldiers, and the scoffs of one of the malefactors, there is no ground for ascribing to invention the incidents last mentioned. But what impression was made as to his character on the company of his intimate associates? They were not obtuse, unthinking followers. They often wondered that he did not take a different way of founding his kingdom, and spoke out their dissatisfaction. They were not incapable observers and critics of character. Peculiarities that must have excited their surprise, they frankly related; as that he wept, was at times physically exhausted, prayed in an agony of supplication. These circumstances must have come from the original reporters. It is certain, that, had they marked any thing in Jesus which was indicative of moral infirmity, the spell that bound them to him would have been broken. Their faith in him would have been dissolved. It is certain that in the closest

association with him, in private and in public, they were more and more struck with his faultless excellence. They parted from him at last with the unanimous, undoubting conviction that not the faintest stain of moral guilt rested on his spirit. He was immaculate. This was a part of their preaching. Without that conviction on their part, Christianity never could have gained a foothold on the earth.

It is not my purpose to dwell on that marvellous unison of virtues in the character of Jesus, — virtues often apparently contrasted. It was not piety without philanthropy, or philanthropy without piety, but both in the closest union. It was love to God and love to man, each in perfection, and both forming one spirit. It was not compassion alone, unqualified by the sentiment of justice; nor was it rectitude, austere, unpitying. It was compassion *and* justice, the spirit of love and the spirit of truth, neither clashing with the other. There was a prevailing concern for the soul and the life to come, but no cynical indifference to human suffering and well-being now. There was courage that quailed before no adversary, but without the least ingredient of false daring, and observant of the limits of prudence. There was a dignity which needed no exterior prop to uphold it, yet was mixed with a sweet humility. There was rebuke for the proudest, a relentless unmasking of sanctimonious oppressors of the poor, and the gentlest words for the child or the suffering invalid.

There is one fact which ought to remove every shadow of doubt as to the absolute sinlessness of Jesus. Let this fact be thoroughly pondered. He was utterly free from self-accusation, from the consciousness of fault; whereas, had there been a failure in duty, his

sense of guilt would have been intense and overwhelming. This must have been the case had there been only a single lapse, — one instance, even in thought, of infidelity to God and conscience. But no such offence could have existed by itself: it would have tainted the character. Sin does not come and disappear, like a passing cloud. Sin is never a microscopic taint. Sin is self-propagating. Its first step is a fall and the beginning of a bondage. We reiterate that a consciousness of moral defect in such an one as we know that Jesus was, and as he is universally conceded to have been, must infallibly have betrayed itself in the clearest manifestations of conscious guilt, of penitence or of remorse. The extreme delicacy of his moral sense is perfectly obvious. His moral criticism goes down to the secret recesses of the heart. He demands, be it observed, self-judgment: "First cast the beam out of thine own eye;" "Judge not." His condemnation of moral evil is utterly unsparing: the very roots of it in illicit desire are to be extirpated. He knows how sinful men are. He teaches them all to pray, "Forgive us our debts;" yet there is not a scintilla of evidence that he ever felt the need of offering that prayer for himself. From beginning to end there is not a lisp of self-blame. He prays often, he needs help from above; but there is no confession of personal unworthiness. Men generally are reminded of their sins when they are overtaken by calamity. The ejaculations of Jesus in the presence of his intimate associates, when he was sinking under the burden of mental sorrow, are transmitted, — and there is no appearance whatever of a disposition on the part of disciples to cloak his mental experiences, or misrepresent them, — but not the slightest consciousness of error is betrayed in these sponta-

neous outpourings of the soul. "His was a piety with no consciousness of sin, and no profession of repentance." [1]

Let the reader contrast this unbroken peace of conscience with the self-chastisement of an upright spirit which has become alive to the obligations of divine law, — the same law that Jesus inculcated. "Oh wretched man that I am!" No language short of this corresponds to the abject distress of Paul. There are no bounds to his self-abasement: he is "the chief of sinners." The burden of self-condemnation is too heavy for such conscientious minds to carry. Had the will of Jesus ever succumbed to the tempter, had moral evil ever found entrance into his heart, is it possible that his humiliation would have been less, or less manifest? That serene self-approbation would have fled from his soul. Had the Great Teacher, whose words are a kind of audible conscience ever attending us, and are more powerful than any thing else to quicken the sense of obligation — had he so little moral sensibility as falsely to acquit himself of blame before God? It is psychologically impossible that he should have been blameworthy without knowing it, without feeling it with crushing distinctness and vividness, and without exhibiting penitence, or remorse and shame, in the plainest manner. There was no such consciousness, there was no such expression of guilt. Therefore he was without sin.

We have said that there is nothing in the evangelic tradition to imply the faintest consciousness of moral evil in the mind of Jesus. A single passage has been by some falsely construed as containing such an implication. It may be worth while to notice it. To the ruler who inquired what he should do to secure eternal

[1] W. M. Taylor, D.D., The Gospel Miracles, etc., p. 50.

life, Jesus is said to have answered, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God."[1] There is another reading of the passage in Matthew, which is adopted by Tischendorf: "Why askest thou me concerning the good? There is one," etc.[2] This answer is not unsuitable to the question, "What good thing shall I do?" It points the inquirer to God. It is fitted to suggest that goodness is not in particular doings, but begins in a connecting of the soul with God. We cannot be certain, however, whether Jesus made exactly this response, or said what is given in the parallel passages in Mark and Luke (and in the accepted text of Matthew). If the latter hypothesis is correct, it is still plain that the design of Jesus was to direct the inquirer to God, whose will is the fountain of law. He disclaims the epithet "good," and applies it to God alone, meaning that God is the primal source of all goodness. Such an expression is in full accord with the usual language of Jesus descriptive of his dependence on God. The goodness of Jesus, though without spot or flaw, was progressive in its development; and this distinction from the absolute goodness of God might justify the phraseology which he employed.[3] The humility which Jesus evinced in his reply to the ruler was not that of an offender against the divine law. Its ground was totally diverse.

There is a single occurrence narrated in the fourth Gospel, which may be appropriately referred to in this place.[4] Jesus said, "I go not up to this feast:" the "yet" in the Authorized Version probably forms no part of the text. "But when his brethren were gone

[1] Matt. xix. 17, cf. Mark x. 18; Luke xviii. 19.

[2] τί με ἐρωτᾷς περὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ;

[3] See Weiss, Matthäusevangelium, *ad loc.* [4] John vii. 8, 10, 14.

up, then went he also up, not openly, but, as it were, in secret." Can anybody think that the author of the Gospel, whoever he was, understands, and means that his readers shall infer, that the first statement to the brethren was an intentional untruth? It is possible that new considerations, not mentioned in the brief narration, induced Jesus to alter his purpose. This is, for instance, the opinion of Meyer.[1] He may have waited for a divine intimation, which came sooner than it was looked for.[2] It is even possible that the expression, "I go not up," etc., may have been understood to signify simply that he would not accompany the festal caravan, and thus make prematurely a public demonstration adapted to rouse and combine his adversaries. In fact, he did not show himself at Jerusalem until the first part of the feast was over. It is not unlikely that he travelled over Samaria. "My time," he had said to his brethren, "is not yet full come."

Complaints have been made of the severity of his denunciation of the Pharisees. Theodore Parker has given voice to this criticism. It is just these passages, however, and such as these, which save Christianity from the stigma cast upon it by the patronizing critics who style it "a sweet Galilean vision," and find in it nothing but a solace "for tender and weary souls."[3] It is no fault in the teaching of Jesus that in it righteousness speaks out in trumpet-tones. There is no unseemly passion, but there is no sentimentalism. Hypocrisy and cruelty are painted in their proper colors. That retribution is stored up for the iniquity which

[1] Evang. Johannis, *ad loc.*

[2] Cf. vers. 6, 7, and ii. 4. So Weiss, in Meyer's Komm. über das Evang. Johann., p. 310.

[3] See Renan, English Conferences, and *passim.*

steels itself against the motives to reform is a part of the gospel which no right-minded man would wish to blot out: it is a truth too clearly manifest in the constitution of things, too deeply graven on the consciences of men. The spotless excellence of Jesus needs no vindication against objections of this nature.

Were it possible to believe, that apart from the blinding, misleading influence of a perverse character, so monstrous an idea respecting himself — supposing it to be false — gained a lodgement in the mind of Jesus, the effect must have been a steady, rapid moral deterioration. False pretensions, self-exalting claims, even when there is no deliberate insincerity in the assertion of them, distort the perceptions. They kindle pride and other unhealthy passions. The career of Mohammed, from the time when he set up to be a prophet, illustrates the downward course of one whose soul is possessed by a false persuasion of this sort. When the bounds that limit the rights of an individual in relation to his fellow-men are broken through, degeneracy of character follows. His head is turned. He seeks to hold a sceptre that is unlawfully grasped, to exercise a prerogative to which his powers are not adapted. Simplicity of feeling, self-restraint, respect for the equal rights of others, genuine fear of God, gradually die out.

If it be supposed that Jesus, as the result of morbid enthusiasm, falsely thought himself the representative of God, and the Lord and Redeemer of mankind, experience would have dispelled so vain a dream. It might, perhaps, have subsisted in the first flush of apparent, transient success. But defeat, failure, the desertion of supporters, will often awaken distrust, even in a cause which is true and just. How would it

have been with the professed Messiah when the leaders of Church and State poured derision on his claims? How would it have been when his own neighbors, among whom he had grown up, chased him from the town? how when the people who had flocked after him for a while, turned away in disbelief, when his own disciples betrayed or denied him, when ruin and disgrace were heaped upon his cause, when he was brought face to face with death? How would he have felt when the crown of thorns was put on his head? when, in mockery, a gorgeous robe was put on him? What an ordeal to pass through was that! Would the dream of enthusiasm have survived all this? Would not this high-wrought self-confidence have collapsed? Savonarola, when he stood in the pulpit of St. Mark's, with the eager multitude before him, and was excited by his own eloquence, seemed to himself to foresee, and ventured to foretell, specific events. But in the coolness and calm of his cell he had doubts about the reality of his own power of prediction. Hence, when tortured on the rack, he could not conscientiously affirm that his prophetic utterances were inspired of God. He might think so at certain moments; but there came the ordeal of sober reflection, there came the ordeal of suffering; and under this trial his own faith in himself was to this extent dissipated.

The depth and sincerity of the conviction which Jesus entertained respecting himself endured a test even more severe than that of an ignominious failure, and the pains of the cross. He saw clearly that he was putting others in mortal jeopardy.[1] The same ostracism, scorn, and malice awaited those who had attached themselves to his person, and were prominently identified with his

[1] Matt. x 17, 18, 36; Mark x. 39; John xvi. 2.

cause. Their families would cast them off; the rulers of Church and State would harass them without pity; to kill them would be counted a service rendered to God. A man must be in his heart of hearts persuaded of the justice of a cause before he can make up his mind to die for it; but, if he have a spark of right feeling in him, he must be convinced in his inmost soul before he consents to involve the innocent and trustful follower in the ruin which he foresees to be coming on himself. It must not be forgotten, that, from the beginning of the public life of Jesus to his last breath, the question of the reality of his pretensions was definitely before him. He could not escape from it for a moment. It confronted him at every turn. The question was, should men *believe in him*. The strength of his belief in himself was thus continually tested. It was a subject of debate with disbelievers. On one occasion — the historical reality of the occurrence no one doubts — he called together his disciples, and inquired of them what idea was entertained respecting him by the people.[1] He heard their answer. Then he questioned them concerning their own conviction on this subject. One feels that his mood could not be more thoughtful, more deliberate. The declaration of faith by Peter, he pronounces to be a rock. It is an immovable foundation, on which he will erect an indestructible community. If Jesus persevered in the assertion of a groundless pretension, it was not for the reason that it was unchallenged. It was not cherished because there were few inclined to dispute it. He was not led to maintain it from want of reflection.

The foregoing considerations, it is believed, are sufficient to show that the abiding conviction in the mind

[1] Matt. xvi. 13–21.

of Jesus respecting his own mission and authority is inexplicable, except on the supposition of its truth. There was no moral evil to cloud his self-discernment. The bias of no selfish impulse warped his estimate of himself. His conviction respecting his calling and office remained unshaken under the sternest trials.

II. The sinlessness of Jesus is in its probative force equivalent to a miracle; it establishes his supernatural mission; it proves his exceptional relation to God.

We are now to contemplate the sinlessness of Jesus from another point of view, as an event having a miraculous character, and as thus directly attesting his claims, or the validity of his consciousness, of a supernatural connection with God.

Sin is the disharmony of the will with the law of universal love. This law is one in its essence, but branches out in two directions, — as love supreme to God, and equal or impartial love to men. We have no call here to investigate the origin of sin. It is the universality of sin in the world of mankind which is the postulate of the argument. Sin varies indefinitely in kind and degree. But sinfulness in its generic character is an attribute of the human family. Rarely is a human being to be found in whom no distinct fault of a moral nature is plainly discernible. There may be here and there a person whose days have been spent in the seclusion of domestic life, under Christian influences, without any such explicit manifestation of evil as arrests attention, and calls for censure. Occasionally there is a man in whom, even though he mingles in the active work of life, his associates find nothing to blame. But, in these extremely infrequent instances of lives without any apparent blemish, the individuals themselves who are thus remarkable are the last to join in the favorable verdict.

That sensitiveness of conscience which accompanies pure character recognizes and deplores the presence of sin. If there are not positive offences, there are defects: things are left undone which ought to be done. If there are no definite habits of feeling to be condemned, there is a conscious lack of a due energy of holy principle. In those who are deemed, and justly deemed, the most virtuous, and in whom there is no tendency to morbid self-depreciation, there are deep feelings of penitence. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."[1] This is quoted here, not as being an authoritative testimony, but as the utterance of one whose standard of character was obviously the highest. With such an ideal of human perfection, the very thought that any man should consider himself sinless excites indignation. One who pronounces himself blameless before God proves that falsehood, and not truth, governs his judgment.

What shall be said, then, if there be One of whom it can truly be affirmed, that every motive of his heart, not less than every overt action, was exactly confirmed to the loftiest ideal of excellence, — One in whom there was never the faintest self-condemnation, or the least ground for such an emotion? There is a miracle; not, indeed, on the same plane as miracles which interrupt the sequences of natural law. It is an event in another order of things than the material sphere. But it is equally an exception to all human experience. It is equally to all who discern the fact a proclamation of the immediate presence of God. It is equally an attestation that He who is thus marked out in distinction from all other members of the race bears a divine commission. There is a break in the uniform course of

[1] 1 John i. 8

things, to which no cause can be assigned in the natural order. Such a phenomenon authorizes the same inference as that which is drawn from the instantaneous cure, by a word, of a man born blind.

On this eminence He stands who called himself the Son of man. It is not claimed that this peculiarity of itself proves the divinity of Jesus. This would be a larger conclusion than the premises justify. But the inference is unavoidable, first, that his relation to God is altogether peculiar, and, secondly, that his testimony respecting himself has the attestation of a miracle. That testimony must be on all hands allowed to have included the claim to be the authoritative Guide and the Saviour of mankind.

CHAPTER VI.

PROOF OF THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST INDEPENDENTLY OF SPECIAL INQUIRY INTO THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE GOSPELS.

THE reader will bear in mind that we are reasoning, for the present, on the basis of the view respecting the origin of the Gospels which is commonly taken by critics of the sceptical schools. Let it be assumed that more than one of the Gospels resulted from an expansion of earlier documents which included a less amount of matter; that the traditions which are collected in the Gospels of the canon are of unequal value; and that all of these books first saw the light in their present form somewhere in the course of the second century. Still it is maintained, that, even on this hypothesis, the main facts at the foundation of the Christian faith can be established. In this chapter it is proposed to bring forward evidence to prove that miracles were wrought by Jesus substantially as related by the evangelists.

I. The fact that the apostles themselves professed to work miracles by a power derived from Christ makes it highly probable that they believed miracles to have been wrought by him.

The point to be shown is, that narratives of miracles performed by Christ were embraced in the accounts which the apostles were in the habit of giving of his life. A presumptive proof of this proposition is drawn from the circumstance that they themselves, in fulfill-

ing the office to which they were appointed by him, professed to work miracles, and considered this an indispensable criterion of their divine mission. There is no doubt of the fact as here stated. Few scholars now hold that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by Paul. Some follow an ancient opinion, which Grotius held, and to which Calvin was inclined, — that Luke wrote it. Others attribute it to Barnabas. Many are disposed, with Luther, to consider Apollos its author. It is a question which we have no occasion to discuss here. The date of the Epistle is the only point that concerns us at present. It was used by Clement of Rome in his Epistle to the Corinthians, and therefore must have existed as early as A.D. 97. A majority of critics, including adherents of opposite creeds in theology, infer, from passages in the Epistle itself, that the temple at Jerusalem was still standing when it was written.[1] Hilgenfeld, the ablest representative of the Tübingen school, is of opinion that Apollos wrote it before A.D. 67.[2] Be this as it may, its author was a contemporary and acquaintance of the apostles.[3] Now, he tells us that their supernatural mission was confirmed by the miracles which they did: "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost."[4] The same thing is repeatedly asserted by the Apostle Paul. "Working miracles among you"[5] is the phrase which he uses when speaking of what he himself had done in Galatia. If we give to the preposition, as perhaps we should, its literal sense "in," the meaning is, that the apostle had imparted to his converts the power

[1] See Heb. vii. 9, viii. 3, ix. 4.
[2] Einl. in d. N. Test., p. 388.
[3] Heb. ii. 3.
[4] Ibid., ver. 5.
[5] ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις ἐν ὑμῖν, Gal. iii. 5.

to work miracles.[1] In the Epistle to the Romans he explicitly refers to "the mighty signs and wonders" which Christ had wrought by him: it was by "deed," as well as by word, that he had succeeded in convincing a multitude of brethren.[2] How, indeed, we might stop to ask, could such an effect have been produced at that time in the heathen world by "word" alone? But in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians he reminds them that miracles — "signs and wonders and mighty deeds" — had been wrought by him before their eyes; and he calls them "the signs," not of *an* apostle, as the Authorized Version has it, but of "the apostle."[3] They are the credentials of the apostolic office. By these an apostle is known to be what he professes to be. In working miracles he had exhibited the characteristic marks of an apostle. The author of the book of Acts, then, goes no farther than Paul himself goes, when that author ascribes to the apostles "many wonders and signs."[4] It is in the highest degree probable, in the light of the passages quoted from Paul, that, if he and Barnabas were vindicating themselves and their work, they would declare, as the author of Acts affirms they did, "what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them."[5] Now we advance another step. In each of the first three Gospels the direction to work miracles forms a part of the brief commission given by Christ to the apostles.[6] If the apostles could remember any thing correctly, would they forget the terms of this brief, momentous charge from the Master? This, if any thing, would be handed down in an authentic form. In the charge when the apostles

[1] Cf. Lightfoot and Meyer, *ad loc.* [2] Rom. xv. 18–20.
[3] 2 Cor. xii. 12. [4] Acts ii. 43, cf. iv. 30, v. 12, xiv. 3.
[5] Acts xv. 12, cf. ver. 4.
[6] Matt. x. 1, 8; Mark iii. 15, Luke ix. 2; cf. Luke x. 9.

were first sent out, as it is given in Matthew, they were to limit their labors to the Jews, — to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." They were not even to go at that time to the Samaritans. This injunction is a strong confirmation of the exactness of the report in the first evangelist. Coupling the known fact, that the working of miracles was considered by the apostles a distinguishing sign of their office, with the united testimony of the first three Gospels, — the Gospels in which the appointment of the Twelve is recorded, — it may be safely concluded that Jesus did tell them to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils." He told them to preach, and to verify their authority as teachers by this merciful exertion of powers greater than belong to man. Is it probable that he expected them to furnish proofs of a kind which he had not furnished himself? Did he direct them to do what they had never seen him do? Did he profess to communicate to his apostles a power which he had given them no evidence of possessing?

II. Injunctions of Jesus not to report his miracles, it is evident, are truthfully imputed to him; and this proves that the events to which they relate actually took place.

It is frequently said in the Gospels, that Jesus enjoined upon those whom he miraculously healed not to make it publicly known.[1] He was anxious that the miracle should not be noised abroad. For instance, it is said in Mark, that in the neighborhood of Bethsaida he sent home a blind man whom he had cured, saying, "Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town."[2] The motive is plainly indicated. Jesus had

[1] Matt. ix. 30, xii. 16, xvii. 9; Mark iii. 12, v. 43, vii. 36, viii. 26, ix. 9; Luke v. 14, viii. 56.

[2] Mark viii. 26.

to guard against a popular uprising, than which nothing was easier to provoke among the inflammable population of Galilee. There were times, it costs no effort to believe, when they were eager to make him a king.[1] He had to conceal himself from the multitude. He had to withdraw into retired places. It was necessary for him to recast utterly the popular conception of the Messiah, and this was a slow and almost impossible task. It was hard to educate even the disciples out of the old prepossession. Hence he used great reserve and caution in announcing himself as the Messiah. He made himself known by degrees. When Peter uttered his glowing confession of faith, Jesus charged him and his companions "that they should tell no man of him;" that is, they should keep to themselves their knowledge that he was the Christ.[2] The interdict against publishing abroad his miracles is therefore quite in keeping with a portion of the evangelic tradition that is indubitably authentic. On the other hand, such an interdict is a thing which it would occur to nobody to invent. It is the last thing which contrivers of miraculous tales (unless they had before them the model of the Gospels) would be likely to imagine. No plausible motive can be thought of for attributing falsely such injunctions to Jesus, unless it is assumed that there was a desire to account for the alleged miracles not being more widely known. But this would imply intentional falsehood in the first narrators, whoever they were. Even this supposition, in itself most unlikely, is completely shut out, because the prohibitions are generally said to have proved ineffectual. It is commonly added in the Gospels, that the individuals who were healed of their maladies did not

[1] John vi 15 [2] Mark viii. 30; Luke ix. 21.

heed them, but blazed abroad the fact of their miraculous cure. Since the injunctions imposing silence are authentic, the miracles, without which they are meaningless, must have been wrought. It is worthy of note, that, when the maniac of Gadara was restored to health, Jesus did not lay this commandment on him. He sent him to his home, bidding him tell his friends of his experience of the mercy of God.[1] Connected with the narratives of miracles, both before and just after in the same chapter,[2] we find the usual charge not to tell what had been done. Why not in this instance of the madman of Gadara? The reason would seem to have been, that, in that region where Jesus had not taught, and where he did not purpose to remain, the same danger from publicity did not exist. To be sure, the man was not told "to publish" the miracle "in Decapolis," as he proceeded to do; but no pains were taken to prevent him from doing this. He was left at liberty to act in this respect as he pleased. The evangelist does not call our attention in any way to this peculiarity of the Gadara miracle. It is thus an undesigned confirmation of the truth of the narrative, and at the same time of the other narratives with which the injunction to observe silence is connected.

III. Cautions, plainly authentic, against an excessive esteem of miracles, are a proof that they were actually wrought.

No one who falsely sets up to be a miracle-worker seeks to lower the popular esteem of miracles. Such a one never chides the wonder-loving spirit. The same is equally true of those who imagine or otherwise fabricate stories of miracles. The moods of mind out of which fictions of this kind are hatched are incom-

[1] Mark v. 19. [2] Mark iii. 12, v. 43.

patible with any thing like a disparagement of miracles. The tendency will be to make as much of them as possible. Now, the Gospel records represent Christ as taking the opposite course: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."[1] This implies that there were higher grounds of faith. It is an expression of blame. "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."[2] That is, if you cannot take my word for it, then let the miracles convince you. It would almost seem that Christ performed his miracles under a protest. He refused to do a miracle where there was not a germ of faith beforehand. In the first three Gospels there is the same relative estimate of miracles as in the fourth. If men form an opinion about the weather by the looks of the sky, they ought to be convinced by "the signs of the times," in which, if the miracles are included, it is only as one element in the collective manifestation of Christ.[3] When the seventy disciples returned full of joy that they had not only been able to heal the sick, but also to deliver demoniacs from their distress,[4] — which had not been explicitly promised them when they went forth, — Jesus sympathized with their joy: he beheld before his mind's eye the swift downfall of the dominating spirit of evil, and he assured the disciples that further miraculous power should be given to them. But he added, "Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." They were not to plume themselves on the supernatural power exercised, or to be exercised, by them. They were not to make it a ground of self-con-

[1] John iv. 48. [2] John xiv. 11. [3] Matt. xvi. 3.
[4] Such is the force of the καὶ (in the καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια, etc.), Luke x. 17

gratulation. These statements of Jesus, be it observed, for the reasons stated above verify themselves as authentic. And they presuppose the reality of the miracles. They show, it may be added, that the disciples were trained by Jesus not to indulge a wonder-loving spirit, and thus guarded against this source of self-deception.

IV. Teaching of Jesus which is evidently genuine is inseparable from certain miracles: in other words, the miracles cannot be dissected out of authentic teaching and incidents with which they are connected in the narrative. A few illustrations will prove this to be the case.

(1) John the Baptist, being then in prison, sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus if he was indeed the Messiah.[1] A doubt had sprung up in his mind. This is an incident which nobody would have invented. In proof of this, it is enough to say that an effort has been made, by commentators who have caught up a suggestion of Origen, to explain away the fact. It has been conjectured that the message was probably to satisfy some of John's doubting disciples. There is not a word in the narrative to countenance this view. It is excluded by the message which the disciples were to carry from Christ to John: "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." That is, blessed is the man who is not led to disbelieve because the course that I take does not answer to his ideal of the Messiah There is no reason to think that John's mind was free from those more or less sensuous anticipations concerning Christ and his kingdom which the apostles, even after they had long been with Jesus, had not shaken off. He had foretold that the Messiah was to

[1] Matt. xi. 4; Luke vii. 22.

have a "fan in his hand," was to "gather his wheat into the garner," and to "burn up the chaff."[1] He was perplexed that Jesus took no more decisive step, that no great overturning had come. Was Jesus, after all, the Messiah himself, or a precursor? If, in his prison there, the faith of John for the moment faltered, it was nothing worse than was true of Moses and Elijah, the greatest of the old prophets. The commendation of John which Jesus uttered in the hearing of the bystanders, immediately after he had sent back the disciples, was probably designed to efface any impression derogatory to the Baptist which might have been left on their minds. This eulogy is another corroboration of the truth of the narrative. The same is true of his closing words: "Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." They suggest the limit of John's insight into the nature of the kingdom. It is an unquestionable fact, therefore, that the inquiry was sent by John. Nor is it denied that Jesus returned the following answer: "Go and show 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." The messengers were to describe to John the miracles which Jesus was doing, — Luke expressly adds that they themselves were witnesses of them, — and to assure him, that, in addition to these signs of the Messianic era which Isaiah had predicted,[2] to the poor the good news of the speedy advent of the kingdom were proclaimed. The message of Jesus had no ambiguity. It meant what the evangelists understood it to mean. The idea that he was merely using symbols to denote

[1] Matt. iii. 12. [2] Isa. xxxv. 5, 6.

the spiritual effect of his preaching is a mere subterfuge of interpreters who cannot otherwise get rid of the necessity of admitting the fact of miracles. What sort of satisfaction would it have given John, in the state of mind in which he then was, to be assured simply that the teaching of Jesus was causing great pleasure, and doing a great deal of good? The same, or almost as much, he knew to be true of his own preaching. What he needed to learn, and what he did learn from his messengers, was, that the miracles of which he had heard were really done, and to be reminded of their significance.

(2) The Gospels record several controversies of Jesus with over-rigid observers of the sabbath. They found fault with him for laxness in this particular. On one occasion he is said to have met a reproach of this kind with the retort, "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?"[1] It has been said of the books written by the companions of Napoleon at St. Helena, that it is not difficult to mark off what he really said; his sayings having a recognizable style of their own. They who maintain that a like distinction is to be drawn in the Gospels among the reported sayings of Christ have to concede that he uttered the words above quoted. They are characteristic words. Even Strauss holds that they were spoken by him. If so, on what occasion? Luke says that it was on the occasion of Christ's healing a man who had the dropsy. There must have been a rescue from *some* evil. The evil must have been a very serious one: otherwise the parable of the ox or the ass falling into a pit would be out of place. What more proof is wanted of the

[1] Luke xiv. 5.

correctness of the evangelic tradition, and thus of the miracle? On another sabbath he is said to have cured a woman, who, from a muscular disorder, had been bowed down for eighteen years. His reply to his censors is equally characteristic.[1] If the reply was made, the miracle that occasioned it was done. On still another occasion of the same kind he added to the illustration of a sheep falling into a pit the significant question, "How much, then, is a man better than a sheep?"[2] If he uttered these words, then he healed a man with a withered hand. Unless he had just saved a man from some grievous peril, the question is meaningless.

(3) In Matthew, Mark, and Luke it is related that Jesus was charged by the Pharisees with casting out demons through the help of Beelzebub their prince.[3] The conversation that ensued upon this accusation is given. Jesus exposed the absurdity of the charge. It implied that Satan was working against himself, and for the subversion of his own kingdom: "If a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand."[4] The conversation is stamped with internal marks of authenticity. The fact of this charge having been made against Christ was inwrought into the evangelic tradition. Now, the occasion of the debate was the cure of a man who was blind and dumb. The reader may consider demoniacal possession to be a literal fact, or nothing more than a popular idea or theory: in either case the phenomena — epilepsy, lunacy, etc. — were what presented themselves to observation. It may be said that the Jews had exorcists. Jesus implies this when he asks, "By whom do your children" —

[1] Luke xiii. 15. [2] Matt. xii. 12.
[3] Matt. xii. 22-31; Mark iii. 22-31; Luke xi. 14-23. [4] Mark iii. 25.

that is, your disciples — "cast them out?" Yet the cures of this sort which were effected by Christ must have included aggravated cases of mental and physical disorder, or they must have been wrought with a uniformity which distinguished them from similar relief administered by others through the medium of prayer and fasting. There was an evident contrast between the power exerted by him in such cases and that with which the Pharisees were acquainted. This is implied in the astonishment which this class of miracles is represented to have called forth. It is implied, also, in the fact that the accusation of a league with Satan was brought against him. They had to assert this, or else admit that it was "with the finger of God" that he cast out devils.[1] "He *commanded* the unclean spirits, and they obeyed him."

(4) We find both in Matthew and Luke a passage in which woes are pronounced against certain cities of Galilee for remaining impenitent.[2] There is no reason for doubting that they were uttered by Jesus. There is a question as to the time when they were uttered, unless it be assumed that they were spoken on two different occasions; but that chronological question is immaterial here. The authenticity of the tradition is confirmed, if confirmation were required, by the mention of Bethsaida and Chorazin. No account of miracles wrought in these towns is embraced in either of the Gospels.[3] Had the passage been put into the mouth of Jesus falsely, there would naturally have been framed a narrative to match it. There would have stood in connection with it a description, briefer

[1] Luke xi. 20. [2] Matt. xi. 20–25; Luke x. 13–16.

[3] The Bethsaida of Mark viii. 22 was another place, north-east of the lake.

or longer, of miracles alleged to have been done in those towns. Moreover, "in that same hour," according to the first Gospel, Jesus uttered a fervent thanksgiving that the truth, hidden from the wise, had been revealed to the simple-hearted,[1] — a passage that needs no vindication of its authenticity. This outpouring of emotion is a natural sequel to the sorrowful impression made on him by the obduracy of the Galilean cities. In Luke there is the same succession of moods of feeling, although the juxtaposition of the two passages is not quite so close. Now, what is the ground of this condemnation of Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida? It is "the mighty works" which they had witnessed. This privilege makes their guilt more heinous than that of Tyre and Sidon. It is the reference to the miracles which gives point to the denunciation.

(5) The manner in which faith appears as the concomitant and prerequisite of miracles is a strong confirmation of the evangelical narratives. Faith is required of the apostles for the performance of miraculous works. They fail in the attempt from lack of faith.[2] They are told, that with faith nothing is beyond their power. But it is not their own strength which they are to exert. They lay hold of the power of God, and in that power they control the forces of nature. So applicants for miraculous help must come to Jesus with faith in his ability to relieve them. The exertion of his restorative power is in response to trust. The references to faith as thus connected with miracles are numerous. They are varied in form, obviously artless and uncontrived. They are an undesigned voucher for the truth of the narratives in which they mingle.[3]

[1] Matt. xi. 25-28.

[2] Mark ix. 18; Luke ix. 40.

[3] See Matt. viii. 10 (Luke vii. 9), ix. 2 (Mark ii. 5; Luke v. 20), ix.

(6) In connection with one miracle there is instruction as to its design which it is difficult to believe did not emanate from Jesus. It is embedded in the heart of the narrative, as it was an essential part of the transaction.[1] He is in a house at Capernaum surrounded by a crowd. A paralytic is brought by four men, and is let down through the roof, this being the only means of bringing him near Jesus. Seeing their faith, he said tenderly to the paralytic, "Son (or child), be of good courage: thy sins are forgiven thee." The disease, we are led to infer, was the result of sin, it may be of sensuality. The sufferer's pain of heart Jesus first sought to assuage. It was the first step toward his cure. These words struck the scribes who heard them as blasphemous. Jesus divined their thoughts, and asked them which is the easier to say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," or "Arise and walk?" If one presupposed divine power, so did the other. Then follows the statement: "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins" — here he turned to the paralytic — "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." The entire narrative is replete with the marks of truth; but this one observation, defining the motive of the miracle, making it subordinate to the higher end of verifying his authority to grant spiritual blessings, carries in it evident marks of authenticity. Did not Jesus say this? If he did, he performed the miracle.

V. The fact that no miracles are attributed to John the Baptist should convince one that the miracles attributed to Jesus were actually performed.

22 (Mark v. 34, x. 52), xvii. 20 (Luke xvii. 6); Luke viii. 48, **xvii. 19**; Matt. xv. 28; Luke vii. 50, xviii. 42; Mark v. 36, ix. 23; Matt. **viii. 13**; John iv. 50, ix. 38; Acts iii. 16, xiv. 9.

[1] **Mark ii. 10**; cf. Matt. ix. 6; **Luke v. 24.**

In the Gospels, John is regarded as a prophet inferior to no other. His career is described. Great stress is laid on his testimony to Jesus. Why, then, are no miracles ascribed to him? They would have served to corroborate his testimony. If there was a propensity in the first disciples, or their successors, to imagine miracles where there were none, why are no fabrications of this sort interwoven with the story of John's preaching? They had before them the life of his prototype, Elijah, and the record of the miracles done by him. What (except a regard for truth) hindered them from mingling in the story of the forerunner of Jesus occurrences equally wonderful? Why do we not read that one day he responded to the entreaty of a poor blind man by restoring his sight, that on another occasion he gave back to a widow the life of her son, that at a certain time a woman who had been for years a helpless invalid was immediately cured by a word from the prophet, that the diseased were often brought to him by their friends to be healed? The only answer, is that the Gospel narratives are not the product of imagination. They give the events that actually took place.

VI. It is equally difficult for sceptical criticism to explain why no miracles are ascribed to Jesus prior to his public ministry. Why should the imagination of the early Christians have stopped short at his baptism? Why did not fancy run back, after the manner of the apocryphal fictions, over the period that preceded? A definite date is assigned for the beginning of his miraculous agency. Fancy and fraud do not curb themselves in this way.

VII. The persistence of the faith of the apostles in Jesus as the Messiah, and of his faith in himself, admits of no satisfactory explanation when the miracles are denied.

How were the apostles to be convinced that he was the promised, expected Messiah? What were the evidences of it? He took a course opposite to that which they expected the Messiah to take. He planned no political change. He enjoined meekness and patience. He held out to them the prospect of persecution and death as the penalty of adhering to him. Where was the national deliverance which they had confidently anticipated that the Messiah would effect? How intangible, compared with their sanguine hopes, was the good which he sought to impart! Moreover, they heard his claims denied on every side. The guides of the people in religion scorned or denounced them. Had there been no exertions of power to impress the senses, and the mind through the senses, it is incredible that the apostles could have believed in him, and have clung to him, in the teeth of all the influences fitted to inspire distrust. We might ask how Jesus himself could have retained immovable the conviction that he was in truth the Messiah of God, if he found himself possessed of no powers exceeding those of the mortals about him. How could he have maintained this consciousness, without the least faltering, when he saw himself rejected by rulers and people, and at length forsaken by his timid disciples?

Strauss is, on the whole, the most prominent disbeliever in modern times who has undertaken to reconstruct the gospel history, leaving out the miracles. His theory was, that the narratives of miracles are a mythology spontaneously spun out of the imagination of groups of early disciples. But what moved them to build up so baseless a fabric? What was the idea that possessed the mind, and gave birth to its unconscious fancies? Why, at the foundation of it all was the fixed

expectation that the Messiah must be a miracle-worker? The predictions of the Old Testament and the example of the prophets required it. How was it, then, that, in the absence of this indispensable criterion of the Messianic office, these same disciples believed in Jesus? How came he to believe in himself? To these questions the author of the mythical theory could give no answer which does not subvert his own hypothesis. The same cause which by the supposition led to the imagining of miracles that were false must have precluded faith, except on the basis of miracles that were true.

VIII. In the evangelical tradition the miracles enter as potent causes into the nexus of occurrences. They are links which cannot be spared in the chain of events.

Take, for example, the opening chapters of Mark, which most critics at present hold to be the oldest Gospel. There is an exceedingly vivid picture of the first labors of Jesus in Capernaum and its vicinity. His teaching, to be sure, thrilled his hearers: "He taught them as one that had authority."[1] But the intense excitement of the people was due even more to another cause. In the synagogue at Capernaum a demoniac interrupted him with loud cries, calling him "the Holy One of God." At the word of Jesus, after uttering one shriek, the frenzied man became quiet and sane. The mother of Peter's wife was raised from a sick-bed. Other miraculous cures followed. It was the effect of these upon the people that obliged him to rise long before dawn in order to anticipate their coming, and to escape to a retired place for prayer. It was a miracle wrought upon a leper that compelled Jesus to leave the city for "desert places," — secluded spots where the

[1] Mark i. 22.

people would not throng upon him in so great numbers.[1] Very definite occurrences are traced to particular causes, which are miraculous acts done by Christ. It was the raising of Lazarus that determined the Jewish rulers to apprehend Jesus, and put him to death. The fact that this event, in a record which contains so many unmistakably authentic details, is the point on which the subsequent history turns, forced upon Renan the conviction that there was an apparent miracle,—something that was taken for a miracle,—and this conviction he has not been able to persuade himself absolutely to relinquish.[2]

The miracle at Jericho, which is described, with some diversity in the circumstances, by three of the evangelists, Keim finds it impossible to resolve into a fiction. He refers to the fact that all of the first three Gospels record it. He adverts to the fresh and vivid character of the narratives. But the main consideration is the explanation afforded of the rising tide of enthusiasm in the people at this time, of which there is full proof. But Keim, still reluctant to admit the supernatural, alludes to the popular excitement as quickening "the vital and nervous forces," and so restoring the impaired or lost vision of the man healed. It is intimated that this access of nerve-force, coupled with his faith, may have effected the cure.[3] It is found necessary to revert to a method of explanation which German criticism had long ago tested and discarded. The point which concerns us here is the reality of the transaction as it appeared to the spectators. The physiological solution may pass for what it is worth. If cures had been effected in this way by Jesus, there would have been

[1] Mark 1. 35, v. 45. [2] Vie de Jésus (13me ed.), pp. 507, 514
[3] Gesch. Jesu von Nazara, vol. iii. p. 53.

conspicuous failures, as well as instances of success; and how would these failures have affected the minds of the disciples and of other witnesses of them, not to speak of the mind of Jesus himself? The resurrection of Jesus, more than any other of the miracles, bridges over an otherwise impassable chasm in the course of events. We see the disciples, a company of disheartened mourners. Then we see them on a sudden transformed into a band of bold propagandists of the new faith, ready to lay down their lives for it. The resurrection is the event which accounts for this marvellous change and for the spread of Christianity which follows. But this event requires to be more thoroughly considered.

IX. The proof of the crowning miracle of Christianity, the resurrection of Jesus, cannot be successfully assailed, even were the views of the sceptical school as to the origin of the Gospels well founded.

As we stand for the moment on common ground with them, we cannot make use of such an incident as the doubt of Thomas and the removal of it,[1] although this incident, as well as various other portions of the fourth Gospel, may be historical, even if not John, but a later author, wrote the book. An uncertainty is thrown over circumstances relating to the intercourse of the disciples with Jesus after his death, which are found in the Gospels; that is, prior to establishing the genuineness of the Gospels, it is open to question how far the details are faithfully transmitted from the witnesses. But, as regards the cardinal fact of the Gospel, we have precious evidence from an unimpeachable source. The Apostle Paul states with precision the result of his inquiries on the subject.[2] There were five interviews of the dis-

[1] John xx. 24-30.

[2] 1 Cor. xv. 4-8.

ciples with the risen Jesus, besides the miracle on the journey to Damascus. Paul was converted A.D. 35, four years after the crucifixion. In A.D. 38 he went to Jerusalem, and staid a fortnight with Peter. He was conversant with the apostles and other disciples. He knew what their testimony was. From his explicit statement, and from other perfectly conclusive evidence, it is certain that the first of the supposed appearances of Christ to the disciples was on the morning of the next Sunday after his death. It was on "the third day."[1] Then it was that they believed themselves to have irresistible proof that he had risen from the tomb. Ever after, this was the principal fact which they proclaimed, the main foundation of their faith and hope. The question is, Were they, or were they not, deceived? Is the church founded on a fact, or on a delusion? Did Christianity, which owes its existence and spread to this immovable conviction on the part of the apostles, spring from either a fraud or a dream? The notion which once had advocates, that Christ did not really die, but revived from a swoon, is given up. How could he have gone through the crucifixion without dying? What would have been his physical condition, even if a spark of life had remained? If he did not die then, when did he die? Did he and the apostles agree to pretend that he had died? The slander of the Jews, that some of the disciples stole his body, is not deserving of consideration. Why should men make up a story which was to bring them no benefit, but only contempt, persecution, and death? The question what became of the body of Jesus is one which disbelievers in the

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 4, cf. Matt. xvi. 21, xvii. 23, xx. 19, xxvii. 63, xxviii. 1; Mark viii. 31, ix. 31, xiv. 58, xv. 29, xvi. 2, 9; Luke ix. 22, xiii. 32, xviii. 33, xxiv. 1, 7, 21, 46; John ii. 19, xx. 1, 19, 26.

resurrection do not satisfactorily answer. It is not doubted that the tomb was found empty. Jewish adversaries had the strongest reason for producing the body if they knew where it was. That would have destroyed the apostles' testimony in a moment.

The only hypothesis which has any plausibility at the present day, in opposition to the Christian faith, is the "vision-theory." The idea of it is, that the apostles mistook mental impressions for actual perceptions. Their belief in the resurrection was the result of hallucination. Some would hold that Christ really manifested himself to them in a miraculous way, but to their souls only: he did not come to them visibly and tangibly. Of this theory, especially in the first form, it is to be said, that responsibility for the delusion supposed comes back upon the founder of Christianity himself. Whoever thinks that the disciples were self-deceived, as Schleiermacher has well said, not only attributes to them a mental imbecility which would make their entire testimony respecting Christ untrustworthy, but implies, that, when Christ chose such witnesses, he did not know what was in man. Or, if Christ willingly permitted or led them to mistake an inward impression for actual perceptions, he is himself the author of error, and forfeits our moral respect.[1] But the vision-theory is built up on false assumptions, and signally fails to explain the phenomena in the case. I shall not here pause to examine the affirmation of Paul, that he had personally seen Christ. This must be observed, that he distinguishes that first revelation of Christ to him — which stopped him in his career as an inquisitor, and made him a new man in his convictions and aims — from subsequent "visions and revelations."[2]

[1] Christlicher Glaube, vol. ii. p. 88. [2] 2 Cor. xii. 1; 1 Cor. ii. 10.

They were separated in time. It was not on them that Paul professed to found his claim to be an apostle. He refers to them for another purpose. The words that he heard in a moment of ecstasy — whether "in the body or out of the body" he could not tell — he never even repeated.[1] That sight of Jesus which was the prelude of his conversion he gives as the sixth and last of his appearances to the apostles. It was objective, a disclosure to the senses. It was such a perception of Christ, that his resurrection was proved by it, — a fact with which the resurrection of believers is declared to be indissolubly connected.[2] Attempts have been made to account for Paul's conversion by referring it to a mental crisis induced by secret misgivings, and leanings toward the faith which he was striving to destroy. Some have brought in a thunder-clap or a sunstroke to help on the effect of the struggle supposed to be taking place within his soul. One trouble with this psychological explanation of the miracle is, that the assumption of previous doubts and of remorseful feelings is not only without historical warrant, but is directly in the teeth of Paul's own assertions.[3] It is not true, however, that Paul implies in the least that the appearances of the risen Christ to the other apostles were exactly similar to Christ's appearance to him on the road to Damascus. His claim was simply that he, too, had seen Christ. The circumstances might be wholly different in his case. Jewish Christians who were hostile to Paul made a point of the difference between his knowledge of Christ through visions and the sort of

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 4, cf. Keim, vol. iii. p. 583, n. 1. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 12-21.

[3] Before discussing fully the subject of Paul's conversion, it is requisite to examine the question of the authorship and credibility of the Acts.

knowledge vouchsafed to the other apostles. The risen Christ whom these saw did not speak to them from heaven. They believed him to be with them on the earth. He had not yet ascended. His real or supposed presence in the body with them was an essential part of what they related. Without it, the whole idea of the ascension was meaningless. We might go farther, and say, that, in the absence of decisive proof to the contrary, it is to be presumed that the accounts which the apostles were in the habit of giving of their interviews with the risen Jesus — facts so immeasurably important to themselves and others — are substantially preserved in the Gospels. Why should it be doubted that at least the essential nature of these interviews, or of their impression of them, about which the Apostle Paul had so particularly inquired, is set forth by the four evangelists?

But the details in the Gospel narratives we leave out of account, for the present. The main facts indisputably embraced in the testimony of the apostles are sufficient. There are criteria of hallucination. If there were not, we should on all occasions be at a loss to know when to credit witnesses, or even to trust our own senses. We have to consider, in the first place, the state of mind into which the apostles were thrown by the crucifixion. It was a state of extreme sorrow and dejection. They were struck with dismay. Their hopes were crushed. Whoever has seen the dead Christ in the famous painting of Rubens at Antwerp can imagine the feeling of the disciples when they looked on the terrible reality. How was it possible for them within a few days — within two days, in the case of some, if not of all — to recover from the shock? How was it possible that in so short a time

joy took the place of grief and consternation? Whence came the sudden revival of faith, and with it the courage to go forth and testify, at the risk of their own lives, that Jesus was indeed the Messiah? The glowing faith, rising to an ecstasy of peace and assurance, out of which hallucination might spring, did not exist. The necessary materials of illusion were absolutely wanting. There was no long interval of silent brooding over the Master's words and worth. The time was short, — a few days. Even then there are no traces of any fever of enthusiasm. The interviews with the risen Christ are set down in the Gospels in a brief, calm way, without any marks of bewildering agitation. No, the revulsion of feeling must have come from without. The event that produced it was no creation of the apostles' minds. It took them by surprise. Secondly, the number and variety of the persons — five hundred at once — who constitute the witnesses heighten the difficulty in the way of the hallucination-theory. Under circumstances so gloomy and disheartening, how were so many persons — comprising, as they must have comprised, all varieties of temperament — transported by the same enthusiasm to such a pitch of bewilderment as to confound a mental image of Christ with the veritable, present reality? But, thirdly, a greater difficulty lies in the limited number of the alleged appearances of Jesus, considering the state of mind which must be assumed to have existed if the hallucination-theory is adopted. Instead of five, the number of those known to Paul, there would have been a multitude. This the analogy of religious delusions authorizes us to assert. If the five hundred collectively imagined themselves to see Christ, a great portion of them would individually, before and after, have imagined the same thing. The

limited, carefully marked, exactly recollected number of the appearances of Jesus is a powerful argument against the theory of illusion. Fourthly, connected with this last consideration is another most impressive fact. There was a limitation of time as well as of number. The appearances of Jesus, whatever they were, ceased in a short period. Why did they not continue longer? There were visions of one kind and another afterward. Disbelievers point to these as a proof of the apostles' credulity. Be this as it may, the question recurs, Why were there no more visions of the risen Jesus to be placed in the same category with those enumerated by Paul? Stephen's vision was of Christ in the heavenly world. In the persecutions recorded in Acts, when martyrs were perishing, why were there no Christophanies? There is not a solitary case of an alleged actual appearance of Jesus on the earth to disciples, after the brief period which is covered by the instances recorded by Paul and the evangelists. There were those distinct occurrences, standing by themselves, definitely marked, beginning at a certain time, ending at a certain time, — so many, and no more.

We know what the mood of the apostles was from the time of these alleged interviews with the risen Christ. They set about the work of preaching the gospel of the resurrection, and of founding the church. There was no more despondency, no more faltering. It is undeniable that they are characterized by sobriety of mind, and by a habit of reflection, without which, indeed, the whole movement would quickly have come to an end. The controversies attending the martyrdom of Stephen were not more than two years after the death of Jesus. Then followed the mission to the Jews and to the heathen, the deliberations respecting the position

to be accorded to the Gentile converts, and the whole work of organizing and training the churches. To be sure, they claimed to be guided by the Divine Spirit. Light was imparted to them, from time to time, through visions. Take what view one will of these phenomena, it is plain, that, on the the whole, a discreet, reflective habit characterized the apostles. This is clear enough from the Acts, and from the Epistles, on any view respecting the credibility of these books which critics are disposed to take. Now, this reasonableness and sobriety belonged to the apostles from the first, or it did not. If it did, it excludes the supposition of that abandonment to dreamy emotion and uninquiring revery which the hallucination-theory implies. If it did not, then it behooves the advocates of this hypothesis to tell what it was that suddenly effected such a change in them. What broke up, on a sudden, the mood of excitement and flightiness which engendered notions of a fictitious resurrection? How was a band of religious dreamers, not gradually, but in a very short space of time, transformed into men of discretion and good sense? Why did these devotees not go on with their delicious dreams, in which they believed Jesus to be visibly at their side? The sudden, final termination, without any outward cause producing it, of an absorbing religious enthusiasm like that which is imputed to the apostles and to the five hundred disciples, is without a parallel in the history of religion.

It is the force of these considerations which compels Keim to give up the illusion-theory. "It must be acknowledged," he says, "that this theory, which has lately become popular, is only an hypothesis that explains some things, but does not explain the main thing, nay, deals with the historical facts from distorted

and untenable points of view."[1] "If the visions are not a human product, not self-produced; if they are not the blossom and fruit of a bewildering over-excitement; if they are something strange, mysterious; if they are accompanied at once with astonishingly clear perceptions and resolves, — then it remains to fall back on a source of them not yet named: it is God and the glorified Christ."[2] Thus the cessation of the visions at a definite point can be accounted for. The extraneous power that produced them ceased to do so. It was, in truth, the personal act and self-revelation of the departed Jesus. Without this supernatural manifestation of himself, to convince his disciples that he still lived in a higher form of being, his cause would, in all probability, have come to an end at his death. Faith in him as Messiah would have vanished, the disciples would have gone back to Judaism and the synagogue, and the words of Jesus would have been buried in the dust of oblivion.[3] A powerful impression, not originating in themselves, but coming from without, from Christ himself, alone prevented this catastrophe. The admission of a miracle is fairly extorted from this writer by the untenableness of every other solution that can be thought of. At the end of a work which is largely taken up with attempts, direct or indirect, to disprove supernatural agency, Keim finds himself driven by the sheer pressure of the evidence to assert its reality, and to maintain that the very survival of Christianity in the world after the death of Jesus depended on it. If he still stumbles at the particular form of the miracle which the testimony obliges us to accept, yet the miracle of a self-manifestation of Jesus to the apostles he is constrained to presuppose.

[1] Gesch. Jesu von Nazara, vol. iii. p. 600. [2] Ibid., p. 602
[3] Ibid., p. 605.

On a question of this kind historical evidence can go no farther. When it is declared by a large number of witnesses who have no motive to deceive, that a certain event took place before their eyes, and when the circumstances forbid the hypothesis of self-deception, there is no alternative but to admit the reality of the fact. The proof is complete. The fact may still be denied by an unreflecting incredulity. It may be affirmed to be impossible, or to be under any circumstances incapable of proof. Against such a position, testimony, historical proof of any sort, is powerless. The immovable faith of the apostles that Jesus "showed himself alive to them" is a fact that nobody questions. Without that faith, Christianity would have died at its birth. Whoever denies credit to their testimony ought to explain in some rational way the origin, strength, and persistence of that faith. But this, as experiment has proved, cannot be done.

X. The concessions which are extorted by the force of the evidence from the ablest disbelievers in the miracles are fatal to their own cause.

At the beginning of this century the theory of Paulus, the German Euemerus, was brought forward. It was the naturalistic solution. The stories of miracles in the New Testament were based on facts which were misunderstood. There were actual occurrences; but they were looked at through a mist of superstitious belief, and thus misinterpreted and magnified. Jesus had a secret knowledge of potent remedies, and the cures which he effected by the application of them passed for miracles. The instances of raising the dead were cases of only apparent death. For example, Jesus saw that the son of the widow of Nain was not really dead. Perhaps the young man opened his eyes, or

stirred, and thus discovered to Jesus that he was alive. Jesus mercifully saved him from a premature burial. He did not think himself called upon to correct the mistaken judgments of the disciples and of others, who attributed his beneficent acts to preternatural power. He allowed himself in a tacit accommodation to the vulgar ideas in these matters. This theory was seriously advocated in learned tomes. It was applied in detail in elaborate commentaries on the Gospels.

Strauss simply echoed the general verdict to which all sensible and right-minded people had arrived, when he scouted this attempted explanation of the Gospel narratives, and derided the exegesis by which it was supported. The theory of Paulus made the apostles fools, and Christ a Jesuit. But the hypothesis which Strauss himself brought forward, if less ridiculous, was not a whit more tenable. Unconscious myths generated by communities of disciples who mistook their common fancies for facts; myths generated by bodies of disciples cut off from the care and oversight of the apostles who knew better; by disciples, who, nevertheless, succeeded in substituting in all the churches their fictitious narrative, in the room of the true narrative, which was given by the apostles, — here were improbabilities which prevented the mythical theory from gaining a foothold at the bar of historical criticism. It was impossible, as it has been remarked above, to see how the faith of the myth-making division of disciples was produced at the start. No such class of disciples, cut off from the superintendence of the apostles, existed. If it be supposed that such a class of disciples did exist, the agents who planted Christianity in the towns and cities of the Roman Empire were not from these, but were the apostles and their followers. And then, how could the

established tradition as to Christ's life be superseded by another narrative, emanating from some obscure source, and presenting a totally diverse conception from that which the apostles, or their pupils, were teaching? So the mythical theory went the way of the naturalistic scheme of Paulus. Seeing his failure, Strauss afterward tried to change the definition of myth, and to introduce an element of conscious invention into the idea; but in so doing he destroyed the work of his own hands.

Renan has undertaken, in a series of volumes, to furnish upon the naturalistic basis an elaborate explanation of the origin of Christianity. In the successive editions of his *Life of Jesus* he has considered and reconsidered the problem of the miracles. What has he to say? He tells us that miracles at that epoch were thought indispensable to the prophetic vocation. The legends of Elijah and Elisha were full of them. It was taken for granted that the Messiah would perform many.[1] Jesus believed that he had a gift of healing. He acquired repute as an exorcist.[2] Nay, it is undeniable that "acts which would now be considered fruits of illusion or hallucination had a great place in the life of Jesus."[3] The four Gospels, he holds, render this evident. Renan sees that there is no way of escaping the conclusion that miracles *seemed* to be wrought, and that they were a very marked feature in the history as it actually occurred. Those about Jesus — the *entourage* — were probably more struck with the miracles than with any thing else.[4] How shall this be accounted for? Illusion in the mind of Jesus, an exaggerated idea of his powers, will go a little way toward a solution of the question,

[1] Vie de Jésus, p. 266, cf. p. 271.
[2] Ibid., p. 273.
[3] Ibid., p. 277.
[4] Ibid., p. 269.

but does not suffice. It must be held that the part of a thaumaturgist was forced on Jesus by the craving of disciples and the demand of current opinion. He had either to renounce his mission, or to comply.[1] His miracles were "a violence done him by his age, a concession which a pressing necessity wrested from him."[2] There were miracles, or transactions taken for miracles, in which he consented "to play a part."[3] He was reluctant; it was distasteful to him: but he consented. Then come M. Renan's apologies for Jesus. Sincerity is not a trait of Orientals. We must not be hard upon deception of this sort. We must conquer our "repugnances." "We shall have a right to be severe upon such men when we have accomplished as much with our scruples as they with their lies." In that impure city of Jerusalem, Jesus was no longer himself. His conscience, by the fault of others, had lost its original clearness. He was desperate, pushed to the extremity, no longer master of himself. Death must come to restore him to liberty, to deliver him from a part which became every hour more exacting, more difficult to sustain.[4]

In plain English, Jesus was an impostor, unwillingly, yet really and consciously. From enthusiasm it went on to knavery; for pious fraud, notwithstanding M. Renan's smooth deprecation, is *fraud*. The Son of man sinks out of sight, with his conscience clouded, his character fallen. M. Renan's excuses for him are themselves immoral. Even his apologies for Judas are less offensive.

This defamation of Jesus is for the theory of disbelief a *reductio ad absurdum*. The wise and good of all ages are told that their veneration is misplaced. Jesus was

[1] Vie de Jesus, p. 267.
[2] Ibid., p. 279.
[3] Ibid., p. 513.
[4] Ibid., p. 375.

not the "holy one." There is nothing even heroic in him. He is swept away by a popular current, giving up his rectitude, giving up his moral discrimination. He is made up in equal parts of the visionary and the deceiver. By his moral weakness he brings himself into such an entanglement, that to escape from it by death is a piece of good fortune. He to whom mankind have looked up as to the ideal of holiness turns out to be, first a dreamer, then a fanatic and a charlatan. It is proved that a clean thing can come out of an unclean. Out of so muddy a fountain there has flowed so pure a stream. Courage, undeviating truth, steadfast loyalty to right against all seductions, in all these Christian ages have sprung from communion with a dishonest man, who obeyed the maxim that the end justifies the means. For no gloss of rhetoric can cover up the meaning that lies underneath M. Renan's fine phrases. When the light coating of French varnish is rubbed off, it is a picture of degrading duplicity that is left.

This is the last word of scientific infidelity. Let the reader mark the point to which his attention is called. On any rational theory about the date and authorship of the Gospels, it is found impossible to doubt that facts supposed at the time of their occurrence to be miraculous were plentiful in the life of Jesus. The advocates of atheism are driven to the hypothesis of hallucination with a large infusion of pious fraud. There is no fear that such a theory will prevail. No being could exist with the heterogeneous, discordant qualities attributed by Renan to Christ. Were such a being possible, the new life of humanity could never have flowed from so defiled a source.

The arguments which this chapter contains will not

convince an atheist. One who denies that God is a personal being is, in direct proportion to the force of his conviction, debarred from believing in a miracle. He will either seek for some other explanation of the phenomena, or leave the problem unsolved. Secondly, these arguments, it is believed, separately taken, are valid; but they are also to be considered together. Their collective strength is to be estimated. If the single rod could be broken, the same may not be true of the bundle. Thirdly, it is not to be forgotten that demonstrative reasoning on questions of historical fact is precluded. He who requires a coercive argument where probable reasoning alone is applicable must be left in doubt or disbelief. In the strongest conceivable case of probable reasoning there is always a *possibility* of the opposite opinion being true. Enough that *reasonable* doubt is excluded.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GOSPELS A FAITHFUL RECORD OF THE TESTIMONY GIVEN BY THE APOSTLES.

WHAT did the apostles testify? Is their testimony to be relied on? In the historical inquiry which we are pursuing, these are the main questions. The subject of the authorship and date of the Gospels concerns us from its relation to the first of these points. Only by investigating the origin of the Gospels can we ascertain whether these writings faithfully present the testimony given by the apostles. But proof, from whatever quarter it may come, that such is the fact, even though not bearing directly on the question by what particular authors the Gospels were written, it is pertinent to adduce. And proof of this character, it will be seen, is not wholly wanting.

There is one remark to be made prior to entering on the discussion before us. The circumstance that the Gospels contain accounts of miracles gives rise, in some minds, to a conscious or secret disinclination to refer these writings to the apostles, or to regard them as a fair and true representation of their testimony. But this bias is unreasonable. Apart from the general consideration, that, if there is to be revelation, there must be miracle, it has been already proved that accounts of miracles, and of some of the very miracles recorded in these histories, did enter into the narratives of the

ministry of Jesus which the apostles were accustomed to give.

The universal reception of the four Gospels as having exclusive authority, by the churches in the closing part of the second century, requires to be accounted for if their genuineness is denied. The literature which has survived from the latter part of the first century and the beginning of the second is scanty and fragmentary. But when we come out into the light in the last quarter of the second century, we find the Gospels of the canon in full possession of the field. We hear, moreover, from all quarters, the declaration that these are the Gospels which have come down from the apostles. We are given to understand that their genuineness had never been questioned in the churches. There was no centralized organization, be it remembered, to pass judgment on their claims. They owed this universal acceptance to the concerted action of no priesthood, to the decree of no council. The simple fact is, that these books — ascribed respectively to four authors, two of whom were apostles, and the other two were not — were recognized by the Christian churches everywhere, and, it was alleged, had been recognized without dispute. Here is Irenæus, born as early as A.D. 130 — probably a number of years earlier[1] — in Asia Minor, bishop of the church of Lyons from A.D. 178 to 202; an upright man, in a conspicuous position, and with ample means of acquiring a knowledge of the churches in Asia Minor and Italy, as well as in Gaul.

[1] Tillemont, and Lightfoot (Cont. Review, August, 1876, p. 415) fix the date of Irenæus' birth at A.D. 120; Ropes (Bib. Sacra, April, 1877, pp. 288 seq.), at A.D. 126; so Hilgenfeld. But Zahn argues ably (Herzog u. Plitt's Real. Encycl., vii. 134 seq.) for an earlier date, A.D. 115; with whom agrees Harnack Die Überlieferung d. griechischen Apologg. d 2tn Jahrh., p. 204.

In defending Christian truth against the grotesque speculations of the Gnostics, he is led to make his appeal, at the beginning of the third book of his treatise, to the Scriptures. This leads him to present an account of the composition of the Gospels, — how Matthew published "a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own language;" Mark put in writing "the things that were preached by Peter;" Luke, "the attendant of Paul," wrote the third Gospel; and "afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned on his breast — he again put forth his Gospel while he abode at Ephesus in Asia."[1] These Gospels, and no others, he tells us, the churches acknowledge. Fully to illustrate how Irenæus constantly assumes the exclusive authority of the Gospels of the canon would require us to transfer to these pages no small part of his copious work. Passing over the sea to Alexandria, we find Clement, who was born probably at Athens, certainly not later than A.D. 160, and was at the head of the catechetical school in the city of his adoption from A.D. 190 to 203, having previously travelled in Greece, Italy, Syria, and Palestine.[2] Referring to a statement in an apocryphal Gospel, he remarks that it is not found "in the four Gospels which have been handed down to us."[3] In another place he states the order in which these Gospels were written as he had learned it from "the oldest presbyters."[4] Then, from the church of North Africa we have the emphatic affirmations of Tertullian (born about A.D. 160) to the sole authority of the four Gospels, which were written by apostles and by apostolic men, their companions.[5] In the churches founded by

[1] Adv. Hær., III. i. 1.
[2] Euseb., H. E., v. 11.
[3] Strom., iii. 553 (ed. Potter).
[4] *τῶν ἀνέκαθεν πρεσβυτέρων*, Euseb., H. E., vi. 14.
[5] Adv. Marc., iv. 2-6.

the apostles, and by the churches in fellowship with them, he asserts, the Gospel of Luke had been received since its first publication. "The same authority of the apostolic churches," he adds, "will also support the other Gospels," of which Matthew, Mark, and John were the authors. The Muratorian canon, of Roman origin, the date of which is not far from A.D. 170, is a fragment which begins in the middle of a sentence. That sentence, from its resemblance to a statement made by an earlier writer, Papias, respecting Mark, as well as from what immediately follows in the document itself, evidently relates to this evangelist. This broken sentence is succeeded by an account of the composition of Luke, which is designated as the third Gospel, and then of John. In Syria, the Peshito, the Bible of the ancient Syrian churches, having its origin at about the same time as the Muratorian canon, begins with the four Gospels. The canon of Scripture was then in process of formation; and the absence from the Peshito of the second and third Epistles of John, second Peter, Jude, and Revelation, — books which were disputed in the ancient church, — is a proof at once of the antiquity of that version and of the value of the testimony given by it to the universal reception of the Gospels.

It must be borne in mind, that the Fathers who have been named above are here referred to, not for the value of their opinion as individuals in regard to the authorship of the Gospels, but as witnesses for the footing which they had in the churches. These Christian societies now encircled the Mediterranean. They were scattered over the Roman Empire from Syria to Spain.[1]

[1] There were Christians in Spain (Irenæus, Adv. Hær., i. 10, 2; Tertullian, Adv. Judæos, c. 7). If, as is probable, Spain is designated by the τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως of Clement of Rome (Ep. v.), St. Paul visited

No doubt the exultation of the Fathers of the second century over the rapid spread and the prospects of Christianity led to hyperbole in describing the progress it had made.[1] But, making all due allowance for rhetorical warmth, it is to be remembered, that, in writing for contemporaries, it would have been folly for them intentionally to indulge in misstatement in a matter of statistics with which their readers were as well acquainted as they were themselves. Christians had become numerous enough to excite anxiety more and more in the rulers of the empire. The question to be answered is, how this numerous, widely dispersed body had been led unanimously to pitch upon these four narratives as the sole authorities for the history of Jesus. For what reasons had they adopted, *nemine contradicente*, these four Gospels exclusively, one of which was ascribed to Matthew, a comparatively obscure apostle, and two others to Luke and Mark, neither of whom belonged among the Twelve?

But the situation of these Fathers personally, as it helps us to determine the value of their judgment on the main question, is worth considering. Irenæus has occasion, in connection with the passage already cited from him, to dwell on the tradition respecting the teaching of the apostles which is preserved in the various churches founded by them. Of these churches he says, that it is easy to give the list of their bishops back

that country. See Bishop Lightfoot's note (The Epp. of Clement of Rome, p. 49).

[1] Tertullian (Adv. Judæos, c. 7; Apol., c. 37), Irenæus (Adv. Hær., i. 10, 1, 2; iii. 4, 1), cf. Justin (Dial., c. 117). For Gibbon's comments on these statements, see Decline and Fall, etc., chap. xv. (Smith's ed., ii. 213, n. 177). Gibbon refers to Origen's remark (Contra Cels., viii. 69), that the Christians are "very few" *comparatively*; but he omits another passage (c. ix.) of the same work, in which Origen refers to them as a "multitude," of all ranks.

to foundation. By way of example, he states the succession of the Roman bishops. In these lists, as given by the ancient writers, there will be some discrepancies as to the earliest names, owing chiefly to the fact, that, in the time before episcopacy was fully developed, leading presbyters, and not always the same persons, would be set down in the catalogues.[1] But a person who is familiar now with any particular church in whose history he has felt much interest will have little difficulty in recounting the succession of its pastors extending back for a century, and will not be ignorant of any very remarkable events which have occurred in its affairs during that period. Moreover, Irenæus was acquainted with individuals who had been taught by John and by other apostles. He had known in his childhood Polycarp, whose recollections of the Apostle John were fresh.[2] He had conferred with "elders" — that is, venerated leaders in the church, of an earlier day — who had been pupils of men whom the apostles had instructed, and some of whom had sat at the feet of the apostles themselves.[3] Of one of these "elders" in particular he makes repeated mention, whose name is not given, but whom in one place he styles "apostolorum discipulus."[4] Pothinus, whom Irenæus succeeded at Lyons, was thrown into prison in the persecution under Marcus Aurelius, A.D. 177, and died two days after, being past ninety years old. Pothinus was probably from Asia Minor, whence the church at Lyons was planted. His memory ran back beyond the beginning of the century. He is one of many who had numbered among their acquaintances younger

[1] Gieseler's Church History, I. i. 3, § 34, n. 10.

[2] Adv. Hær., iii. 3, 4; Epist. ad Flor.

[3] Adv. Hær., ii. 22, 5; iii. 1, 1; iii. 3, 4; v. 30, 1; v. 33, 3; v. 33, 4; cf. Euseb., H. E., iii. 23, iv. 14, v. 8.

[4] Adv. Hær., iv. 32, 1.

contemporaries of apostles. Clement of Alexandria was a pupil of Pantænus, who had founded the catechetical school there shortly after the middle of the second century. In all of the oldest churches there were persons who were separated by only one link from apostles.

The attempt has often been made to discredit the testimony of Irenæus by reference to a passage which really strengthens it. After asserting that there are four Gospels and no more, he fancifully refers to the analogy of the four winds, four divisions of the earth, four faces of the cherubim, four covenants, etc.[1] Says Mr. Froude, "That there were four true evangelists, and that there could be neither more nor less than four, Irenæus had persuaded himself, because there were four winds or spirits," etc.[2] It is plain to every reader of Irenæus, that his belief in the four Gospels is founded on the witness given by the churches and by well-informed individuals, to their authenticity; and that these analogies merely indicate how firmly established the authority of the Gospels was in his own mind and in the minds of all Christian people. It was something as well settled as the cosmical system. If some enthusiast for the Hanoverian house were to throw out the suggestion that there must be four, and only four, Georges, because there are four quarters of the globe, four winds, etc., Mr. Froude would hardly announce that the man's conviction of the historic fact that those four kings have ruled in England is founded on these fanciful parallels. Mr. Froude himself shrinks from his own assertion as quoted above; for he adds, "It is not to be supposed that the intellects of those great men who converted the world to Christianity were satisfied with arguments so imaginative as these: they must

[1] Adv. Hær., iii. 2, 7. [2] Short Studies on Great Subjects, p. 213

have had other closer and more accurate grounds for the decision," etc. But then he continues, "The mere employment of such figures as evidence in any sense shows the enormous difference between their modes of reasoning and ours, and illustrates the difficulty of deciding, at our present distance from them, how far their conclusions were satisfactory." If they had "other closer and more accurate" grounds of belief, why should such instances of weakness in reasoning, even if it be intended as strict reasoning, operate to destroy the value of their testimony? A man who is not a strict logician may be a perfectly credible witness to facts within his cognizance. But the inference suggested by Mr. Froude's remark as to the intellectual character of Irenæus is unjust. A single instance of weak reasoning is a slender basis for so broad a conclusion. Jonathan Edwards is rightly considered a man of penetrating intellect and of some skill in logic. Yet in his diary he makes this absurd remark: "January, 1728. I think Christ has recommended rising early in the morning, by his rising from the grave so early."[1] Certainly no one would feel himself justified, on account of Edwards's remark, in disputing his word on a matter of fact within his personal cognizance. We do not mean that Irenæus had the same measure of intellectual vigor as Edwards: nevertheless, he was not a weak man, and he furnishes in his writings a great many examples of sound reasoning. The inference unfavorable to the value of his testimony, which Froude in common with many others has drawn from a single instance of fanciful argument or illustration, is itself an example of very flimsy logic.

In quoting the statements of the Christian writers of

[1] Dwight's Life of Edwards, p. 106.

the closing part of the second century, it is not implied, of course, that either they or their informants were incapable of error. Who does not know that traditions, the substance of which is perfectly trustworthy, may interweave incidental or minor details, which, if not without foundation, at least require to be sifted? A tradition may take on new features of this character, even in passing from one individual to another, when there is an average degree of accuracy in both. But every intelligent historical critic knows the distinction which is to be made between essential facts and their accessories. It is only the ignorant, or the sophist who has an end to accomplish, that ignore this distinction, and seek to apply the maxim, *falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*, which relates to wilful mendacity, to the undesigned modifications which oral statements are almost sure to undergo in the process of transmission from one to another. It is evident that the few documents on which the Christians of the second century depended for their knowledge of the life and ministry of Christ must have had an importance in their eyes which would render the main facts as to the origin of these writings of the highest interest and importance. As to these documents, the foundation of the faith for which they were exposing themselves to torture and death, information would be earnestly sought and highly prized. That this curiosity, which we should expect to find, really existed, the ecclesiastical writers plainly indicate.

Let us now go back from the age of Irenæus to the first half of the second century. In that obscure period, where so many writings which might have thrown light on the questions before us have perished, there is one author who is competent to afford us welcome information. It is Justin Martyr. He was born in Palestine,

at Flavia Neapolis, near the site of the ancient Sichem. From his pen there remain two apologies, the first and principal of which was addressed to Antoninus Pius, A.D. 147 or 148, and a dialogue with Trypho, a Jew. In these writings, two of which are directed to heathen, and the third treats of points in controversy between Jews and Christians, there was no occasion to refer to the evangelists by name. The sources from which he draws his accounts of the life and teaching of Jesus are styled *Memoirs*, a term borrowed from the title given by Xenophon to his reminiscences of Socrates. Were these *Memoirs* the four Gospels of the canon?[1]

The first observation to be made is, that a tolerably full narrative of the life of Jesus can be put together from Justin's quotations and allusions, and that this narrative coincides with the canonical Gospels. The quotations are not verbally accurate; neither are Justin's citations from heathen writers or the Old-Testament prophets. He is not always in verbal agreement with himself when he has occasion to cite a passage, or refer to an incident more than once.[2] It was not a custom of the early Fathers to quote the New-Testament writers with verbal accuracy. Justin blends together statements in the different Gospels. This is easily accounted for on the supposition that he was quoting

[1] On the subject of the Memoirs of Justin and his quotations, the following writers are of special value: Semisch, Die apostolischen Denkwürdigkeiten des Märtyrers Justinus (1848); Sanday, The Gospels of the Second Century, pp. 88-138; Norton, The Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels, vol. i. pp. 200-240, ccxiv.-ccxxxiii.; Westcott, History of the Canon of the N. T., pp. 83-150; Professor E. Abbot, The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel — External Evidences (1880); also Bleek's Einl. in d. N. T. (ed. Mangold), p. 271 seq.; Hilgenfeld's Kritisch. Untersuch. über die Evangell. Justins, der Clementiner, u. Marcions; and Supernatural Religion (7th ed.).

[2] E g., Matt. xi. 27. See Apol., i. c. 63; Dial., c. 106.

from memory, and when it is remembered, that, for the purpose which he had in view, he had no motive to set off carefully to each evangelist what specially belonged to him. A similar habit of connecting circumstances from the several Gospels is not unfrequent at present, familiar as these writings have become. It is impossible here to combine all the items of the gospel history which may be gathered up from Justin's writings, but an idea of their character and extent may be given by casting a portion of them into a consecutive narrative.[1]

The Messiah, according to Justin, was born of a virgin. Particulars of the annunciation (Luke i. 26, 31, 35) and of Joseph's dream (Matt. i. 18–25) are given. He was born in Bethlehem, where his parents were, in consequence of the census under Cyrenius. He was laid in a manger, was worshipped by the Magi, was carried by his parents into Egypt on account of the machinations of Herod, which led to the massacre of the children in Bethlehem. From Egypt they returned, after the death of Herod. At Nazareth Jesus grew up to the age of thirty, and was a carpenter (Mark vi. 3). There he remained until John appeared in his wild garb, declaring that he was not the Christ (John i. 19 seq.), but that One stronger than he was coming, whose shoes he was not worthy to bear. John was put in prison, and was beheaded, at a feast on Herod's birthday, at the instance of his sister's daughter (Matt. xiv. 6 seq.). This John was the Elias who was to come (Matt. xvii. 11–13). Jesus was baptized

[1] The quotations from Justin are collected in Credner's Beiträge zur Einl., etc., pp. 150–209. The *résumé* above is mainly abridged from Dr. Sanday's The Gospels in the Second Century, pp. 91–98. Summaries of a like nature are given in Mr. Sadler's The Lost Gospel and its Contents (London, 1876).

by John in the Jordan. The temptation followed. To Satan's demand to be worshipped, Jesus replied, "Get thee behind me, Satan," etc. Jesus wrought miracles, healing the blind, dumb, lame, all weakness and disease, and raising the dead. He began his teaching by proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matt. iv. 17). Justin introduces a large number of the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, sayings from the narrative of the centurion of Capernaum (Matt. viii. 11, 12; Luke xiii. 28, 29), and of the feast in the house of Matthew. He brings in the choosing of the twelve disciples, the name Boanerges given to the sons of Zebedee (Mark iii. 17), the commission of the apostles, the discourse of Jesus after the departure of the messengers of John, the sign of the prophet Jonas, Peter's confession of faith (Matt. xvi. 15–18), the announcement of the passion (Matt. xvi. 21). Justin has the story of the rich young man; the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem; the cleansing of the temple; the wedding-garment; the conversations upon the tribute-money, upon the resurrection (Luke xx. 35, 36), and upon the greatest commandment; the denunciations of the Pharisees; the eschatological discourse; and the parable of the talents (Matt. xxv. 14–30). Justin's account of the institution of the Lord's Supper corresponds to that of Luke. Jesus is said to have sung a hymn at the close of the Supper, to have retired with three of his disciples to the Mount of Olives, to have been in an agony, his sweat falling in drops to the ground (Luke xxii. 42–44). His followers forsook him. He was brought before the scribes and Pharisees, and before Pilate. He kept silence before Pilate. Pilate sent him bound to Herod (Luke xxiii. 7). Most of the circumstances of the crucifixion are narrated by Justin, such

as the piercing with nails, the casting of lots, the fact of sneers uttered by the crowd, the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and the last words, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46). Christ is said to have been buried in the evening, the disciples being all scattered, according to Zech. xiii. 7 (Matt. xxvi. 31, 56). On the third day he rose from the dead. He convinced his disciples that his sufferings had been predicted (Luke xxiv. 26, 46). He gave them his last commission. They saw him ascend into heaven (Luke xxiv. 50). The Jews spread a story that the disciples stole the body of Jesus from the grave.

This is a mere outline of the references to the gospel history which are scattered in profusion through Justin's writings. A full citation of them would exhibit more impressively their correspondence to the Gospels. The larger portion of the matter, it will be perceived, accords with what we find in Matthew and Luke; a small portion of it, however, is found in Mark exclusively. But there are not wanting clear and striking correspondences to John. The most important of these single passages is that relating to regeneration,[1] which, notwithstanding certain verbal variations to be noticed hereafter, bears a close resemblance to John iii. 3–5. Again: Christ is said by Justin to have reproached the Jews as knowing neither the Father nor the Son (John viii. 19, xvi. 3). He is said to have healed those who were blind from "their birth,"[2] using here a phrase, which, like the fact, is found in John alone among the evangelists (John ix. 1). Strongly as these and some other passages resemble incidents and sayings in John, the correspondence of Justin's doctrinal state

[1] Apol., i. 61. [2] Dial., c. 49.

ments respecting the divinity of Christ and the Logos to the teaching of the fourth Gospel is even more significant. Justin speaks of Christ as the Son of God, "who alone is properly called Son, the Word; who also was with him, and was begotten before the works."[1] He says of Christ, that "he took flesh, and became man."[2] We are "to recognize him as God coming forth from above, and Man living among men.[3] Conceptions of this sort, expressed in language either identical with that of John, or closely resembling it, enter into the warp and woof of Justin's doctrinal system. They are both in substance and style Johannine. Professed theologians may think themselves able to point out shades of difference between Justin's idea of the pre-existence and divinity of Christ and that of the fourth Gospel. But, if there be an appreciable difference, it is far less marked than differences which subsist among ancient and modern interpreters of the Gospel without number. The efforts of the author of *Supernatural Religion* to make out a great diversity of idea from unimportant variations of language — as in the statement that the Logos "became man," instead of the Hebraic expression, "became flesh" — hardly merit attention. Some of his criticisms apply with equal force to the Nicene Creed, and would prove its authors to have been unacquainted with the fourth Gospel, or to have disbelieved in it.[4]

The next observation respecting Justin is, that his references to events or sayings in the Gospel history, which have not substantial parallels in the four evangel

[1] Apol., ii. 6. [2] Ibid., ii. 5. [3] Ibid., i. 23.

[4] See The Lost Gospel, etc., p. 91. In Dial., c. 105, Justin is more naturally understood as referring a statement peculiar to John to the Memoirs. See Professor E. Abbot, Authorship of the Fourth Gospel, p. 43.

ists, are few and insignificant. They embrace not more than two sayings of Jesus. The first is, "In what things I shall apprehend you, in these will I judge you,"[1] which is found also in Clement of Alexandria[2] and Hippolytus.[3] The second is, "There shall be schisms and heresies,"[4] — a prediction referred also to Christ by Tertullian[5] and Clement.[6] Thus both passages occur in other writers who own no authoritative Gospels but the four of the canon. Justin represents the voice from heaven at the baptism of Jesus as saying, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee,"[7] — a combination of expressions, which is found in the Codex Bezæ, in Clement of Alexandria,[8] in Augustine, and[9] is said by him to be the reading in some manuscripts, though not the oldest.[10] The recurrence of the same expression in Ps. ii. 7, or Acts xiii. 33, Heb. i. 5, v. 5, led naturally to a confusion of memory, out of which this textual reading may have sprung. That Jesus was charged by the Jews with being a magician[11] is a statement made by Lactantius[12] as well as by Justin, and is probably a reference to the accusation that he wrought miracles by the aid of Beelzebub. The incidental saying, that the ass on which Jesus rode was tied to a vine,[13] was probably a detail taken up from Gen. xlix. 11, with which it is connected by Justin. The saying connected

[1] Dial., c. 47. [2] Quis div. salvus, c. 40.
[3] Opp. ed. de Lag., p. 73 (Otto's Justin, i. 2, p. 161, n. 21). The origin of the passage has been traced by some to Ezekiel, to whom Justin refers in the context. See Ezek. vii. 3, 8, xviii. 30, xxiv. 14, xxxiii. 20. Otto suggests that it may have been a marginal summary attached by some one to Matt. xxiv. 40 seq., xxv. 1 seq.
[4] Dial., c. 35, cf. c. 51, cf. 1 Cor. xi. 18, 19.
[5] De Præscript. Hær., c. 4. [6] Strom., vii. 15, § 90.
[7] Dial., c. 88, cf. c. 103. [8] Præd., i. 6.
[9] Enchir. ad Laur., c. 49. [10] De Cons. Evv., ii. 14 (Otto, i. 1, p. 325).
[11] Dial., c. 49, cf. Apol., i. 30. [12] Institutt., v. 3.
[13] Apol., i. c. 32.

with the designation of Jesus as a carpenter, that he made ploughs and yokes,[1] may have sprung from his words in Luke ix. 62 and Matt. xi. 29, 30. It was found pleasant to imagine him to have once made these objects to which he figuratively referred.[2] Justin speaks of Jesus as having been born in a cave,[3] but he also says that he was laid in a manger. That the stable which contained the manger was a cave or grotto was a current tradition in the time of Origen.[4] One other allusion completes the brief catalogue of uncanonical passages in Justin. He speaks of a fire kindled on the Jordan in connection with the baptism of Jesus, — a circumstance which might have mingled itself early in the oral tradition. These constitute the whole of the supplement to the contents of the four Gospels to be found in the mass of Justin's references;[5]

[1] Dial., c. 88.
[2] See Otto, i. 2, p. 324; Semisch, p. 393
[3] Dial., c. 78.
[4] Cont. Celsum, i. 51.

[5] Other slight variations from the Gospels are sometimes owing to the wish of Justin to accommodate the facts in the life of Jesus to the predictions of the Old Testament. This is especially the case, as might be expected, in the dialogue with Trypho the Jew. The following, it is believed, are all the instances of circumstantial deviation from the evangelists. Mary is said to have descended from David (Dial., c. 43, cf. cc. 45, 100, 120). This statement is connected (c. 68) with Isa. vii. 13. Irenæus and Tertullian say the same of Mary. The Magi came from Arabia (Dial., 77, cf. 78, 88, 102, 106), on the basis of Ps. lxxii. 10, 15; Isa. lx. 6. The same is said by many later writers (Semisch, p. 385). In connection with Ps. xxii. 11, it is said (Dial., 103), that, when Jesus was seized, not a single person was there to help him. In Dial., c. 103, Pilate is said to have sent Jesus to Herod *bound;* this being suggested by Hos. vi. 1. So Tertullian, Adv. Marc., iv. c. 42; also Cyril of Jerusalem (see Otto, i. 2, p. 370, n. 14). The Jews, it is said (Apol., i. 35), set Jesus on the judgment-seat, and said, "Judge us," in fulfilment of the prediction in Isa. lviii. 2; the circumstance referred to being recorded in Matt. xxvii. 26, 30. In Dial., i. 101 (Apol., i. 38), the bystanders at the cross are said to have distorted their lips, — the thing predicted in Ps. xxii. 7; and in Apol., i. 38, on the basis of several passages in the Psalms, they are said to have cried out, "He who raised the dead, let him save himself." In Apol., i. 50, the disciples after the crucifixion are said to have

and, as the author of *Supernatural Religion* observes, "Justin's works teem with these quotations." In the index to Otto's critical edition they number two hundred and eighty-one. It may be here remarked, that not one of these supplementary scraps is referred by Justin to the *Memoirs*.

It is thus evident, that, whatever the *Memoirs* were, their contents were substantially coincident with the contents of the four Gospels. It is a necessary inference, that, at the time when Justin wrote, there was a definite, well-established tradition respecting the life and teaching of Jesus; for the *Memoirs*, he tells us, were read on Sundays in the churches, in city and country.[1] The period of his theological activity was from about A.D. 140 to A.D. 160. None will probably be disposed to question, that as early, at least, as A.D. 135, he was conversant with this gospel tradition, and knew that it was inculcated in the churches. The Jewish war of Barchochebas (A.D. 131 to 136), he says, was in his own time.[2] But that date (A.D. 135), to which the personal recollection of Justin on this subject extended, was only thirty-seven years after the accession of Trajan, — an event which preceded the death of the Apostle John at Ephesus.[3] If the date of Justin's acquaintance with the habitual teaching of the church respecting the

fled from Christ, and denied him; and in c. 106 (cf. c. 53) they are said to have repented of it after the resurrection; the prophetic references being Zech. xiii. 7 and Isa. liii. 1–8. In Dial., c. 35, Jesus is represented as predicting, that "false apostles" (as well as false prophets) will arise. This is not presented as an instance of prophecy fulfilled; but the same thing is found in Tertullian, De Præsc. Hærett., c. 4, and in other writers. In Dial., c. 51, Jesus predicts his re-appearance at Jerusalem, and that he will eat and drink with his disciples, — a free paraphrase of Matt. xxvi. 29 and Luke xxii. 18. Not one of these passages, in the context where it occurs, would naturally lead the reader to presuppose any other source of them than the canonical Gospels.

[1] Apol., i. 67. [2] Ibid., ii. 31. [3] Irenæus, Adv. Hær., ii. 22, 5, iii. 3, 4

life of Jesus were 1883, in the room of 135, the termination of the apostle's life would be set no farther back from us than 1846. Justin incidentally remarks, that many men and women sixty or seventy years old, who had been Christians from their youth, were to be found in the churches.[1] Many of his Christian contemporaries could remember as far back as the closing decades of the first century. Is it reasonable to believe that in the interval between John and Justin, in the organized Christian societies of Syria, Asia Minor, and Italy, with which Justin is considered to have been conversant, the established conception of the life of Jesus, of his doings and sayings, underwent an essential alteration?

Before bringing forward direct proof that the *Memoirs* were the Gospels of the canon, it is well to notice a rival theory which has been advanced to disprove this hypothesis. Partly on the basis of the uncanonical passages in Justin, and partly on another ground soon to be mentioned, certain critics have contended that the mass of his quotations were derived from some other Gospel than the four; in particular, from the Gospel of the Hebrews, or from an apocryphal Gospel of Peter, which has been assumed, without evidence, to have been a form of that Gospel. There was an Aramaic gospel, commonly called "the Gospel according to the Hebrews," which was extensively used by Jewish Christians in Palestine and Syria. Hegesippus (about A.D. 150) is said by Eusebius to have borrowed some things from it.[2] It is referred to by Clement of Alexandria.[3] Origen also cites from it;[4] and Jerome translated it into Greek and Latin.[5] It owed its repute mainly to a

[1] Apol., i. 15. [2] H. E., iv. 22. [3] Strom., ii. 9.
[4] Comment. in Johann., tom. iv.; Homil. in Jerem., 15.
[5] De Vir. Ill., c. 2.

prevalent idea that it was the original of the Gospel of Matthew. This may, perhaps, have been true of it in its primitive form; for it underwent various modifications. In all its forms, however, it retained its affinity to our first Gospel. It is evident from the fragments that remain, twenty-two of which have been collected by Hilgenfeld,[1] that the canonical Gospel is the original, and that the deviations from it in parallel texts in the Gospel of the Hebrews are of a later date. "The fragments preserved in Greek," says Professor Lipsius, "by Epiphanius" — which are tinged with Essæan doctrine, and have some statements also coincident with Luke — "betray very clearly their dependence on our canonical Gospels; though it is impossible, on the other hand, to prove that the Hebrew text was a translation back into Aramaic from the Greek. The Aramaic fragments also contain much that can be explained and understood only on the hypothesis that it is a recasting of the canonical text."[2] All that we know of the Gospel of Peter is from a statement, preserved in Eusebius, of Serapion, who was bishop of Antioch at the end of the second, and beginning of the third century. He had found this book in use in the town of Rhossus in Cilicia. It favored the heresy of Docetism, although in the main orthodox.[3] There is no proof that it was a narrative. It was probably of a doctrinal cast. Eusebius[4] and Jerome[5] refer to it as an heretical book which no early teacher of the church had made use of. Justin in one passage, recording an incident respecting Peter,

[1] Nov. Test., extra can. recept., fasc. iv. pp. 5–38. Mr. E. B. Nicholson thinks that thirty-three can be discovered. See The Gospel according to the Hebrews, etc., pp. 28–77.

[2] Smith and Wace's Dict. of Christ. Biogr., art. Gospels Apocryphal, vol. i., p. 710.

[3] Eusebius, H. E., vi. 12. [4] H. E., iii. 25. [5] De Vir. Ill., 1.

professes to derive it from "his Gospel."[1] The incident is found nowhere except in the canonical Gospel of Mark. If the usual reading is correct, there is no reason to question that this is the Gospel to which Justin here refers. But there are grounds for the opinion that the text should be amended by substituting the plural of the pronoun for the singular, and that the reference is, as ordinarily in Justin, to the memoirs of "the apostles."[2]

About forty years ago, Credner, a theologian of Giessen, published his critical works on the New Testament, in which the quotations of Justin were collected and tabulated. The judgment of this scholar did not in every case keep pace with his learning. He held that the first three Gospels were in the hands of Justin, and he believed in the Johannine authorship of the fourth; but he attributed an exaggerated influence to the Jewish-Christian Gospels, and broached the opinion that Justin drew the main portion of his quotations from them. The Tübingen doctors started with the facts and data of Credner, and proceeded to push his theory to the extreme of excluding altogether the canonical Gospels from the circle of Justin's authorities. The author of *Supernatural Religion* treads closely in their footsteps. He attributes Justin's quotations to an Ebionite document that has passed away. One argument for this view is from the character of the verbal deviations in Justin's quotations from the text of the Gospels. This argument is destitute of force. His quotations are not more inexact than those of other Fathers which are known to be derived from the canonical Gospels. In one of the most striking instances of inexact quotation (Matt. x. 27; cf. Luke x. 22) the

[1] Dial., c. 106.

[2] See Otto's note (10), *ad loc.*

same variations from the canonical text are found in Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Irenæus.[1] In repeated instances, Justin attributes passages to one prophet which belong to another.[2] He quotes the Old Testament and heathen writers with the same sort of freedom. Where Justin varies from the Septuagint, he often varies in different places in the same manner. Hence uniformity of variation does not in the least warrant the inference of the use of other books than the Gospels. The main argument which is relied on to prove the non-canonical source of Justin's quotations is the alleged identity of some of them which deviate from the canonical text with quotations in the Clementine Homilies, which are assumed to be from a Hebrew gospel. The answer to this is conclusive. First, the author of the Homilies used the synoptical Gospels, and he presents at least one passage which is undeniably from John. But, secondly, the alleged identity does not exist. The premise of the argument is false. Of Justin's quotations generally, it is true, that, so far from tallying with those of the Homilies, they differ verbally from them as widely as the same quotations differ from the literal text of our evangelists. Of the five quotations on which the argument for identity of origin rests, it has been demonstrated that there is no such resemblance as the argument assumes to exist.[3] What can be the worth of reasoning, which, were it valid, would compel us to hold that Jeremy Taylor drew his knowl-

[1] See Semisch, p. 367.

[2] E.g., Apol., i. 53, where a passage in Isaiah is credited to Jeremiah.

[3] See Professor E. Abbot, Authorship of the Fourth Gospel, p. 31 seq., 100 seq. Professor Abbot's exhaustive investigation has settled the question of the derivation of the passage in Justin on regeneration (Apol., i. 61) from John iii. 3-5. Cf., on Justin and the Clementines, Westcott, Hist. of the Canon, p. 129 seq., and note D, p. 155; Dr. E. A. Abbot, Enc. Brit., vol. x. p. 818.

edge of the teachings and acts of Christ, not from the Gospels of the canon, but from a lost Ebionitic document? On this subject Professor Lipsius, a scholar admitted to be free from the apologetic bias which is so freely and often so groundlessly imputed to defenders of the genuineness of the Gospels, says, "The attempt to prove that the two writers [Justin and the author of the Homilies] had one such extra-canonical authority common to them both, either in the *Gospel of the Hebrews* or in the *Gospel of St. Peter*, has altogether failed." "Herewith," observes the same writer, "fall to the ground all those hypotheses which make the *Gospel of Peter* into an original work made use of by Justin Martyr, nigh related to the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, and either the Jewish-Christian basis of our canonical St. Mark, or, at any rate, the gospel of the Gnosticizing Ebionites."[1] Certain passages of Scripture are not unfrequently misquoted in the same way, owing to causes which in each case are readily explained. There are, so to speak, stereotyped errors of quotation. Another occasion of greater or less uniformity in verbal deviations from the text as we have it is the diversity of manuscripts. Attention to the ordinary operations of memory, and more familiarity with textual criticism, would have kept out untenable theories of the kind just reviewed.

Justin was a native of Palestine. He may have been acquainted with the Gospel of the Hebrews, as other Fathers were. He may have read in it that Jesus made ploughs and yokes, and that a fire was kindled in the Jordan at his baptism, although this last tradition is differently given in that Gospel.[2] There is no proof,

[1] Dict. of Christ. Biogr., vol. ii. p. 712.

[2] See Nicholson, The Gospel of the Hebrews, etc., p. 40. The state-

however, that he picked up these circumstances from any written source. They were probably afloat in oral tradition before they found their way into books. But there is decisive proof that the Gospel of the Hebrews was not one of the *Memoirs* which were his authoritative sources. That was a gospel of Judaic sectaries, and Justin was not an Ebionite. There is not a shadow of reason to suppose that the Gospel of the Hebrews was ever read in the churches which he must have had most prominently in mind. It is only necessary to observe how he describes the *Memoirs*, to be convinced that the Gospels of the canon are meant. He speaks of them as composed by "the apostles and their companions," and this he does in connection with a quotation which is found in Luke.[1] This accounts for his adding the term "companions" to his usual designation of these documents. This is the same mode of describing the Gospels which we find in Tertullian and in other later writers.[2] In one place, in the dialogue with Trypho, he calls them collectively "the Gospel," — a term applied to the contents of the four, taken together, by Irenæus and Tertullian in the same century. He says, however, expressly that they are called "Gospels."[3] Apart from this explicit statement, it is preposterous to imagine that Justin can have one document only in mind in his references to the *Memoirs*. Was that document the joint production of the "apostles and their companions"? This would be a case of multiple authorship without a parallel in literature. If the hypothesis of the author of *Supernatural Religion* were tenable, we should have to hold that a gospel

ment is found, for substance, in two ancient Latin MSS., and is perhaps alluded to by Juvencus, a Christian writer of the fourth century.

[1] Dial., c. 103. [2] See Tertullian, Adv. Marc., iv. 2. [3] Apol., i. 66.

comprising in itself the contents of the four of the canon was read, in the middle of the second century, in the churches "in city and country," and was then, within a score of years, silently superseded by four Gospels of unknown authorship, among which its contents were distributed. The ancient document of established authority vanished as if by magic at the advent of these new-comers, among whom it was somehow partitioned! And this miraculous exchange, which took place when Irenæus was not far from thirty years old, occurred without his knowledge! Such an hypothesis is too heavy a tax on credulity. Scholars of all types of opinion are now disposed to accept the conclusion, which should never have been disputed, that Justin used all the Gospels of the canon; and it is safe to predict that there will be a like unanimity in the conviction that it is these alone which he designates as *Memoirs by the Apostles and their Companions.*

The proposition that Justin's *Memoirs* were the four Gospels is corroborated, if it stood in need of further support, by the fact that Tatian, who had been his hearer, and speaks of him with admiration,[1] wrote a Harmony of the Four Gospels. Tatian is intermediate between Justin and Irenæus. He flourished as an author between A.D. 155 and 170. In his extant *Address to the Greeks* are passages evidently drawn from John's Gospel.[2] Eusebius says, that, "having formed a certain combination and bringing-together of Gospels, — I know not how, — he has given this the title *Diatesseron;* that is, the gospel by the four," etc. The expression "I know not how" implies, not that Eusebius had not seen the book, but that the plan seemed strange to

[1] H. E., iv. 29; Tatian, Orat. ad Græcos, c. 18.
[2] Cc. 4, 5, 13, 19.

him.[1] At the beginning of the fifth century Theodoret tells us that he had found two hundred copies of the work in circulation, and had taken them away, substituting for them the four Gospels. A Syrian writer, Bar Salibi, in the twelfth century, had seen the work: he distinguishes it from another Harmony by Ammonius; and he testifies that it began with the words, "In the beginning was the Word." A commentary on this Diatesseron, Bar Salibi states, had been made in the fourth century by Ephraem Syrus. This is not all the evidence in support of the assertion of Eusebius on this subject. The recent discussion by Bishop Lightfoot has placed beyond reasonable doubt the correctness of it. More recently still, the commentary of Ephraem of Syria has been published in a Latin translation from the Armenian.[2] The composition of such a work, in which the four Gospels were probably worked together into one narrative, is an independent proof of the recognition which they enjoyed, and is an additional proof that the same Gospels constituted the *Memoirs* of Justin.

There were a few writings, not included in the canon, which were sometimes read in the early churches for purposes of edification; and some of these were held by some of the Fathers to have a certain claim to inspiration. In this list are embraced the Epistle ascribed to Barnabas, the Epistle of Clement of Rome, and the Shepherd of Hermas. A book of much less note, an Epistle of Soter, bishop of Rome, is also said to have been sometimes read in churches; and there are some traces of a similar use of an *Apocalypse of Peter*, which Eusebius and Jerome brand as apocryphal. Not one of

[1] See Lightfoot, Contemporary Review for May, 1877, p. 1136.

[2] See Zahn's Tatian's Diatesseron (1881). On its date, see Harnack's Die Überlieferung der griechischen Apologeten d. 2tn Jahrh. (1882).

these books was a narrative. None of them ever had any thing like the standing of the documents which recorded the facts in the public ministry of Christ, on which the very life of the church depended. They were read in some of the churches for a time; but even Fathers who regard them with honor, as is seen in the example of Clement of Alexandria, do not hesitate to criticise their teaching.[1] The *Memoirs* of Justin were narratives, placed by all the churches on a level with the prophets of the Old Testament.[2] The gradual separation of the didactic writings whose titles have been given from the books of the canon does not in the least help us to comprehend how the documents referred to by Justin could have been expelled from the churches, and perished out of sight.

It is sometimes imagined, if not asserted, that there were apocryphal Gospels which were widely used in the churches of the second century, and shared in the esteem accorded to the four of the canon. This is a groundless impression. The apocryphal Gospels which are now extant, relating to the nativity and childhood of Jesus, and to the Virgin Mary, never pretended to be any thing more than supplements to the received Gospels. They are of a much later date than the age of Justin. It has been thought by some that two or three of them existed in an earlier, rudimental form at that day.[3] Such was the opinion of Tischendorf. But

[1] Clement (Pæd., ii. 10, ed. Potter, p. 220) dissents from a statement of Barnabas (c. x.). Origen more definitely separates these writings from those which are authoritative. Cf. Bleek, Einl. in d. N. T., p. 755. Yet at Alexandria there was a stronger tendency to accept writings of this class than existed elsewhere in the church.

[2] Apol., i. 67.

[3] It may be well to state what apocryphal Gospels present the slightest plausible claim to great antiquity

The Protevangelium of James treats of the nativity of Mary. Origen

even this is doubtful. The Gospel of the Hebrews, or the Hebrew St. Matthew, in its various redactions, had a wide acceptance among the different Jewish sects. But, this Gospel and Marcion's mutilated Luke excepted, there were no uncanonical gospel narratives which we have reason to think had any extensive circulation among professed Christians. There were no rivals of the *Memoirs* to which Justin referred. Numerous books were fabricated among heretical parties; but, though they might bear the name of "Gospels," they were generally of a didactic nature. This is the case with *The Gospel of the Truth*, which Irenæus and Tertullian inform us had been composed by the Valentinians. It is a powerful argument for the genuineness of the canonical Gospels, that the Gnostics are constantly charged with bolstering up their doctrines by perverse interpretation of the Gospels, but are not accused of bringing forward narratives of their own at variance with them. On this subject Professor Norton remarks:

refers to it by name (in Matt., tom. x. 17, ed. Migne, vol. iii. p. 875)· but it could not be the existing book that he used, as is shown by Professor Lipsius, Dict. of Christ. Biogr., ii. 702. Clement of Alexandria (Strom., vii.) is thought to have referred to it. There is no proof that Justin (in Dial., c. 78) borrowed from it. Says Professor Lipsius, "There is, indeed, no clear warrant for the existence of our present text of the Protevangelium prior to the time of Peter of Alexandria (311)." Gnostic and Ebionitic features are mingled in it.

The Acta Pilati forms the first part of the Gospel of Nicodemus. Justin (Apol., i. 28, 36) refers to the Acts of Pilate, as does Tertullian (Apol., 21; cf. 5). Both have in mind, probably, not any book, but an official report, which they assume to exist in the public archives at Rome. Eusebius (H. E., ii. 2) refers to a blasphemous Pagan forgery under this same title, which was of recent origin. The first trace of the present Acts of Pilate is in Epiphanius (A.D. 376), Hær., 50, 1.

A Gospel of St. Thomas is referred to by Origen (Hom. in Luc., i). It was used by the Gnostic sects of Marcosians and Naassenes (Hippol., Ref. Omn. Hær., v. 2; cf. Irenæus, Adv. Hær., i. 20, 1). Portions of this book may exist in the extant Gospel of the same name. It relates to the boyhood of Christ.

"Irenæus and Tertullian were the two principal writers against the Gnostics; and from their works it does not appear that the Valentinians, the Marcionites, or any other Gnostic sect, adduced, in support of their opinions, a single narrative relating to the public ministry of Christ, besides what is found in the Gospels. It does not appear that they ascribed to him a single sentence of any imaginable importance which the evangelists have not transmitted. It does not appear that any sect appealed to the authority of any history of his public ministry besides the Gospels, except so far as the Marcionites, in their use of an imperfect copy of St. Luke's Gospel, may be regarded as forming a verbal exception to this remark." [1]

With the exception of the Valentinian *Gospel of Truth*, the reference to which is contained in a disputed passage of Tertullian, it is true, as Professor Norton states, that this Father "nowhere speaks of any apocryphal Gospel, or intimates a knowledge of the existence of such a book." [2] In all the writers of the first three centuries, there are not more quotations professedly derived from apocryphal books called by them Gospels than can be counted on the fingers of one hand.[3]

[1] Genuineness of the Gospels, iii. 222.

[2] Ibid., iii. 227. Tertullian expressly states that Valentinus used all the four Gospels (De Præscript. Hær., c. 38). On the sense of *videtur* in the passages, see Professor E. Abbot, Authorship of the Fourth Gospel, p. 81, note.

[3] The following is a list of them. Origen once quotes a statement from the Gospel of Peter (Comment. in Matt., tom. x. 462, 463). Clement of Alexandria twice refers to statements in the Gospel of the Egyptians (Strom., iii. 9, 13). In the so-called II. Ep. of Clement of Rome are several pasages thought to be from this Gospel, but the source is not named. See Lightfoot's Clement, pp. 192, 193, 297 seq., 311. Clement of Alexandria thrice (Strom., ii. 9, iii. 4, vii. 13) cites passages from The Traditions, which was not improbably another name of the Gospel of Matthias.

Of these authors Pseudo-Clement is the only one who seems to at-

These citations in the Fathers, however, involve no sanction of the books from which they are taken. Clement of Alexandria quotes the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, but he quotes it to condemn it. If in the second century, as well as later, the Gospels of the canon were not the authorities from which the Church derived its knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus, there is no known source whence that knowledge could have been obtained.

Celsus, the most distinguished literary opponent of Christianity in the second century, may be joined with the Gnostics as an indirect witness for the Gospels of the canon. He wrote, perhaps, as early as Marcus Antoninus (A.D. 138–161); but if, as Keim thinks, he composed his book under Marcus Aurelius, in A.D. 178, he was a contemporary of Irenæus.[1] He had the Christian literature before him. He showed no lack of industry in searching out whatever could be made to tell against the Christian cause. As in the case of Justin, the gospel history can be constructed out of the passages cited from Celsus by Origen.[2] But there is not an incident or a saying which professes to be taken from Christian authorities that is not found in the canonical Gospels.[3]

tribute authority to the book to which he refers. The Gospel of the Egyptians was used by an ascetic sect, the Encratites (Clem. Alex., iii. 9). The Encratite tendencies of the Homily of Pseudo-Clement are noticed by Bishop Lightfoot, Clement of Rome: Appendix, p. 311.

[1] Keim, Celsus' Wahres Wort, p. 273.

[2] See the summaries of the work of Celsus, by Doddridge and Leland, in Lardner's Credibility, etc., ii. 27 seq., and the work of Keim, as above.

[3] Origen (Adv. Cel., ii. 74) says, "Now we have proved that many foolish assertions, opposed to the narratives of our Gospels, occur in the statements of the Jew" [in Celsus], etc. But these "foolish assertions," as an inspection of the previous portion of Origen's work demonstrates, are comments on the gospel history, not pretending to come from any Gospels.

With all of these, as Keim, allows,[1] he shows himself acquainted. Had there been apocryphal Gospels which had attained to any considerable circulation in the Church, even at a date thirty or forty years previous to the time when he wrote, this astute controversialist would have found copies of them, and would have availed himself of the welcome aid to be derived from their inventions.

Passing by other proofs, we proceed to consider one testimony to the Gospels which carries us back into the company of the immediate followers of Christ. It is that of Papias, bishop of Hierapolis. He is spoken of by Irenæus as "a man of the old time."[2] He was a contemporary of Polycarp,[3] who was born A.D. 69, and died A.D. 155. He had also known the daughters of Philip, — either the apostle, or (less probably) the evangelist.[4] He is said by Irenæus to have been a disciple of John the Apostle; but a doubt is cast on the correctness of this statement by Eusebius.[5] This is certain, that he knew Aristion, and John the Presbyter, — two immediate disciples of Jesus,[6] who probably formed a part of a company of apostles and their followers who left Palestine for Asia Minor about A.D. 67, on the outbreak of the Jewish war. In the passages which Eusebius has preserved from Papias, he speaks only of Mark and Matthew. The silence of Eusebius, however, as to any mention of Luke and John by Papias, has been demonstrated not to imply, in the least, that these Gospels were not referred to and used by him.[7] The avowed purpose of Eusebius in these notices, and his practice in other similar cases, would not lead us to ex-

[1] P. 230. [2] Adv. Hær., v. 33, 4. [3] Irenæus, l. c.
[4] Eusebius, H. E., iii. 39. [5] Eusebius, l. c. [6] Ibid
[7] See Lightfoot, Contemporary Review, January, 1875.

pect any allusion to what Papias might say of the other Gospels, unless it were something new, or of special interest. Now, Papias was informed by John the Presbyter, a contemporary of the apostle of the same name at Ephesus, that Mark was the interpreter of Peter, and wrote down accurately what he heard Peter relate of the sayings and doings of Jesus. The same statement respecting the relation of Mark to Peter, and the origin of the second Gospel, is made by Clement of Alexandria,[1] Irenæus,[2] and Tertullian.[3] It was the undisputed belief of the ancient church. It is borne out by the internal traits of Mark's Gospel.[4] It would seem as if there could be no doubt in regard to the book of which Papias is speaking. Yet it has been maintained by some, that a primitive Mark, of which the Gospel of the canon is an expansion, is the work referred to. Most of these critics, to be sure, including Professor Holtzmann, have made the primitive Gospel embrace the main parts of our Mark. On what is this theory founded? First, on the statement in Papias, that Mark, though he omitted nothing that he heard, but reported it accurately, was precluded from recording "in order" (ἐν τάξει) the matter thus derived from the oral addresses of Peter. But this remark is, no doubt, founded on a comparison of Mark with Matthew, where the sayings of Christ are often differently disposed; or with Luke, who specially aimed at an orderly arrangement; or, as Bishop Lightfoot thinks, with John, where the sequence of events is more carefully preserved.[5] It may be nothing more than a subjective

[1] Eusebius, H. E., ii. 15. [2] Irenæus, Adv. Hær., iii. 10, 6.
[3] Adv. Marc., iv. 5. [4] See Weiss, Marcusevangelium, Einl., p. 2.
[5] Contemporary Review, October, 1875. "Per ordinem profitetur," says the Muratorian canon, after referring to Mark in terms like those used by Papias.

impression of Papias or of his informant. There is no sign that either Papias himself, or Eusebius, or Clement, or Irenæus, or any other ancient writer, had heard of any other book by Mark than our second Gospel. It is morally impossible that any other Mark could have existed in the time of Papias and Polycarp, and have been silently superseded by the Gospel of the canon, without any knowledge of the fact reaching Irenæus and his contemporaries. The second reason given for the conjecture respecting an earlier Gospel of Mark is founded on a certain hypothesis as to the relation of the synoptical Gospels to one another, and to the authorship of the first of them. It is assumed by the critics of whom we are speaking, that Matthew's authorship extended only to the compilation of the discourses of Jesus, and that the narrative portion of his Gospel is from another hand. Papias states that "Matthew wrote the oracles (τὰ λόγια) in the Hebrew tongue, and every one interpreted them as he could." It is assumed that the narrative portion of the first Gospel is mainly derived from Mark; and then, from the fact that, by way of exception, in certain passages Matthew's Gospel appears to be the more original of the two, it is inferred that the corresponding passages in the second Gospel are of a later date than the body of its contents. But learned writers, such as Professor Weiss, who give the restricted sense to the term *Logia* as designating the discourses of Jesus, still maintain, with reason, that, even on this interpretation of the term, narrative matter was, to some degree, associated by the Apostle Matthew with his record of the sayings of Jesus.[1] The theory of a primitive Mark is thus wholly gratuitous, even on the general ground taken by the

[1] See his Matthäusevangelium, Einl., p. 17 seq.

critics in question respecting the original work of Matthew.[1] But the confident assertion of so many German critics since Schleiermacher, that the *Logia* of Papias means "discourses" simply — things said, to the exclusion of things done, by Jesus — is not proved either on philological or other grounds.[2] There is no proof that any writer of the second century made the distinction between a Matthew composed of discourses alone, and the Gospel in its later form. Unless the use of the term *Logia* contains decisive evidence to the contrary, we must conclude that Papias intended to give an account of the composition of the Gospel in its present compass.

If, on the ground that *Logia* in Papias is interpreted to mean "discourses," or for other reasons, it is held that the Gospel as composed by Matthew embraced only the teachings of Christ, with brief historical memoranda essential to an intelligible record of them, and that, on the basis of this primitive Matthew, the first Gospel as we have it was composed by another, still this later author stands in the same rank, as regards authority and credibility, with the second and third evangelists. The date of the work as it now stands is determined, as will be seen, by internal evidence of a conclusive character. So much is clear, that the writing to which Papias refers no longer had need to be translated: his use of the aorist proves that that necessity was a thing of the past.[3]

[1] The theory of an Ur-Markus has been given up by its author, Professor Holtzmann. See Weiss's Leben Jesu, i. 32.

[2] See Bishop Lightfoot's remarks, Contemp. Review, 1875, p. 399 seq.

[3] In connection with the testimony of Papias to the first Gospel, it may be added, that in the Epistle ascribed to Barnabas, which is not later than A.D. 120, a passage found in Matthew is introduced by the words, "As it is written;" which were usual in quoting from a sacred scripture (Barnabas iv. 14).

Although the statements cited by Eusebius from Papias relate not to Luke, but to Mark and Matthew, it happens that there is nearly contemporary evidence of striking value from another source. Marcion came from Asia Minor to Rome about A.D. 140.[1] His heresy involved a rejection of the apostles, with the exception of Paul, for the reason that he deemed them tainted with Judaic error. The fathers who oppose Marcion describe him as having rejected the Gospels, with the exception of Luke. He did not deny that the other Gospels were genuine productions of their reputed authors (there is no hint that he did); but he selected Luke as his authority, he having been an associate of Paul, and made a gospel for himself by cutting out of Luke's work passages which he considered incongruous with his doctrinal theories.[2] That Marcion's Gospel was an abridgment of our Luke is now conceded on all hands, even by the author of *Supernatural Religion*. Dr. Sanday has not only demonstrated this by a linguistic argument, but has proved, by a comparison of texts, that the Gospel of the canon must have been for some time in use, and have attained to a considerable circulation, before Marcion applied to it his pruning-knife.[3] There is no reason to doubt that he took for his purpose a Gospel of established authority in the church.

But we have Luke's own unimpeachable testimony. In the prologue of the Gospel he states that his information was derived from the immediate disciples of Christ.[4] Unless the author who collected and preserved

[1] See Justin, Apol., i. 26, 58.

[2] Tertullian, De Præscript. Hærett., c. 38.

[3] The Gospels in the Second Century, chap. viii. The priority of Luke to Marcion's Gospel is admitted in the seventh edition of Supernatural Religion.

[4] Luke i. 2.

such passages of the Saviour's teaching as the parables of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan, and as the story of the Pharisee and the Publican, lied, he was an associate of immediate followers of Jesus. Moreover, in the Acts, which undoubtedly has a common authorship with the Gospel, he distinctly discloses himself, though in a perfectly artless and incidental way, as having been a companion of the Apostle Paul in a part of his journeying. There is no other explanation of the passages in which the writer speaks in the first person plural,[1] unless an intentional fraud is imputed to him; and this is the most unreasonable explanation of all. It is now generally conceded that Luke is the author of the narrative of the shipwreck and of the connected passages, where the writer speaks in the first person. For a later writer to take up these quotations, and, still more, to assimilate them to his own style, would be a flagrant attempt at imposture. Had a later writer wished to cheat his readers into a belief that he had been an attendant of Paul, he would not have failed to make his pretension more prominent. There is the same consensus in the tradition respecting the association of Luke with Paul that we find with regard to the connection of Mark with Peter.[2]

The objection that was formerly made by the Tübingen school to the genuineness of the third Gospel and of the Acts, on the ground of an alleged misrepresentation, especially in the latter book, of the relations of the older apostles to Paul, and of the Jewish to the Gentile branches of the church in the apostolic age, is swept away by the admission of independent critics,

[1] Acts xvi. 10–19, xx. 5–xxviii. 31.

[2] Irenæus, Adv. Hær., iii. 1, 1; Tertullian, Adv. Marc., iv. 2; cf. Ep to Philemon, ver. 24; Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11.

that the Tübingen premise was without foundation in fact, and that the representation of Luke, in his record of the council (Acts xv.), and elsewhere, is in substantial accordance with the statements of Paul in the Galatians and in his other Epistles.[1]

The evidence, the most important points of which have been sketched above, proves the genuineness of the first three Gospels. We have, however, within these Gospels themselves, proofs of their early date of a convincing character. The most important of these internal evidences is the form of the eschatological discourse of Jesus. In Matthew especially, but also in the other synoptical Gospels, the second advent of Christ is set in apparent juxtaposition with the destruction of Jerusalem.[2] There is not room here to review the various attempts of exegetes to remove the difficulties which this circumstance involves. The reader, in interpreting these passages, may adopt whatever hypothesis pleases him best. I will only remark, that Jesus is proved not to have foretold his advent to judgment as an event to follow immediately upon the destruction of Jerusalem, by the parable of the Marriage-feast, in Matt. xxii., where the mission to the heathen (ver. 10) is pictured as subsequent to the downfall and burning of that city. The same thing is decisively proved, also, by the parable of the Householder (Matt. xxi. 33–42), where, after the destruction of the husbandmen, the vineyard is to be "let out to other husbandmen;" to which it is added, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (ver. 43). The same conclusion is

[1] See Mangold, in Bleek's Einl. in d. N. T. (ed. 3), p. 390, n.; and especially Keim, Aus dem Urchristenthum, pp. 64–89.

[2] Matt. xxiv. 29, 34; Mark xiii. 19, 24, 30; Luke xxi. 32.

likewise deducible from the parables of the Mustard-seed and the Leaven, not to speak of other teaching of like purport. At the same time, it will not be questioned by the soundest interpreters, that, had any considerable interval elapsed between the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans in the year 70, and the composition of the synoptical Gospels, other phraseology would have been used by the evangelists, or at least some explanation thrown in respecting the chronological relation of that event to the advent to judgment. We have therefore, in the passages referred to, satisfactory evidence that the first three Gospels were in existence, if not before, at least very soon after, A.D. 70. And the same reasoning proves that they existed in their present form and compass. The eschatological discourse in Matthew, for example, is homogeneous in style with the rest of the Gospel; and, in any revision later than the date given above, these perplexing statements would not have been left unaltered or unexplained.

The long and searching inquiry on the question of the origin and mutual relation of the first three Gospels has not been without substantial results.[1] The great influence of an oral tradition which shaped itself at Jerusalem, where the apostles remained for years, and whose repetition of the Lord's sayings and acts would tend to acquire a fixed form, is now generally acknowledged. The independence of Mark in relation to the other evangelists is an assured fact. The priority of Mark in respect to date of composition, if not so unanimously accepted, is favored by a large body of learned scholars. Leading English critics are disposed to claim

[1] For a full survey of the history of this inquiry, see Schaff's History of the Christian Church, vol. i. p. 590 seq.

for the oral tradition a larger agency in accounting for the resemblances of the synoptists to one another than German critics consider it possible to assume. Professor Westcott favors the hypothesis that Matthew wrote his Gospel in the Aramaic; that the Aramaic oral tradition which he took up had its contemporaneous parallel in a Greek oral tradition; that, about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, the Aramaic Gospel was not exactly rendered into Greek, but its contents exchanged for the Greek oral counterpart; that the disciple who thus transferred the Aramaic first Gospel of Matthew into Greek added here and there certain historical memoranda. In this way he would account for the resemblances of the matter contained in the synoptists.[1]

Professor Weiss, in common with critics of the German school, of whom he is one of the most eminent, holds that the peculiarities of the synoptists cannot be explained by the influence of oral tradition alone. We must assume an interdependence. His view is, that the oldest Gospel was an Aramaic writing of Matthew, composed mainly, but not exclusively, of discourses of Christ, arranged in groups; that this was rendered into Greek; that, immediately after the capture of Jerusalem by Titus, it was amplified by historical matter, drawn mainly from Mark, — the second Gospel having been previously written, as the ecclesiastical tradition affirms, by the same Mark who had attended Barnabas and Paul, and who afterwards was a companion of Peter; that the third Gospel was composed by Luke, the companion of Paul, who, in addition to other sources of information, written and oral, made use of the oldest document, the writing of Matthew, and the narrative

[1] Westcott's Introduction to the Gospels, pp. 213, 214, 231, n.

of Mark; that Luke's Gospel was composed not much later than the "first decennium after A.D. 70."[1]

From the foregoing statements it will be seen how small, comparatively, is the divergence of the different schools of judicious critics, so far as their conclusions have a bearing on the historical evidences of Christianity. The early formation, under the eyes and by the agency of the immediate disciples of Jesus, of an oral narrative of his sayings and of the events of his life; its wide diffusion; its incorporation into the second Gospel, prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, by an author who had listened to Peter; the authorship of the foundation, at least, of the first Gospel by the Apostle Matthew; the completion of the first Gospel in its present compass at about the date of the fall of the city, and the consequent dispersion of the Christians, who fled at the coming of the Romans; the composition of Luke by a Christian writer who had access to immediate testimony, as well as to writings in which this testimony had been set down by disciples situated like himself, — these are facts which erudite and candid scholars, both German and English, whose researches entitle them to speak with confidence, unite in affirming.

A few words may be said upon the integrity of the Gospels. The guaranty of this is the essential agreement of the existing manuscripts, which would not be possible had the early texts been tampered with. Renan speaks of the little authority which the texts of the Gospels had for about a "hundred years:" in his first edition he wrote "a hundred and fifty." "They had no scruple," he adds, "about inserting in them paragraphs combining the narratives diversely, or completing some by others. The poor man who has but

[1] Weiss's Leben Jesu, B. i. p. 24–84.

one book wishes it to contain every thing that comes home to his heart. They lent these little rolls to one another. Every one transcribed on the margin of his copy the words, the parables, which he found elsewhere, and which moved him." [1] These statements are exaggerated. There is no proof that the Gospels were treated with this degree of license. Had they been so treated, the differences consequent upon it must have perpetuated themselves in the copies derived from the early texts. With regard to Renan's solitary example of an insertion of any length, — John viii. 1-11 (he might have added one more, Mark xvi. 9-20), — these passages are doubted, or rejected from the text, by scholars, mainly on this very ground of a lack of manuscript attestation. No doubt, here and there a marginal annotation, made for liturgical purposes, or from some other innocent motive, has crept into the text. In the second century the diversities in the copies of the canonical Gospels were considerable.[2] It is the business of textual criticism to ascertain what readings are to be preferred. The statement that the early Christians felt no interest whatever in keeping the text of the Gospels intact is a pure fiction.[3]

[1] Vie de Jésus, 13me éd. p. lv.

[2] See Westcott's History of the Canon of the New Testament, p. 149 seq.

[3] Other statements, in the same connection, have even less foundation. "They attached little importance," says Renan, "to these writings," — Gospels; "and the collectors (conservateurs), such as Papias, in the first half of the second century, still preferred to them the oral tradition." On the contrary, the work of Papias was itself a commentary on the Gospels, or on portions of them. In his remark about his esteem of oral tradition, he is not comparing the Gospels with other sources of information, but refers to anecdotes respecting them and their authors, which he interwove in his comments, and which he preferred to derive from oral sources. See Eusebius, H. E., iii. 39. Renan's reference to Irenæus (Adv. Hær., iii. cc. 2, 3) proves nothing to his pur-

In these remarks we have turned away for a time from the special consideration of the fourth Gospel. The more particular discussion of its origin must be reserved for another chapter.

pose. It contains no hint of a preference of tradition to the Gospels. Renan further says, "Besides the Gospels that have reached us, there were others" — in his first edition he wrote "a multitude of others" — "pretending equally to represent the tradition of eye-witnesses." How little warrant there is for this statement respecting apocryphal Gospels, and how false is the impression which it conveys, have been shown in preceding pages of this chapter. The "many" writers to whom Luke refers in his prologue were soon superseded, and passed away. There were left no competitors with the Gospels of the canon, and none arose.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE APOSTOLIC AUTHORSHIP OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

EUSEBIUS places the Gospel of John in the catalogue of the "Homologoumena," — books received without dispute by all Christian people.[1] It is fully recognized, he tells us, "in all the churches under heaven." Its authorship had never been questioned, except in the solitary instance of an obscure sect which Epiphanius terms "Alogi;"[2] for there is no reason to doubt that these persons, who lived at Thyatira in Lydia, are the same to whom Irenæus refers;[3] who are noticed, also, later by Philastrius;[4] and against whom, not improbably, Hippolytus wrote. They were carried, in their hostility to Montanism, with its doctrine of prophetical gifts and of the Paraclete, into an antipathy to both the Apocalypse and the Gospel; and their tendencies of thought sooner or later awakened in them a repugnance to the conception of the Logos, or of the pre-existence of Christ as a person. Critical objections, on their part, to the Gospel, seem to have been an afterthought, due to an antagonism which had its origin in a purely subjective and dogmatic prejudice. Since they discarded the Apocalypse, as well as the Gospel, and absurdly ascribed them both to Cerinthus, a contemporary of John, their protest, as Zeller allows,[5] affords no indication that

[1] H. E., iii. 24, 25.
[2] Hær., li. 3, liv. 1.
[3] Adv. Hær., iii. 11, 9.
[4] Hær., 60.
[5] Theol. Jahrbb., 1845, p. 645 seq.

any other tradition as to the authorship of the Gospel existed, save that existing in the church. No importance, then, attaches to the dissent of this insignificant party, on which Irenæus thinks it necessary to bestow but a few lines. The ancient church is united in its testimony to the genuineness of the fourth Gospel, and whoever adopts the contrary opinion is bound to account for this consentaneous judgment of antiquity.

The modern attack on the Johannine authorship, as far as it merits serious attention, may be said to have begun with the first essay in which Baur took up the subject. It was published in 1844.[1] The subsequent assailants have followed more or less closely in his footsteps, but they have frequently forgotten or renounced the postulates which gave coherence and a degree of plausibility to his theory. At the time when he wrote, Hegelism was predominant in Germany. On the basis of that philosophy the historical speculations of Baur were founded. In history, as in the development of mind, and in the universe at large, thesis begets antithesis; and both, by an inward momentum, are resolved into a higher unity. Christianity was treated as an example of evolution, passing through successive stages, according to the method of the Hegelian logic. The church, it was affirmed, was at the outset Ebionitic.

[1] The literature of this controversy (down to 1869) is given by Professor E. Abbot in the American edition of Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, art. John, Gospel of. A complete bibliography (down to 1875), embracing about five hundred publications, by Mr. C. R. Gregory, is appended to the English translation of Luthardt's work, St. John the Author of the Fourth Gospel (Edinburgh, 1875). Among the later discussions of most value are Bishop Lightfoot's articles (in the Contemporary Review, 1875-77) in review of Supernatural Religion, Beyschlag's Zur Johanneischen Frage (1876), Godet's Introduction hist. et critique to his Comm. sur L'Évang. de S. Jean (1876), and Professor E. Abbot's The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel: the External Evidences (1880).

Christ was at first held to be only a human prophet filled with the Spirit. Then arose the opposite pole of Paulinism, leading to the conflict of the two types of belief, and of the followers of Peter and Paul respectively. The reconciliation ensued, mediated, first, in such writings as the Epistles to the Colossians and the Philippians, which it was denied that Paul wrote, and then in the Logos theology as presented in the Gospel and first Epistle, falsely attributed to John. In point of fact, this apostle wrote only the Apocalypse: he was a Judaizer, like the other primitive apostles. The fourth Gospel followed the great Gnostic systems, and was composed somewhere between A.D. 160 and A.D. 170. In common with the Book of Acts and many other of the New-Testament writings, it was a *Tendenz-schrift*, that is, the product of theological bias or theory; and was composed with the intent to pacify contending parties. It should be observed that Baur's historical speculation was the counterpart of his metaphysics. It was a naturalistic view, growing out of an ideal pantheism. The chronological position assigned to the fourth Gospel followed from the assumption that Christianity was a development on the plane of nature. It is dangerous to pull away any of the stones in so compact a structure. Yet just this, many of the later defenders of the proposition of Baur have rashly ventured to do. The metaphysical system at the foundation has been generally given up. The date assigned to the Gospel has been almost universally abandoned. The force of the historical proofs has obliged the critics to push it back towards the beginning of the century. They have been unable, however, to find a resting-place where the composition of the book could be securely placed. Keim first put it between A.D. 100 and A.D.

117, but finally fixed it at A.D. 130. Wherever the date is set, obstacles and difficulties spring up to necessitate a change. Meantime it is frequently overlooked, that this departure from Baur on the chronological question imperils the whole scheme of doctrinal development, of which his view on this point formed an essential element, and thus shakes to the foundation the critical fabric so laborously built up by the Tübingen master.

Moreover, the historical postulates of Baur have been proved to be untenable. The "tendency" theory is generally admitted by independent critics to have been at least a great exaggeration. Such writers as Mangold [1] and Keim,[2] who are quite free from prejudice in a conservative direction, maintain that the representation in the Acts, of the relation of the older apostles to Paul, is substantially consonant with Paul's own testimony in the Galatians and elsewhere, and with what is inherently probable. Neither John nor Peter was a Judaizer. Neither demanded that the Gentile converts should be circumcised. There was no such chasm to be bridged over as Baur assumed to exist. There was no such radical change required to convert John into a liberal-minded apostle as Baur affirmed to be necessary. This has become evident, whether the apostle was the author of the Apocalypse, or not. As to the New-Testament writings, Hilgenfeld,[3] probably the ablest living representative of the Tübingen school, now holds that Paul wrote First Thessalonians and Philippians, together with Philemon, in addition to the four great Epistles, — First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans, — which Baur had allowed to him. The progress is in the

[1] Bleek's Einl. in d. N. T. (ed. Mangold), p. 392.
[2] Aus dem Urchristenthum, pp. 64–89.
[3] Einl. in d. N. T., pp. 239, 331, 333.

right direction, towards the recognition of Colossians and Ephesians, — which Reuss has ably defended,[1] — and of other Epistles, which, more on subjective than historical grounds, have been called in question. But, even as the case now stands among the critics, the fundamental assumption of the Tübingen school, that the primitive type of Christianity was Ebionitic, has no tenable footing. That assumption is contradicted, as will appear, by the synoptical Gospels. It is contradicted by the Epistles of Paul, even by those which on all hands are conceded to be genuine. It is unreasonable to assume that he introduced most important elements of doctrine respecting the person of Christ, which the other apostles must have known that Paul taught, but against which it is not pretended that they uttered a lisp of dissent. In this altered state of opinion, when the premises of Baur have been so far abandoned, and when his hypothesis respecting the date of the Gospel has been so variously and essentially modified, it remains to be seen whether his general theory as to its authorship can longer be maintained.

The farther back it is found necessary to shift the date of the Gospel, the more menacing is the situation for the theory of non-apostolic authorship. Keim is not alone in the retreat from the old ground taken by Baur and Volckmar. Hilgenfeld is not disposed to deny that the fourth Gospel was used by Justin, and therefore places its origin between A.D. 130 and A.D. 140. Renan, after not a little vacillation, now holds that it saw the light in A.D. 125 or A.D. 130. Schenkel fixes on a date ten years earlier, — A.D. 115-120; which is somewhat later than the limits first assigned by Keim. When it is considered that the Apostle John, according to the

[1] Gesch. d. heiligen Schriften d. N. T., i. 107 seq.

universal and well-grounded tradition of the ancient church, died at a very advanced age, at Ephesus, Keim's opinion, even his final opinion, as to the date when the Gospel was in use, would appear to exclude absolutely the assumption that it was a spurious work. How could a book of this kind be palmed off on the churches, including the church at Ephesus, with no longer interval between its appearance and the apostle's death? To meet the exigency, Keim boldly affirmed that the Apostle John never lived at Ephesus, and that the belief of the ancient church, that he resided there and died there, was all a mistake! This was to strike at the corner-stone of the Tübingen historical theory, which rested on the Johannine authorship of the Apocalypse. Keim's novel and adventurous opinion has been effectually confuted by Hilgenfeld[1] and Krenkel.[2] The supposition that Irenæus confounded John the Apostle with another John — John the Presbyter — is next to impossible. He had a perfectly distinct recollection of Polycarp, and of his reminiscences of the apostle. His connection with Irenæus was not in his childhood, but in the early part of his manhood; that is, of that era included between the ages of seventeen or eighteen and thirty-five or forty.[3] Moreover, it was not one or two interviews with Polycarp, but the continued relation and intercourse of a pupil, which Irenæus describes.[4] In a letter to Victor, bishop of Rome, Irenæus referred to the visit of Polycarp to that city (A.D. 155), and to the appeal which that venerable bishop made to the instruction

[1] Einl. in d. N. T., pp. 394 seq.

[2] Der Apostel Johannes, pp. 133 seq. On this topic, see also Steitz, Stud. u. Kritik. (1868), pp. 467 seq.

[3] See Zahn's art., Irenæus, in Herzog u. Plitt's Real-Encycl., vii. 136 seq.; Canon Venables, in Smith and Wace's Dict. of Biography, iii. 254

[4] See Zahn's art. (as above), p. 136.

which he had received from John and other apostles.[1] If there was an error in this statement of Irenæus, it would have been evident at Rome, where the facts concerning Polycarp's visit were remembered. It is not alone from Polycarp directly that Irenæus was informed of his recollections of John. The story of the apostle's meeting the heretic Cerinthus in the bath, he had received from individuals to whom Polycarp had related it.[2] Not Polycarp alone, but other elders also who had known John, are referred to by Irenæus. Polycarp was not the sole link connecting him with John.[3] He had, moreover, before him the work of Papias, in which the apostle is plainly distinguished from the presbyter of the same name. Keim's hypothesis attributes to Irenæus an incredible misunderstanding. If he was in error in saying that Papias had been taught by the apostle, of which we cannot be certain, this circumstance will not for a moment warrant such an inference as Keim would deduce from it. As Renan says, we cannot suppose a falsehood on the part of Irenæus; but this, as the same writer implies, we should have to suppose, if we held that John did not live in Asia.[4] Other witnesses besides Irenæus testify to the sojourn of the apostle there, — Apollonius, an Asiatic bishop and an earlier writer;[5] Polycrates, himself a bishop of Ephesus, who was born as early as A.D. 125;[6] Clement of Alexandria, who relates the incident — whether it be true or not is immaterial in the present argument — of John's conversion of the apostate youth who had become a robber.[7] Other early legends relating to the apostle imply at least the knowledge that he had lived at Ephe-

[1] Irenæus (ed. Stieren), i., fragm. iii. p. 826.
[2] Adv. Hær., iii. 3, 4.
[3] See this work, p. 185 seq.
[4] Les Évangiles, p. 425, n. 2.
[5] Eusebius, H. E., v. 18.
[6] Ibid., v. 24.
[7] Ibid., iii. 23.

sus. Justin Martyr (A.D. 140–160), and all others who attribute the Apocalypse to the Apostle John, virtually testify to the same fact. Keim holds that the author of the Gospel, whoever he was, proceeded on the supposition that John had lived in Asia Minor; so that at least as early as A.D. 130 the belief must have prevailed that the apostle had dwelt there. The traces of the influence of John in Asia were distinct and permanent. There was in reality, as Lightfoot has shown, a later "school of John," — a class of writers coming after Polycarp and Papias, and including Melito of Sardis, Claudius Apollinaris, and Polycrates, — who bear incontestable marks of the peculiar influence of John's teaching.[1] Keim's conjecture falls to the ground before these strong and multiplied historical proofs.

Irenæus states that the Apostle John was alive at the accession of Trajan, A.D. 98.[2] With this positive assertion of one who was in a position to ascertain the fact agree the traditions relative to John as an old man, to which reference has been made in later ecclesiastical writers. Clement's account of the rescue of the outlaw chief, and Jerome's interesting narrative of the aged apostle's method of addressing his flock,[3] indicate a general belief that his life was protracted to extreme old age. We are authorized, by evidence which cannot be successfully impugned, in picturing to ourselves the Apostle John, near the close of the first century, at Ephesus, a flourishing centre of Christianity, surrounded by disciples whom he had trained, and who, in common with the churches in all that district, looked up to him with affectionate reverence. And now, if he did not write the Gospel which bears his name, how did those

[1] Cont. Review, February, 1876, p. 471 seq.
[2] Adv. Hær., ii. 22, 5, iii 3, 4.
[3] Hieron., In Gal., vi.

disciples and churches come to believe that he did? How did all the churches in the second century acquire the same conviction? Many of those disciples of John were living at the time when the Gospel is admitted to have been in circulation. But nothing would be gained for the sceptical cause if the assumed date of its first appearance could be brought down to a later day. Where had this remarkable document lain during the long interval? What warrant was there for accepting a narrative so unique, so different from the first three Gospels and from the established tradition? Can we believe that there was nobody to ask these questions? Is it credible that a new history of Jesus would have made its way, under these circumstances, to universal acceptance without the least scrutiny? If spurious, very little inquiry would have sufficed to expose its false pretensions. The striking peculiarities of the Gospel, not to speak of the fact, which demanded explanation, of its late appearance, would have compelled doubt and dispute. The microscopic examination of particular passages in the Fathers, and the discussion of special points of evidence about which a contest may be raised, has availed of late to cover as in a mist the more comprehensive features of proof. The great strength of the external argument for the genuineness of the Gospel has seldom been justly appreciated by friend or foe.

When we turn from these general considerations, to consider the use of the Gospel by particular writers in the second century, one is struck at seeing how much of the ground which Baur attempted to seize has been surrendered by the ablest critics of the negative school. Keim holds that the fourth Gospel was among the Gospels known to Marcion, that Justin Martyr derives

quotations from it, that it antedated the Epistles of Barnabas and the Ignatian Epistles, and that it was used as early in the extant literature of the church as were the first three Gospels.[1] Mangold goes almost as far. He admits that there is no defect in the external evidence.[2] What more satisfactory attestation is required? In the succinct review of the evidence which it is proposed to give here, it will be taken for granted that the Gospel and first Epistle are from the same pen. Baur and Hilgenfeld denied this; but their difference from one another on the question, which was the primitive work and which the secondary, is an argument for the identity of authorship, — an opinion which is supported as well by the strongest internal evidence as by the uniform tradition.

Eusebius, in the first quarter of the fourth century, with much of the earliest Christian literature in his hands which is now lost, knew of no dispute respecting the authorship of this Gospel. Origen, one of the most erudite of scholars, whose birth from Christian parents fell within the limits of the second century (A.D. 185), counts it among "the only undisputed Gospels in the church of God under the whole heavens."[3] In consonance with Irenæus his contemporary, Clement of Alexandria reports what he had heard from the oldest presbyters. John, he says, wrote a "spiritual Gospel," being encouraged to this task by his friends, and urged by the Spirit.[4] The Muratorian canon gives with more detail a tradition of like purport. The apostle had been exhorted to write, it tells us, by his fellow-disciples and bishops. Justin Martyr has quotations which are undoubtedly traceable to this Gospel; and from

[1] Gesch. Jesu, i. 137. [2] Bleek's Einl. in d. N. T. (ed. 3), p. 281, n
[3] Eusebius, H. E., vi. 25. [4] Ibid., vi. 14.

no other source could he have derived his doctrine of the person of Christ.[1] It formed one of the four at the basis of the Diatesseron of Tatian,[2] Justin's pupil. Theophilus, a contemporary of Tatian, who became bishop of Antioch A.D. 169, describes the fourth Gospel as one of the Holy Scriptures, and John as guided by the Holy Spirit.[3] He wrote a commentary on the Gospels, and somehow combined the four in a single work.[4] Athenagoras, a contemporary of Theophilus, speaks of Christ in terms which are obviously founded on passages in this Gospel.[5] Melito, bishop of Sardis, spoke of the ministry of Jesus as lasting for three years, — a fact, in all probability, derived from the fourth Gospel.[6] Another contemporary, Apollinaris, bishop of Hierapolis, indirectly but manifestly implies its existence and authority.[7] It may here be observed, that Celsus, the most noted of the opponents of Christianity in the second century, resorted to the fourth Gospel, as well as to the first three, to get materials for his attack.[8] It was probably used by Hermas;[9] and traces, though less distinct, of its use, are not wanting in the Epistle ascribed to Barnabas.[10] Polycarp, in addition to the inference as to his use of the Gospel which may be drawn with the highest degree of probability from the relations of Irenæus to him, introduces into his own brief Epistle to the Philippians a passage which is found in

[1] See this work, p. 193 seq.
[2] Ibid., p. 204; Bishop Lightfoot's art., Cont. Review, May, 1877.
[3] Ad Autolycum, ii. 22. [4] Hieron., De viris illustr., 25; Epp., 151.
[5] Suppl. pro Christianis, c. 10.
[6] See Otto's Corpus Apo.., t. ix. p. 416.
[7] Chron. Pasch., pp. 13, 14. [8] See this work, p. 209.
[9] Simil., ix. 12, cf. John x. 7, 9, xiv. 6; Mand., xii. 3, cf. 1 John v. 3.
[10] Keim is confident that proofs of the use of the fourth Gospel are contained in the Ep. of Barnabas. But see Luthardt, p. 76; Sanday, Gospels in the Second Century, pp. 270-273; Cunningham, Dissert. on the Ep. of Barnabas, etc., p. 60.

no other book but the first Epistle of John.[1] As to Papias, there is not the least evidence to disprove his acquaintance with the fourth Gospel; since the silence of Eusebius on this topic affords not the slightest presumption that Papias made no mention of it.[2] But Eusebius does expressly state that Papias used the first Epistle of John,[3] this being one of the catholic Epistles the use of which by the early writers was a matter which it belonged to the plan of Eusebius to record. Irenæus cites from "elders," the contemporaries of Papias, an interpretation of the words of Christ in John xiv. 2,[4] and attributes to them an idea relative to the length of the Saviour's ministry, which sprang up from a misunderstanding of John viii. 57.[5] These testimonies sweep over the century. They carry us back to the lifetime of the contemporaries and pupils of John. Finally, appended to the Gospel itself is an indorsement emanating from those into whose hands it was first given (John xxi. 24). It is an independent attestation, distinct from that given by the author himself, and not to be distrusted without imputing to him a reduplicated, intricate fraud.

Let us glance now at the parties without the pale of the church. Tertullian distinctly implies that Marcion (A.D. 140) was acquainted with John's Gospel, but cast it aside because he would acknowledge no other of the apostles than Paul.[6] We have little information respecting the canon of the Montanists, but there is no hint that they rejected the fourth Gospel. The Basilidians and the Valentinians, Gnostic sects which arose in the second quarter of the second century, made use

[1] Ad Phil., 7.
[2] See Bishop Lightfoot's art., Cont. Review, January, 1875.
[3] H. E., iii. 39. [4] Adv. Hær., v. 36, 2. [5] Ibid., ii. 22, 5
[6] Adv. Marcion, iv. 3, cf. c. 2; De Carne Christi, c. 3.

of it; the Valentinians, Irenæus tells us, abundant use of it, seeking to bolster up their strange opinions by a perverse interpetation of its contents.[1] Heracleon, a follower of Valentinus, wrote a commentary upon it, from which Origen quotes largely.[2] Tertullian explicitly says that Valentinus himself used all of the four Gospels,[3] and Irenæus nowhere implies the contrary. If there is room for a doubt whether Hippolytus derived those comments upon certain places in the Gospel which he quotes, from Valentinus himself, or from a disciple, there is little occasion for a similar doubt in regard to his references to Basilides.[4] Basilides flourished under Hadrian (A.D. 117–138). Valentinus came to Rome about A.D. 140. In the middle of the second century the debate between the church and the Gnostic heresiarchs was raging. Justin speaks in the severest terms of reprobation of Marcion and his followers, of the Valentinians, Basilidians, and the sect of Saturlinus.[5] Their doctrines he calls blasphemous. Now, all of these parties on the one hand, and the defenders of orthodoxy on the other, acknowledge in common the fourth Gospel. The Gnostics did not question its apostolic authorship, but resorted to artificial interpretation of its contents; and the church teachers had no heavier task than to expose the fantastic character of their exegesis. The beginnings of the great controversy are as early as the Apocalypse, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Epistle to the Colossians. How

[1] Adv. Hær., iii. 11, 7.

[2] For Origen's references, see Grabe's Spicilegium, vol. ii., or Stieren's ed. of Irænus, i. 938-971.

[3] De Præscript., c. 38. For the sense of "videtur" in the passage see this work, p. 208.

[4] Hippolytus, Ref. omn. Hær., vii. 22, 27. See Professor E. Abbot, The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel, p. 86.

[5] Dial., c. 35, cf. Apol., i. 26.

and when could this Gospel, if it be spurious, have been brought in, have secured universal acceptance among the belligerent parties, and been adopted as an authority by both? Who could have had the intellectual skill requisite to frame a book of such a character as to obtain this honor and deference from the champions of antagonistic types of doctrine? If the work was known to emanate from an apostle, no explanation is required; since the Gnostics, Marcion excepted, did not profess to reject the authority of the apostles. If it was a forged composition, first appearing decades of years after the death of John, its reception by orthodox and heretic alike must remain an unsolved enigma.

Leaving the external proofs, we turn to the internal evidence. Here we meet at once the standing objection, that the catholic tone of the author, and, in particular, his method of speaking of "the Jews" as an alien body, are inconsistent with the character and position of John. The reader must bear in mind, however, that John was never the Judaizer whom the Tübingen critics have painted him, but was the apostle who gave the right hand of fellowship to the apostle to the Gentiles (Gal. ii. 9). He is not writing at the early day when the Jewish Christians kept up the legal observances in the temple, and hoped for a vast influx of converts from their countrymen. The temple lay in ruins. The full meaning of the Master, when he said, "In this place is one greater than the temple" (Matt. xii. 6), had become apparent to his disciples from the lessons of Providence and the teaching of the Spirit. The rejection of Jesus the Messiah by the bulk of the Jews, which long before filled the Apostle Paul with grief, was now a fact beyond all question. The Jewish antagonism to the church had broken forth, as the Jewish

war approached, in acts of violence. At an earlier day persecution of the Jewish Christians is referred to by Paul (1 Thess. ii. 14), and in the Epistle to the Hebrews (x. 32–35). In the year 44, Herod Agrippa I., a rigid Jew, had seized and killed John's own brother, James. About a score of years later — Hegesippus places the event just before the siege of Jerusalem by Vespasian — even James the Just, the brother of Jesus, who had been least of all offensive to Jewish zealots for the old ritual, was stoned to death by the fanatical populace and their leaders. Concurrent proofs justify the conclusion, that, on the breaking-out of the war with the Romans, not only John, but a company of disciples, including in their number one or more of the other apostles, went to Asia. There at Ephesus, in the midst of the Gentile churches, the Apostle John continued for many years. He must have been an impassive spectator indeed, not to have read the import of the events which made the true significance of Christianity, and the position which belonged to it in relation to the Old-Testament religion and people, as clear as noonday. His must have been a sluggish mind indeed, if, even independently of supernatural aid, the teaching of Jesus respecting the spiritual and catholic nature of religion and of his kingdom had not been brought with new vividness to his recollection, and its contents more clearly apprehended in the light of the revolution which had subverted the Jewish sanctuary and state, and of the malignant, persevering hostility which had sent him and his fellow-disciples as outcasts into the bosom of the churches which Paul had planted among the heathen. What is the attitude of this Gospel towards the religion and the people of the old covenant? If mention is made of "the Jews," the same

phrase is on the lips of Paul,[1] whose ardent love to his countrymen is plain to all his readers. The author of the fourth Gospel is a reverent believer in Moses and the prophets (i. 47, iv. 22, x. 35). It is from his report that we are made acquainted with the pregnant words of Jesus, "Salvation is of the Jews" (iv. 22). He is represented as having come to "his own" (i. 11): the Jews were "his own" in a peculiar sense. Their refusal to receive him is to the author's mind an event full of pathos. If the ecclesiastical tradition respecting the date of the Gospel and the place and circumstances of its composition is accepted, there is nothing in the tone of the author in the least incongruous with the belief that he was John the Apostle.

The Tübingen school have insisted that John could not have written both the Apocalypse and the Gospel. It is true that the differences in style, and in the style of thought, between these two books, are such that both could hardly have been written at the same time or from the same mood of feeling. But that it is impossible for an author, who under the influence of the emotions roused in him by Jewish and heathen persecutions, in the mood of prophetic exaltation, wrote the Revelation, to compose works like the Gospel and first Epistle twenty or thirty years after, under entirely altered conditions of outward and inward experience, is more than can be safely affirmed. The Tübingen critics have erroneously attributed to the Apocalypse a Judaizing and anti-Pauline spirit.[2] But the same critics have themselves pointed out marked resemblances between the Gospel and the Apocalypse. Baur styled the Gospel a spiritualized (*vergeistigte*) Apocalypse. It is remarkable that

[1] Gal. i. 13, 14: "the Jews' religion."
[2] See Weiss, Leben Jesu, p. 98.

in the Revelation, Christ is called "the Word [Logos] of God" (Rev. xix. 13). Those who are disposed to accept the dilemma of the Tübingen school as justified are bound in candor to admit that the evidence which connects John with the Gospel is decidedly stronger than that of his writing the Apocalypse. This is the fact as regards even the external proofs. The Book of Revelation was not embraced in the Peshito, the ancient Syriac version.

Another objection to the Johannine authorship is the alleged indebtedness of the author of the Gospel to Philo for the conception of the Logos, or Word, which stands at the beginning of the book as a designation of Christ in his state of pre-existence. The first remark to be made in answer to this allegation is, that the idea of the Logos, and the doctrine associated with it, in the Gospel, are utterly at variance with the system of Alexandrian-Jewish philosophy, of which Philo is the leading representative. In the Gospel, the Logos is personal. In Philo, the Logos is predominantly the self-revealing potence of the hidden, ineffable Deity. If, as Zeller holds,[1] the Logos is ever thought of by Philo as a real hypostasis, the passages having this import stand opposed to the current of his teaching. Many of the soundest expositors of Philo do not concur in the opinion of Zeller, that the Logos in his writings is ever conceived of as truly personal.[2] Again: the notion of the Logos in Philo is usually the Platonic idea of "reason." It is this idea which he more commonly connects with the term, and not the Old-Testament conception of the Word; whereas in the Gospel the Platonic conception

[1] Gesch. d. Graech. Phil., iii. 2, p. 329.

[2] See Dorner, Entwicklungsgesch. d. Lehr. von d. Pers. Christ, i. 19, 23 seq.

is utterly absent. Once more—and this is the most important consideration—the cardinal thought of the prologue of the Gospel, that of the incarnation of the Logos, is in direct antagonism to the fundamental philosophy of Philo. His system is dualistic. Matter, in his view, is utterly alien to the Deity. Nothing can be more repugnant to the system of Philo than the declaration that "the Logos became flesh" (i. 14). The Judaic Gnosticism, which denied the incarnation as any thing more than an appearance, or temporary connection of the divine Christ with the man Jesus, was the legitimate and actual offspring of the Philonian speculation. It was Cerinthus, who probably began his career at Alexandria, against whom, according to the declaration of Irenæus, John wrote. Cerinthus carried out the dualistic theory, and taught that the heavenly Christ joined himself to Jesus at his baptism, and forsook him at the passion. The theology of the Gospel and first Epistle, so far from being borrowed from Philo, is repugnant to his essential doctrine and to the heretical scheme based on it. Finally, even the phraseology of John can be accounted for by supposing it drawn mainly, and perhaps exclusively, from the Old Testament. The prologue makes it evident that he had in mind the narrative of the creation by the word of God, in Genesis. The "word" of God is said in the Old Testament to have come to the prophets, revealing his attributes and will.[1] In the Psalms and in Isaiah the "word" is personified, and divine attributes and works are attributed to it.[2] From these sources the evangelist may have taken up the term which struck him as most fit to designate the personal Revealer of God, whose incarnation, and life

[1] Isa. i. 4–11, cf. Isa. ii. 3.

[2] Ps. xxxiii. 6, cvii. 20, cxlvii. 15; Isa. lv. 10 seq

in the flesh, he was about to describe. Whether the choice of this term by the author of the Gospel is to be accounted for wholly in this way, from its Old-Testament use, as Weiss thinks, or whether discussions about the Logos, which were fomented by Alexandrian speculation, may have likewise influenced him in his selection of phraseology, are questions into which we do not here enter. At all events, the term "Logos" was found by him to be a proper vehicle for expressing that idea of Christ which his own testimony, and the impression made by his life, had stamped upon the disciple's mind. Could it be proved that the source of this term was Alexandrian, the apostle's definition of it was none the less a reversal or rectification of the Alexandrian idea connected with it.[1] Philo's philosophy, it should not be forgotten, was not all his own creation. It had its roots in prior, widely-diffused Judaic speculation. In the reports of the teaching of Christ in the fourth

[1] Dr. E. A. Abbot (in the art. Gospels, Enc. Brit., vol. x.) traces various passages in John to Philo. But why go so far, when the Old Testament furnishes abundant materials suggestive of the imagery which is contained in every passage which Dr. Abbot refers to? The evangelist's account of the visit of the Samaritan woman to the well (chap. iv.) is said to remind us of Philo's contrast between Hagar at the well and Rebekah (Posterity of Cain, xli.). Why, then, does the evangelist make the woman carry a pitcher, like Rebekah, while in Philo one point of the contrast is that she carries a "leathern bag"? The reader who will consult an English concordance under the words "well," "wells," "water," "waters," "living water," "fountain," "fountains," "drink," will see how much closer the parallels are between John iv. and the Old Testament than between that chapter and Philo. For example, for "well of salvation," see Isa. xii. 3; compare Prov. x. 11, xvi. 22, xviii. 4. For "fountain of living water," see Jer. ii. 13; compare Isa. lviii. 11, Jer. xvii. 13; Cant. iv. 15. See also Rev. xxi. 6, which will not be attributed to Philo. "Ye drink; but ye are not filled with drink" (Hag. i. 6). As for the figurative use of "bread," the suggestions in the Old Testament are numerous. For the expression "bread of heaven," see Ps. cv. 40; compare Ps. lxxviii. 20, 15, 16.

Gospel the term "Logos" nowhere appears. It is clear that the author merely sums up in the prologue, in language of his own, the instruction which Christ had given concerning himself.

The author of the Gospel was a Jew and a Palestinian. The strong Hebraic coloring of his style is acknowledged by Keim,[1] as well as affirmed by Ewald.[2] The principal conceptions, as "life," "light," "truth," are drawn from the circle of Old-Testament thought. The authority of the Old Testament, the inspiration of Moses and the prophets, are assumed.[3] With the characteristic elements of the Messianic expectation the author is familiar. The same is true of Jewish opinions and customs generally; for example, the usages connected with marriage and with the burial of the dead. Witness his acquaintance with the prejudice against conversing with women (iv. 27), with the mutual hatred of Jews and Samaritans (iv. 9), with the opinion that deformity or suffering implies sin (ix. 2). He is intimately conversant with Jewish observances, as is seen in what he says of the "last day of the feast" (vii. 37), — the day added to the original seven, — the wedding at Cana, the burial of Lazarus.[4] The allusions to the geography of the Holy Land are those of one personally conversant with the places. He knows how to distinguish Cana of Galilee from another place, of more consequence, of the same name (ii. 11). Of the Sea of Galilee, the passage across, and the paths on its shores, he has an accurate recollection. Respecting the topography at the opening of chap. iv.,

[1] Gesch. Jesu, i. 116. [2] Johann. Schriften, i. 44 seq.

[3] i. 45, iii. 14, v. 46, vi. 32, vii. 38, viii. 56, x. 35, xii. 14 seq., 37 seq. xv. 25, xix. 23 seq., 28, 35, 36, 37, xx. 31.

[4] Cf. Westcott, Comm. on St. John's Gospel, p. vi.

Renan remarks that it could emanate only from one who had often passed into the Valley of Sychem.[1] He has in his mind the image of the Pavement, or platform on which Pilate's chair was placed, with its Hebrew name, Gabbatha (xix. 13).

We have now to consider the relation of the fourth Gospel to the other three. Here the same phenomena which persuade some that the fourth Gospel is spurious convince others that it is genuine. The longer ministry of Jesus, — extending to at least two years and a half, and probably to three years and a half, — and his extended labors in Judæa, are obvious peculiarities of the fourth evangelist. But his representation of the life and ministry of Christ, although independent, is not contradictory to that of the synoptists. The "country" of Jesus, it is to be observed, is still Galilee; for this is the right interpretation of John iv. 44. Luke, in the long passage relating to the last journey of Jesus to Jerusalem (ix. 51–xviii. 14), brings together matter, a portion of which appears to belong in connection with the ministry in Judæa. Independently of such particulars as the relation of Christ to the family of Mary and Martha, the lament of Jesus over Jerusalem (Luke xiii. 34 seq.; Matt. xxiii. 37 seq.) admits of no tolerable explanation, except on the supposition that he had frequently taught there. "How often" must have meant more than the efforts of a few days. The apostrophe plainly refers to the city, not to the Jewish people as a whole, to whom Baur would arbitrarily apply it. In Luke, the verse immediately before reads, "For it cannot be *that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem*."[2]

[1] Vie de Jésus (13th ed.), p. 493.

[2] For Strauss's abortive attempt to escape from the only rational interpretation of the Saviour's lament, see The Supernatural Origin of Christianity, p. 100 seq.

This passage establishes on the authority of the synoptists, beyond the reach of doubt or cavil, the longer Judean ministry of Jesus, and thus confirms the testimony of the fourth Gospel in this essential particular. Luke (vi. 1) distinctly implies the intervention of at least one passover between the beginning and the close of his public life. Who can avoid seeing that the profound impression made by Jesus is far better accounted for if we accept the chronology of the fourth Gospel than if we conceive his ministry limited to about a twelvemonth? The truth appears to be, that in the early oral narration of the life and teaching of Christ, perhaps for the reason that his labors in Jerusalem and the neighborhood were more familiar to the Christians there, the Galilean ministry was chiefly described. The matter was massed under the three general heads of his baptism, and intercourse with John the Baptist, his work in Galilee, and the visit to Jerusalem at the passover, when he was crucified. If the author of the fourth Gospel was a non-apostolic writer of the second century, no satisfactory reason can be conjectured for his deliberate departure from the apparent chronology of the received authorities. He might easily have brought Jesus into conflict with Pharisees more frequently elsewhere than in Judæa. He might have invented visits intermediate between the two passovers. If, as is alleged, he was of an anti-Judaic spirit, why should he thus cling to the passovers? Why should he present a chronological scheme which could only tend to provoke suspicion, and expose him to contradiction and detection? The writer, whoever he was, was evidently acquainted with one, if not all, of the earlier Gospels.[1] Why did he not set his new portrait into the

[1] See John iii. 24.

old frame? The most reasonable hypothesis certainly is, that he was conversant with the facts, and was possessed of a conscious and acknowledged authority which excluded from his mind all fear of contradiction.

The alleged discrepancy between the fourth Gospel and the synoptists, respecting the day of the month when Christ was crucified, has been urged as an argument, both by those who advocate, and those who oppose, the Johannine authorship. Was that Friday the 14th, or the 15th, of Nisan? And was the Last Supper at the usual time of the passover meal, or on the evening before? It is held by many scholars that there is here a discrepancy between the fourth evangelist and the other Gospels; that he, unlike them, makes the Last Supper to have occurred on the evening before the day on which the passover lamb was killed and eaten, and the crucifixion on the morning following. Bleek, Neander, Weiss, and numerous others, admitting the discrepancy, bring forward considerations to prove the superior accuracy of the fourth Gospel in this particular, some of which are drawn from incidental observations in the synoptists themselves. The Tübingen school insisted on the opposite inference. They have contended that the author of the fourth Gospel purposely misdated these events in order to make the crucifixion synchronize with the slaying of the paschal lamb, his intent being to convey the idea that the passover is supplanted by the offering of Christ, "the Lamb of God."

The renewed examination of the Gospels has led me more and more to doubt whether the fourth evangelist really differs from the synoptists as they are ordinarily understood.[1] I cannot but think that the more con-

[1] That John is in harmony with the synoptists on this point has been maintained by Dr. E. Robinson, Wieseler, Tholuck, Norton, and others:

servative critics, as Meyer, Weiss, Westcott, Ellicott, have asserted with an unwarranted degree of confidence the interpretation of John which places the Last Supper on the day prior to that of the paschal meal. It is still a very doubtful question of exegesis. On the supposition, however, that the discrepancy really exists, there is no just ground for the conclusion unfavorable to the accuracy of the fourth Gospel. The motive assigned by the Tübingen school for the alleged falsification of the date is totally insufficient. In the first place, if the author of the Gospel had wished to represent Christ as the antitype of the paschal lamb, he had no need to alter the chronology for this end. Christ is termed by Paul "our passover" (1 Cor. v. 7). In the second place, it is not certain even that the evangelist designs thus to represent Christ. It is quite as likely that the appellation "Lamb of God" was taken from Isa. liii. 7 as from Exod. xxix. 38 seq. It is more probable that the passage quoted by the evangelist, "A bone of him shall not be broken" (xix. 36), was taken from Ps. xxxiv. 20 than from the law relative to the paschal offering (Exod. xii. 46, Num. ix. 12).[1] On any reasonable view of the case, had the evangelist thought that the minute identification of Jesus with the paschal lamb was of so vital consequence that he must needs run the risk of devising a false chronology in contradiction to the received Gospels, he would surely have made the parallelism much more obvious. He would have gone farther than merely to insinuate it. How *could* he have considered it essential that Christ, as the antitype of

also, more recently, by Keil, Comm. ü. das Evangel. d. Matt., pp. 513-528; Luthardt, Comm. u. das Evangel. Johann.; McLellan, The New Testament, etc., vol. i. pp. 473-494.

[1] See Hutton's thoughtful essay on John's Gospel (Essays, vol. i p. 195).

the passover lamb, should die on the 14th of Nisan, when, according to the theory of the Tübingen critics, it was known to him that he did not?

The Quartodeciman observance in Asia Minor is a topic closely connected with the foregoing. That was on the 14th of Nisan. But what did it commemorate? Many scholars have thought that it was the crucifixion of Jesus. If this be so, it is a direct argument for the interpretation of the fourth Gospel, which would make the crucifixion on the morning of the day when the lamb was killed and eaten, and at the same time confirms the evangelist's accuracy on this point. But, since the able essay of Schürer, his opinion, which corresponds with that formerly defended by Bleek and Gieseler, has gained ground, that the Quartodeciman Supper on the evening of the 14th of Nisan was primarily the Jewish passover, kept at the usual time, but transformed into a Christian festival. John found the festival in being when he came to Asia Minor, and may well have left it to stand, "whether he regarded the 13th or the 14th as the day of the Last Supper."[1] It is certain that the defenders of the Quartodeciman practice in Asia found nothing in the fourth Gospel to clash with their views. Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus towards the end of the second century, pointed back to the example of John "who leaned on the bosom of the Saviour." It appears quite astonishing that a Gospel should have been forged in opposition to the tenet of the Quartodecimans, but treating the matter so obscurely that their leaders failed to discover in it any condemnation

[1] Zeitschr. für hist. Theol., 1870, pp. 182–284. For an exposition of the view of Weitzel and Steitz, that the Quartodecimans commemorated the crucifixion, see The Supernatural Origin of Christianity (3d ed.), p. 584 seq.

of their custom. It is not agreed what precise position on the paschal controversy was taken by Apollinaris, bishop of Hierapolis, the successor, and it may be the next successor, of Papias, in the second century. But this is known, that he recognized the fourth Gospel, and made his appeal to it. We may dismiss the Quartodeciman discussion as affording, even in the view of such opponents of the genuineness of the fourth Gospel as Schürer, no argument in favor of their opinion on this subject.

Were there space to compare various features in the history which are common to the synoptists and the fourth Gospel, we should find the statements of the latter worthy of credit. If we are obliged to choose between the first and the last passover as the probable date of the driving of the money-changers from the temple, the probability is decidedly in favor of the date assigned by the fourth evangelist. Then John the Baptist was fresh in the recollection of the people. As another example, may be mentioned the account given in John of the temporary connection of several of the disciples of Jesus with him immediately after his baptism, — a circumstance which explains, what would otherwise be difficult to understand, their instant obedience to his call to forsake their occupations, and enter into a permanent connection with him.

The next topic to be considered is the discourses of Christ as given in the fourth Gospel, considered in themselves and in relation to the reports of his teaching by the synoptists. The ordinary effect of oral repetition is to single out the salient points of a narrative, to sift it of a portion of its details, and to preserve or impart a certain terseness and home-bred vigor to the diction. These traits frequently appear in the first

three Gospels. The fourth Gospel is made up of personal recollections, in a style marked by the individuality of the author, and charged throughout with emotion. The discourses are in the same style of expression as the narrative portions of the Gospel and as the first Epistle. No doubt it must be assumed that the teaching of Jesus was heard, assimilated, and reproduced mainly in the author's own phraseology. This supposition is perfectly consistent with the essential faithfulness of his recollection. Let an ardent and sympathetic pupil listen to a public discourse of a teacher. Suppose him to undertake afterwards to relate in a condensed way what was said, for the information of another. It will be natural for him to cast what he will convey to his auditor, in part and perhaps altogether, in his own phraseology, and even, almost unconsciously, to mingle an explanatory element to aid the comprehension of the listener. It is the teacher who forms the pupil. The essential conceptions of the teacher become, so to speak, the staple of his habitual thoughts. The ideas and the spirit of the instructor are more effectually, they are, it might be added, more truly, transmitted by this method to other minds than might otherwise be possible, unless, perchance, a *verbatim* report of his discourses could be presented. It is one proof of the genuineness of the Gospel, and of the essential correctness of the relation given of the discourses, that the author is so filled with the spirit of his Master's teaching, so absorbed in the substance of it, that here and there he insensibly passes from the Master's words into reflections of his own, without distinctly marking the point of transition. Incidentally there occur undesigned tokens of the fidelity of the evangelist's memory. One of the most striking in-

stances is the introduction of the words, "Arise, let us go hence" (John xiv. 31), which are not explained, but which imply a change of place, — perhaps a leaving of the table to go forth towards the garden. Had they formed a part of a fictitious narrative, it is impossible to suppose that they would not have been connected with a statement of what the action was that is implied in them.

Who can doubt that Jesus said much more, and, especially in converse with his disciples, spoke in more continuous discourse, than the synoptists relate? They preserve, for example, but a few sentences which were uttered on the occasion of the Last Supper. Yet he sat with the disciples the greater part of the night. Here, again, the peculiarity of the oral tradition, in contrast with the full narrative of a person who draws from the store of his own recollections, is manifest. As regards the Saviour's manner of teaching, there are striking resemblances between the discourses in John and his method of instruction as described in the synoptical Gospels. It is said that in John he makes use of symbols, as in the connecting of physical blindness with spiritual (ix. 39–41). But how does this differ from such a saying as, "Let the dead bury their dead"? (Matt. viii. 22.) It is said that in John his figures are frequently misunderstood by his disciples. But in the synoptists we have such statements as, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Matt. xvi. 11), which the disciples failed to comprehend; and, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one" (Luke xxii. 36), which the disciples misunderstood, and which Jesus did not stop to explain. Such an illustration as that of the good shepherd (chap. x.) belongs to the same method of teaching which dictated

the parables recorded in the first three Gospels. The close examination of the two authorities, John and the synoptists, brings to light numerous resemblances in the modes in which the religious thoughts of Christ are set forth, such as might not attract the attention of a cursory reader.[1]

As regards theology, there are traces in the synoptists of the same vein of teaching which is so prominent in the fourth Gospel. The memorable passage in Matt. xi. 27, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father,

[1] On this topic, see Luthardt, Der Johann. Ursprung, etc., p. 185 seq., or Godet, Comm., etc., p. 189 seq.; also Westcott, Comm. on St. John's Gospel (Am. ed.), p. lxxxii. seq. Among the passages are John ii. 19, "Destroy this temple," etc. (Matt. xxvi. 61, xxvii. 40; Mark xiv. 58, xv. 29), John iv. 44, "A prophet hath no honor," etc. (Matt. xiii. 57; Mark vi. 4; Luke iv. 24), John v. 8, "Rise, take up thy bed," etc. (Matt. ix. 5 seq.; Mark ii. 9; Luke v. 24), John vi. 20 (Matt. xiv. 27; Mark vi. 50), John vi. 35 (Matt. v. 6; Luke vi. 21), John vi. 46 (Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 21 seq.), John xii. 7 (Matt. xxvi. 12; Mark xiv. 8), John xii. 8 (Matt. xxvi. 11; Mark xiv. 7), John xii. 25, "He that loveth his life," etc. (Matt. x. 39, xvi. 25; Mark viii. 35; Luke ix. 24), John xii. 27, "Now is my soul troubled" (Matt. xxvi. 28; Mark xiv. 34 seq.), John xiii. 3, "knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands" (Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 21 seq.), John xiii. 16 (Matt. x. 24; Luke vi. 40), John xiii. 20 (Matt. x. 40; Luke x. 16), John xiii. 21 (Matt. xxvi. 21; Mark xiv. 18), John xiii. 38 (Matt. xxvi. 34; Mark xiv. 30; Luke xxii. 34), John xiv. 18 (Matt. xxviii. 20), John xv. 20 (Matt. x. 25), John xv. 21 (Matt. x. 22), John xvi. 32 (Matt. xxvi. 31; Mark xiv. 27), John xvii. 2 (Matt. xxviii. 18), John xviii. 11 (Matt. xxvi. 39, 52; Mark xiv. 36; Luke xxii. 42), John xviii. 20 (Matt. xxvi. 55), John xviii. 33 (Matt. xxvii. 11), John xx. 23 (Matt. xvi. 19 and xviii. 18). The terms "life" and "eternal life" are found in Matthew, and are even interchanged with "kingdom of heaven." Compare Matt. xviii. 3 with ver. 8; xix. 17 with ver. 23; xxv. 34 with ver. 46; ix. 45 with ver. 47. These resemblances to the synoptists are wholly inartificial. Professor Holtzmann's attempt to show that words and phrases are culled from the synoptists by the author of the fourth Gospel, and put together in a kind of mosaic, is a failure. The inference finds no warrant in the data brought forward to sustain it. The fourth Gospel is as far as possible from being a mechanical composite of scraps of phraseology gathered from other sources. It has a homogeneousness, a continuity, a life, which never could have belonged to it had it been composed in the artificial way supposed.

neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him," is in content and style coincident with what we find in John. It is a specimen of that sort of teaching respecting himself and his relation to God, which we have good reason to expect that Christ would impart to his followers. Is it probable that he would have left them in the dark on those questions in regard to which they must inevitably have craved instruction, and which form so large a portion of the teaching in John? The institution of the Lord's Supper as it is recorded by the synoptists implies that instruction respecting his person and concerning the spiritual reception of himself, such teaching as is given in John vi., had been imparted to his disciples. Else how could his words at the Last Supper have been otherwise than strange and unintelligible to them? The conception of his person in the synoptical Gospels is at bottom the same as in the fourth. In them he stands forth as the supreme lawgiver, as we see in the Sermon on the Mount. He is distinguished from the prophets, and is exalted above them. He is at last to judge the world. The particular point that is found in John, in distinction from the other Gospels, is the explicit doctrine of his pre-existence. This doctrine, together with that of his relation to the creation, has its equivalent in the writings of the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. viii. 6; 2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 6), — a circumstance, as was remarked above, which tends strongly to prove that it entered into the testimony of Jesus respecting himself, and thus goes to corroborate the evidence of the same fact afforded in John.

In the Christian literature of the second century, there is no book which approaches in power the fourth Gospel. Every thing is on a lower level. When we

take up the works of the sub-apostolic age, we are conscious of an abrupt descent from the high plane of the apostolic writings. The apostolic Fathers are marked by a languor which infuses languor into the reader. Even the Epistle of Polycarp, although not wanting in good sense and good feeling, is not an exception. The Epistle of Clement of Rome, compared with the New-Testament writers, is feeble. Unless for the purpose of scholarly investigation, who cares to peruse the allegories of Hermas? The anonymous Epistle to Diognetus, which is generally thought to be as early as A.D. 150, stands alone in that era as a really spirited composition. This is a discourse or terse appeal addressed to an individual; but, notwithstanding its rhetorical vigor, it cannot be compared for a moment in religious depth with the fourth Gospel. The writings of that day, Justin included, are echoes of the inspired works of the preceding age. How can a book of the transcendent power of this Gospel be referred to the period of decadence? It has commanded the reverent sympathy of the ablest minds. It has captivated millions of hearts, and has held its throne, age after age, in the households of the Christian nations, amid all the fluctuations of culture and civilization. To think that such a writer — an unknown writer too — sprang up, like a flower of perennial beauty, in the barren waste of post-apostolic authorship, is to suppose an anachronism.

Strongly marked as is the type of doctrine in the writings of John, its identity in essential features with the theology of Paul is an impressive fact. John teaches that "life" begins here, in the knowledge of God and of his Son (John iii. 36; 1 John v. 12). Life inseparable from fellowship with Christ is the truth on which all stress is laid. Judgment is here: the Gospel

does its own work of separation by testing and revealing the affinities of the heart; yet the objective, atoning work of Christ is not ignored, nor is the resurrection and the final awards (John iii. 14, 15, v. 28, 29; 1 John i. 7, ii. 2). Paul connects the breaking-down of the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile with the death of Christ (Gal. iii. 13, 14). In remarkable harmony with this conception are the words of Jesus when it was told him (John xii. 20 seq.) that Greeks who had come up to the passover desired to see him. It was a sign to him that his hour had come. The corn of wheat in order not to "abide alone," but that it might bear fruit, must "fall into the ground, and die."

If the fourth Gospel is a fiction, what account can be given of the motives and aims of the author? The only theory on this subject which is entitled to notice is that of Baur. He supposes the author to have been a Gnostic, having a certain idea of the Logos, believing in the identity of the historic Jesus with the Logos, and undertaking to exhibit this identity in a fictitious narrative of a symbolic character. The book is written, then, with a definite purpose. The historic material, which is mainly imaginary, is simply the vehicle for conveying the author's speculation or intuition of the divine Logos. The distinction between "light" and "darkness," it is affirmed, is an absolute metaphysical antagonism. The principle of darkness is embodied in the Jews; and the development of their unbelief is carried through successive stages corresponding to the increasing manifestation of Christ, or the Logos, which provokes it. Outward events, especially miracles, are merely a sensuous counterpart of "the idea," — a kind of staging, put up to be pulled down again. One aim, we are told, is to exhibit the nullity of a faith

which rests on miracles. They are not only a crutch to be thrown away: they are a crutch fabricated by fancy.

On this theory, what notion shall we have of the mental state of the author? We are assured that he is a very earnest man; that he identifies himself with John in spirit and feeling; that he writes as he feels that John would if he were alive. He is immersed and lost in a series of imaginative intuitions and pictures (*Anschauungen und Bilder*) of the grandest and most significant character. In the course of his work on this Gospel, Baur not unfrequently intimates that the author hardly distinguished fiction from fact in his own mind. He lost himself, as it were, in the symbols of his own creation. The artistic product assumed the character of reality, so closely related was it to the idea which it embodied. Fancy that Bunyan was so carried out of himself in his portraiture of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, that the outward narrative almost seemed to his own mind to be literal history, so fitly did it embody the course of feeling symbolized in it. Something like this state of consciousness is attributed by Baur to the author of the fourth Gospel. Except on some such theory as this, the work — supposing it not to be genuine — must be considered a product of base and vulgar imposture.

Now, the whole scheme of Baur respecting this Gospel is built up on a false assumption as to the author's point of view. It is assumed that the incarnation is to him a circumstance of no account. It is even assumed, on the basis of erroneous interpretation, that no real incarnation is taught in the Gospel, but rather a Docetic junction of the Logos with the man Jesus; whereas it is on the incarnation as a most real and

momentous fact that the writer's thoughts are fixed. He does not spin the history of Jesus out of the idea: he deduces the idea from the history. In the forefront of the book, as the climax of the prologue, stands the joyous declaration, "The Word became flesh." To help out his view, Baur makes verses 9–14 of the first chapter refer to the pre-existent Word. But they plainly relate to the Word incarnate. Baur's interpretation is an example of the artificial exegesis — of which far more signal specimens might be adduced — by which alone his thesis can be sustained. Not that he is insincere, or lacking in ingenuity. His treatise on this Gospel is in many respects a work of great ability, but it is a remarkable illustration of the power of a preconceived theory to pervert the judgment of a skilful interpreter. What candid reader of the Gospel can fail to perceive that it is the historic Jesus, as he had actually lived, taught, consorted with his disciples, hung upon the cross, and risen from the tomb, in whom the author's interest centres? Here all his beliefs respecting Christ take their rise.

That the apostle teaches dualism is a groundless allegation. The contrast between light and darkness is represented as moral, as having its roots in the will (John iii. 19–21; cf. viii. 47 with viii. 34, and xii. 35, 36, with xii. 43). Where is there room for dualism when "*all* things were made by" the Word? (John i. 3.) How can the Jews be thought of, as, metaphysically speaking, of the realm of darkness, when it is said of Christ in relation to them that "he came unto *his own*"?

It is manifest that John has a certain conception of Jesus, and announces it at the outset of his narrative. The same is true of Matthew, who will show, partly by

a comparison of facts with prophecy, that Jesus is the Messiah. The only question is, Whence was that conception derived? Was it excogitated in the writer's own brain? Was it a dogma acquired by speculation? Or did it arise from the impression made on the mind of the writer by Jesus himself and by his testimony respecting his relation to God? A man, let it be supposed, proposes to depict the life of Washington. He may have an enthusiastic conviction that his hero was the noblest of patriots. He may so express himself at the beginning of his book. But if he derived his persuasion from what he saw and knew of Washington's career, and if he sustains his view by presenting a record of facts within the limits of his personal knowledge, surely his procedure is legitimate. The credibility of his narrative is not in the least diminished. Is it a condition of trustworthiness that a historian should be an uninterested chronicler? The main thread in John's narrative is one that belongs to the facts as they occurred. Did not the unbelief and malignity of the Jews actually grow, as Jesus more and more revealed himself to them, and disclosed the nature of his kingdom? Why, then, should not John, casting his eye back on the course of events, see them in their real nexus, and shape his narrative accordingly?

If it could be made to appear that the various parts of the narrative are artificial, or contrary to probability, the conclusion of Baur might be warranted. But the interpretations by which this is sought to be done are themselves artificial, and forced upon the text. What, for example, can be more groundless than the assertion made by so many critics, from Baur to Keim, that, according to this Gospel, Jesus was not baptized? What fair-minded reader, with John i. 32, 33, before him,

would ever have attributed such an intent to the evangelist? How, it might be added, could the author, whoever he was, expect to dislodge from the belief of Christians a fact like this, ingrained as it was in the Gospel tradition? If he were foolish enough to undertake such a feat, how could he hope to effect his end by merely omitting expressly to record the circumstance? It is one of the fancies of the Tübingen critics that Nicodemus is invented as a type of unbelieving, sign-seeking Judaism. Why, then, should he be depicted as attaining more and more faith? (iii. 2, vii. 50, xix. 39.) The Samaritan woman, on the contrary, is said to be a type of the believing heathen. Why was not an actual heathen chosen to figure in this character, rather than a Samaritan who believed in Moses, and was looking for the Messiah? But into the details of exegesis it is impracticable here to enter.[1]

It is a strange error into which the critics fall who have said that the author of this Gospel attaches no value to miracles, setting them up, so to speak, merely to bowl them down. It is true, that, as he looks back upon the Saviour's life, every thing in it is seen to be a manifestation of the glory that was veiled in the servant's form. The nature of the only-begotten Son shone out in supernatural exertions of power and mercy. That which is censured in the Gospel is the disposition to rest in the miracles as bare facts which minister to wonder, or supply some lower want, instead of catching their suggestion. Unbelief, even when not denying that they were wrought, failed to look through them.

[1] For a particular examination of Baur's exegesis of the Gospel, see Beyschlag (*ut supra*), also Brückner's notes to De Wette's Kurze Erkl. d. Evang. Johann., and The Supernatural Origin of Christianity (3d ed.) p. 132 seq.

They were a language the deep import of which was not comprehended. They were opaque facts. Hence the Jews called for more and more. They clamored for something more stupendous, — for a "sign from heaven."

This is the view of miracles which is found in the fourth Gospel. There is not the remotest suggestion that they are not actual occurrences. The narrator does not stultify himself in this manner. In every instance where Baur appeals to exegesis in support of his view of the evangelist's intent in this matter, he is obliged to do violence to the passage in hand. For example, when Jesus said, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed," there is, to be sure, a reference to the reluctance of Thomas to believe without seeing; but to believe what? Why, the miracle of the resurrection to which the other apostles had testified. This was the object of faith. It is not on faith independent of miracles, but on faith independent of the ocular perception of miracles, that Jesus pronounces his blessing.

Scattered over the pages of the fourth Gospel are numerous indirect proofs that the author draws his material from personal recollection. Only a few illustrations can be here presented. "And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch" (John x. 22, 23). Why should it be mentioned that Jesus was in this porch? Nothing in the teaching recorded in the context called for it. How can it be accounted for, except on the supposition that the scene was printed on the author's memory? Stating this fact, he must needs explain to heathen readers why Jesus walked in this sheltered place. "It was winter:" the

festival occurred in December. A similar instance of obvious recollection is John viii. 20. The iron boxes constituting the "treasury" the author had seen. The image of Jesus as he stood near them was present in his recollection. Why should he refer to "Ænon," where John was baptizing, as "near to Salim?" (iii. 23.) Why should he describe the pool at Jerusalem as being by the sheep-gate, as called in Hebrew "Bethesda," as having five porches? (v. 2.) Why should he interrupt his narrative (viii. 1) with the statement that "Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives, and early in the morning he came again into the temple," a bare chronological fact with nothing to hang upon it? What else can it be but an accurate reminiscence? Other chronological statements, extending not only to the day, but to the hour, are frequent. They come in, not as if they had been sought, but as a component part of the author's recollection (ii. 12). For what reason is Philip designated (xii. 21) as "of Bethsaida of Galilee," the incident here recorded not requiring any such particularity of description? What reason is there for adding, to the statement that Pilate sat down in his judgment-seat, that the place "is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha"? What can this be but an instance of precise description such as is natural in referring to a spot where one has witnessed a memorable event?

If the fourth Gospel was not written by John, it is the product of pious fraud. Among the Jews, in the later period of their history, prior to the time of Jesus, many pseudonymous works were composed. This took place chiefly among the Alexandrians, but was not confined to them. Conscious that the age of inspiration had gone by, authors felt prompted to set forth, under the name of Enoch, Solomon, or some other worthy,

the lessons which they thought suited to the time. They aspired to enter into the mind, and speak in the spirit, of the prophet or sage whom they personated. In this literary device there was often no deliberate purpose to deceive. It early led, however, to intentional fraud. This practice passed over into certain Christian circles where Judaic and Judaizing influences prevailed. The distinction between esoteric and exoteric doctrine, which may be traced to the Alexandrian philosophy, availed as a partial excuse for it. Writings were fabricated like the Sibylline Oracles and the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies. But pious frauds of this nature, as every one feels, are repugnant to the sense of truth which Christianity demands and fosters. Christianity brought in a purer standard. In the ancient church, as now, books of this sort were earnestly condemned by enlightened Christians. Tertullian informs us, that the presbyter who was convicted of writing, in the name of Paul, the *Acta Pauli et Theclæ*, confessed his offence, and was deposed from his office.[1] This incident shows what must have been the feeling entertained by Christians generally in regard to this species of benevolent imposture. The reader can judge for himself as to the moral tone of the Gospel and Epistle which we are considering. Did the author, as regards sound ethical feeling, stand on the low plane of the manufacturers of spurious books? Would such a man fabricate, in the name of an apostle, a fictitious history of the Lord? Such a work, let it be noticed, is of an utterly diverse character from a merely didactic writing. Doubts have been entertained, both in ancient and modern times, of the genuineness of the second Epistle of Peter. But if we can conceive of a

[1] De Baptismo, 15.

well-meaning Christian, with a conscience imperfectly trained, undertaking to compose a homily under the name of an apostle, it is still something utterly different from the attempt to traverse the ground, which to him must have been sacred ground, that was already covered by the authentic Gospels. The irreverence, the audacity, of such a procedure, far outstrips any examples furnished by the Gospels known to be apocryphal, which mainly confine themselves to the infancy of Jesus, and to the Virgin Mary. Baur, in defending his position, actually compares the author of this Gospel to the Apostle Paul. Paul, he reminds us, was not one of the twelve. Why should there not be still another apostle? Think of the Apostle Paul sitting down to invent a fictitious history of the Lord Jesus Christ! And yet the author of the fourth Gospel is put by Baur on a level, as regards moral and spiritual worth, with the Apostle Paul.

Those who deny that John wrote the fourth Gospel hold that its author was a man of genius. The power exerted by his writing, in his own time and subsequently, is of itself a sufficient proof of his surpassing ability. Who was this anonymous leader of opinion? Why should a man of this exalted capacity wish to wear a mask? Why not, like others, propagate his ideas in the light of day and in the open field? How did he succeed in hiding himself in obscurity? Why have we no other great works from his pen? Why does not his name figure among the noted religious leaders of his time?

There are some other traits of the fourth Gospel which are adapted to impress the candid reader with the conviction that it is the Apostle John who writes it.

1. The peculiar mode in which the authorship is indicated. There is one prominent disciple whose name is not given. He is referred to by a circumlocution. At the Last Supper there leaned on the bosom of Jesus "one of his disciples whom Jesus loved" (xiii. 23). To him, described in the same terms, Jesus commits his mother (xix. 26). He accompanies Peter to the tomb of Jesus — "the other disciple whom Jesus loved" (xx. 2). Once more (xxi. 7) he is designated in the same way. He it is who is spoken of as "another disciple," and "that other disciple" (xviii. 15, 16, compare xx. 2, 3, 4, 8). Nor will it be doubted that he is the "one of the two" whose name is not given (i. 40), the associate of Andrew. In the appendix to the Gospel (xxi. 24, compare ver. 20), he is declared to be its author. As might be expected from the passages just quoted, he refers to himself in the third person when asserting that he had witnessed a particular occurrence (xix. 35). That he was one of those personally conversant with Jesus is left to be inferred from his use of the first person plural of the pronoun (John i. 14; 1 John i. 2, 3): "We beheld his glory," etc. It is not denied by Baur, nor is there any reason to doubt, that the author of the Gospel intends his readers to believe him to be the Apostle John. Now, if it is the apostle himself, who, from a certain delicacy of feeling, prefers to veil himself, as it were, instead of referring to himself by name, this peculiar manner of indicating the authorship of the book is easily and naturally explained. If it be not John, what is the alternative? It is not simply that we must infer that deceit is intended, but it is deceit of a very different sort from that which has been referred to as belonging to pseudonymous writings. There is adroit

painstaking: there is, as Weiss observes, an abandonment of the *naïveté* which belongs to the authors of those books, and which is the sole apology that can be pleaded in behalf of them. They do not go to work in this sly way. They do not seek to decoy the reader into ascribing the book to the pretended author. They assume his name without hesitation. On the contrary, if the fourth Gospel was not written by John, we have an artful imposition, carried from beginning to end of the book. We have a product of sheer knavery. The forger not only assumes to be John, but, in order to accomplish his end, affects modesty. He puts himself side by side with Peter, leans on the breast of Jesus, goes to the sepulchre, stands before the cross, there to have the mother of the Lord committed to his charge, but, in order to impose on his readers more effectually, takes pains to avoid writing the name of John, — except when he speaks of the Baptist, whose usual title he suppresses — doing thus from cunning what John the Apostle, being of the same name, and his disciple, would have done naturally.

2. The author (if he be not John) is guilty of direct falsehood, amounting almost to perjury. He asserts that he saw water and blood issue from the side of Jesus as he hung on the cross (xix. 34). Baur correctly interprets the writer as speaking of himself. He would resolve this alleged direct perception of material objects into a kind of spiritual discernment, — an intuition of spiritual effects to follow the death of Jesus. What is this but to trifle with historical statements? What is it but to confound sober prose with a poesy which hardly consists with a sane mind? If the author of the Gospel did not see what he so solemnly asseverates that he did see, his misstatement is due to some-

thing worse than the mysterious agency called by the critic "die Macht der Idee."

3. The Gospel is, in a sense, an autobiography. It is a record of the origin and development of the author's faith in Jesus as the divine Son of God. It is the grounds of his own faith which he professes to set forth; and his purpose is to bring others to the same faith, or to establish them in it. Why not recount the very facts which had planted this deep persuasion in his own heart? Why resort to fictions? Were not the words and works of Christ, which had actually evoked faith in his own soul, sufficient for others?

4. The personal love of the author of the Gospel to Jesus is inconsistent with the supposition that it is a spurious work. It is evident, from the whole tone of the composition, that he regards Jesus with a warm personal affection. Whom does he love? Is it an unreal person, called into being by imagination? The person whom he loves is the historic Jesus. Of him he says, "Which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled" (1 John i. 1). He is conscious, with a mingled humility and joy, that he had been specially an object of the love of Jesus, — "the disciple whom Jesus loved." With Jesus he is consciously united by the closest personal tie. Shall we say that the author imagined a character, and then, conceiving of him as an actual person who had said and done what imagination had ascribed to him, gives to this product of fancy his heart's deepest love? This is to impute to the author insanity.

5. The tender simplicity which marks so many passages of the narrative stamps them with the seal of truth. The record of the tears of Jesus on witnessing the sorrow of Mary and her friends; the saying, that as

death approached, having loved his disciples, "he loved them to the end;" the pathetic words, "Behold thy mother," "Behold thy son," which were spoken from the cross — to think of these as the inventions of a theological speculatist who is bent on writing up or writing down a person or theory is an unnatural and offensive supposition.

To complete this discussion, it is necessary to notice a middle theory which has found favor with some recent writers; namely, that disciples of John composed the Gospel on the basis of oral instruction which they had received from him. Mr. Matthew Arnold has conjectured that the Ephesian presbyters, partly on the foundation of materials furnished by the apostle, are the authors of the book.[1] Clement of Alexandria, as it was said above, reports the tradition that John wrote at the urgent request of familiar friends. The Muratorian fragment makes a like statement, with the additional circumstance of a revelation to Andrew, to the effect that John "should write down every thing, and all should certify."[2] There is no patristic support for the hypothesis just explained. But what compels its rejection is the testimony, respecting the authorship of the book, which the writer himself gives in the peculiar, indirect form which has been adverted to. He is brought before his readers in such a manner that the necessary alternative of denying his personal authorship is the supposition of intentional deceit.

[1] God and the Bible, p. 248.

[2] Mr. Arnold renders the word *recognoscentibus* "revise." This is a possible, but not the usual meaning of the word. It signifies "to inspect," "to examine" with a view to approval, hence "to indorse" or "authenticate." This appears to be its meaning in the document referred to.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE APOSTLES' TESTIMONY AS PRESENTED BY THE EVANGELISTS.

In the last two chapters, evidence has been brought forward to prove that the Gospels were written by apostles and companions of apostles; in particular, that the fourth Gospel is the work of John; that the first Gospel, at least in its original form, and as to the main portion of its contents, had Matthew for its author, and that it existed in the Greek, and in its present compass, while the generation of the first disciples of Jesus, by whom it was acknowledged, was still in being; that the second and third Gospels were composed by contemporaries who brought together the information which they had sought and obtained from apostles, and from others who were immediately cognizant of the facts. The Gospels thus meet one test of trustworthy historical evidence, — that it shall come from witnesses or well-informed contemporaries. They present the testimony which the apostles gave to their converts respecting the words and actions of Jesus. We have to show that this testimony is entitled to credit. Let it be understood that in this place we have nothing to do with the theological doctrine of inspiration, or with the nature and limits of the divine help afforded to the historical writers of the New Testament in the composition of their books. That subject is irrelevant to the present discussion. What we have to establish is the

essential credibility of the evangelists; in other words, to show that the narrative which they give of the life of Jesus may be relied on as fully as we rely on the biographies of other eminent personages in the past which are known to have been composed by honest, and, in other respects, competent historians.

1. The fact of the selection of the apostles, and the view deliberately taken both by Jesus and by themselves of their function, are a strong argument for their credibility.

In inquiring whether the Gospel history is true or not, it is, first of all, important to ascertain what view Jesus took of the life he was leading among men, and also to observe in what light his career was regarded by his followers. Had his teaching, and the events occurring in connection with his life, such a significance in his own eyes, that he meant them to be the subject of testimony? Did he design that they should be remembered, and be faithfully narrated to those beyond the circle of immediate observers? In other words, had he, and his followers with him, an "historical feeling" as regards the momentous occurrences, as they proved to be, belonging to his career? This question is conclusively answered by the fact of a deliberate selection by him of a body of persons to be with him, who were deputed to relate what they saw and heard, and who distinctly understood this to be an essential part of their business. They were called "The Twelve;" and so current was this appellation at an early day, that Paul thus designates them even in referring to the time when Judas had fallen out of their number (1 Cor. xv. 5). The idea which they had of their office was explicitly pointed out by Peter when he stated the qualifications of the one who should be chosen in place

of Judas (Acts i. 21–25). It may be remarked, before quoting the passage, that, if there were any just ground for suspecting the accuracy of Luke in general, it could have no application in this place. There is no room for the bias of a Pauline disciple, since the transaction is one in which it is Peter who appears as the leader; and the thing proposed is the completion of the number of "the twelve." The passage reads as follows: "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us" — that is, travelled about with us — "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us," — that is, was in constant intercourse with us, — "beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." The resurrection is particularly mentioned as the fact most prominent in the apostle's testimony. Here is a deliberate consciousness on the part of Peter, that he and his fellow-apostles were clothed with the responsibility of witnesses, and that, to be of their number, one must have the necessary qualification of a credible witness, — a personal knowledge of that about which he is to testify. "We are witnesses," said Peter, on a subsequent occasion, "of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem" (Acts x. 39).[1] Their commission was to "teach all nations," and to teach them the commandments of Jesus (Matt. xxviii. 20). His teaching was to be brought to their remembrance (John xiv. 26). They were forewarned that they would be arraigned before magistrates, to give reasons for their adherence to him (Matt. x. 18; Luke xxi. 12). The promise of the Spirit is given in a form to exalt, and not to diminish, the importance of the historical

[1] Cf. Luke xxiv. 47–49; Acts i. 8.

facts of the life and teaching of Jesus (John xiv. 15 seq., 25, 26, xv. 24–27, xvi. 14; Luke xxi. 14, 15). The Apostle John speaks of himself as an eye-witness (John i. 14, xix. 35, cf. xxi. 24). Luke, at the beginning of his Gospel, refers to his having consulted, with painstaking, those who had heard and witnessed the things to be recorded by him (Luke i. 1–5). His object in writing is to satisfy Theophilus that his Christian belief rested on a good foundation of evidence. It is plain that the apostles and evangelists are distinctly conscious of their position.[1] They are aware that they have to fulfil the duty of witnesses. There is this barrier against fancy and delusion. It is a great point in favor of their credibility.

2. The apostles never ceased to be conscious that they were disciples. They never ceased to look back upon the words and actions of Christ with the profoundest interest, and to regard them as a sacred treasure left in their hands to be communicated to an ever-widening circle. In that life, as it had actually passed before their eyes, they placed the foundation of all their hope and of the hope of the world. There is not the least sign that any enthusiasm which they felt in their work ever carried them away from this historical anchorage. They received the precious legacy which it devolved on them to convey to others, in a spirit of sobriety and conscientiousness, and with such a sense of its value and sacredness, that they were cut off from the temptation to add to it or subtract from it. They were as far as possible from regarding what they had received as a mere starting-point for musings and speculations of their own. They were not "many masters," but continued to hold the reverent, dependent position of pupils.

[1] See also Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 3–9, 14, 15.

3. The apostles relate, without the least attempt at apology or concealment, instances of ignorance and weakness on their part, together with the reproofs on this account which they received from the Master.

This proves their honesty; but, more than that, it illustrates the *objective* character of their testimony. That they were taken up by the matter itself, so that all personal considerations sunk out of sight, is the main fact which we are now endeavoring to illustrate. So absorbing is their interest in what actually occurred, that they do not heed its effect on their own reputation. They do not think of themselves. They narrate what exhibits them in an unfavorable light with as much artless simplicity as if they were not personally affected by it. When Jesus taught them that no defilement could be contracted by eating one rather than another kind of food, at which the Pharisees were offended, Peter asked him to explain "the parable," or obscure saying. They tell us (Matt. xv. 16; Mark vii. 18) that Jesus answered, "Are ye also yet without understanding?" He expressed, they say, astonishment and regret that even they could not discern his meaning. When told to beware of "the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees," they obtusely surmised that the injunction had reference to a possible deficiency of bread. They report the severe reproach, which this called forth, of a littleness of faith, a failure to remember the miracle of the loaves (Matt. xvi. 8; Mark viii. 17–21).[1] They tell us how they confessed their own weakness of faith (Luke xvii. 5). Repeatedly they state that they did not compre-

[1] The strong expression of grief and weariness, "O faithless and perverse generation!" etc. (Matt. xvii. 17), is omitted above, for the reason that the parallel (Mark ix. 19) makes it, perhaps, doubtful whether the disciples were included among those addressed in the apostrophe. Matt. xvii. 20 would suggest that they were.

hend or take in the predictions of his suffering death, which were addressed to them by Jesus. They represent themselves to have clung so tenaciously to the idea of a political Messiah, that after the death of Jesus they expressed their disappointment in the words, "We trusted that it should have been he which should have redeemed Israel." And, even after the resurrection, they anxiously inquired of him, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" This false conception of the Messiah's work led to expressions on their part which deeply wounded Jesus. These are faithfully reported by them. They inform us (Matt. xvi. 23; cf. Mark viii. 33; Luke iv. 8) that Peter's protest against the suggestion that Jesus was to suffer death elicited from him such a rebuke as nothing but the feeling that he was tempted to sin by a friend by whom he ought rather to be supported on the hard path of duty, could evoke: "Get thee behind me, Satan," — adversary of the will of God, tempter, — "for thou art an offence" — a stumbling-block — "unto me; for thou savorest not" — mindest not — "the things that be of God," — God's will, God's cause, — "but those that be of men." This heavy, humiliating rebuke is recorded by all the synoptists. It entered into the story which the apostles, Peter included, were accustomed to relate. Other instances when they must have felt humbled by the Saviour's displeasure are recorded with the same candor. For example, when they repelled those who brought little children to him, Jesus "was much displeased," and bade them let the children come to him (Mark x. 13, 14; cf. Matt. xix. 14; Luke xviii. 16).

What surer mark of an honest narrator can exist than a willingness to give a plain, unvarnished account

of his own mortifying mistakes, and the consequent rebuffs, whether just or not, which he has experienced? When Boswell writes that Johnson said to him, with a stern look, "Sir, I have known David Garrick longer than you have done, and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject," or when he writes, again, that Johnson said to him, "Sir, endeavor to clear your mind of cant," no one can doubt that the biographer is telling a true story. Men are not likely to invent anecdotes to their own discredit. When we find them in any author, a strong presumption is raised in favor of his general truthfulness.

4. The apostles related, and the evangelists record, serious delinquencies of which the former were guilty, — unworthy tempers of feeling, and offences of a grave character.

They tell us of the ambition and rivalry which sprang up among them, and of the wrangles that ensued. The mother of John and James petitioned that her sons might have the highest places of honor in the new kingdom, of the nature of which she had so poor a conception (Matt. xx. 20, 21). The two apostles joined in the request (Mark x. 37), having first tried to draw from their Master a promise that they should have whatever they might ask for. The other ten disciples were angry with John and James for preferring such a request (Mark x. 41). One day, on their way to Capernaum, the disciples fell into a dispute on the same question, — who should have the precedence (Mark ix. 34; cf. Luke ix. 46, xxii. 24). Altercations of this sort, so they themselves related, broke out in their company on different occasions. Will the reader ponder the fact that all four of the evangelists give a circumstantial account of the denials of Peter? (Matt. xxvi.

58 seq.; Mark xiv. 54 seq.; Luke xxii. 54 seq.; John xviii. 15 seq.) · Here was the apostle who had a kind of leadership among them. It was he whose preaching was most effective among the Jews everywhere (Gal. ii. 8). Yet this undisguised account of his cowardice, treachery, and falsehood, on a most critical occasion, is presented in detail in the evangelical narrative. It is impossible to doubt that it formed a part of the story of the crucifixion, which the apostles, each and all of them, told to their converts. Could a more striking proof of simple candor be afforded? Is it not obvious that the narrators sank their own personality — merged it, as it were — in the absorbing interest with which they looked back on the scenes which they had beheld, and in which they had taken part? And then they relate that at the crucifixion they all forsook Jesus, and fled (Matt. xxvi. 56; Mark xiv. 50). They make no attempt to conceal the fact that they left his burial to be performed by one who was comparatively a stranger, and by the women whose devotion overcame their terror, or who considered that their sex would be their safeguard. Beyond the conscientious spirit which this portrayal of their own infirmities and misconduct compels us to attribute to the apostles, these features of the Gospel narrative show that they forgot themselves, so intent were they on depicting things just as they had occurred. In other words, they impress on us the *objective* character of the Gospel history as it is given on the pages of the evangelists.

5. It is an impressive indication of the *objective* character of the apostolic narrative, that the manifestations of human infirmity in Jesus, infirmity which does not involve sin, are referred to in the plainest manner, and without the least apology or concealment. These

passages occur side by side with the accounts of miracles. Had there been a conscious or latent disposition to glorify their Master at the expense of truth, it is scarcely possible that they would have spread out these illustrations of human weakness. It is only necessary to remind the reader of the record of the agony of Jesus in the garden. We are informed that he was overwhelmed with mental distress. He sought the close companionship of the three disciples who were most intimate with him. He prostrated himself on the earth in supplication to God. As he lay on the ground, one of the evangelists tells us that the sweat fell from his body, either actually mingled with blood, or in drops like drops of blood issuing from the wounds of a fallen soldier. "My soul" — thus he had spoken to the three disciples — "is exceeding sorrowful unto death." In the presence of passages like these, how can it be thought that the apostles were enthusiasts, oblivious or careless of facts, and bent on presenting an ideal of their own devising, rather than the life of Jesus just as they had seen it?[1]

6. The truthfulness of the apostles is proved by their submission to extreme suffering and to death for the testimony which they gave.

They had nothing to gain, from an earthly point of view, by relating the history which is recorded in the Gospels: on the contrary, they had every thing to lose. It had been distinctly foretold to them that they would be "delivered up to be afflicted," delivered up to pain and distress, be objects of universal hatred, and be

[1] It does not fall within the plan of John to repeat this narrative of the synoptists. But John reports an instance of the deep distress of Jesus: "Now is my soul troubled" etc. (xii. 27). John alone relates that he "wept" (xi. 35).

killed (Matt. xxiv. 9). They were forewarned that they would be seized, imprisoned, brought before rulers as criminals, betrayed by friends and nearest relatives (Luke xxi. 12–16, cf. xi. 49). "The time cometh," it was said, "that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John xvi. 2, cf. xv. 20, xvi. 33). These predictions were verified in their experience. Whatever view is taken of the authorship of the Gospels, none can doubt that these passages are a picture of what the apostles really endured. The persecution of the apostles was the natural result of the spirit which had prompted the crucifixion of Jesus. It began as soon as they began publicly to preach "Jesus and the resurrection." There were men, like Saul of Tarsus, eager to hunt down the heretics. The murder of Stephen occurred in the year 33 or 34, about two years after the death of Christ. The apostles were objects of mingled scorn and wrath. Their situation is described by St. Paul as follows: "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death" — or doomed to death — "for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. . . . Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place. . . . Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day" (1 Cor. iv. 9–14). There were certain peculiar exposures to suffering in the case of Paul, yet he describes here the common lot of the apostles. Defamation, public scorn, physical hardship, assaults by mobs, and punishments by the civil authority, imprisonment, death, — this was what they saw before them, and what they actually

suffered. Ostracism, with all the indignities and pains that bitter fanaticism can inflict along with it, was the reward which they had to expect for their testimony to the teaching, the miracles, the resurrection, following the death, of Jesus. To suspect them of dishonesty is to imagine that men will fling away property, friends, home, country, and life itself, for the sake of telling a falsehood that is to bring them no sort of advantage.

Hardly less irrational is it to charge them with self-delusion. It has been shown in a preceding chapter, by internal evidence derived from the Gospels, and by other proofs, that miracles were wrought by Christ. It has been shown that the theory of hallucination will not avail to explain the unanimous, immovable belief of the apostles in his resurrection. The twelve attended Jesus through his public ministry, from the baptism in Jordan to the close. The occurrences which necessarily presuppose the exertion of miraculous power took place in their presence. They were events in which they had a deep concern. The apostles were not wanting in common sense, and they were conscientious men. They were the men whom Jesus Christ selected to be his companions. Unless, as the enemies of Jesus charged, he was "a deceiver," and most accomplished in the art, how could they mistake the character of these works, which, as they alleged, he performed before their eyes?

But as the miracles are the part of the Gospel history which in these days chiefly provokes incredulity, it is well to consider this topic further. No more time need be spent on Hume's argument to show that a miracle is, under no circumstances, capable of being proved. As Mill observes, all that Hume has made out is, that no evidence can prove a miracle to an atheist, or to

a deist who supposes himself able to prove that God would not interfere to produce the miraculous event in question.[1] We assume the being and moral attributes of God; and we have no call to discuss the character, in other respects, of Hume's reasoning.[2]

We are not called upon to confute the opinion, that the first three Gospels — the historical character of the fourth has already been vindicated — were moulded by a doctrinal purpose or bias, since that opinion finds no countenance now from judicious critics of whatever theological creed. The first Gospel contains numerous passages in which the catholic character of Christianity is emphatically set forth.[3] "Our Matthew," says Mangold, an unprejudiced critic, not at all wedded to traditional views, "is, to be sure, written by a Jewish Christian for Jewish Christians;" "but he has given us no writing with a Jewish Christian doctrinal bias." "The words of Jesus, quoted in Matthew," says Reuss, "which form the doctrinal kernel of the book, are not selected in the slightest degree from that point of view," — that of the Palestinian Jewish Christianity, — "but go beyond it in a hundred places, and bespeak so much the more the faithfulness of the tradition."[4] Mark has decidedly outgrown Judaism; "but no dogmatic tendency can on this account be saddled on his presentation of the Gospel history, as long as it is not shown that Christ himself did not rise above Judaism, and that the Jewish Christian Matthew looks on Christi-

[1] J. S Mill, System of Logic, vol. ii. p. 110.

[2] See chap. iv. of this work.

[3] Matt. viii. 11, ix. 16 seq., xii. 8, xiii. 31, xx. 1 seq., xxi. 28, 33, xxii. 10, xxiii. 33, xxiv. 14, xxviii. 19; cf. Essays on the Supernatural Origin of Christianity, pp. 213-215; Reuss, Gesch. d. heilig. Schriftt. d. N. T p. 195.

[4] Gesch., etc., p. 194.

anity as a development within the limits of Judaism."[1] In Luke, "not only does the history of Jesus acquire in general no other significance than in Matthew, nowhere is there disclosed a design to set aside or to overcome an imperfect understanding of it: on the contrary, there occur numerous words and acts, drawn from the general tradition, which, when literally taken, rather wear a Jewish Christian coloring. But here it will be nearest to the truth to affirm that not a party feeling, but the most independent historical research, — or, if we prefer so to call it, a thirst for the fullest possible information, — has governed in the collection of the matter."[2] The whole charge of being *Tendenz-Schriften*, which Baur and his school brought against the Gospels, is founded on untenable theories respecting their authorship and order of composition.

If the "tendency-theory" no longer calls for detailed refutation, the same thing is true of the attack of Strauss on the credibility of the Gospels, which is founded on their alleged inconsistencies. This attack is now acknowledged by judicious scholars to be merely the work of an expert advocate, bent on finding contradictions in testimony which he is anxious to break down.[3] The Gospel narratives are wholly inartificial. No compositions could be more open to assault from critics who ignore this character that belongs to them, and labor to magnify the importance of variations which only serve to prove that there was no collusion among the several writers, and no attempt on the part of anybody to frame a story that should be proof against hostile comment.

[1] Maugold, p. 342; cf. Holtzmann, Die Synopt. Evangg., p. 384 seq.

[2] Reuss, p. 212.

[3] For a full reply to Strauss on this topic, see The Supernatural Origin of Christianity, chap. vi.

As the miracles rest on the same grounds of evidence as the other matters of fact to which the apostles testify, special reasons are required for discrediting their testimony as regards this one class of events. Is it said that miracles are incredible? The answer is, that, being a necessary element and the natural adjuncts of revelation, they are not incredible, unless the fact of revelation, and of the Christian revelation in particular, is incredible. Their improbability is just as great as, and no greater than, the improbability that God would reveal himself to men, and send his Son to save them. Is it objected that there have been a vast number of pretended miracles? The answer of Bishop Butler appears sufficient, that mankind have not been oftener deluded by these pretences than by others. "Prejudices almost without number and without name, romance, affectation, humor, a desire to engage attention or to surprise, the party-spirit, custom, little competitions, unaccountable likings and dislikings, — these influence men strongly in common matters." As they are not reflected on by those in whom they operate, their effect is like that of enthusiasm. And yet, as Butler adds, human testimony in common matters is not, on this account, discredited. Because *some* narratives of miracles spring out of mere enthusiasm, it is an unwarrantable inference that *all* are to be accounted for in this way.[1]

[1] What is said in the Gospels of Jesus prior to his public ministry calls for special remark. Of this portion of his life, the apostles were not directly cognizant. With regard to it they were dependent upon others for information. The brief and fragmentary character of the introductory narratives in Matthew and Luke is adapted to inspire confidence, rather than distrust, since it indicates authentic tradition as the probable source of them. The most important fact contained in them is the miraculous conception. For the historical truth of this record, there is proof in the circumstance that Matthew's and Luke's narratives are

from separate sources, and are complementary to each other. Moreover, these sources are Jewish. Certainly Luke's account is from a Jewish Christian document. There was nothing in Jewish ideas to lead to the origination of a myth of this sort. As for Judaizing Christians, they would be the last to imagine an incident so contrary to their dogmatic tendencies. As to Isa. vii. 14, there is no proof that it had been applied by the Jews to the Messiah; and the Hebrew term used there did not necessarily denote an unmarried person. Luke repeatedly refers to the recollections of Mary respecting the early days of Jesus (Luke ii. 19, 51). It is probable that she lived at Jerusalem with John. That John and Paul do not connect the Saviour's divinity, or even his sinlessness, with his miraculous birth, goes to prove that doctrinal belief did not engender the story. Luke's designation of Jesus as holy, in connection with his miraculous conception (Luke i. 35; cf. Matt. i. 20), is not equivalent to sinlessness. If the origination of such a myth could be credited to Gentile Christians, which, especially at so early a date, is an unlikely supposition, we could not account for its adoption in the circle of Palestinian Jewish Christians. How the idea of a miraculous element in the birth of "the second Adam" comports with the function that was to belong to him as a new creative potence in humanity, together with the force of the historical proofs, is cogently presented by Neander, Leben Jesu, p. 14 seq. See also the instructive discussion of Weiss, Leben Jesu, i. 212 seq. That difficulties should exist in connection with details in the narratives of the opening period of Christ's life, which are collected in Matthew and Luke, is to be expected. It is natural that Strauss should make the most of them.

CHAPTER X.

THE MIRACLES OF THE GOSPEL IN CONTRAST WITH HEATHEN AND ECCLESIASTICAL MIRACLES.[1]

It is frequently alleged, that the evidence in favor of pagan and ecclesiastical miracles, which fill so large a space in chronicles of a former day, but which are generally allowed to be fictitious, is as strong as that for the miracles recorded in the Gospels. What is to be said of the ecclesiastical miracles is, in the main, applicable to the miraculous tales found in ancient heathen writers, from Herodotus to Livy, and from Livy to the fall of the Græco-Roman paganism. To the stream of church miracles, then, which flows down from the early centuries, through the middle ages, almost or quite to our own time, we may confine our attention. Is the evidence for these alleged miracles equivalent in force to that of the miracles recorded by the evangelists? So far from this being true, there are broad marks of distinction by which these last are separated from the general current of miraculous narrative.

1. The Gospel miracles are for the express purpose of attesting revelation. They are the proper counterpart and proof of revelation. They occur, with few exceptions, only at the marked epochs of revelation, — the Mosaic era, the reform and advance of the Old

[1] Among the valuable discussions of this subject, are Douglas's Criterion, Newman's Two Essays (4th ed., 1875), and Mozley's Bampton Lectures.

Testament religion under the great prophets, and in connection with the ministry of Christ and the founding of the church. "We know," it was said, "that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." (John iii. 2.)

On the contrary, ecclesiastical miracles profess to be for a lower, and, in general, for a signally lower end. At the best, they are to give efficacy to the preaching of a missionary. Miracles were requisite as a part and proof of revelation. When they have once taken place, testimony is all that can reasonably be demanded as a ground of faith. There is no call for a perpetual interruption of the course of nature. Even the Roman-Catholic Church holds that the whole deposit of revelation was with Christ and the apostles. The dogmatic decisions of popes and councils are only the exposition of that primitive doctrine. Their function is not to originate, but to define, Christian truth.

But, in a vast majority of instances, the ecclesiastical miracles are for some end below that of serving as the credentials of a missionary. At the best, they are to relieve the distress of an individual, with no ulterior and more comprehensive end such as attaches to the miracles wrought by Jesus and the apostles. In a multitude of instances they simply minister to an appetite for marvels. Witness the wonders that crowd the pages of the apocryphal Gospels. Many are for objects extremely trivial. Tertullian gives an account of a vision in which an angel prescribed to a female the size and length of her veil. Some, like the Jansenist miracles at the tomb of Abbé Paris, to which Hume appeals, are in the cause of a political or religious party, and against an antagonistic faction. Very frequently mira-

cles are valued, and said to be wrought, merely as verifications of the sanctity of a person of high repute for piety.

The distinction which we are here considering is one of great importance. No doubt there is a presumption against the probable occurrence of miracles, which grows out of our instinctive belief in the uniformity of nature, and the conviction we have that an established order is beneficent. This presumption Christians believe to be neutralized by the need of revelation, and by the perceived character of the Christian system and of its author. But in proportion as the end assigned to miracles is lower, that adverse presumption remains in full force.

2. The Gospel miracles were not wrought in coincidence with a prevailing system, and for the furtherance of it, but in opposition to prevalent beliefs.

This is another striking difference. Jesus won all of his disciples to faith in him. They did not inherit this faith: they did not grow up in it. He and they had to confront opposition at every step. "The world," he said, "hateth me." His doctrines and his idea of the kingdom of God clashed with Judaic opinion and feeling. Christianity had to push forward in the face of the hostility of all the existing forms of religion. But how is it with the ecclesiastical miracles of later ages? They occurred, if wrought at all, in the midst of communities and smaller circles which were already in fervent sympathy with the cause in behalf of which they were supposed to be performed. The narrations of them sprang up among those who were, beforehand, full of confidence in the church as the possessor of miraculous power, and in the individuals to whose agency such miracles were ascribed. Recollecting what occurred

at the origin of the church, full of faith in the supernatural powers which were thought still to reside in it, men were on the lookout for startling manifestations of them. There was a previous habit of credulity in this particular direction. The same scepticism which is deemed reasonable in respect to stories of miracles performed by Dominicans or Franciscans, where the rival interests of the two orders are involved, is natural in regard to wonders said to have been wrought in behalf of a creed assumed to be true, and enthusiastically cherished. In Galilee, Judæa, and in the various provinces of the Roman Empire, Christianity was a new religion. It was at the start an unpopular religion, in a struggle against wide-spread, bitter prejudice. The whole atmosphere was thus totally different from that which prevailed in the middle ages, or even in the Roman Empire, after the gospel had succeeded in gaining hundreds of thousands of converts.

3. The motives to fraud, which justly excite suspicion in the case of many of the ecclesiastical miracles, did not exist in the case of the miracles of the gospel.

It cannot be denied that pious fraud played a prominent part in producing the tales of the supernatural which are interspersed in the biographies of the saints. Ecclesiastical superiors have often given a free rein to popular credulity, on the maxim that the end sanctifies the means. Where positive trickery has not been practised, circumstances have been concealed, which, if known, would have stripped many a transaction of the miraculous aspect which it wore in the eyes of the ignorant. The same spirit that gave rise to the mediæval forgeries, of which the Pseudo-Isidorian decretals are a conspicuous example, was capable of conniving at numberless deceits which served to bolster up sacer

dotal pretensions. In order that an individual may be enrolled as a saint, and invoked in this character, it has been held to be indispensable that he should have wrought miracles. Miracles are held to be a badge of sainthood. It is easy to conceive, not only what a stimulus this theory must have afforded to the devout imagination, but also what conscious exaggeration and wilful invention must have sprung out of such a creed

When we enter the company of Christ and the apostles, we find that this incentive to the invention of miracles is utterly absent. We find, rather, the deepest antipathy to every species of deceit and fraud.

4. A great number of the Roman-Catholic miracles can be explained by natural causes, without any impeachment of the honesty of the narrators. Frequently, natural events of no uncommon occurrence are viewed as supernatural. The physical effect of vigils, and fastings and pilgrimages, on the maladies of those who resorted to these practices, was, no doubt, in many cases salutary. As the body acts on the mind, so the mind powerfully affects the body. Heated imagination, ardent faith, the confident hope of relief, may produce physical effects of an extraordinary character. There is a variety of nervous disorders which are cured by a sudden shock which turns feeling into a new channel. Mohammed was a victim of hysteria attended by catalepsy. Especially when medical knowledge was scanty, exceptional conditions of mind and body were easily mistaken for supernatural phenomena.

If the miracles of the Gospels consisted only of visions, or of the cure of less aggravated cases of demoniacal possession, or of the healing of certain diseases which spring mainly from nervous derangement, there might be no occasion for referring them to supernatural

agency. But such miracles as the cure of the lunatic at Gadara, the multiplication of the loaves, the conversion of water into wine, the raising of the son of the widow of Nain, and of Lazarus, the resurrection of Jesus himself, baffle every attempt at naturalistic solution. If miracles such as these are admitted on the ground of the testimony to them, taken in connection with the exalted character of Christ and with the doctrine of Christianity, it is alike unreasonable and profitless to resort to any naturalistic explanation of visions and cures, which, considered by themselves, might perhaps be accounted for by that method. The whole set of Gospel miracles belong together. If certain of them do not of necessity carry us beyond the limit of physiological and psychological causes, and if this boundary is not strictly definable, there are others, equally well attested, which do undeniably lie beyond this limit, and must, if the phenomena are admitted, be referred to the interposition of God.

5. The incompetence of the witnesses to ecclesiastical miracles, as a rule, is a decisive reason for discrediting their accounts.

We do not include under this head an intention to deceive. Reports of Pagan and ecclesiastical miracles frequently rest on no contemporary evidence. It was more than a century after the death of Apollonius of Tyana when Philostratus wrote his life. Sixteen years after the death of Ignatius Loyola, Ribadeneira wrote his biography. At that time he knew of no miracles performed by his hero. St. Francis Xavier himself makes but one or two references to wonders wrought by him; and these occurrences do not necessarily imply any thing miraculous. In the case of an ancient saint, Gregory Thaumaturgus, the life that we possess was

written long after his time by Gregory Nyssa. Boniface, the apostle to the Germans, and Ansgar, the apostle to the Scandinavians, do not themselves claim to be miracle-workers. It is others who make the claim for them. Of the string of miracles which Bede furnishes, there are few, if any, which he affirms to have occurred within his personal knowledge.

Where there are contemporary narratives, it is evident, generally, that the chroniclers are too deficient in the habit of accurate observation to be trusted. This want of carefulness is manifest in what they have to say of ordinary matters. Dr. Arnold gives an example of the inaccuracy of Bede.[1] The Saxon chronicler describes a striking phenomenon on the southern coast of England, in such a way that one who is familiar with it would be quite unable to recognize it from this author's description. Where the observation of natural objects is so careless, how can we expect a correct account of phenomena which are taken for miraculous? Excited feeling, on the watch for marvels, in minds not in the least trained to strict observation, renders testimony to a great extent worthless.

Now, who were the original witnesses of the miracles of Jesus? As Cardinal Newman has said, "They were vey far from a dull or ignorant race. The inhabitants of a maritime and border country (as Galilee was); engaged, moreover, in commerce; composed of natives of various countries, and therefore, from the nature of the case, acquainted with more than one language — have necessarily their intellects sharpened, and their minds considerably enlarged, and are of all men least disposed to acquiesce in marvellous tales. Such a people must have examined before they suffered themselves to be

[1] Lectures on Modern History (Am. ed.), p. 128.

excited in the degree which the evangelists describe." Their conviction, be it observed, was no "bare and indolent assent to facts which they might have thought antecedently probable, or not improbable," but a great change in principle and mode of life, and such a change as involved the sacrifice of every earthly good. There is a vast difference between the dull assent of superstitious minds, the impressions of unreflecting devotees, and that positive faith which transformed the character of the first disciples, and moved them to forsake their kindred, and to lay down their lives, in attestation of the truth of their testimony. A conviction on the part of such persons, and attended by consequences like these, must have had its origin in an observation of facts about which there could be no mistake.

6. The Gospel miracles, unlike the ecclesiastical, were none of them merely tentative, unsuccessful, or of doubtful reality.

In ancient times the temple of Æsculapius was thronged by persons in quest of healing at the hands of the god. No one could pretend that more than a fraction of these votaries were actually healed. Of the multitude who failed of the benefit there was no mention or memory.

To come down to a later day, many thousands were annually touched for the scrofula by the English kings. Some recovered; and their recovery, no doubt, was blazoned abroad. But, of the generality of those who thus received the royal touch, there is not the slightest proof that it was followed by a recovery. So, elsewhere, among those to whom miraculous power has been attributed, the instances of apparent success were connected with uncounted failures of which no record is preserved. Even in the cases where it is loudly

claimed that there was every appearance of miracles, as in certain of the wonders at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, it is found that some have been only partially relieved of their maladies, or have experienced soon a recurrence of them.

Mark the contrast presented by the miracles of the gospel. They were performed by a definite class of persons. They were "the signs of an apostle." The main point, however, is, that there were no exceptions, none on whom the wonder-working power failed of its effect. There were no abortive experiments. *All* whom Jesus attempted to heal were healed. *None* went away as they came. None went away with painful symptoms alleviated, while the disorders were not removed. Had such instances of failure occurred, they would not have escaped the attention of the apostles and of their enemies. Confidence in Christ would have been weakened, if not subverted. In accounting for the gospel miracles, the supposition of accident is thus precluded. We do not reason from occasional coincidences.

7. The grotesque character of many of the ecclesiastical miracles awakens a just presumption against them as a class.

A miracle emanates from the power of God. But it will not be, for that reason, at variance with his other attributes. As far as an alleged miracle appears to be unworthy of God in any particular, it loses its title to be credited.

The miracles in the apocryphal Gospels (such as that of the throne of Herod, drawn out to its right length by the child Jesus, to remedy a blunder of Joseph in making it) give no unfair idea of the style of many narratives in the legends of the church. Among the miracles attributed to Thomas à Becket is the story

that the eyes of a priest of Nantes, who doubted them, fell from their sockets. "In remembrance," says Mr. Froude, "of his old sporting days, the archbishop would mend the broken wings and legs of hawks which had suffered from herons." "Dead lambs, pigs, and geese were restored to life, to silence Sadducees who doubted the resurrection." The biographers of Xavier relate, that, having washed the sores of a poor invalid, *he drank the water*, and the sores were forthwith healed. Even St. Bernard, preaching on a summer day in a church where the people were annoyed by flies, excommunicates these winged insects; and in the morning they are found to be all dead, and are swept out in heaps. It would be unjust to say that trivial, ludicrous, or disgusting circumstances belong to all ecclesiastical miracles. But such features are so common, that they affix a corresponding character to the set of wonders, taken as a whole, to which they pertain.

That the miracles of the Bible have a dignity and beauty peculiar to themselves is acknowledged by disbelievers; for instance, by the author of *Supernatural Religion*. If any of them are thought to bear a different look, they are exceptions. "Hence," observes Cardinal Newman, "the Scripture accounts of Eve's temptation by the serpent, of the speaking of Balaam's ass, of Jonah and the whale, and of the devils sent into the herd of swine, are by themselves more or less improbable, being unequal in dignity to the rest." "They are then supported," the same author holds, "by the system in which they are found, as being a few out of a multitude, and therefore but exceptions (and, as we suppose, but apparent exceptions) to the general rule." This remark implies that their exceptional character makes it necessary that they should have an extraordi-

nary support if they are to be credited. When the miracles of Scripture are looked at as a body, they are seen to be of an elevated character. They are at a wide remove in this respect from the common run of pagan and ecclesiastical miracles. The contrast is like that of a genuine coin with a clumsy counterfeit.

8. The evidential value of the miracles of the gospel is not weakened, even if it be admitted that miraculous events may have occasionally occurred in later ages.

The restoration of the sick in response to prayer is commonly through no visible or demonstrable interference with natural law. Yet no one should be charged with credulity for holding, that, in certain exceptional instances, the supernatural agency discovers itself by evidence palpable to the senses. So discreet an historical critic as Neander will not deny that St. Bernard may have been the instrument of effecting cures properly miraculous. It is true, as was suggested above, that missionary work is something to which human powers are adequate, and which requires no other aid from above than the silent, invisible operation of the Spirit of God. Yet Edmund Burke, speaking of the introduction of Christianity into Britain by Augustine and his associates, remarks: "It is by no means impossible, that, for an end so worthy, Providence on some occasions might directly have interfered." "I should think it very presumptuous to say," writes F. D. Maurice, "that it has never been needful, in the modern history of the world, to break the idols of sense and experience by the same method which was sanctioned in the days of old." Those who, like the writers just quoted, hold that miraculous events have not been wholly wanting in later ages, cannot maintain that they have occurred

under such conditions of uniformity and the like, as distinguish the miracles of Christ and the apostles. The most that can be claimed is, that *sometimes* they have occurred in answer to prayer, — a form of answer on which the petitioner has never been able to count. The judicious student who surveys the entire history of miraculous pretension will be slow to admit the miraculous in particular instances of the kind described, without the application of strict tests of evidence. He will bear in mind that the great, the principal design of the miracle is to serve as at once a constituent and proof of revelation.

A particular examination of the alleged miracles of the early age of the church is precluded by the limits of the present chapter. The following points are specially worthy of attention: —

1. The miracles said to have been performed in the second and third centuries are far less marked and less numerous than those referred to in the two centuries that followed, — a fact the reverse of that which we should expect if these narrations were founded in truth.

2. The same writers — as Origen, Tertullian, Eusebius, Augustine — who record contemporary miracles, imply in other passages that the age of miracles had gone by, and that their own times were in marked contrast, in this respect, with the era of the apostles.

3. The miracles related by the Fathers are mostly exorcisms, the healing of the sick, and visions; that is, occurrences where natural agencies are most easily mistaken for supernatural. Miracles in which this error is impossible lack sufficient attestation.[1]

[1] For the Patristic passages on these three points, see Mozley's Bampton Lectures, p. 195 seq.

The true view on this subject appears to be, that miraculous manifestations in the church ceased gradually. No sharp line of demarcation can be drawn, marking off the age of miracles from the subsequent period, when the operation of the Divine Providence and Spirit no longer was palpably distinguished from the movements of natural law.

As we advance into the fourth century, called the Nicene age, we meet with a notable increase in the number of alleged miracles. Yet Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, speak of the apostolic age as distinguished from their own as having been a period marked by miracles. Notwithstanding the high merits of the authors of the Nicene era, they discover, more and more, the artificial rhetorical tone which had now come to infest literature. There was a habit of thought and style which tends to breed exaggeration. It was a period of decadence. Relic-worship, the invocation of martyrs and saints, and like superstitions, established themselves in the church; and the alleged miracles were frequently associated with these customs. A spirit of credulity gained ground. The evidence for most of the post-apostolic miracles which the Fathers advert to melts away on examination. In cases where there is no ground for distrusting the sincerity of the narrator, we are bound to consider whether the phenomena which one of the Fathers reports were known to him directly; and, if they were, whether they necessarily involve any thing miraculous, — whether they may not reasonably be referred to hallucination, or to some other source of unconscious illusion.

As an example, we may take the reports of miracles which Augustine has collected in his treatise on the City of God.[1] He starts with a reference to the objec-

[1] Lib. xxii.

tion that miracles are no longer wrought. "It might be replied," he says, "that they are no longer necessary, as they were at first." This answer is in keeping with other statements made by him, which imply that no such miracles were wrought in his time as were done by Christ and the apostles. But in this place he affirms that miracles are wrought, though more privately, and that they are less widely reported. Many of those to which he refers are alleged to have been performed in connection with the relics of the proto-martyr Stephen, which, as was claimed, were discovered in A.D. 415, at a place called Carphagamala, in Palestine. Gamaliel, the Jewish rabbi, appeared in visions to Lucian, a priest of the church there, and informed him, that after Stephen had been stoned to death, and his body had been left exposed for a day and a night, it was carried, by his order, to this place, twenty miles distant. Nicodemus, also, he had caused to be interred at the side of Stephen, and Gamaliel's own "dear son, Alitas." The remains, by the aid of this information, were discovered, and a new shrine for pilgrims was thus created at Jerusalem. A portion of these relics found their way to Africa, and became the centre of miraculous phenomena, the details of which are given by Augustine. It certainly requires a great stretch of credulity to believe that these relics, thus identified with the proto-martyr, ever really belonged to him; and this circumstance suggests beforehand a legitimate doubt as to miraculous interpositions in connection with them. But Augustine also relates other miracles as having occurred in Africa, and it is worth while to notice these. The first is described at length: it is the disappearance of a fistula from the body of a man at Carthage, who had not long before undergone a surgical

operation for the same trouble. This event, which fills Augustine with devout amazement, is easily accounted for by physicians at present, without any recourse to the supernatural. It was simply ignorance of physiology that led to the inference that it was a miracle. The next case is that of Innocentia, a Christian woman in the same city, who had a cancer on one of her breasts, and was cured by the sign of the cross made upon it by the first woman whom she saw coming out of the baptistery, of whom she had been directed in a dream to ask this favor. Here, in the absence of a more particular statement of the circumstances, it would be rash to suppose a miracle. But the attestation is in this case singularly deficient. The supposed miracle had been kept secret, much to Augustine's indignation, who was somehow informed of the event, and reprimanded the woman for not making it public. She replied that she had not kept silence on the subject. But Augustine found, on inquiry, that the women who were best acquainted with her "knew nothing of it," and "listened in great astonishment," when, at his instigation, she told her story. How remarkable, that the sudden deliverance from a disorder which the physicians had pronounced incurable should not have been known to her most intimate female acquaintance! Why did she tell Augustine that she had not kept it to herself? How did he himself find it out? The next miracle is that of "black woolly-haired boys," who appeared to a gouty doctor, and warned him not to be baptized that year. They trod on his feet, and gave him the acutest pain. He knew them to be devils, and disobeyed them. He was relieved in the very act of baptism, and did not suffer from gout afterward. If we suppose that the fact was well attested, who would be bold enough to

ascribe it to a miracle? How easy, in a multitude of cures of this sort, to confound the antecedent with the cause, the *post hoc* with the *propter hoc!* Several of the miracles which Augustine had gathered into his net are of a grotesque character; as that which provided Florentius, a poor tailor of Hippo, with a new coat, after a prayer to the twenty martyrs, whose shrine was near at hand. Who was the cook that found the gold ring in the fish's belly? and who was it that interrogated her on the subject? There are three or four instances of the raising of the dead which are found in Augustine's list. But of neither of these does he pretend to have been an eye-witness; nor, if the circumstances are credited in the form in which they are given, is there any thing to prove that death had actually taken place. A swoon, or the temporary suspension of the powers of life, may have been in each instance all that really occurred.

Another miracle in Augustine's catalogue is that of the martyrs of Milan, which occurred while he was in that city, and which is also described circumstantially by Ambrose, the celebrated bishop. A violent conflict was raging between Ambrose and the mass of the populace, on the one side, and the Arian Empress Justina, the widow of Valentinian I., with her following, on the other. Ambrose had refused her demand that one church edifice should be set apart for Arian worship. The populace, who were in full sympathy with their bishop, were in a high state of excitement. A new church was to be dedicated, and they were eager for relics with which to enrich it. Then follows the unexpected discovery of the remains of two utterly forgotten martyrs, Protasius and Gervasius, with fresh blood upon them, and able to shake the earth in the

neighborhood where they lay. As they are transported through the city, a blind butcher touches the fringe of the pall that covers them, and at once receives his sight. We are not willing to join with Isaac Taylor in imputing to Ambrose himself complicity in a fraud. Yet the circumstances connected with the discovery of the bodies indicate that fraud and superstitious imagination were combined in those who were most active in the matter. The blindness of the butcher was not congenital. It was a disorder which had obliged him to retire from his business. But oculists know well that cases of total or partial blindness are sometimes instantly relieved. What was the special cause of the disorder in this instance? Had there been symptoms of amendment before? Was the cure complete at the moment? As long as we are unable to answer these and like questions, it is unwise to assume that there was a miracle. We miss in the accounts, we may add, the sobriety of the Gospel narratives. They are surcharged with the florid rhetoric to which we have adverted.

The evidence for most of those post-apostolic miracles which are more commonly referred to melts away on examination. The miracle of "the thundering legion," whose prayers are said to have saved the army of Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 174), and to have thus turned him from his hostility to Christianity, is one of these. But no such effect was produced on the emperor's mind, since he persecuted the Christians afterwards (A.D. 178). The tempest of rain which brought relief to the army, the heathen asserted to be the consequence of their own prayers to Jupiter. If it was true that a sudden shower of the kind described in the story followed upon the supplications of the Christian soldiers, we

should hardly be justified in pronouncing it a miracle in the proper sense of the term. The story of the cross with an inscription upon it, seen by Constantine in the sky, Eusebius heard from the emperor not until twenty-six years after the event, and was not acquainted with it, when, with the best opportunities for informing himself, he wrote his *Church History* (about A.D. 325). That Constantine had a dream in the night such as Lactantius describes, is not improbable. It is possible that on the day previous, a parhelion, or some similar phenomenon, may have seemed to his excited and superstitious feeling a cross of light. Under the circumstances, and considering the defects in the testimony, the natural explanation is far the most probable. None of the post-apostolic miracles appears to have a stronger attestation than that of the breaking-out of fire from the foundations of the temple at Jerusalem, when the workmen, by the order of the Emperor Julian, set about the task of rebuilding that edifice. The fact is stated by a contemporary heathen writer of good repute, Ammianus Marcellinus. Notwithstanding the grave historical difficulties which have been suggested by Lardner and others, it seems most reasonable to conclude that some startling phenomenon of the kind actually occurred. Neander says, "A sign coming from God is here certainly not to be mistaken, although natural causes also co-operated."[1] Guizot, in his notes on Gibbon, explains the occurrence by referring it to the explosion of the subterranean gases suddenly liberated by the workmen. Although the admission of a miracle in such a case detracts nothing from the peculiar function and evidential force of the miracles of Scripture, we cannot feel obliged to call in

[1] Church History, vol. ii. pp. 69, 70.

here supernatural agency. Natural causes of a physical nature, together with the fears and fancies of the laborers, and the exaggerating imagination of reporters, suffice to explain the alarm that was created, and the cessation of the work.

The standing argument at the present day against the credibility of the evangelists is the precedent afforded by the biographers of "the saints," and of the incredible marvels which they mingle with authentic history. To some it is no matter of surprise that the apostles should be utterly deceived in this branch of their testimony. Thus Matthew Arnold boldly admits, that, if we had the original reports of eye-witnesses, we should not have a miracle less than we have now.[1] Very different is the judgment of a great historical scholar, Niebuhr. He refers to the critical spirit in which he had come to the study of the New Testament histories and to the imperfections which he believed himself to find in them. He adds, "Here, as in every historical subject, when I contemplated the immeasurable gulf between the narrative and the facts narrated, this disturbed me no further. He whose earthly life and sorrows were depicted had for me a perfectly real existence, and his whole history had the same reality, even if it were not related with literal exactness in any single point. Hence, also, the fundamental fact of miracles, which, according to my conviction, must be conceded, unless we adopt the not merely incomprehensible but absurd hypothesis, that the Holiest was a deceiver, and his disciples either dupes or liars; and that deceivers had preached a holy religion, in which self-renunciation is every thing, and

[1] Contemporary Review, vol. xxvi. p. 697.

in which there is nothing tending toward the erection of a priestly rule, — nothing that can be acceptable to vicious inclinations. As regards a miracle in the strictest sense, it really only requires an unprejudiced and penetrating study of nature to see that those related are as far as possible from absurdity, and a comparison with legends, or the pretended miracles of other religions, to perceive by what a different spirit they are animated."[1]

"*To perceive by what a different spirit they are animated*" — it is just this which Renan fails to see in the legends of the saints. It is found impossible to dispute the fact, that testimony substantially equivalent to the contents of the Gospels was given by the apostles. The grand hypothesis of a post-apostolic mythology, set up by Strauss, is given up. That the apostles were wilful deceivers, if it be sometimes insinuated, is felt to be a weak position. This old fortification of unbelief is abandoned. What, then, shall be said? Why, answers Renan, they were, like the followers of St. Francis of Assisi, credulous, romantic enthusiasts. The frequency with which he reverts to the lives of St. Francis indicates what is the real source and prop of his theory in his own mind. It is well to look at this pretended parallel more narrowly.

We have two lives of St. Francis by personal followers, — one, by Thomas de Celano; and another, by the "three companions." Another life is from the pen of Bonaventura, who was five years old when the saint died.[2] The moment one takes up these biographies, he finds himself in an atmosphere different from that of

[1] Memoir of Niebuhr (Am. ed.), p. 236.

[2] These lives are in the Acta Sanctorum (ed. nov.), vol. 90, pp. 683-798.

nature and real life. He is transported into dream-land. Feeling drowns perception. Every thing is suffused with emotion. We are in an atmosphere where neither discriminating judgment nor cool observation is to be looked for. Here is an example of the strain of eulogy in which these disciples of St. Francis, intoxicated with admiration, indulge: "Oh, how beautiful, how splendid, how glorious, he appeared, in innocence of life and in simplicity of language, in purity of heart, in delight in God, in fraternal love, in odorous obedience, in complaisant devotedness, in angelic aspect! Sweet in manners, placid in nature, affable in speech, most apt in exhortation, most faithful in trusts, prudent in counsel, efficient in action, gracious in all things, serene in mind, sweet in spirit, sober in temper, steadfast in contemplation, persevering in esteem, and in all things the same, swift to show favor, slow to anger," etc.[1] This is only one of the outbursts of ecstatic admiration for "the morning star," the luminary "more radiant than the sun," in which these chroniclers break out. When we turn to the saint who is the object of all this fervor, we find in his character, to be sure, much to respect. There is "sweetness and light;" but the light is by far the minor factor. The practice of asceticism rendered his bodily state at all times abnormal and unhealthy. To lie on the ground, with a log for a pillow; to deny himself the refreshment of sleep when it was most needed; to choose, on principle, the coarsest food, and to insist on its being cooked, if cooked at all, in a way that made it as unpalatable and indigestible as possible; to weep every day so copiously that his eyesight was nearly destroyed, and then, as always when he was ill, to take remedies with great reluctance, if he took them

[1] Acta Sanctorum, ut sup., p 716.

at all — these customs were not favorable to sanity of mental action any more than to soundness of body. They co-existed with attractive virtues; they sprang from pure motives: but they were none the less excesses of superstition. Persuaded on one occasion, when he was enfeebled by illness, to eat of a fowl, he demonstrated his penitence by causing himself to be led, with a rope round his neck, like a criminal, through the streets of Assisi, by one of his followers, who shouted all the time, "Behold the glutton!"

The sort of miracles ascribed to St. Francis, and the measure of credence which the stories of them deserve, may be understood from what is said of his miraculous dealing with the lower animals. On a journey, leaving his companions in the road, he stepped aside into the midst of a concourse of doves, crows, and other birds. They were not frightened at his approach. Whereupon he delivered to them a sermon, in which he addressed them as "my brother-birds," and gave them wholesome counsel — supposing them able to comprehend it — respecting their duties to God. But we are assured that they did comprehend it, and signified their approbation by stretching their necks, opening their mouths, and flapping their wings. Having received from the saint the benediction, and permission to go, this winged congregation flew away. This is only one in a catalogue of wonders of the same kind. Fishes, as well as birds, listened to preaching, and waited for the discourse to conclude. We can readily believe Celano, when he says that St. Francis was a man of "the utmost fervor," and had a feeling "of piety and gentleness towards irrational creatures." He was probably one of those who have a remarkable power of dispelling the fear, and winning the confidence, of animals. Incidents where this natu-

ral power was exercised were magnified, by the fancy of devotees, into the tales a sample of which has been given. A like discount from other miraculous narratives resting on the same testimony would reduce the events which they relate to the dimensions of natural, though it may be remarkable, occurrences. It is needless to recount these alleged miracles. One or two will suffice. Travelling together, St. Francis and his followers see in the road a purse, apparently stuffed with coins. There was a temptation to pick it up. The rule of poverty was in imminent peril. The saint warns his curious disciple that the devil is in the purse. Finally, the disciple, after prayer, is permitted to touch it, when out leaps a serpent, and instantly — *mirabile dictu!* — serpent and purse vanish. When the saint came to die, one of his followers beheld his soul, as it parted from the body, in appearance like an immense luminous star, shedding its radiance over many waters, borne upon a white cloud, and ascending straight to heaven.

The great miracle in connection with St. Francis is that of the "stigmata," or the marks of the wounds of Christ, which the Saviour was thought in a vision to have imprinted upon his body. From the hour when a vision of the crucified Christ was vouchsafed him, as he thought, while he was in prayer before his image, "his heart," say the "*tres socii*," was wounded and melted at the recollection of the Lord's passion; so that he carried while he lived the wounds — *stigmata* — of the Lord Jesus in his heart. He sought in all ways to be literally conformed to the Lord as a sufferer. For example, remembering that the Virgin had no place where her son could lay his head, he would take his food from the table where he was dining, carry it out, and eat it on

the ground. It was his constant effort to bring upon himself the identical experiences of pain and sorrow which befell Christ. Especially did he concentrate his thoughts in intense and long-continued meditation on the crucifixion. There is a considerable number of other instances of *stigmata* found upon the body, besides that of St. Francis. The scientific solution, which has high authority in its favor, is, that the phenomenon in question is the result of the mental state acting by a physiological law upon the body. It is considered to be one effect of the mysterious interaction of mind and body, the products of which, when body and mind are in a morbid condition, are exceptionally remarkable.

Before leaving our subject, let the reader reflect on that one trait of the apostles by which they are distinguished from other witnesses to alleged miracles. It is their *truthfulness*. Men may be devout; they may be capable of exalted emotions; they may undertake works of self-sacrifice, and be revered for their saintly tempers; and yet they may lack this one sterling quality on which the worth of testimony depends. This defect may not be conscious. It may result from a passive, uninquiring temper. It may grow out of a habit of seeing things in a hazy atmosphere of feeling, in which all things are refracted from the right line. But the apostles, unlike many devotees of even Christian ages, were *truthful*. Without this habit of seeing and relating things as they actually occurred, their writings would never have exerted that pure influence which has flowed from them. Because they uttered "words of truth and soberness," they make those who thoroughly sympathize with the spirit of their writings value truth above all things.

And there is one proof of the truth of the apostles' testimony which can be appreciated by the unlearned. The character of Jesus as he is depicted in the Gospels is too unique to be the result of invention. It is the image of a perfection too transcendent to be devised by the wit of man. Yet it is perfectly self-consistent, and obviously real in all its traits. In him the natural and the supernatural, divine authority and human feeling, the power which gives life to the dead and the sympathy which expresses itself in tears, blend in complete accord. This portrait of Christ in the Gospels is evidently drawn from the life. It demonstrates the truth of the Gospel history.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIANITY FROM THE CONVERSION OF SAUL OF TARSUS, WITH AN EXAMINATION OF RENAN'S THEORY OF THAT EVENT.

No event in the founding of Christianity, which does not relate to the life of Jesus himself, is so important as the conversion, at a very early day, of that able, resolute, and zealous enemy of the Christian cause, Saul of Tarsus. No one who looks at his career, or weighs the effect of it on the subsequent history of the world, will doubt, that, in force of intellect and of character, he was one of the greatest men, if not the greatest man, of his age. He was not content to confine his labors in behalf of Christianity within the borders of his own nation. He went forth as a conqueror through the Roman Empire, to convert the heathen. He made his way to Athens, there to reason with philosophers, and preach to the people. He aspired to preach in Rome itself, not heeding the contempt that his doctrine would excite. He had the courage to face mobs at Jerusalem and at Ephesus; to be persecuted by his own countrymen as a heretic, and by Gentiles as an atheist. No bodily hardship or peril discouraged him. No rebuff disheartened him. He had the independence to withstand Peter, the leader among the original disciples, when he gave way to timidity. No man ever afforded more signal proofs of independence of thought and of judgment. He was acquainted with the eye-

witnesses who had lived with Jesus from the beginning of his public ministry. He conferred with them. He inquired of them as to what they had seen. Seven years after the crucifixion, he spent a fortnight with Peter at Jerusalem. He was of the school of the Pharisees. All his prepossessions were against the claims of Jesus. He embarked in a determined effort to crush the Christian cause, yet from a fanatical enemy he was transformed to an enthusiastic follower and servant of Jesus. The adhesion of so independent and thoughtful and inquisitive a man; of a man having access to direct means of information respecting Jesus; of a man who had fixed prejudices to overcome; of a man whose espousal of the Christian cause cost him, as he knew it would, all that men generally hold dear; of a man who proved the depth and sincerity of his faith by a life full of heroic exertions and sufferings, and by a martyr's death, — the adhesion of such a man is itself an argument for the verity of the claims which Christianity made. Saul of Tarsus, one so quick-sighted, and at the same time reflective, was convinced of the truth of the gospel. From a zealous foe he became an intrepid advocate. Was he deceived?

The circumstances of his conversion, when, after having taken part in the slaying of Stephen, he was on the road to Damascus to persecute the disciples of Jesus there, are familiar. Unless he was altogether mistaken, a miracle occurred; not a miracle that superseded a moral decision on his part, for he might have been "disobedient unto the heavenly vision," but still a miracle. How shall the phenomena which occurred on that occasion be otherwise explained?

We have the naturalistic solution. It was an instance of hallucination. Renan, combining the ideas of

Strauss, and of Baur in his earlier treatment of the subject, with speculations of his own, has drawn out the theory.[1] Paul was on his persecuting journey, his brain highly excited, at times violently so. Passionate natures fly from one belief to the opposite. When at one extreme, they are never far from the other. They are almost ready to love what they hate. Was he sure that he was not withstanding a work of God?[2] The more he knew the good sectaries, the more he loved them. At certain moments he seemed to see the sweet figure of the Master looking on him with tender reproach. Tales of apparitions of Jesus, which the disciples had told, occurred to him. He drew near the city. The odious role of an executioner became more and more insupportable to him. He appears to have had inflamed eyes, perhaps incipient ophthalmia. Sudden fevers are an incident of journeys in that region. One will be suddenly struck (*foudroyé*), plunged into darkness traversed by flashes of light, where he will see images traced on the black ground. It is not unlikely that there was a thunder-storm. The strongest minds are dismayed by the roar of the tempests on the sides of Mount Hermon. Jews looked on thunder as the voice of God; on lightning, as the flame of God. Paul thought that what he heard in his own heart was the voice of the storm. It was a feverish delirium, caused by a sunstroke or by ophthalmia. Paul, we know, was subject to visions. He now fancied himself to see Jesus, and hear his voice. The thought of Stephen flashed on him: "he saw himself covered with his blood." All that occurred afterwards in connection with Ananias

[1] Les Apôtres, p. 175 seq.

[2] A few pages before (p. 172), Renan doubts whether Paul ever knew Gamaliel.

was another series of hallucinations and delusions. Ananias spoke gently to him, laid his hands on him. He was calmed. He believed himself healed; "and, the malady being entirely nervous, he was."

This jumble of contradictory guesses, most of which are directly belied by the known facts, is called "the scientific explanation" of the Apostle Paul's conversion. It implies throughout that he lacked common sense. He mistook the occurrences of a thunder-storm for a supernatural address, in articulate speech, to himself. He knew so little of physical disorders (which are represented, however, as being very common in the region where he was), that he mistook a sunstroke for a perception of Christ. The main point to consider, and the only point worthy of consideration, in this cobweb of conjectures, is whether there was in the mind of Paul the psychological condition out of which hallucination can naturally spring. Nothing need be said of the extraordinary postulate, that strong natures — men, be it observed, who are strong in intellect, as well as fervent in emotion — are ready at any time to jump over to an opposite conviction. A Loyola, we are to believe, very easily turns into a Luther; a Cromwell, into a Laud; and it must be a matter of surprise that Paul, in the thirty years or more that followed his conversion, in which he attacked the Judaizing spirit, did not oscillate back again to Pharisaism.

But did Paul have any of the compunction, any of the misgivings and of the hesitation, about the rectitude of the course he was pursuing, which Renan's romance ascribes to him? Not only is there not a particle of proof that he had, there is decisive proof to the contrary. The figure of the "pricks" against which it was vain for him to kick[1] was taken from the

[1] Acts xxvi. 14.

goad used to spur forward oxen. The meaning is, that his opposition to the Christian cause would be of no avail. He was forgiven for persecuting, he says, because he "did it ignorantly, in unbelief." "*I verily thought with myself*," he declares, "that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."[1] The notion that he was trying to drown the rebukes of conscience is a pure fiction, contradicted by Paul's own declarations and by all the facts in the case. There was no place, then, for hallucination, an imaginary sight of the reproving look of Jesus, and a hearing of reproaches from his voice. The superstructure falls with the foundation on which it is reared.

But is the occurrence on the road to Damascus to be considered "a vision" in the ordinary sense of the term in the New Testament? If it were this, its reality would not be disproved, unless it were first assumed that God could not or would not thus communicate with men. There is not even this ground, however, for the naturalistic hypothesis to retreat to. It is true that Paul, at various times after his conversion, refers to visions which he had. But he does not put his conversion among them. The vision to which he refers in 2 Cor. xii. 1–4 occurred six or seven years after his conversion. The whole description of this vision, and of the ecstatic state in which he was, and of the incommunicable things which he heard, shows how dissimilar it was from his experience on the road to Damascus. A vision (ὅραμα) was, and was known to be, something quite distinct from an affection of the outward senses.[2] Moreover, Paul distinguishes the sight which he had of Jesus from visions, and ranks it with that direct perception of him which the apostles had on different

[1] Acts xxvi. 9.

[2] See Acts xii. 9.

occasions after the resurrection. He says,[1] "*Last of all* he was seen of me," etc. That one interview stood by itself. It was a conviction of the untenableness of the naturalistic solution which led Baur, in his later days, to say of Paul, that "neither psychological nor dialectical analysis can explore the mystery of the act in which God revealed to him his Son."[2] Baur even says that in the conversion of Paul, "in his sudden transformation from the most vehement adversary into the most resolute herald of Christianity, we can see nothing short of a miracle (*Wunder*)." Keim, an independent representative of the same school, affirms the objective reality of the manifestation of Jesus to Paul. He appeals to the passage already referred to (1 Cor. xv. 8), and the context. "The whole character of Paul; his sharp understanding, which was not weakened by his enthusiasm; the careful, cautious, measured, simple form of his statement; above all, the favorable total impression of his narrative, and the mighty echo of it in the unanimous, uncontradicted faith of primitive Christendom," — are the considerations on which Keim rests his belief.[3] The deeper criticism of the Teutonic mind, even when under a naturalistic bias, halts at a point where Gallican scepticism does not "fear to tread."

The external miracle is not to be looked at apart from the spiritual miracle to which it led, and which attended it. There was a transformation of character involving a totally new view and interpretation of the Old Testament religion. The superficialness of Renan in his treatment of these themes is illustrated in his

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 8.

[2] Das Christenthum d. drei ersten Jahrhh. (2d ed.), p. 45.

[3] See Schaff, in The Princeton Review, March, 1883, p. 163.

dealing with this topic. Paul, he would have us believe, was not essentially altered. "Ardent men change, but are not transformed." All that he did, was to alter the direction of his fanaticism: it was directed against another object. How any sober-minded critic can read the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, where the apostle's fervor in the depicting of love lifts his style to a rhythmical flow, and still say that it is the same man who "made havoc" of the church, and "breathed out threatenings and slaughter," it is hard to see. That the apostle's native talents and dispositions did not forsake him when a new spirit entered into his heart, is, of course, true. Along with this moral and spiritual renewal, and as a part of it, was a conviction of personal unworthiness and condemnation. Righteousness — a right or justified position before God — he saw to be impossible under the law-method. The law went too deep: his heart and will were too far at variance with its exactions. Thus he saw that the Old-Testament system was only preparatory to the gospel of free forgiveness. Baur is right in saying that the perception by Paul that the death of Jesus, which was the stumbling-block to such as Paul in the way of believing in him as the Christ, no longer stood in his way when he saw that death was to Jesus the gateway to an exalted life and to a spiritual reign. It is also true, that, with this new view of the death of Jesus and of his present heavenly life and reign, the carnal conception of God's kingdom, with all Judaizing theories and prejudices, vanished. Christianity was seen to be equally for all. "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek."[1] But

[1] This topic I have considered in the Essays on the Supernatural Origin of Christianity, p. 466 seq.

how did Paul arrive at this radically altered view of the death of Jesus? How did he come to look on him as having passed into the heavens to reign there? How was the prejudice against the idea of a dying Messiah, which had possessed his whole being, removed? This result was accomplished by the revelation to him of Jesus in this heavenly exaltation. Thus the turning-point was the event on the road to Damascus, when, according to his immovable conviction, he saw Christ. On this miracle, therefore, the conversion of Paul from a fanatical Jew to an ardent and life-long apostle of the faith which he had persecuted, hinged. Upon this event, all that was noble in his career, all that was beneficent in his work as the principal founder of Christianity in Europe, all that has flowed from his writings and life for the enlightenment of human souls and the uplifting of society, depends. Was this event a miserable mistake on his part, due to a thunder-clap, a sunstroke, or sore eyes? No one who believes in God will be satisfied with such a solution.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIANITY FROM PROPHECY, WITH COMMENTS ON THE THEORY OF KUENEN.

It appears to be thought by many at present, that the argument for Christian revelation from prophecy is of little weight. In treatises on Christian evidences, it has fallen into the background, or has disappeared altogether. By some it would seem to be considered an objection, rather than a support, to the Christian cause. This impression, which has arisen in part from wrong methods of interpretation that were formerly in vogue, has no real foundation. On the contrary, prophecy, looked at in the light of a more scientific exegesis and a larger conception of the nature of prophetic inspiration, furnishes a striking and powerful argument for revelation.

One thing which modern theologians have learned respecting Hebrew prophecy is, that prediction was not the exclusive, or even the principal, constituent in the prophet's function. The prophets were raised up to instruct, rebuke, warn, and comfort the Israel of their own day. They dealt with the exigencies and obligations of the hour. They were the spokesmen of God, speaking to the people by his commission, and through his Spirit inspiring them. Prediction was involved, both as to the near and the distant future. But, as we see from the case of the prophets of the New Testament

church (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 31), foretelling was not the essential thing. The prophet was an inspired preacher.

Another change in the modern view of prophecy is in the perception of the limitations to which the prophets were subject, as to the extent and the form of their vaticinations. Allegorical interpretation, in the form, for example, which ascribed to the language of the prophets a double or multiple sense of which they were conscious, or in the form which laid into their words a meaning at variance with their natural import, is now set aside. There is a broader view taken of the matter. The distinction between the inmost idea, the underlying truth, and the form in which it is conceived, or the imagery under which it is beheld, by the seer, is recognized. The central conception of the organic relation of the religion of the Old Testament to that of the New, the first being rudimental in its whole character, and thus in its very nature predictive, — just as a developed organism is foreshadowed in its lower forms or stages, — illuminates the whole subject. It suggests the limitations of view which must of necessity inhere in prophetical anticipation, even though it be supernatural in its origin.

Prediction, in order to prove revelation, must be shown to be truly pre-diction, — that is, to have been uttered prior to the event to which it relates. On this point, as regards the Old-Testament prophecies, there is no room for reasonable doubt.[1] The predictions must be shown not to spring from native sagacity or wise forecast, based on natural causes known to be in operation. And they must be verified to an extent not to be ex-

[1] As the date of the Book of Daniel is a controverted point, we leave out of the account its predictions as far as they relate to events prior to the Maccabean age.

plained either by the supposition of accidental coincidence, or by supposing the effect to be wrought by the influence of the predictions themselves.

If we glance at the prophets as they present themselves to our view on the pages of the Old Testament, we shall be helped to judge whether their predictions can endure the test of these criteria.[1]

A man was not made a prophet by virtue of any natural talents that he possessed, or any acquired knowledge. He might, to be sure, be a great poet; but this of itself did not make him a prophet. The prophets, it is true, were not cut off from a living relation to their times. They did not appear as visitors from another planet. But what the prophet had learned, whether in "the schools of the prophets" (when such existed, and if he belonged to them), or from the study of the law, and of other prophets who preceded him, did not furnish him with the message which he delivered. He was not like the rabbi or scribe of a later day.[2] He did not take up his office of his own will. So far from this, he is conscious of being called of God by an inward call which he can not and dare not resist. The splendid passage in which Isaiah recurs to the vision in the temple, when "the foundations of the thresholds shook," and the Voice was heard to say, "Whom shall I send?" shows the awe-inspiring character of the divine call which set the prophet apart for his work (Isa. vi.). The true prophet is conscious of being called to declare, not the results of his own inves-

[1] Cf. Oehler, Theologie d. Alt. Test., vol. ii. p. 170 seq.; Bleek, Eiul. in d. Alt. Test. (Wellhausen's ed.), p. 305 seq.; Schultz, Alt. Test. Theologie, p. 187 seq.; Ewald, Prophets of the Old Test. (Engl. transl., Lond., 1875), vol. i.; Riehm, Messianic Prophecy; Oehler's Arts. (Prophetismus Messias, Weissgung, etc.) in Herzog's Real-Encykl.

[2] Oehler, p. 170.

tigations or reflections, but the counsels and will of the Most High. He utters the word of God. It may be a message that runs counter to his own preference, that excites the deepest grief in his soul, that overcomes him with surprise or terror; but he cannot keep silent. So conscious is he that he is not speaking out of his own heart, as do the false prophets, that at times he no longer speaks *in propria persona* as the deputy of God: God himself speaks, in the first person, by his lips. Yet as a rule, and especially in the later and higher stages of prophecy, the state of the prophet is not that of ecstasy. He is in full possession of reason and consciousness. He distinguishes between his own thoughts and words and the word of God. There is no bewilderment. The truth which he pours forth from a soul exalted, yet not confused, by emotion, is not something reasoned out. It is an immediate perception or intuition. He is a seer: he hears or beholds that which his tongue declares. The intuition of the prophet cannot be resolved into a natural power of divination. What power of divination could look forward to the far remote consummation of the workings of Providence in history? The prophets give utterance to no instinctive presage of national feeling. Commonly their predictions are in the teeth of the cherished aspirations of the people.[1]

The prophets predicted events which human foresight could not anticipate. Yet there is no such correspondence between prediction and fulfilment, that history is written in detail in advance of the actual occurrences. There is no such identity as to disturb the action of human free-will, as it would be deranged if every thing that man were to do and to suffer in the future were

[1] Oehler, p. 196.

mapped out before his eyes. Moreover, the conditions under which the ideas given to the prophet necessarily shape themselves in his thought and imagination — which may be called the human side of prophecy — give rise to a greater or less disparity between the mode of the prediction and the mode of fulfilment. This will constitute an objection to the reality of prophecy, only to those who cannot break through the shell, and penetrate to the kernel within it. On this topic Ewald writes as follows: —

"A projected picture of the future is essentially a presentiment, a surmise; i.e., an attempt and effort of the peering spirit to form from the basis of a certain truth a definite idea of the form the future will take, and to pierce through the veil of the unseen: it is not a description of the future with those strict historical lines which will characterize it when it actually unfolds itself. The presentiment or foreboding advances at once to the general scope and great issue. Before the prophet who is justly foreboding evil, there rises immediately the vision of destruction as the final punishment; but probably this does not come to pass immediately, or only partially; and yet the essential truth of the threat remains as long as the sins which provoked it continue, whether it be executed sooner or later. Or when the gaze of the prophet, eager from joyous hope or sacred longing, dwells on the consideration of the so-called Messianic age, this hovers before him as coming soon and quickly; what he clearly sees appearing to him as near at hand. But the development of events shows how many hinderances still stand in the way of the longed-for and surmised consummation, which again and again vanishes from the face of the present: nevertheless, the pure truth that the consummation will come, and must come precisely under the conditions foretold by the prophet, remains unchangeably the same; it retains its force during every new period, and from time to time some part of the great hope finds its fulfilment. Further: the presentiment endeavors to delineate its subject-matter with the greatest clearness and definiteness, and, in order to describe really unseen things, borrows the comparisons and illustrations that are at hand from the past and popular ideas. To set forth the presentiment of evil, there occurs the

memory of Sodom, or all the terrible things of nature; whilst for bright hope and aspiration, there is the memory of Mosaic and Davidic times. But the prophet does not really intend to say that only the things that occurred in Sodom, and under Moses and David, will recur, or that mere earthquakes and tempests will happen; but, using these comparisons, he means something far higher." [1]

The prophet, beholding things future as if present, may leap over long intervals of time. Events may appear to him near at hand which are really distant. Thus, in Isaiah, the Messianic era follows immediately on the liberation of the Israelites from captivity. Round numbers may be used, — numbers having only a symbolical significance.[2] Events may be grouped according to the causal rather than the temporal relation between them.

On this matter of chronology, Ewald has suggestive remarks: —

"The prophetic presentiment, finally, endeavoring in certain distressing situations to peer still more closely into the future, ventures even to fix terms and periods for the development of the events which are foreseen as certain; yet all these more definite limitations and calculations are so many essays of a peculiar class, to be conceived of and judged by their own nature and from the motive that produced them, to say nothing of the fact that every thing that the prophet threatens or promises is conditioned by the reception which his advice and command, indeed, which his suppressed yet necessary and of themselves clear presuppositions, meet with. Accordingly, the prophetic picture in the end is not to be judged by its garments, but by the meaning of the thoughts and demands which is hidden within it; and it would be a source of constant misconception to conceive of and judge picture and presentiment otherwise than in accordance with their own peculiar life and nature. Jerusalem was not destroyed so soon as Micah (ch. i.–iii.) foreboded: nevertheless, inasmuch as the same causes

[1] Ewald's Prophets of the Old Testament, vol. i. p. 36.
[2] Oehler, p. 205.

which provoked that presentiment were not radically removed, the destruction did not ultimately fail to come. Literally, Jerusalem was neither besieged nor delivered exactly as Isaiah (ch. xxix.) foresaw: still, as he had foreseen, the city was exposed during his lifetime to the greatest danger, and experienced essentially as wonderful a deliverance. In the calculations (Isa. xxxii. 14 seq., comp. v. 10, xxix. 1–8, and especially v. 17), if the words are taken slavishly, there lies a minor contradiction, which, with a freer comparison of all the pictures as they might exist before the mind of the prophet, it is granted, quickly disappears. The punishment of Israel (Hos. ii.) consists in expulsion into the wilderness; (ch. iii. seq.) it consists rather in other things, e.g., in being driven away to Assyria and Egypt. Yet all these presentiments were equally possible, and contain no contradiction, unless they are confounded with historical assertions or even express commands. As appears from Jer. xxvi. 1–19, at this period of Jewish history a correct feeling of the true meaning of prophetic utterances in this respect was still in existence, and they were not so misunderstood as they were in the middle ages, and as they still are in many quarters."[1]

Closely related to the partial indifference to mere chronological relations which is seen, for example, in what is termed "the perspective of prophecy," is another feature, — that of the gradual fulfilment, the preliminary and the completed verification, of predictions. Glowing ideals stir the soul of the prophet. The realization of them he may connect with personages already living or soon to appear, and with conditions with which he is conversant. In the ways anticipated by him they have in truth a verification, but one that falls far short of the prophetic vision. The accordance is real, but only up to a certain point: the discordance is too great to be removed by treating the prediction as an hyperbole. Hence the full verification is still looked for; and *it comes*. The development of the religion of Israel brings in the complete realization

[1] Ewald, p. 37.

of the grand idea which floated before the prophet's mind. This is not a novel theory of prophecy, peculiar to our day. Lord Bacon speaks of "that latitude which is agreeable and familiar unto divine prophecies; being of the nature of their author, with whom a thousand years are but as one day; and are therefore not fulfilled punctually at once, but *have springing and germinant accomplishment throughout many ages*, though the height or fulness of them may refer to some one age"[1] The mind of the seer or psalmist was illuminated, so that the plan of Jehovah in the ordering of the past course of Israel's history, and the real import of the present conjunction of circumstances, were unveiled to his mind. From this point of view, he glanced forward, and, illuminated still by the Spirit of God, he beheld the future unfold itself, — not, to be sure, as to the eye of the Omniscient, but under the limitations imposed by finite powers acting within a restricted environment. For prophetic inspiration is no operation of magic. An apostle represents the prophets as seeking earnestly to get at the meaning of their own prophecies, — "searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify," etc.[2]

The Old-Testament prophecies fall into two classes. The first embraces the predictions of a Messianic character, especially those relating to the kingdom and the spread of it. The second includes prophecies of particular occurrences.

We begin with the first class of predictions. The prophets look forward to a great salvation in the future, a period of rest and blessedness for the people.[3] Some-

[1] The Advancement of Learning, b. ii. (Spedding's ed., vi. 200).
[2] 1 Pet. i. 11.
[3] Cf. Bleek, p. 329.

times this redemption is depicted as a great triumph over all the enemies of Israel, when the state appears in unexampled glory and splendor; the land yielding abundant fruits, and all divine blessings being showered upon its inhabitants. In other prophecies the predominant feature is the moral: it is the forgiveness of sin, the prevalence of holiness and righteousness, on which the eye is fixed. Sometimes the great redemption is foreseen as a gift to the seed of Abraham, the nation of Israel. But in other places the prophets take a wider view, and describe the heathen nations as sharing in the blessing, and the kingdom as extending over the whole earth. Now the Redeemer is Jehovah himself; now the hope centres in a particular monarch, or on a class by whom the grand deliverance is to be achieved; and again it is a person to appear in the future, a ruler of the family of David. The house of David is chosen to carry the kingdom to its consummation: it stands in the relation of sonship to God. Then there is a limitation: the great promise is to be realized from among the sons of David. Finally, the prophetic eye fastens its gaze upon an individual in the dim future; as in Ps. ii., where the whole earth owns the sway of the king, who is the Son of God; in Ps. lxxii., where the coming and universal sway of the Prince of peace, and the succor afforded by him to the needy and distressed, are described; and in Ps. cx., in which the conqueror of the earth unites with the kingly office that of an everlasting priesthood, — a priesthood not of the Levitical order.[1] Elsewhere (Isa. liii.) the great deliverance is expected through a suffering "servant of Jehovah," who dies not for his own sins, but for the sins of the people. First, the

[1] Cf. Oehler, ii. 258.

"servant of Jehovah" is spoken of as Israel collectively taken, then as the holy and faithful class among the people; and finally, in this remarkable chapter, there is, not improbably, a farther step in individualizing the conception: and a single personage, in whom all the qualities of the ideal "servant" combine in a faultless image, rises before the mind of the seer.

This glimpse of the most general outlines of Old-Testament prophecy cannot but deeply impress one who has any just appreciation of the religion of Jesus Christ, and of Christendom even as it now is, to say nothing of what may, not unreasonably, be expected in the future. Under these different phases of prediction, there is one grand expectation, viz., that the religion of Israel will itself be perfected, and will prevail on the earth. Follow back the course of prophecy, and you find traces of this expectation — either sublime in the extreme, or foolhardy in the extreme, as the event should prove — in the earliest records of Hebrew history. Concede all that, with any show of reason, can be said about the variety in the ideals and anticipations of the Hebrew prophets, there remains enough of correspondence to them in the origin, character, and progress of Christianity, to suggest a problem not easy to be solved on any naturalistic hypothesis. Grant that the prophets had an intense conviction of the reality of Jehovah, of his power, and of his right to rule. This conviction, be it remembered, is itself to be accounted for; but, taking this for granted, we find in it no adequate means of explaining the confident declaration, that "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."[1] Why should they not have stopped with the anticipa-

[1] Hab. ii. 14; cf. Oehler, ii. 196.

tion of the downfall and destruction of the Pagan nations? How could they tell that from Judæa a universal kingdom should take its rise?[1] How could they overcome the obstacles to such an anticipation which the actual course of history, as it was going forward under their eyes, appeared to involve?

Let the reader imagine, that, twenty-five or thirty centuries ago, the mountain cantons of Switzerland were inhabited by tribes insignificant in numbers and strength, while extensive and powerful empires, like ancient Rome after the conquest of Carthage and the East, or modern Russia, are on their borders. Suppose that the people thus imagined to exist had a religion unique, and distinct from that of all other nations. Yet even in times when their little territory is ravaged by vast armies, and the bulk of its population dragged off into slavery, there arise among them men, who, with all the energy of confidence of which the human mind is capable, declare that their religion will become universal, that it will supersede the gorgeous idolatries of their conquerors, that from them will emerge a kingdom which will overcome, and purify as it conquers, all the other kingdoms of the world. And suppose, further, that actually, after the lapse of centuries, from that diminutive, despised tribe of shepherds and herdsmen, there does spring a development of religion which spreads, until it already comprehends all the nations that now profess Christianity; there does spring a Legislator and Guide of men, whose spiritual sway is acknowledged by hundreds of millions, and to the progress of whose reign no limit can be set: would not the correspondence, or the degree of correspondence, between those far-off predictions and the subsequent

[1] Dan. vii. 27.

phenomena, be a fact which is nothing short of a miracle?

The second class of prophecies pertain to particular occurrences. In inquiring whether they were fulfilled, we have to consider the obscurity, which, notwithstanding recent discoveries in archæology, still belongs to the annals of the nations contemporary with Israel. We have to consider, moreover, that predictions of this sort were never absolute, in the sense that God might not revoke a sentence in case repentance should intervene. The Book of Jonah — be it history or parable — is designed partly to dispel the error that a verdict of God, because once announced, is irreversible. The prophets entreat that their own predictions may not be fulfilled, and their prayers sometimes avail. Nevertheless, the instances of the actual verification of prophecies of this kind, which could not have sprung from any mere human calculation and foresight, are so numerous, and of so marked a character, that the reality of a divine illumination of the prophet's mind cannot rationally be denied.[1] Such an instance is the prophecies of Isaiah respecting the rapidly approaching downfall of the kingdoms of Israel and Syria, which had cemented an alliance with each other, and of the failure of their project against Judah.[2] Another instance is Isaiah's prophecy of the failure of the powerful army of the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, in his siege of Jerusalem.[3] Other examples are afforded by the definite predictions of Jeremiah respecting the return of the people from the exile. Such prophecies cannot be referred to any shrewd forecast on the part of the seers who uttered them. When, for example, the Syro-Israelitish alliance menaced Judah and Jerusalem, the

[1] See Bleek, p. 326. [2] Isa. vii. [3] Isa. xxxvii. 21 seq.

peril was imminent, else it would not have been true of Ahab and of his subjects, that "his heart shook, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest shake before the wind."[1] Apart from the impossibility of foretelling such events, the naturalistic explanation presupposes a mental state in the authors of the prophecies, which is quite diverse from the fact.

Dr. Kuenen's work on prophecy is an elaborate effort to eliminate the supernatural from the Old-Testament predictions. These he attributes exclusively to natural causes. In sustaining his thesis, he seeks to show that the prophecies have failed of a fulfilment, to such an extent as to preclude the supposition that they were the product of revelation. To this end, as regards the general prophecies, — the first class of predictions in the enumeration above, — he not only insists on attaching a literal sense to passages which point to the perpetual continuance of the nation of Israel, the final restoration of the Jews, the subjugation of their enemies, and the like; but he refuses to consider these features of prophecy, which the event has not literally verified, as limitations in the perception of the prophet, not inconsistent with his inspiration. In other words, he allows no medium between a stiff supernaturalism, which ascribes exact verity to the *form* of the prophet's vaticination, and a bald theory of naturalism. This position is unphilosophical. It overlooks the fact, that the vehicle of revelation is human, and fettered, to a degree, by natural conditions which the inspiring Spirit does not sweep away. To break through these limitations altogether would be to substitute a dictation at once magical and incomprehensible for a divine illumination adapted to the mental condition and the environment

[1] Isa. vii. 2.

of the recipient of it. The prophet Jeremiah (ch. xxxiii. 18), in a memorable passage, foresees a momentous change and advance in the religion of Israel. A "new covenant" is to be made with "the house of Judah," — so radical is this change to be! The law is to be written in their hearts, that is, the law is to be converted into an inward principle; and there is to be a forgiveness of sin: "I will remember their sin no more." These cardinal features of the new dispensation, which Christianity, ages afterward, was to bring in, are thus summarily set forth in this wonderful prediction. Yet the same Jeremiah says, that "a man shall never be wanting to sit on the throne of David, nor Levites to offer sacrifice on the altar."[1] "The Jew," says Dr. Payne Smith "could only use such symbols as he possessed, and, in describing the perfectness of the Christian Church, was compelled to represent it as the state of things under which he lived, freed from all imperfections."[2] In the last chapter of the Book of Isaiah[3] the prophet describes in an exulting strain the glorious days, when there shall be, as it were, new heavens and a new earth; when priests and levites shall be taken even from the Gentiles; when the old forms of worship, with the exception of the new moon and the sabbath, shall have passed away; and when "all flesh" shall worship before Jehovah. Yet here Jerusalem is conceived of as supreme, and the centre of worship. To break away absolutely from this conception, inconsistent though it be with the union of "all flesh" in the adoration of God, would have been to ascend to a point of view higher even than that which the apostles had attained for years after they began their ministry. Yet

[1] Jer. xxxiii. 18. [2] Speaker's Commentary, *in loco*
[3] Isa. lxvi. 20-23, cf. lxii. 2, lxv. 15.

in these cases, according to Dr. Kuenen's method of viewing prophecy, the circumstance that the prophet failed to see the future in form and detail proves that what he did see was through his own unaided vision. This procedure implies an exclusion of the natural factor from revelation and inspiration, and is of a piece with one-sided conceptions of the supernatural in the Scriptures, which modern theology has set aside, or which are clung to only by rigid adherents of an obsolescent system.

With reference to prophecies of particular events, — the second class of predictions, — Dr. Kuenen is disposed to bind the prophets too closely to the letter of their predictions; for example, in what they say of times and seasons. He does not allow sufficient weight to the conditional character that belongs to this species of prediction where retributive inflictions are concerned. Even if he could succeed in showing, that, in certain cases, prophecy failed of its accomplishment, he would not establish his main proposition, unless he could prove that the cases where the prediction proved true may be considered the result of accident, or the product of natural foresight. A marksman may hit a target often enough to exclude the hypothesis of accident, even if he miss it occasionally. If he thus hits the mark when he is known to be blind, or when the target is out of sight, a miraculous guidance of the arrow must necessarily be assumed. But exceptions to the correspondence of event with prediction are not easily made out. The progress of historical research has removed difficulties in regard to passages that were once thought to have remained unverified; the passage, for example, in Isaiah, predicting the conquest of Tyre.[1]

[1] See Cheyne's The Prophecies of Isaiah, i. 132.

One of Kuenen's main positions is, that the canonical prophets are not separated by a broad and distinct line from the "false prophets." He avers that they are all of a class; the only difference being a superior degree of moral earnestness, and a deeper piety on the part of a few. His theory is like that entertained by Grote respecting the relation of Socrates and Plato to the Sophists. But Grote's view of the Sophists breaks down under his own concessions that Socrates and Plato were great reformers; working, not, like other teachers, for hire, but from a nobler impulse. Socrates and Plato differed from Protagoras and his followers in their principles, method, and spirit. But the disparity between the true and the false prophets was of a different kind, and more radical still. That among those who are denounced as "false prophets" were individuals not conscious of an evil intent, or actuated by a fraudulent purpose, may be true. This is all the truth that is contained in Kuenen's peculiar view. The refutation of his opinion is furnished in the statements of Köhler, which Kuenen himself quotes. There was a set of "false prophets," — "lying prophets" as they were called by the prophets of the canon. Those pretended prophets spoke, not by the command of Jehovah, but out of their own hearts. It was from no irresistible impulse from within that they uttered their smooth words. They flattered the vain hopes of kings and people. They cry "Peace!" "Peace!" when there is no peace. They do not disturb the people in their indolent self-indulgence. Frequently they are instigated by covetousness and greed of gain. Against this whole class the true prophets carry on a perpetual warfare. Unless these were guilty of gross slander and intolerance, magnifying differences of judg-

ment into flagrant sins, Dr. Kuenen's view of the subject is erroneous. On the one side stood the "false prophets" and the people whom they deceived. But the true prophets generally faced a resisting and persecuting public opinion. "Who hath believed our preaching?" is their sad and indignant complaint. Dr. Kuenen's theory is contradicted by the psychological facts connected with the utterance of the prophetic oracles. Was the inward call of the true prophet — that overwhelming influence upon the soul, when the mighty hand of God was laid upon him — a delusion? And how shall it be explained that the prophet was often dismayed by the glimpses of the future that burst upon his vision, that he strove to turn away from the prospect, that he was driven to foretell what he himself dreaded, and begged God to avert? Shall these extraordinary experiences of the soul, so exceptional in their character, so powerful in their effect, be deemed a morbid excitement? or resolved into a mere play of natural emotion?

Dr. Kuenen says that "the canonical prophets have struggled forward in advance of their nation and of their own fellow-prophets."[1] "Struggled forward?" Dr. Kuenen professes to be a theist. Why should he apparently shut out the influence of the Spirit of God? Why not, even on his own theory of an uplifting of a portion of a class above their fellows, attribute this phenomenon, which no discerning man can fail to regard as amazing, to a special unction from above? It may be allowed that there were natural qualifications which led to the choice of a prophet. His mental and spiritual characteristics fitted him to be the recipient of the divine influence. But to exclude or depre

[1] P. 582.

ciate this divine influence appears more congruous with the Pelagian conceptions of deism than with a theism which recognizes God as immanent, and ever active in the realm of the finite. Ewald has pointed out in a striking way the habit of the prophet to distinguish between what was given him and what he produced of himself, — a peculiarity which disproves the naturalistic hypothesis, unless one is prepared to consider the prophet a half-insane enthusiast. It is not to be thought, observes Ewald, that because, in passages, the prophet's "own *I* disappears in the presence of another *I*," he "really forgets himself, and begins to speak without self-consciousness, or ends in unconsciousness and frenzy." "Neither has his introduction of God, as speaking in the first person, sunk into a crystallized and idle habit." "But the prophet always starts from his own experience to announce what he has already seen in the spirit, and again ends with his own experience. *Nor in the course of his utterance does he ever lose the consciousness of the fine boundary-lines between the divine and the human.*"[1]

There were criteria for distinguishing the true prophet from the spurious. The prophet might work a miracle; but even this was no absolute proof, since the pretended prophet might at least seem to do the same. Nor was the correspondence of the event to the prediction a sure evidence of genuine prophecy.[2] But in the genuine prophet there was a sympathy in the depths of the soul with Jehovah and his law, and with the purpose of God in the course of history, the goal of which he saw in the far future. There was a power and majesty in the true prophets, which nothing but the presence of God's spirit could impart to them. "When the spirit of

[1] The Prophets, etc., p. 41. [2] Deut. xiii. 1 seq.

God lays hold of them, and compels them to speak, they demand obedience to their mere word. And as, in spite of all murmuring, the congregation of Israel in the main followed Moses, so neither the bitter hatred of the idolatrous party in Samaria, nor the vacillation of the king, could cripple the influence of Elijah and Elisha.[1] So Saul at the head of his victorious army dared not withstand the word of Samuel.[2] So Eli bowed himself to the divine message;[3] and David, in the midst of all his glory, endured the rebuke of Nathan.[4] Without weapons, without the prestige derived from priestly consecration, without learning and human wisdom, the prophets demand obedience, and are conscious of the influence which they can exert over the men of power in the nation."[5] "A true prophet of God, by his prayers and his knowledge of God's will, by the warnings that he utters against perils and false enterprises, is 'the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof;' that is, like a shielding host of armed men." "On the other hand, their persons are so consecrated to God that it can naturally seem dangerous for simple mortals to come into near contact with these men of God, who may bring their guilt to their remembrance."[6]

Underlying Dr. Kuenen's views of prophecy, as was before hinted, is a deistic mode of thought. There is a reluctance to admit a direct agency of God in connection with spiritual phenomena of the most unique and impressive character. He allows an immediate act of God in connection with the separation of Abraham and the training of Moses.[7] The Deity, in his system,

[1] 1 Kings xxi. 20 seq., 27 seq.; 2 Kings iii. 13 seq.
[2] 1 Sam. xv. 21.
[3] 1 Sam. ii. 27 seq.
[4] 2 Sam. xii. 13 seq., cf. xxiv. 11 seq.
[5] 2 Kings iv. 13.
[6] 1 Kings xvii. 18, 24; 2 Kings iv. 9; Luke v. 8. Schultz, p. 721.
[7] Kuenen, The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel, p. 579.

if he comes in at all, comes in as a *deus ex machina.* Hence he finds it difficult to conceive of grades of inspiration, of degrees in the agency of the supernatural, of lower and higher stages in prophetic illumination. The supposed difficulty of drawing a sharp line between natural divination and soothsaying, and the earliest phenomena of Hebrew prophecy, moves him to conclude that the latter, even in its grandest manifestations, springs wholly from the unassisted faculties of man, — which is like inferring, from the fact that we cannot fix the exact point when a boy becomes a man, that no man exists, or that all men are boys. There is a latent postulate of a great gulf between the natural and the supernatural.

As a part of this deistic mode of view, the work of the prophets is confined to the origination of "an ethical monotheism." The New-Testament system is the completion of this work. Redemption, the hope of the prophets, the hope realized in Christ, is left out in this description of the religion of the Bible. To one who adopts this interpretation of the significance of the work of Christ, the links of connection between the religion of the Old Testament and the religion of the New, which the apostles perceived to exist, must appear unreal. Hence the exposition of the Old-Testament system by the New-Testament writers, their recognition of the typical character of the Old-Testament institutions and rites, and their explanation of the prophecies, must seem to be a house built on the sand. First, there is a narrow conception of prophecy, in which phraseology and form are put on a level with the grand, living ideas which they embody. Next, there is a narrow conception of Christianity as merely or chiefly a doctrine of ethical monotheism. Lastly, by way of corollary, the

prophets did not prophesy, and are made by the apostles to prophesy only through a groundless and fanciful understanding of their writings.

There are prophecies in the New Testament as well as in the Old. The general predictions relative to the perpetuity, extension, and transforming influence of the gospel, when one compares the circumstances under which they were uttered with the subsequent history of Christianity down to the present day, discover a knowledge more than human. The words of Jesus to the disciple Peter, "On this rock I build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it," are a declaration, that, on the basis of belief in him as the Messenger and Son of God, a community was arising which no power could destroy. Consider who this Peter was to whom Jesus spoke, who Jesus was, as regards outward condition and resources, and the insignificance of his following, and then glance at the Christian Church, advancing from its obscure beginnings to victory over Judaic and Pagan opposition and to its present commanding place in human society! The prediction that the gospel would be like leaven in the world of mankind, like the smallest of seeds, evolving from itself a lofty and spreading tree — who, not possessed of a discernment more than human, could have then foreseen that such an effect was to follow? Then there are particular predictions, of which the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem is, perhaps, the most remarkable. The sagacity of man might have judged that a desperate conflict was likely to break out between the Romans and the Jews, but who could have predicted with any assurance that city and temple would be reduced to a ruin? With this prediction, one should connect, in his recollection, the prophecy that the vine-

yard would be given out to other husbandmen, that the treasure of God's best gifts would pass into the custody of the Gentiles. The Founder looked forward to the death of Judaism and the birth of Christendom! It is not to be overlooked that the prophecies which are referred to, like prophecies in general, are not pronounced as results of calculation, as probabilities founded on the examination of evidence on the one side and on the other. They are uttered in that tone of absolute confidence which belongs to an assured insight. It is the penetrating glance into the future of one to whom the counsels of omniscience have been supernaturally revealed.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIANITY FROM ITS ADAPTEDNESS TO THE NECESSITIES OF HUMAN NATURE.

EVERY religion has to submit to a practical test. It verifies or disproves itself by the way in which it answers to the spiritual nature and wants of man. Christianity does not come forward as a new philosophy having for its primary end the solution of speculative problems. It claims, to be sure, to be in accord with reason. It claims to rest upon a truly rational conception of that universal system of which man is a component part. But it also bases its title to confidence on more practical grounds. It appeals immediately to the conscience and the affections. It calls for a rectification of the will. It promises to minister to necessities of human nature which are felt even by minds of the humblest cast. In its adaptedness to such deep-felt necessities, which spring out of man's constitution and condition, which cleave to him as a moral, responsible, finite creature who looks forward to death, and, with more or less of hope or dread, to an existence hereafter, — in this adaptedness lies an argument for its truth and supernatural parentage. If Christianity is found to be matched to human nature as no other system can pretend to be, and as cannot be accounted for by any wisdom of which man is capable, then we are justified in referring it to God as its author. In the proportion in which this fitness of Christianity to

the constitution, the cravings, the distress, of the soul, becomes a matter of living experience, the force of the argument will be appreciated. It will be understood in the degree in which it is first felt. Here the data of the inference are drawn from the experiences of the heart. The impressions which carry one to this conclusion are contingent on the state of the sensibility, the activity of conscience, and the bent of the will. The conclusion itself is one to which the soul advances by an inward movement, in which, rational though it be, the affections and the will are the determining factors.

There is in the human spirit a profound need of God. This grows out of the fact that we are not only finite, but consciously finite, and not sufficient for ourselves. But, whether the source of it is reflected on or not, this need of a connection with the Eternal and Divine is felt. In reality it is deeper in the heart, whether it be consciously recognized or not, than any other want of human nature; for example, than the instinct that craves friendship, or impels to the creation of family ties, or seeks knowledge for its own sake. The need of God may be, it often is, latent, undefined. It stirs in the soul below the clear light of consciousness. Its very vagueness has the effect to send man off in pursuit of a variety of finite objects, which are sought for the sake of filling the void, the true significance of which is not yet discerned. Now it is wealth, now it is honor and fame, now it is the acquisitions of science. Or it may be sensual pleasure, or the entertainment afforded by social intercourse, or any one of a myriad sorts of diversion. The different forms of earthly good are estimated beyond the value which experience finds in them. When they are gained, the void within is not filled. If these remarks are commonplace, their very

triteness proves their truth. In childhood, we find the world into which life is opening sufficient. We do not tire of its novelty. The future stretches before us with a seemingly infinite attraction. In the human beings about us, in the spectacles presented for the eye to gaze on, in the work and in the play that await us at each day's dawn, there is enough. It is only in exceptional instances, in the case of unusually thoughtful and deep-souled children, that there appears a sacred discontent with the things that are comprised in the life about them. When we emerge out of immaturity, there will arise within us a sense of the unsatisfactoriness of existence, — a feeling not in the least cynical, not always, certainly, due to disappointments, though experiences of hardship and bereavement, or of whatever makes the heart ache, do certainly aggravate this hunger of the soul. It may be that there will co-exist an inexpressible feeling of loneliness. There is a reaching out for something larger than human love can provide, and for something which human love, when tasted to the full, leaves unsupplied. Study, travel, absorption in pleasant labor, experiments in quest of happiness from this or that source, much as they may do to drive away temporarily the feeling of want, fail to pacify it permanently. There is a cry in the soul, even if not so articulate as to be distinctly heard by the soul itself, to which no response comes from the world. Gifted minds which of set purpose shut their ears to this voice within have their moments in which they cannot avoid hearing it. Goethe is one of the most prominent examples of the deliberate purpose to confine the attention within the finite realm, and to live upon the delights of art, literature, science, love. Whatever could disturb the repose of the spirit, the dark side of

mortal experience, harassing questions respecting the future, he would banish from thought. Yet this serene man said to his friend, "I have ever been esteemed one of fortune's chiefest favorites; nor can I complain of the course my life has taken. Yet, truly, there has been nothing but toil and care; and in my seventy-fifth year I may say that I have never had four weeks of genuine pleasure. The stone was ever to be rolled up anew."[1] Rest was not attained. There was a lurking sense that the peace which came and went had no perennial source. "We may lean for a while," he once said, "on our brothers and friends, be amused by acquaintances, rendered happy by those we love; but in the end man is always driven back upon himself. And it seems as if the divinity had so placed himself in relation to man as not always to respond to his reverence, trust, and love; *at least in the terrible moment of need.*" "There had then been," writes Mr. Hutton, in his thoughtful Essay on Goethe, — "there had then been a time when the easy familiarity with which the young man scrutinized the universe had been exchanged for the humble glance of the heart-stricken child; and he had shrunk away from that time (as he did from every hour of life when pain would have probed to the very bottom the secrets of his nature), to take refuge in the exercise of a faculty which would have been far stronger and purer, had it never helped him to evade those awful pauses in existence when alone the depths of our personal life lie bare before the inward eye, and we start to see both 'whither we are going, and whence we came.' Goethe deliberately turned his back upon those inroads which sin and death make into our natural habits and routine. From the pleading griefs, from

[1] Eckermann's Conversations of Goethe, p. 76.

the challenging guilt, from the warning shadows, of his own past life, he turned resolutely away, like his own Faust, to the alleviating occupations of the present. Inch by inch he contested the inroads of age upon his existence, striving to banish the images of new graves from his thoughts long before his nature had ceased to quiver with the shock of parting; never seemingly for a moment led by grief to take conscious refuge in the love of God and his hopes of a hereafter."[1]

This just criticism of Goethe brings us to another deep feeling of the human soul, — a more solemn experience, a more imperious need. The yearning of the finite soul for an infinite good is not its most agonizing emotion. The craving which an intelligent creature, however pure, would feel, — the craving for an object meet for its boundless desires, — is far from comprising the whole need of man. There is a sense of guilt, which, sooner or later, with more or less persistency, haunts the soul. It may exist only as an uneasy suspicion. It will frequently arise in connection with special instances of wrong-doing, or of neglect of duty in relation to other men. One finds himself accused in conscience of being selfish in his conduct. The consciousness of secret purposes which his moral sense condemns inspires him with a feeling of unworthiness and of shame. He falls below his own ideals; he detects himself in a lack of courage, of truth, of purity, of magnanimity, of loyalty to the just claims of relatives, or of neighbors, or of society at large. Self accusation may go so far as to induce self-loathing. The more he probes his own character, the more aware does he become that there is something false and wrong at the core. He is living to the world, is making the

[1] Hutton's Essays, vol. ii. (Literary), p. 77.

good which the world yields, or self-gratification in a more gross or more refined form, the goal and end of his striving. Not only is he without God, he is alienated from him; and in this alienation, carrying in it an idolatry of the creature and of finite good, he finds the root of the evil that is in him. Then the sense of guilt attaches itself to the impiety or ungodliness out of which, as an innermost fountain, flows the defiled stream of ethical misconduct. We are drawing no fancy picture. The sense of unworthiness is not a morbid experience. It is not confined to transient moods; it is not limited to characters of exceptional depravity; it does not belong alone to men of the spiritual elevation of Pascal and Luther, of Augustine and Edwards; it does not pertain to one nation exclusively, or to any single branch of the human family alone; it is not an artificial product of the teaching of Christianity, or of any other of the religions that have prevailed on the earth. It is a human experience, giving, therefore, the most diversified manifestations of its presence in the confessions of individuals, in poetry, and in other forms of literature, in penances, sacrifices, and other rites of worship. The "whole world is guilty before God," and in some degree sensible of its guilt, notwithstanding the obtuseness of conscience which the practice of evil-doing engenders, the natural efforts to stifle so humiliating and painful an emotion, the partially successful efforts to divert the attention from it, and the sophistry which labors to make it seem unreal.

Then the sense of being without God is converted into a sense of estrangement from him. The feeling of responsibleness and of guilt, while it brings God more vividly to mind, awakens the consciousness of being repelled from communion with him. The sense

of condemnation both drives one away from God, and compels the thought of him. The soul hides itself "among the trees of the garden," yet is followed, and held, and mysteriously drawn, by the offended Being from whom it has unnaturally separated itself.

There is more than a sense of unworthiness: there is a consciousness of bondage. It may be that there are particular habits, under which the will has been subjugated, which have now come to be felt as a chain. Sensual appetite in one form or another, ungovernable resentment, covetousness, or some other base purpose or corrupt form of conduct, may have established a mastery, which, when the conviction of guilt arises, and with it discontent, is felt as a galling tyranny. If there be no single predominant passion, the general principle of worldliness which has enthroned the creature in the room of the Creator oppresses the soul that has now awoke to a perception of its abnormal and guilty state. Struggles to break loose from the yoke of habit, which has become bound up with the laws of association that determine the current of thought, has enslaved the affections, and taken captive the will, prove ineffectual. "What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that I do;" or, as the heathen poet expresses it, —

> "Video meliora proboque;
> Deteriora sequor."

Of course the struggle against inward evil may be faint, but in strong and earnest natures it may amount to an agony. The insurrection against the power to which the will has surrendered itself may rend the soul as a kingdom is torn by civil strife. The unaided effort at self-emancipation turns out to be fruitless. It is the vain struggle of Laocoön in the

coils of the serpent. It may end in a despairing submission to evil.

But this description does not complete the account of the experience of the soul in its relations to God, as long as it is yet practically ignorant of the gospel. The *misery* of human life must be taken into consideration. Where there is youth, health, prosperity, and the buoyancy of spirits which is natural under these circumstances, there is commonly but a slight appreciation of the countless forms of distress from which even the most favored class of mankind do not escape. That there is no sunshine in human life, even in situations that are adverse, only a cynic would be disposed to deny. But he is equally blind to facts who fails to recognize that the earthly life of men is a scene abounding in trouble, in pain of body and anguish of spirit, in hearts lacerated by fellow-beings who have been loved and trusted, made sore by bereavement, anxious with numberless cares, often weary or half-weary with the burden of toil and the bitterness of grief. Then there approaches every household and every individual the dark shadow of death. The love of life is an instinct so strong, that only in exceptional cases is it fully overborne by the pressure of despondency. Yet death stands waiting. More than half of the race expire in infancy. Before every individual is the prospect of this inevitable event, which he endeavors to avert and to postpone as long as possible, all the while, however, aware that his painstaking will at length be fruitless.

None but the superstitious consider that pain and affliction are distributed in strict proportion to transgression, and that the happiest lot falls uniformly to the least unworthy. But, while this notion is abandoned as a falsehood of superstition, we may recognize in it

the distortion of a truth which is embedded in the convictions of mankind, — the truth that natural evil and moral evil are connected in the system of things; that one is the concomitant and shadow of the other; that suffering, to a large extent, to say the least, is a part of a retributive order. Certain it is, that pain and sorrow tend to provoke self-judgment and that feeling of ill-desert which is inseparable from conscious guilt. The presage of judgment arises spontaneously in the soul. Especially does the prospect of death excite remorseful apprehension. The vivid presentiment of a retribution to come, or an undefined dread of this nature, springs up unbidden in the mind, in the presence of that awful crisis which breaks up our present form of being, and sends the spirit out of its fleshly tenement into the world beyond. Death itself wears a penal aspect: it is felt to be something incongruous, a violent rupture of a bond, which, if dissolved at all, we might look to see loosened by a gentler process, by a transition not attended with the pangs of dissolution.

When the moral and spiritual perceptions have been thus quickened, the mind is struck with the fact that Christianity, as set forth in the Scriptures, recognizes to the full extent all the facts which it has been aroused to discern. Not only are they admitted in the Scriptures, and spread out with no attempt to disguise them: they are insisted on, and are depicted with a startling impressiveness. An individual thus awakened to the realities of existence finds depicted there man's need of God, — his thirst for God, — and the vanity of seeking to slake the thirst of the soul for the Infinite from any mundane fountains of pleasure. "Why do ye spend money for that which is not bread?" He finds there the unworthiness that belongs to human character and

conduct proclaimed with a piercing emphasis. There is no attenuation of human guilt, whether as connected with immorality or with ungodliness. The actual condition of men, as regards the sufferings to which all are exposed, and those from which none escape, is very often delineated, and is everywhere latently assumed. Death is held up to view as the goal which all are approaching. The penal element included in it is brought out The foreboding of conscience, the product of the sense of ill desert, is distinctly sanctioned in the solemn affirmation of judgment to come. In short, the malady of the soul, in all its characteristic features, is exposed with such fidelity and force as to evoke and intensify the spiritual needs and fears which have been adverted to. This outspokenness of the Bible, this laying bare of the evil and of the danger, invites confidence. It raises at least the hope, that, where the disorder is so fully understood, an adequate remedy will not be wanting.

The need of the soul is RECONCILIATION. This is the first want of which it is conscious. It needs to be brought back to God, and to communion with him, through Forgiveness. It needs help from without, that it may overcome the principle of sin, and attain the freedom of a willing loyalty. It needs deliverance from death, as far as death is an object of dread either in itself or for what is expected after it.

How can one who is in this mood fail to be deeply impressed at the outset by the circumstance, that, while the Scriptures assert without extenuation the guilt of sin and the righteous displeasure of God against it, they announce at the same time not an inevitable perdition, but a complete rescue? There is a proclamation of "good tidings." First, there is the momentous announcement of a merciful Approach made by God to

estranged and condemned mortals. This simple assurance, apart from all methods and details, will excite a profound interest. The initiative in the work of deliverance has been taken by Him from whom alone forgiveness and deliverance can proceed. Then comes the explicit announcement of the mission of a SAVIOUR. There is a manifestation of God to men through a man; a man, yet in such an intimacy of union to God, that his most fit designation is "the Son of God," — a union such that no one knows the Father but the Son, and whoever has seen him may be said to have seen the Father, — a union which had its mysterious springs back of his life among men. He brings a proclamation of the pardon of sin. Ill-desert is to be no barrier to the coming back of the transgressor to the Father's house and heart. Death is no longer to be an object of dismal foreboding: it is to become a door-way to an immortal life hereafter. All this is *said* by the divine Messenger. But the redemption thus declared is represented as *achieved* by him. A man among men, born of woman, subject to temptation, identifying himself in sympathy with his race, he surrenders his own will to the will of God, with every access of trial carries this surrender to a higher pitch, carries human nature victoriously through life, and through the anguish of death, — the final test of obedience to God and of devotion to men, endured willingly, because it was a cup given him of the Father to drink. In that death is the life of the world. Here is the response of Christianity to the call of the conscience and heart for something of the nature of expiation, — an Atonement for sin. From death the Saviour rises to be the author of life. Through the Spirit given to replace his visible presence, the soul is convinced of its sin, pacified in its self-re-

proach, delivered from its servitude to evil, and brought into a likeness to the Redeemer, to whom it is spiritually united, as the branches are in the vine.

Jesus came to plant within the soul a life of filial union to God. In the assured confidence and peace of that life there would be a conscious superiority to the world, an independence of the changes and chances of this mortal state. In that life of heavenly trust, fears and anxieties of an earthly nature would lose their power to break the calm of the spirit. There would inhere in it a power to overcome the world. Resentful passions would die out in the recollection of the heavenly Father's patience and forgiving love, and in the sense of the inestimable worth that belongs to every soul, however unworthy. A secret life, serene in the midst of sorrow and danger, a perennial fountain of rest, and stimulus to kindly and beneficent exertion, — such was the gift of Christ to men. "My peace I give unto you." This life he first realized in himself. He maintained and perfected it through conflict. He imparts it through the channel of personal union and fellowship.[1] The Stoic sought for tranquillity. He purchased it by subjecting the natural affections and emotions to the tyranny of an iron will. It was freedom from disquiet, attained by paralyzing a part of human nature. If gentleness and sympathy survived, as in individuals like Marcus Aurelius, it was in the case of souls remarkably favored in their native qualities, or not conformed practically to the hard and gloomy dogmas which formed the basis of their system. Christian serenity leaves room for the full flow and warmth of all human sympathies and affections. The Buddhist sought

[1] This life is admirably set forth in that classic of devotional literature, The Imitation of Christ, by Thomas à Kempis.

for inward peace. He sought for it, likewise, in a renunciation of the world. But the path was that of the ascetic. The Christian is empowered to use the world without abusing it, or being enslaved to it. He is not obliged to fling away the good gifts of God; but, by making them servants instead of masters, he can enjoy, and yet can forego, that which he possesses. He carries within him a treasure sufficient when all else is lost.

This is but a meagre sketch of what the soul actually finds in Christianity as bread for its hunger. It is a question of historic fact. There have been millions of human beings who have been delivered from conscious alienation from God, and enabled to live lives of comparative purity and well-doing, and to die in peace, in the hope of immortal life, in the way delineated. This effect of Christianity, age after age, would be inexplicable, were there not an adaptedness in it to the needs of human nature. For example, the conquest of the Roman Empire by the Christian faith is an insoluble problem, except on the supposition of a profound correspondence between the moral and spiritual necessities of the soul and the cravings of the heart, on the one hand, and the Christian faith on the other. Causes like those assigned by Gibbon need themselves to be accounted for. They mainly describe traits of Christianity itself: they would have been inoperative independently of the impression made by Christ himself.

There being this adaptedness in Christianity to man's spiritual being, how shall it be accounted for? Can it be attributed to the Nazarene and to the group of fishermen who followed him, they being credited with no more than an ordinary human insight? Is there not reason to conclude that supernatural agency, even a

divine wisdom and will, was active in this great movement? Leaving out of view other kinds of proof, as that from testimony to miracles, the practical argument for the miraculous origin of Christianity, from its proving itself the counterpart of human need and the fulfilment of the soul's highest aspirations, is one difficult to controvert. It is the argument of the man born blind, who replied to the objections of the Pharisees, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."[1]

[1] John ix. 25.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIANITY FROM THE CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN SYSTEM OF DOCTRINE.

CHRISTIANITY verifies itself by the satisfaction which it affords to reason. It is true that, in one particular, Christianity is broadly distinguished from systems of human philosophy. It professes to have another object than merely to present a theory or exposition of the nature of things. It will do more than draw in outline "an intellectual system of the universe." Inquisitive minds, in past times and in our own day, have sought to unveil that rational order, which, it is taken for granted, pervades the world, and binds together the beings that compose it; and they have aspired to trace all things back to their ultimate origin. Christianity is a religion, and it is the religion of redemption. It includes things done, interpositions of God in history, a signal expression and achievement of love on the plane of human action. In a word, Christianity is historical. It contains an element intractable to mere speculation. It can be evolved by no *a priori* reasoning from axiomatic truth. It does not admit of being resolved into a chain of metaphysical ideas.

Yet Christianity is a system of truth. As such it invites comparison with other systems. It embraces conceptions of God and of man, the two parties with whom redemption is concerned; and, respecting redemption itself, it asserts a consonance of this historic

transaction with the principles of right reason. The origin of things, the nature and chief end of man, the relation of man to the world in which he is placed, the purport of history, what evil is, and how it is related to the universe as a whole, and to its First Cause, — these are some of the important points which philosophy has always dealt with, and on which Christianity presents a teaching of its own. Is this teaching satisfactory to reason? The question is not whether it clears up all difficulties. The proposal to do this would of itself constitute a presumption against the pretensions of any system. Omniscience is not, and can not be made, an attribute of men. But does the Christian system shed enough of light on the problems referred to to inspire confidence in it? And is it so reasonable and so lofty a system, that we are led to refer it to a higher source than the human minds directly concerned in the framing of it? With these questions in mind, let us glance at some of the principal characteristics of the Christian doctrine.

It may be thought that these questions imply a capacity of reason to judge which it does not possess, and which Christianity even denies to it. The limit of reason, it may be said, is reached when the fact of a revelation has been rationally established. Nothing further remains but a docile reception of what revelation affirms. Are not the doctrines of the gospel an offence to reason? Does not the New Testament say this? Does not history confirm it?

In answer, let it be observed, that, when reason sits in judgment on the question whether a revelation has been made, it exercises an imperial function. How, moreover, can it avoid forming its conclusion partly on what the alleged revelation teaches? Yet the objec

tions stated above are valid as against that usurpation of the understanding which is called "rationalism." Christianity does not charge reason itself, but *unregenerate* reason, with in capacity to discern the things of the spirit. Regenerated reason finds nothing contradictory to itself, or uncongenial, in the Christian system. The New Testament does make the perception of the truth of the gospel contingent on the bent of the will. "He that willeth to do his will shall know of the doctrine," etc. This philosophy of religion, instead of warranting doubt as to the pretensions of the gospel, excites confidence. It is a profound philosophy. The human soul is recognized as a spiritual unit. The part which the spiritual nature and the character have in the ascertainment of truth is recognized. Knowing keeps pace with doing. The mind is dependent on the heart, as the heart is dependent on the mind. Yet, as long as character and intellectual development are both imperfect, the element of authority continues. We are climbing a hill, but see not all, which, we are told, will be visible from the summit. Insight and belief are not yet coextensive. At the goal both are blended into one.

With this explanation, we may glance at some of the main particulars of Christian doctrine.

1. In the forefront of the teaching of Christianity is its pure theism. The being on whom the universe depends, from whom it derives its existence, as well as its unity and order, is the one God, a spirit, to whom belongs every conceivable perfection. In modern times it has been occasionally proposed to supersede Christianity by deism, or by theism without revelation. Deists or theists of this class have commonly failed to recognize the fact, that the one article of their creed is an heir-loom from the religion of the Bible. The

truth of one personal God, the Creator and Ruler of the universe, if it can be established by the light of nature, is, neve theless, actually derived from Christianity. It was brought to the European mind as a part of the Christian faith. But for this teaching, they who profess to believe in God, but to reject revelation, might still be worshipping "gods many, and lords many." Mohammedanism is a deistic religion, but it borrowed its doctrine of one God from Hebrew and Christian sources.

When the Christian conception of God is contrasted with that of the Greek philosophy, the ripest product of the uninspired intellect of man, the superiority of the former is evident. None of the Greek philosophers, not even Plato and Aristotle, attained to the idea of the absolute and infinite. The eternity of matter, a partially intractable material, was assumed; and thus a dualism, unreduced, and of baneful tendency in its bearing on ethics, infected their theology. Prayer, personal communion with God, were encouraged by Socrates and by the noblest of the schools that sprang up after him. But the Epicureans cast aside practical religion altogether: since their creed made the world a machine that took care of itself, and the deities indifferent to every thing that occurs in this mundane sphere.

Pantheistic philosophers have sought to improve upon the Christian conception of God. They have thought it a gain to divest the absolute of consciousness and of all other personal attributes, as if unconscious being were higher than self-conscious, and as if a substance that is necessitated to produce a finite world, be that world real or a mass of illusions, could be considered independent as to its being and its action. On the plane of philosophy, the idea of a God who gives rise to other

existences through a free self-determination, not constrained from within or without, is to be preferred to all the rival theories in which fate is made supreme.

The mode of creation, Christianity does not profess to explain; but the immanence of God, in opposition to the deistic notion of him as acting on the world from a point exterior, is abundantly affirmed in the Scriptures. He is immanent at the same time that he is transcendent. The fountain of all energy and vitality, he does not exhaust his power in carrying forward from within the course of nature. He is above, as he was before, all things. All that Pantheism values in the indwelling of deity as an ever-active Presence, Christianity includes in its conception of God.

The Christian definition of the character of God is equally agreeable to reason. That character is made up of righteousness and love, not righteousness without love, or love without righteousness. It is love that seeks the well-being of all creatures, yet for that reason is hostile to whatever is unrighteous, to whatever is opposite to its own nature, and to universal good.

The Christian doctrine of the providence of God, as not limited to things and events of extraordinary moment, as the heathen philosophers were apt to imagine, but as extending over the minutest objects, and over occurrences apparently insignificant, — this doctrine alone answers to the rational idea of an infinite Being. It is one of the peculiarities of the biblical doctrine, that, while the majesty of God is exalted above any limit that imagination can set, there is associated with these views the representation of him as caring tenderly for the wants and the fears of the humblest human being, as even listening with pity to the cry of the creatures inferior to man. "Not a sparrow falls to the ground

without him." This is said of the Being who "sitteth on the circle of the heavens," and before whom the nations of mankind are as "the dust in the balance."

If the providence of God shapes the course of individuals and of communities, Christianity also brings to light the moral government which he is administering over the world of mankind. His justice is declared to be exerted in the allotment of good and evil which follow in the train of well-doing and evil-doing. These awards occur, to be sure, not in exact proportion to the merit of individuals, yet in such manner and proportion as to excite the expectation that the system will in the end show itself in complete accord with righteousness.

2. In the Christian doctrine respecting man, his weakness and frailty as a child of the earth, framed of the dust, and his lofty spiritual nature and destiny, are truthfully recognized. Allied on the one side to the animals, he is made, nevertheless, in the image of God. There is accorded him in this relation a position exalted above the perishing races that with him inhabit the earth. He is to live beyond death. He is false to his nature if he does not seek his blessedness in filial communion with God. He is endued with the lofty but awful power of free self-determination, the foundation of personal responsibility. He is made the arbiter of his own destiny. It is left to him to choose whether he shall rise to an unimaginable height of moral and spiritual excellence, or sink to a proportionate depth of ruin. Yet side by side with this doctrine of human freedom and consequent accountableness, there are found in the Bible the strongest assertions of the control exercised by God over men, and over the course of events in which their volitions bear a part. If we glance at the schemes of human philosophy, we shall

find that most frequently one truth on this subject is affirmed, but coupled with a denial or curtailment of its counterpart and seeming opposite. We meet with assertions of the doctrine of free-will, no room being allowed for that divine ordering of events without which God would be subordinate to his creatures, and history a chaos of random occurrences. More often we find the efficiency of the superior powers affirmed in a way that explicitly, or in effect, shuts out human liberty, and compels the inference that free-will is a phantom. In this coupling of two apparently antagonistic types of teaching, each of which, however, finds a warrant in every broad view of things, the Bible evinces its wisdom. If the sacred writers make no attempt to reconcile divine control and free-will, it is because of the practical, as contrasted with the speculative, spirit and design of the Scriptures. Metaphysical disquisition is foreign to the end which the authors of the Bible had in view.

3. The Christian doctrine of sin is marked by a deep perception of the nature of character, and finds a response in the verdicts of an enlightened conscience. The foremost philosophers of antiquity traced moral evil to a physical source. The germs of it were thought to lie in the constitution of man. It sprang of necessity from the matter which enters into his being. Thus the real nature of sin was obscured: it was made to be something physical, therefore something inevitable. Responsibility was in a proportionate degree eclipsed. A mist was spread over the moral judgment of the individual, whether as directed to his own character or to the character of mankind generally. Kindred theories appear and re-appear in Christian ages, wherever the doctrine of the Bible is forsaken for a wisdom assum-

ing to be higher. It is evident, however, that to trace moral evil to any thing behind or below the will is to violate conscience, and really to degrade man from the high level of free and responsible agency. No being with capacities less exalted would be capable of sin, as sin is defined in Christian teaching. To supersede this conception by one which transmutes moral evil into natural evil is not to lift up man in dignity, but to degrade him.

The depth of the Christian view of moral evil is evinced in the tracing of it collectively to the alienation of the heart or will from God. Separation from communion with God, the self-assertion which aspires to independence, disobedience to him, — here, according to the Bible, is the *fons et origo malorum*. The substitution of an inferior good for the highest good, the world for God, is at the root of immorality. Impiety is the source of corrupt and unrighteous conduct in human relations. The chief good being lost, a struggle ensues to extort from the world more of happiness than it has to yield. Propensities are inflamed, and the more, in proportion as they are indulged. Man having broken loose from the law of his being, there is no effectual curb upon the passions. Selfishness prevails, with its two instruments, lawless force and fraud.

The Christian doctrine of sin is conformed to truth in that it makes the individual implicated with the race in being under the dominion of sin, at the same time that personal agency and accountableness are insisted on. This truth suggests problems which Scripture does not undertake to solve. For the most part, it relies upon the common convictions of men, and upon conscience, as affording a sufficient sanction to its doctrine in both of its aspects. To harmonize the fact of indi-

vidual responsibility with the community of the race in sin and guilt is a task left, for the most part, for the Christian philosopher to perform as far as he may. But just as the combination of divine control with human liberty in the biblical system is an indication of its breadth of view, so is the assertion of sin as at once the attribute of the individual, and the common character of the race. Seeming inconsistencies of this nature, instead of being a ground of objection to the Christian system, are marks of a comprehensiveness which takes account of all the facts, and looks at the truth upon more than one side.

4. The Christian doctrine of Salvation is the counterpart of the doctrine of Sin. Redemption is a moral deliverance. The old philosophers, who placed the seeds of moral defilement in matter, must needs hold to a physical redemption. Spirit must be cleansed from the polluting contact with the body. Frequently an ascetic discipline was prescribed. Sometimes there was demanded an austere discipline of the intellect, which might liberate the intellectual principle from the intermingling of corporeal influences. The spiritual philosophy of a Plato confuses the moral with the physical in its theory of redemption as in its theory of sin. Purification is quite as much a metaphysical change, a purging of the soul from the ingredients of sense, as a cleansing of the heart, that is, the rectification of the will. Degenerate forms of Christianity introduce kindred ideas. Physical austerities and asceticism follow in their train. The Christianity of the Bible, on the contrary, lays its finger on the source of the malady. The axe is laid at the root of the tree. Repentance is a turning of the will in the right direction. Conversion is a self-surrender, in a voluntary act, to God as the

object of supreme trust and service. But the breadth of the Christian system is again manifest in the circumstance that it includes in its doctrine the redemption of the whole man. This is the significance of the resurrection. It is a rescue from physical evil and from death, its extreme form. It is the restoration of the organism through which the soul acts to its pristine or ideal perfection. As the body of Jesus was raised up, transfigured, converted into "a spiritual body," or a body divested of the infirmities and inconveniences that belong to matter in the crass form in which matter is known to us, so the prospect is held out, that, in the room of the bodies which return to dust, there will be developed for the redeemed soul an organism suited to its needs and to the conditions of the immortal state of being, — an organism of which the material body worn here is the type and precursor.

Inasmuch as salvation is moral in its essence, it is within the reach of all. Christianity — in keeping with its main postulate, that the ills of man spring ultimately from a moral source, the alienation of the heart from the Father of our spirits — addresses itself to the work of remedying this primary disorder. The chief good is to be found in communion with God. To this communion a pure heart — a righteous choice — is the one condition. Thus the boon offered by Christianity is accessible to all. The Greek philosophers went too far in identifying virtue with knowledge. Socrates himself was not free from this error. Hence, in Plato and Aristotle and the other masters, it is only the intellectually gifted to whom the highest spiritual good is open. The world at large is debarred from attaining it. The sage in the Stoic system must be one on whom nature has bestowed special endowments. The philosophers taught,

that, to their class alone, redemption in the full sense is possible. The true good was an esoteric possession. It belonged to the select few. The intellectual made up the elect. The idea of an intellectual aristocracy, raised above the common herd by the possession of an insight utterly out of their reach, pervades the ancient schools. Christianity, through its conception of evil as moral in its essence and source, is humane and catholic. The classes of men who are despised by those who are proud of their superior talents and culture are cordially invited by Christianity to receive its best gifts. The point, however, which is here to be considered, is not the catholic, compassionate spirit of the gospel, but rather, the profound discernment which it implies of the real origin of sin and evil in men, and of the sort of remedy that must be applied.

If we were to enter into the particular consideration of this remedy, we should be called on to consider the doctrines of the incarnation and of the atonement. Apart from the testimony of Scripture to the truth of these doctrines, none but the shallow or ill-informed will be disposed to deny that they contain grand conceptions. That God should unite himself to the race, to the end that he might unite the race to himself; that, by an obedience unto death, a great reparation should be made for man's violation, through sin, of the moral order of the world, — these are ideas, to say the least, fraught with interest. Last of all, can philosophers who lean towards Pantheism regard with disrespect a doctrine which brings God into so close affiliation with human nature. That salvation is accomplished by a mediator is in harmony with the analogies of the divine procedure in the course of nature and of history. That vast benefits should flow to the many through voluntary

and unmerited sufferings endured by one is a familiar fact of experience.

But, not to enter into the special discussion of these topics, there are certain prominent characteristics of the Christian doctrine of redemption which are stamped upon the face of it. There is a conjunction of righteousness and mercy. The work which is done by the Saviour is from beginning to end a manifestation — a realization we might better say — both of holiness and of love. There is not the least abatement of the intensity of the abhorrence of sin; yet forgiveness, so far as the recipient is concerned, could not be more free, complete, heartfelt. It may be further said, that this mingling of holiness, absolute and uncompromising, with a love to the transgressor that stops short of no sacrifice, and grants pardon "without money and without price," is fundamental to the gospel.

The Christian doctrine of the influence of the spirit of God is in itself not more mysterious or inexplicable than the acknowledged personal influence of one human mind upon another. There is involved in it no more interference with the liberty of the will. The reasonableness of the Christian doctrine as a conception will be questioned only by a frigid, unphilosophical deism, which represents God as standing aloof from the world, and ignores the near affinity of the human to the divine.

5. How stands Christianity on the questions of the theodicy? In particular, how is the infinitude of the divine attributes to be reconciled with the existence of evil? The Christian system rejects with abhorrence the pantheistic notion that wrong is a phase or rudiment of right. It pronounces a woe on all who call "evil" "good," or "good" "evil." How shall the existence of sin be harmonized with the omnipotence and

holiness of God? And how shall the sufferings of creatures be reconciled with the ascription of boundless power and benevolence to the Creator and Disposer of all?

Christianity abstains from a positive and complete solution of these problems. It enters an indignant protest against false theories, such as those which limit God by fate, or destroy human responsibility. The rational grounds of this protest are made evident. Enough is said to disarm the disbeliever or doubter, who on logical grounds would impugn the perfections of God. It is made impossible to convict the Christian doctrine of God and of his government of error or inconsistency. This negative work is of great scientific value.

To begin with natural evil. As concerns human suffering, it is impossible to aver, that, in a world where sin abounds, there is too much pain, or that it is unwisely distributed with reference to the ends of justice and benevolence. It must be remembered, that the course of things is determined by general laws; and this, as far as we can judge, is the most beneficent arrangement. The pain which men suffer is represented as either penal or disciplinary, both as related to the individuals who suffer and to the community with which they stand in an organic relation. In a multitude of particular instances we can discern that the various forms of suffering are salutary in their tendency. No man knows enough respecting the system of things in its full extent, embracing the life to come as well as the life that now is, to affirm that the same is not true of all the pains and calamities to which we are subject. The teaching of revelation respecting death is, not that man was made in his physical nature immortal, but that

physical immortality was to be the reward of moral obedience. There would have been some transition to the higher stage of being without the endurance of death in the present significance of the term, — the violent rupture of soul and body, with the agony and anxiety that precede and attend dissolution. If moral evil is apprehended in its true character, as an abnormal perversion at the very centre of personality, the scriptural doctrine of death as resulting in this indirect way will no longer appear strange and improbable.

With respect to the existence of moral evil, much light is thrown on this dark problem which has puzzled men from the dawn of speculation, by the scriptural doctrine of human freedom. All direct agency in the production of sin is denied to the Creator. It is only the permission or non-exclusion of moral evil by his interposition which calls for explanation. The answer of Christian theology to objections brought on this score to the divine omnipotence and goodness, is that, for aught we know, the existence of freedom in creatures made and placed as the creatures of God are, and in a created system the best of all possible systems in its nature and results, — that the existence of freedom under these circumstances may be incompatible with the exclusion through the agency of God, whether moral or coercive, of sin, so far as sin actually exists. There *may* be an incompatibility as absolute as that which prevents a triangle from having a sum of angles greater or less than two. The moral influences arranged for the prevention and reduction of moral evil, the measures appointed for overruling it when it appears, and for vindicating righteousness in the punishment of it, may exhaust the resources which omnipotence can wisely exert in the way of antagonism to sin.

If the subject of the actual issues of the world's history is to be considered as one topic of the theodicy, it is first to be said, that, to a large extent, these are veiled in mystery. We are debarred by ignorance from assuming that the human race comprises all, or even a considerable fraction, of the intelligent creatures who compose the universe. This circumstance of itself precludes us from judging of the total results of a system whose extent is so imperfectly understood. The disclosures, moreover, of the lot that awaits human beings hereafter, though clear and definite in some points, are, for reasons not wholly inscrutable, left obscure and fragmentary. They partake of the ordinary style of prophetical teaching. They are brought forward, not to gratify a curiosity to peer into the future, but for warning and encouragement in the struggle with temptation. In the second place, the principles on which divine judgment will proceed are, as it is always declared, marked by perfect equity and mercy. There is no condemnation which will not include a corresponding self-condemnation. There is no ruin possible to a responsible creature of God which he does not bring on himself, first by voluntary transgression, and, secondly, by resistance or indifference to the merciful intervention which contains in it both the bestowal of pardon, and divine spiritual aid in casting off the habit of impiety and evil-doing, and in rising superior to the seductions of the tempter. The Christian doctrine is, that God seeks for those who are astray, and welcomes them, when they return, with all the tenderness of a human father towards a wayward son. The conclusion of the whole matter is, that we must know more of the ultimate results of the creation and management of the entire universe, of only a small portion of which we

have any definite knowledge, to authorize us in calling in question the infinite wisdom, the infinite power, the infinite justice, or the infinite goodness, of God. Such is the answer which the Scriptures, in substance, make to the objections of infidelity. On such a theodicy the Christian system of doctrine reposes. What other mode that has ever been proposed of meeting the questions suggested by the existence of evil is equally satisfactory?

In the discussions which we are now pursuing, the question of the truth of the several doctrines of Christianity is pertinent only as illustrative of the depth and value of the Christian system. The foregoing remarks are designed, not so much to vindicate these doctrines against objections, as to produce a just impression of the high rank that belongs to the Christian system from an intellectual point of view. It will hardly be questioned by any competent student, that Christianity presents to the human mind a system of teaching on the most momentous themes, which, for its profundity and coherence, deserves respect, if it does not command unhesitating assent. The bare fact that Christian teaching has, age after age, absorbed the attention of so many of the ablest minds, is enough to make good this proposition. Men of powerful intellect, such as Thomas Aquinas, to whom writers like Aristotle are familiar companions, have spent their lives in formulating Christian doctrine, in seeking to fathom its abysses of wisdom, and in showing its conformity to the most illuminated reason. That which, century after century, has formed the subject of all this investigation and debate, must comprise within it a mine of thought. Looking, now, at the human originators of this teaching, on the human side alone, on the prophets of the old dispen-

sation, the apostles, and the Teacher of Nazareth, how can this body of conceptions be accounted for? How did Israelitish seers, some of whom were called from the plough, how did fishermen who had just left their nets, how did a young villager from a carpenter's shop in Galilee, arrive at these doctrines concerning God, the nature, duty, and destiny of man, ethical obligations, the method of obtaining forgiveness and peace of conscience, and all the other topics which enter into the Christian system? Had Palestinian laborers, who were brought up to tend flocks, or cultivate vineyards, unfolded the astronomic system in advance of Copernicus, it would be thought a miracle. Can less be said of that moral and religious system which has drawn to it, and even now engages, the thoughtful study of the most acute intellects, and which has commended itself to the most of them for many centuries as far more satisfactory to reason than all that was contributed by the most brilliant minds of Greece for the solving of these problems? How happens it, that, in intellectual value, the impassioned utterances of Hebrew seers, the simple sayings of unlettered Jewish preachers, the aphorisms of the youthful Jesus, who was a stranger to the lore of even rabbinical schools, so far outstrip the consummate products of philosophical genius?

CHAPTER XV.

THE ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIANITY FROM CHRISTENDOM AS AN EFFECT OF CHRIST'S AGENCY.

Not the supernatural origin of a religion, nor even its truth, can be decided by the number of its adherents: else Buddhism, with its four hundred and fifty millions, would hold the vantage-ground over against Christianity with its four hundred millions; and Mohammedanism, with its one hundred and seventy-five millions, might put in a plausible claim to a higher than human derivation. It is necessary to consider in what way the converts of a religion have been won. Mohammedanism was a fanatical crusade against idolatry, that achieved its success by the sword and by the energy with which it was wielded. Force was exerted, to some extent, for the furtherance of Christianity by the successors of Constantine; and force has been exerted in other instances, like that of the conquest of the Saxons by Charlemagne: yet there is no doubt that coercion — which, it may be observed, was used in the cause of Buddhism by the kings who embraced it — has, on the whole, hindered, instead of helped on, the progress of the gospel. The victory of the religion of the cross in the Roman Empire was really gained by moral means. The reactionary movement of Julian proved futile, for the reason that the faith which it attempted to succor had been smitten with death. When we consider the small beginnings of Christianity, in its

Galilean birthplace, and watch its progress against the organized and violent opposition of Judaism, and the successive attempts to extirpate it made by imperial Rome, from the cruelties of Nero and Domitian to the systematic persecution by Diocletian, its triumph over the ancient heathenism excites a wonder that is not lessened by the theories which have been invented to explain it. All the proximate causes of the downfall and disappearance of the Græco-Roman religion, through the preaching of the gospel, presuppose behind them, as the ultimate cause, the personal influence of Jesus Christ and of his life and death. When we see the same gospel, amid the ruins of the Roman Empire, subduing to itself the victorious barbarian tribes by whom it was overthrown, we gain a new impression of the mysterious efficacy that resides in it. An Asiatic religion in its origin, it became the religion of Europe. Yet its adaptedness to races beyond the limits of the Aryan peoples it has fully demonstrated.

But in order to complete the argument for the truth and divine origin of Christianity, drawn from its effect, we must go farther, and inquire into the particular character of that effect. The impression which the spread of the other religions — whether the national faiths, like the native religions of China, or the universal systems, Mohammedanism and Buddhism — might leave upon us, is largely neutralized when we mark the character and limit of the influence exerted by them on human nature, culture, and civilization. We may, to be sure, recognize enough of good to prove that those religions inculcated important truths. We may discern the value of the moral and religious sentiments which they partially express and respond to. But the idea that any of those religions is the absolute reli-

gion, or the religion revealed from Heaven to be the perpetual light of men, is dispelled the moment we find that the work wrought by them upon the human soul is one-sided and defective, and that their final result is an arrested development. The individual is impelled forward to a certain limit. There he halts. Deterioration even may ensue. The nation feels a transforming agency for a time, but at length it reaches an impassable barrier. An imperfect civilization becomes petrified. Christianity, on the contrary, never appears to have exhausted its power. It moves in advance, and beckons forward the individual and the people who embrace it. When it is misconceived, in some respect, and a perverted development ensues, it contains in it a rectifying power. It forever instigates to reform: its only goal is perfection.

We are not to forget, of course, that Christendom is something besides a religion. It is composed of particular races; races having distinctive traits, which have entered as one factor into the spiritual life and the civilization of this society of peoples. They have inherited from the past, especially from the Roman Empire and the cultivated nations of antiquity, invaluable elements of polity and culture. The Teutonic peoples were specially hospitable to the religion of the gospel. They were docile, as well as strong. They had these native traits to begin with: they received much, besides the gift of Christian faith, from those whom they conquered. Yet it is Christianity which leavened all. It is Christianity which fused, moulded, trained, the European nations. It is in the light of Christianity that their vigorous life unfolded itself. In that light it still flourishes.

Jesus Christ brought into the world a new ideal of

man, — man individual and man social. This was not all. Had this been all, the condition of men might not have been materially altered. He brought in at the same time a force adequate to effect — though not magically, but by slow degrees — the realization of this ideal. It is in this double character, — in the perfection of the moral ideal, and in the wonderful stimulus to the practical realization of it, — that the transcendent superiority of the Christian religion is manifest. The sages of antiquity presented high though always imperfect conceptions of what man and society should be; but those conceptions remained inoperative. They did not avail for the elevation of many individuals even. Their effect on social and political life was small. Culture was attained by the intellectual and versatile Greek, but the ideal of manhood was faulty. There was no life-giving force to save the Greek from degeneracy and corruption. No more was there a saving power in the law and polity which Rome created. Neither Greek learning and philosophy, nor Roman politics and jurisprudence, could rescue mankind from degradation, or even avail to perpetuate themselves.

With Christ there came in a nobler ideal and a force to lift men up to it. That force resided in Jesus himself. The central thought of Jesus was religion, — man's relation to God. Take out this idea of man's true life as consisting in that filial relation to the heavenly Father, and the vital principle is gone from the system of Jesus. The sources of its power are dried up; the root is dead, and the branches wither away.

For with this idea is inseparably connected his estimate of the worth of the soul. Every individual, according to the teaching of Christ, has an incalculable worth. This does not depend on his outward condition.

Lazarus, the beggar at the gate, was on a footing of equality with Dives at his luxurious table. To the surprise of the disciples, Jesus conversed with the peasant-woman at the well. What was a woman, and a poor woman, even a depraved woman, that the Master should waste time in order to enlighten her? Little children he took in his arms when the disciples "forbade them." It was not the will of the Father that one of these little ones should perish. The transgressor of human and divine law, the male or female outcast — he saw in each something of imperishable value. With this idea of the worth of man, there is associated the recognition of every individual as an end in himself. No man is made merely to enhance the interests, or minister to the gratification, of another man. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself*." He is the greatest who serves most, in the spirit of self-sacrifice. For one man to use another man or a woman as an instrument of his own pleasure or advancement is an act of inconceivable cruelty and baseness. The equality of men as regards worth or value, be their talents, property, station, power, or condition in any particular, what they may, is a cardinal truth. It is an inference from their common relation, as creatures and children, to God, and from the common benefit of redemption, in which all alike share. In the community of God's-children there was no distinction of bondman or freeman, rich or poor, male or female, Greek or Barbarian. All — be their nationality that of the strong and intellectual branches of mankind, or of those little esteemed; be their lot among the prosperous or the unfortunate — stand on a level. They are "brethren."

The Christian ideal embraced the sanctification of the entire life. It did not subvert established relations

between man and man, as far as they were conformed to nature and right. It infused into them a new spirit. It set to work to purify the family and the state, and to raise each of these institutions to the ideal standard. Each was to be made to fulfil its true function, and to become an agent of the highest possible beneficence.

One of the great changes which Christianity made, and is making, in the family, is the abolition of domestic tyranny. The authority of the father in ancient Rome, as in many other nations, was without limit. As far as restraints of law were concerned, he was a despot in the household. He had over its members the right to inflict death. From the time of the introduction of Christianity, the authority of the father began to be reduced. The paternal prerogative, the *patria potestas* was curtailed in the Roman law in the second century. The Stoic ethical teaching contributed to this result, as to other humane reforms. How far the milder sentiments prevalent among the Stoics in the early Christian centuries were unconsciously imbibed from the gospel, which was already active in modifying the atmosphere of thought and feeling, is a question difficult to settle. This is certain, that Christian teaching from the beginning tended strongly to such a result, and evidently, at a later date, had a powerful effect. The position of the wife in relation to the husband's will and control, the more Christianity gained influence, was wholly changed for the better. The freedom of divorce which existed by Roman law and custom found in the precepts of Christ and in the teaching of the Church a stern rebuke. The wife could no longer be discarded in obedience to the husband's caprice. Marriage became a sacred bond, — a bond, except for one cause, indissoluble. On the immeasurable influence

which the religion of Jesus has exerted in shielding the purity of woman, it is needless to speak. The power which the unsparing injunctions of the Sermon on the Mount have exercised for the defence of the helpless and innocent against lawless passion, it would be impossible to estimate. As fast as Christianity spread, respect for the rights of woman extended. The more deeply Christianity leavens society, the more does all unjust discrimination in laws and social customs, by which the rights and privileges of women have been abridged, disappear. The words of Jesus on the cross, when he committed his mother to the care of John, have inspired in all subsequent ages a tender feeling for the sorrows of woman. If reverence for the Virgin was at length exaggerated, and became a hurtful superstition, that unauthorized worship was connected with a sentiment towards the wife and mother which genuine Christianity fosters.

The State is the second great institution having a divine sanction, and springing out of essential tendencies and needs of human nature. It is one of the most remarkable features of Christianity, and one of the marked signs that a wisdom higher than that of man was concerned in it, that from the first it asserted the inviolable authority of the civil magistracy. There was all the temptation that religious zeal could afford to cast off the rule of the State. This temptation was aggravated a thousand-fold by the circumstance that against the early Christians the civil powers arrayed themselves in mortal antipathy. Yet from the beginning the injunction was to honor the ruler. Nay, he was declared to be the minister of God for the execution of justice. Civil government was affirmed to be a part and instrument of God's moral government of mankind. Christians were to pray for the ruler at the very time when

Nero was burning them alive. No priestly usurpation in later periods, when it was carried to its height, was ever able to obliterate from the Christian mind the feeling of obligation to obey the magistrate, and the conviction that the powers that be are ordained of God. Christianity exalted justice, and revered the State as its divinely appointed upholder between man and man. Christianity honored rightful authority, and recognized it as inhering in the rulers of a political community.

At the same time, the religion of Christ brought in liberty. Wherever it has been understood aright, it has been the most powerful champion and safeguard of natural and political rights. In heathen antiquity the State was supreme, and practically omnipotent. The individual was absorbed in the political body of which he was a member. To that body he owed unlimited allegiance. There was no higher law than the behest of the State. Socrates is one instance of an individual refusing to obey a prohibition of the State, out of deference to the Divine Will. He would not promise to refrain from teaching when he might have saved his life by doing so. We meet here and there with a shining example of one who was ready to disregard a civil mandate which required of him some flagrant act of injustice. But these are exceptions that prove the rule. They are anticipations of a better era than existed, or could exist, as long as polytheism was dominant, and while there was no broader form of social unity than the civil community. Christianity founded a new kingdom. It was a kingdom not of this world; but it was a real sovereignty, which was felt to be supreme over all human enactments. The first preachers of the gospel were obliged to obey God rather than man. The early Christians had to disobey the laws and

decrees of the Jewish and the Roman authorities. It was a new thing when prisoners who were brought before Roman prefects, and commanded to worship the image of the emperor, or to curse Christ, refused, and persistently refused, to do so. Such contumacy, such insubordination, struck these administrators of law as a marvel of audacity and of treasonable hostility to the supreme authority. By this means, through the higher allegiance to the revealed will of God which Christianity made a wide-spread, practical fact, the power of the state, up to that time virtually boundless, was cut down to reasonable proportions. The precepts of the State were subjected to the private judgment of the subject. The individual decided whether or not they were consistent with the laws of the King of kings. He inquired whether they enjoined what God had forbidden, or forbade what God had enjoined. The eternal laws of justice and right, of which Sophocles wrote in the highest strain of Greek religious thought, became, in the Christian Church, the every-day, absolute arbiter of conduct. There might spring up a new despotism. There might grow up an ecclesiastical authority not less tyrannical than the State had been. But this could only be a temporary abuse and perversion. Christian truth could not be permanently eclipsed. Meantime, even in the days when ecclesiastical control over the individual was overgrown, it still afforded a most wholesome check to the unrestrained power of chieftains and kings. The Papacy, in the periods when it mistakenly strove to govern the laity with an absolute sway, and even to build up a universal monarchy of its own, a spiritual despotism, did, nevertheless, do a vast service in its unceasing assertion of a spiritual law above the will of any man, however strong, and the right of spir-

itual ideas to prevail over brute force. Guizot, speaking of the period which ensued upon the fall of the Western Empire, says, "Had the Christian Church not existed, the whole world must have been abandoned to purely material force."[1] When Christianity had liberated the human mind from the yoke of secular power, it proved itself enlightened enough and strong enough to emancipate it from the yoke of the ecclesiastical institution through which, in great part, that deliverance had been achieved.

Looking at the constitution of the State itself, we see plainly how Christianity has introduced, and tends to introduce, a just measure of political liberty, and a fair distribution of political power. The constitution of the Church as its Founder established it, the fraternal equality of its members, the mutual respect for opinion and preference which was enjoined, the forbidding of a lordship like that which existed in secular society — all tended strongly to bring analogous ideas and parallel relations into the civil community. Liberty was prized by the ancients; but what sort of liberty? At Athens, the citizens were but a handful compared with the entire population. In Rome, citizenship was a privilege jealously guarded by the select possessors of it. When, at last, political equality was attained, it was through the absolute rule of the emperors, after liberty had vanished. Christianity presents no abstract pattern of civil society. It prescribes no such doctrine as that of universal suffrage. But Christianity, by the respect which it pays to man as man, by its antipathy to unjust or artificial distinctions, by its whole genius and spirit, favors those forms of polity in which all men of competent intelligence, who have a stake in the well-

[1] Lectures on the History of Civilization, chap. ii. p. 38.

being of the community, are allowed to have some voice in its government. So far, Christianity is not a neutral in the contests relative to political rights and privileges. As concerns natural rights, which are always to be carefully distinguished from political, the religion of Christ continually cries out against every violation of justice in the laws and institutions of society. The Golden Rule it holds to be not less applicable to those acts of the community which determine the relations of its members to one another than to the private intercourse of individuals. Who that examines the governments of Christian nations to-day can fail to see what a mighty influence Christianity has already exerted in moulding civil society into a conformity with human rights and with the rational conception of equality?

Christianity fundamentally alters the view which is taken of international relations. Slowly, but steadily, it makes mankind feel that injustice is not less base when exercised between nation and nation than between man and man. Prior to the Christian era, the more closely the members of a tribe or people were bound together, the more regardless they generally were of the rights and the welfare of all beyond their borders. Pretexts were easily found — very often they were not even sought — for enterprises of conquest and pillage. As intercourse increased, and commerce spread, there was required some mutual recognition of rights. Covenants were made, and sometimes were kept. Occasional glimpses of a better order of things, in which mankind should be regarded as a kind of confederacy, were gained by Stoic philosophers. Such ideas were now and then thrown out by rhetorical writers on politics and morals, like Cicero. But international law existed only in its rudiments. Selfish-

ness was the practical rule of national conduct. The strong domineered over the weak. Christianity subordinated even patriotism to the law of righteousness and human brotherhood. It insisted on the responsibility of the nation, in its corporate capacity, to God, the Father of all. It held up a nobler ideal for the regulation of nations in their mutual intercourse. It need not be said how much remains to be done in order that the Christian law should be even approximately carried out. Yet the contrast between the Christendom of to-day and the spectacle presented by the tribes and nations of antiquity is like the contrast between winter and spring. In the middle ages, the Church, as an organized body, through the clergy, undertook to pacify contention, and curb the appetite for aggression. Vast good was accomplished, but a new species of tyranny incidentally came in. In modern days, equitable treaties, amicable negotiations, and, above all, arbitration, are resorted to for the settlement of disputes, the redress of wrongs, and the prevention of war. Christianity does not absolutely forbid war, as it does not prohibit, but rather approves, the use of force for the maintenance of law within the limits of each community. But against all wars of aggression, against all wars which might have been avoided by forbearance and reasonable concession, the religion of Jesus lifts up a warning voice, which is more and more heard. A glance at the history of Christianity, and at the present condition of the world, makes it manifest that a mighty force is incessantly at work in the bosom of mankind, which promises at last to bring in an era when righteousness shall prevail in the dealings of the nations with one another, and men shall learn war no more.

The work which Christianity has done in the cause of charity, of kindness and beneficence, constitutes a topic of extreme interest. There was charity before the gospel. Men were never brutes. There was compassion; there was a recognized duty of hospitality to strangers. Among the Greeks, Jupiter was the protector of strangers and suppliants. There were not absolutely wanting combined efforts in doing good. Institutions of charity have not been entirely unknown in heathen nations. In China there have long existed, in the different provinces, hospitals for two classes, — for old people and for foundlings. In ancient times men were not indisposed to befriend their own countrymen. This was pre-eminently true of the Jews. Among the heathen, in various towns of the Roman Empire, physicians were appointed by the municipality, whose business it was to wait on the poor as well as on the rich. Yet, when all this is justly considered, the fact remains, that charity was comparatively an unmeaning word until Christianity appeared. Largesses bestowed on the multitude by emperors and demagogues were from other motives than a desire to relieve distress. Considerations of policy had a large part in such benefactions as those of Nerva and Trajan for poor children and orphans. Nothing effectual was done to check the crime of infanticide, which had the sanction of philosophers of highest repute. The rescue of foundlings was often the infliction upon them, especially upon the females, of a lot worse than death. Gladiatorial fights — the pastime which spread over the Roman Empire in its flourishing days, and against which hardly a voice was ever raised — could not fail to harden the spectators, who learned to feast their eyes on the sight of human agony.

From the beginning, the outflow of charity was natural to Christians. God had so loved the world, that he *gave* his Son. Christ loved men, and *gave* himself for them. The Christian principle was love, and love was expressed in giving liberally to those in need. The disciples at Jerusalem were so generous in their gifts to the poor of their number, that they are said to have "had all things in common;" although other passages in the Acts prove that there was no actual communism, and Christianity never impugned in the least the rights of property. Wherever a church was established, there were abundant offerings regularly made for the poor, systematic provisions for the care of the sick, of orphans, and of all other classes who required aid. Gifts were poured out, even for the help of Christians in distant places, without stint. In the second and third centuries, there were scattered all over the Roman world these Christian societies, whose members were bound together as one family, each taking pleasure in relieving the wants of every other. Through their bishops and other officers, there was a systematic alms-giving on a scale for which no precedent had ever before existed. Nor was it indiscriminate, or in a way to encourage idleness, as it too often was, even when the motive was laudable, in the middle ages. There is an exhortation of the Apostle Paul, in which the spirit of the gospel, as it actually embodied itself in the early Church, is impressively indicated. "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."[1] There were reclaimed thieves in the church at Ephesus. The apostle urges them to industry in order that they may have the means of aiding

[1] Eph. iv. 28.

those in want. Nothing could better set before us the influence of the new religion. The Apostolic Constitutions, which disclose the rules followed among the churches as early as the Nicene age, ordain that the poor man shall be assisted, not according to his expectations, but in proportion to his real needs, of which the bishops and deacons are to judge; and to be assisted in such a way as best to secure his temporal and spiritual good.[1] It is added, "God hates the lazy." The exercise of discrimination, and of care not to foster idleness, is a frequent theme of exhortation during several centuries. Asylums for orphans, hospitals for the sick sprang into being under the auspices of the Church. In process of time *noscomia*, or hospitals for the diseased, including the insane, were founded in all the principal cities, and even in smaller towns, and in some country-places. Nor did the vast stream of benefaction flow out for the help of Christians alone. When pests broke out, as at Alexandria in the third century, and somewhat earlier at Carthage, the Christians, under the lead of their clergy, instead of forsaking the victims of disease, or driving them from their houses, as the heathen did, showed their courage and compassion by personally ministering to them. The parable of the Good Samaritan had not been uttered in vain. Among the numerous recorded examples of charity to the heathen is the act of Atticus, Archbishop of Constantinople (A.D. 406–A.D. 426), who, during a famine in Nicæa, sent three hundred pieces of gold to the presbyter Calliopius. This almoner was directed to distribute it among the suffering who were ashamed to beg, without distinction of faith. Acacius, Bishop of Amida,

[1] Const. Apost., iv. 5, iii. 4, 12–14. See Chastel's The Charity of the Primitive Churches, p. 79.

about A.D. 420, persuaded his clergy to sell the gold and silver vessels of the church, that he might ransom several thousands of suffering Persian captives who had been taken by the Romans. On one occasion Chrysostom, passing through the streets of Antioch, on his way to the cathedral, saw a multitude of poor, distressed persons. He read to his audience the sixteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Then he described the blind, the crippled, and diseased throng which he had just seen, and proceeded to exhort his hearers to exercise towards their "brothers" the compassion which they themselves had need of at the hands of God.[1] "Christian charity extended over all the surface of the empire, like a vast tissue of benevolence. There was no city, no hamlet, which, with its church and its priest, had not its treasure for the poor; no desert which had not its hospitable convent for travellers. The compassion of the Church was open to all."[2]

These meagre references to the charitable work of the early Church may call to mind the miracle that Christianity wrought in penetrating the human heart with a spirit of kindness, the like to which the world before had never known. That same spirit, not always discreetly it may be, has been operative among Christian nations ever since. It is ever detecting forms of human want and infirmity which have not been previously noticed, and devising for them relief. No superior prudence in administering charity, derived from social and economic science, could have ever called into being, nor can it ever dispense with, that temper of unselfish pity and love out of which the charities of Christian people, age after age, have continued to flow. In this feature of beneficence, the Christendom of to-day,

[1] Opp., vol. iii. p. 248 seq. See Chastel, p. 159. [2] Chastel, p 304.

contrasted with heathen society of any age, is like a garden full of fruits and flowers by the side of a desert.

Christianity is the only known corrective of the evils out of which socialism arises. The enrichment of the few, and the impoverishing of the many, can be remedied by no infraction of the right of property; which would bring back barbarism. The only antidote is to be found in that spirit of beneficence which prompted Zaccheus to give half of his goods to feed the poor. That spirit, when it prevails, will dictate such arrangements between capitalist and laborer as will secure to the latter a fair return for his toil. It will check the vast accumulation of wealth in a few individuals. And the Christian spirit, as in ancient days, will inspire patience and contentment, and a better than an earthly hope, in the minds of the class whose lot in life is hard.

In speaking of the improvement of society through the agency of Christianity, it is natural for us to think of the two great scourges of mankind, — war and slavery. Iniquitous wars are undertaken in modern days. Yet, if we compare the motives that lead to warfare now with those which in ancient times filled the world with incessant strife, we cannot but perceive a vast and salutary change. The laws and usages of war have felt the humanizing touch of the gospel. The manner in which non-combatants are treated is a signal illustration. Once they were at the mercy of the conqueror, who too often knew no mercy. Their lives were forfeited. Reduction to slavery was a mitigation of the penalty which it was lawful to inflict on them. A military commander who should treat his prisoners as commanders like Julius Cæsar, who were thought in their time to be humane, treated them, would be an object of universal execration. A like change has

taken place, even as regards the property of a conquered belligerent. The extinction of a nationality like Poland, even when arguments in favor of it are not wholly destitute of weight, is a dark blot on the reputation of the sovereigns or nations by whom it is effected. Formerly it would be the expected and approved result of a successful war. In the provisions now made for the care and cure of the wounded, for the health and comfort of the common soldier, including the voluntary labors of devoted physicians and nurses, we perceive a product of Christian feeling. The Romans had their soldiers' hospitals (*valetudinaria*); but the vast and varied work of philanthropy in this direction which belongs to our time was something of which no man dreamed.

Ancient slavery was generally the servitude of men of the same race as the master. It involved the forfeiture of almost all rights on the part of the slave. It was attended with a kind and degree of cruelty which the intelligence of the victims, and the danger of revolt resulting from it, seemed to require, if the system was to be kept up. In extensive regions it had the effect, finally, almost to abolish free labor, to bring landed property into the hands of a few proprietors, to enervate the Roman spirit, and thus to pave the way for the downfall of the empire through the energy of uncivilized but more vigorous races. Christianity found slavery everywhere. It preached no revolution; it brought forward no abstract political or social theory: but it undermined slavery by the expulsive force of the new principle of impartial justice, and self-denying love and fraternal equality, which it inculcated. From the beginning it counselled patience and quiet endurance; but it demanded fairness and kindness of the master,

brought master and slave together at the common table of the Lord, and encouraged emancipation. The law of Constantine (A.D. 321), which forbade all civil acts on Sunday, except the emancipation of slaves, was in keeping with all his legislation on the subject of slavery. It is a true index of the state of feeling which is manifest in the discourses of the eminent teachers of the Church of that period. Ancient slavery, and, afterwards, serfdom in the mediæval age, disappeared under the steady influence of Christian sentiment. The revival of slavery in modern times has been followed by a like result under the same agency. A century ago the slave-trade on the coast of Africa was approved by Protestant Christians. At first, after his conversion, John Newton, the pastor of Cowper, did not condemn it. But at length the perception dawned on his mind, and became a deep conviction, that the capture and enslavement of human beings is unchristian. The same conviction entered other minds. It grew and spread, until, in the treaties of leading nations, the slave-trade has been declared to be piracy. This amazing change was not wrought by a new revelation. It was the effect of the steady shining of the light of Christian truth long ago recorded in the Scriptures.

If it were practicable to dwell upon the varied consequences of the religion of Christ as they are seen in the actual state of Christian civilization, we should have to trace out the modifications of political science under the benign influence of the gospel, the transforming effect of Christian ethics in such departments as prison discipline and penal law, the new spirit that breathes in modern literature, which emanates from Christian ideas of human nature, of forgiveness, and of things supernatural, — a spirit which is vividly felt

when one passes from the dramas of Shakspeare to the dramas of Æschylus, — the way in which the arts of music, painting, and sculpture, have developed new types of beauty and harmony from contact with the Christian faith, the indirect power of Christianity in promoting discoveries and inventions that conduce to health and material comfort, the softening influence of Christianity upon manners and social intercourse. But the topic is too broad to be farther pursued.

To appreciate the magnitude of the results of Christianity, one must bear in mind that they do not consist alone or chiefly in external changes. There is a transformation of thought and feeling. The very texture of the spirits of men is not what it was. The conscience and the imagination, the standards of judgment, the ideals of character, the ends and aims of human endeavor, have undergone a revolution. When a continent, with its huge mountains and broad plains, is gradually lifted up out of the sea, there is no doubt that a mighty force is silently active in producing so amazing an effect. What is any physical change in comparison with that moral and spiritual transformation, not inaptly called "a new creation," which Christianity has caused?

Now, the total effect of Christianity which Christendom — past and present, and future as far as we can foresee the future — presents, is due to the personal agency of Jesus of Nazareth. It can even be shown to be contingent on a personal love to him which animated the Christians of the first centuries, and which still pervades a multitude of disciples who call themselves by his name. Had this bond of personal gratitude and trust been absent, this vast result could never have come to pass. The power of Christianity in moulding Christendom is undeniably owing to the religious and

supernatural elements which are involved in the life, character, and work of Jesus Christ. Had he been conceived of as merely a human reformer, a teacher of an excellent system of morals, a martyr, the effect would never have followed. Subtract the faith in him as the Sent of God, as the Saviour from sin and death, as the hope of the soul, and you lose the forces without which the religion of Jesus could never have supplanted the ancient Heathenism, regenerated the Teutonic nations, and begotten the Christian civilization in the midst of which we live, and which is spreading over the globe. Men may doubt about this or that miracle in the Gospels, even though the testimony cannot be successfully impeached. The miracle of Christendom wrought by Christ, is a fact which none can question.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIANITY FROM A COMPARISON OF IT WITH OTHER RELIGIONS.

CHRISTIANITY is one of many religions which have existed in the world. They may be divided into three classes, — the religions of barbarian tribes, past and present; the national religions, which have sprung up within a single nation or race, and have not striven for a farther extension; and the universal religions, which, not content to stay within national boundaries, have aspired to a general or universal sway. To this last class, Buddhism and Christianity unquestionably belong. The religion of the Israelites, before it assumed the Christian form, had spread extensively among men of foreign birth; and its adherents were zealous in making proselytes. Yet converts were partly or fully transformed into Jews, and incorporated with the race of Israel. Mohammedanism was at first the religion of one people, and at the outset it may not have been the design of its founder to extend it beyond the national limits. But the design was widened: it became a conquering faith, and has, in fact, included within its pale numerous votaries of different nations and tongues.

The study of pagan and ethnic religions has been carried forward, of late, in a more sympathetic spirit. Elements of truth and beauty have been carefully sought out in the beliefs and worship of heathen nations. Religious ideas and moral precepts which de-

serve respect have been pointed out in the ethnic creeds. The aspirations at the root of the religions of the heathen, the struggle of the soul to connect itself with the supernatural, and to realize ideals of an excellence above any present attainment, have been justly appreciated. This aspect of heathenism, it should be observed, however, is recognized in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul builds his discourse at Athens on the acknowledged ignorance of the Divinity, for whom there was, nevertheless, a search and a yearning. He cites the teaching of certain heathen poets as conformed to the truth on the great point of man's filial relation to the Deity. The Christian Fathers traced wise and holy sayings of heathen sages to rays of light from the Logos, — the Divine Word, — or to an illumination from the Spirit of God. Devout missionaries, in recent days, have been impressed with the conviction that individuals, of whom Confucius was one, have been providentially raised up to be the guides of their people, and to prepare them for better things. Points of affinity, and of accordance between the Bible and the sacred scriptures of peoples ignorant of Christianity, have not been overlooked by Christian scholars. Even the fables of mythology may betray glimpses of truth not capable of being grasped on the plane of nature. They may reveal a craving which Christianity alone avails to appease, and may thus be unconscious prophecies of Him who is the desire of all nations. Even the Avatars of Vishnu, countless in number, indicate that through man the full revelation of God is looked for. They may be considered a presage, in a crude form, of the historic fact of the incarnation.

Christianity differs from the other religions in its contents, and in the authoritative sanction which gives

ground for certainty of belief. This last feature is of itself a distinguishing merit. If much that is taught by Christ and the apostles should be found here and there in the literature of the world, the supernatural sanction which changes hope into assurance, and doubting belief into conviction, would be of itself an inestimable advantage. In this place, it is the contents of Christianity which we have to consider in comparison with the tenets of other creeds.

It is well, at the outset, to give prominence to the grand peculiarity of the Christian religion, which constitutes the central point of difference between it and the ethnic religions. Revelation is the revelation — the self-revelation — of GOD. The doctrine of God is the sun which illuminates the whole system, and keeps every part in its place. There may be excellent moral suggestions in heathenism. There may be partial, momentary glimpses of the Divine Being himself in certain aspects of his character. But nowhere, save in the religion of the Bible, and in systems borrowed from it, is there a full view of the perfections of God, — such a view as gives to moral precepts their proper setting and the most effectual motive to their observance. This essential characteristic of Christianity the Apostle Paul held up to view in his discourse at Athens. There was worship — in its way, genuine worship — among the heathen, but an ignorance of its true object. In a few striking sentences the apostle presented to view the only living God, a Spirit, the Creator and Ruler of the universe, in whom we live, and to whom we are responsible. The whole conception of man, of his duties and destiny, and of the goal to which all things tend, is colored and determined by the primary ideas relative to God. What, let us now inquire, have other religions to say

of him? Heathen religions generally fail altogether to disengage God from nature. Hence polytheism is the prevailing fact. Whether the various religions carry in them traces of an earlier monotheism is a disputed point. Scholars are not agreed on the question; and a bias, on one side or on the other, frequently appears in the recent discussions upon it. As the existing diversity of languages is entirely consistent with the hypothesis of an original unity of speech, although the phenomena do not positively establish this doctrine, so it may be respecting religion. Vestiges of a primitive theism may have utterly disappeared, yet such may have been the religion of the primitive man. Certain it is, that, as we contemplate the religions which history and ancient literature exhibit to us, we find them at a distant remove from a pure and spiritual apprehension of the Deity. Where there was a supreme God, other divinities divided power with him; and none of them were conceived of as absolute, as independent of nature. Tien, or Shang-ti, the supreme God of the Chinese, was Heaven conceived of as Lord or sovereign Emperor. Dr. Legge, the learned translator of Confucius, holds that "Tien" signifies the Lord of the Heavens. He finds in the conception an early monotheism. This was not the understanding of the Roman Catholic missionaries in the last century, nor is it the interpretation of the most competent missionaries at present. The testimony of Chinese authors, says Dr. Hopper, "is uniform and the same. Everywhere it is the visible heaven which is referred to." "They refer to an intelligent soul animating the visible heaven, as the soul animates the body of a man." The religion of the Bactrian prophet Zoroaster was a dualism. An eternal principle of evil, a god of darkness, the source of every thing baleful and

hateful, contends against the rival deity, and is never overcome. Max Müller has designated the religion of the Sanskrit-speaking Indians, the system of the Vedas, as henotheism, by which he means the worship of numerous divinities, each of which, however, in the act of worship, is clothed with such attributes as imply that the other divinities are for the moment forgotten, and which might logically abolish them. This is really polytheism with a peculiar monistic drift. But Professor Whitney, than whom there is no higher authority on the subject, dissents from this theory, and attributes the exalted attributes attached to the particular god at the moment of worship, mainly to a natural exaggeration. Professor Whitney declares that "there is no known form of religious faith which presents a polytheism more pure and more absolute than the Vedic religion."[1] Whether monotheism entered into the ancient religion of Egypt is an unsettled debate. It is maintained by Renouf, that the Egyptian monuments and literature exhibit a mingling of monotheism and polytheism; that there was a conception of one God with sublime attributes, — an idea connected, however, with the notion of a plurality of divinities and with debased superstitions. The sublime conception, Renouf contends, was the most ancient. Mr. G. Rawlinson takes the same position, holding that there was a purer, esoteric faith, the religion of the educated class, alongside of the polytheism and idolatry in which the multitude were sunk.[2] On the contrary, Lepsius thinks that the Egyptian religion took its start in sun-worship. Other Ægyptologists would make sun-worship intermediate between an earlier monotheism and polytheism.

[1] Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, tom. vi. (1882), **No. 5, p. 143.**

[2] The Religions of the Ancient World, p. 29.

The religion of the Greeks, as all know, was a polytheism in which there is a struggle towards unity in the lofty image of Zeus, as the father of gods and men, and as the fountain of law and right, which is found in the writings of Sophocles and of his contemporaries. Turning to a much later religion, — the religion of Mohammed, — we find passages in the Koran which imply not only a genuine faith in the Supreme Being, but also the ascription to him of certain exalted moral attributes. "Your God is one God: there is no God but he, the merciful, the compassionate."[1] Paradise is "for those who expend in alms in prosperity and adversity, for those who repress their rage, and those who pardon men. God loves the kind. Those who, when they do a crime, or wrong themselves, remember God, and ask forgiveness of their sins, — and who forgives sins save God? — and do not persevere in what they did, the while they know, these have their reward, — pardon from their Lord," etc.[2]

Passages like these, taken by themselves, would give a higher idea of Mohammed's system than a wider view warrants. Those other representations must be taken into account, in which the holiness of God is obscured, the prophet's fierce resentment is ascribed to the Lord, and a sensual paradise promised to the faithful. "And when ye meet those who misbelieve — then strike off heads until ye have massacred them, and bind fast the bonds. . . . Those who are slain in God's cause. . . . He will make them enter into Paradise"[3] But the higher elements in the religion of

[1] The Koran, Professor Palmer's translation, chap. ii. [150], (vol. i p 22).

[2] Ibid., c. iii. [125], [130], vol. i. p. 63.

[3] Ibid., chap. xlvii. [5], (vol. ii. p. 229).

Mohammed, strongly as they seized upon his faith, did not begin with him. Kuenen argues that he knew little of Abraham, and that the identification of his creed with that of the patriarch, which is found in the Koran, was an afterthought.[1] However imperfect his knowledge of Abraham's history was, the name of the patriarch was familiar to him. It is of more consequence to remember that his main tenet was the familiar belief of the Jews, which a circle of Arab devotees probably still cherished. The religion of Mohammed was a fanatical crusade against polytheism and idolatry, first among the Arabs, and then in the degenerate Christianity of the Eastern Church. The ultimate source of all that is good in Mohammed's movement is the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which he did not refuse to acknowledge, little as he really knew of their contents, and far as he was from comprehending the prophetic or Messianic element of the Old-Testament religion, or its fulfilment in the gospel. Mohammedanism is one grand idea of the Old Testament, the idea of God, with the attribute of holiness largely subtracted, and divested of the principle of progress which issued, in the case of the religion of Israel, in the kingdom of Christ, the universal religion of Jesus.

History indicates that polytheism, whatever be its origin, tends, in the case of nations that advance in intelligence, to some species of monotheism. Professor Whitney finds "unmistakable indications of the beginnings of a tendency to unity in the later Vedic hymns."[2] The Græco-Roman religion had resolved itself, in the mind of Plutarch and many of his contemporaries, into a belief in one Supreme Being, with a host of subordi

[1] Kuenen, National Religions and Universal Religions, p. 12 seq.
[2] Revue, etc., p. 140.

nate divinities. In the second century of the Christian era, under the influence of philosophy, God was conceived of as one Being; and the minor deities were thought of, either as representing the variety of his functions, or as instruments of his providence. This was the mode of thinking in cultivated classes. The belief and rites of the common people remained unaltered. But here a most important fact must be brought to the attention of the reader. We find that the tendencies to unification, although they may beget a sort of monotheism which lingers for a time, commonly issue in Pantheism. Nature still holds the spirit in its fetters. If it is not a multitude of deities, more or less involved in natural forces and functions, it is nature as a whole, figured as an impersonal agency, into which deity is merged. It was so in the ancient classical nations. The esoteric philosophy and theology did not remain deistic: it slid down into Pantheism. The religions of India are a notable illustration of this apparent helplessness of the spirit to rise above nature, above the realm of things finite, to the absolute and personal Being, from whom are all things. One of the most learned and trustworthy of the recent expositors of the religions of India says, "India is radically pantheistic, and that from its cradle onwards."[1] When we examine the Brahminical religion as it was developed on the banks of the Ganges, we find a thoroughly pantheistic system. Emanation is the method by which finite things originate. Brahma is the impersonal essence or life of all things: from Brahma, gods, men, the earth, and all things else, proceed. This alienation from Brahma is evil. The finite soul can find no peace, save in the return to Brahma, — the extinction of personal

[1] Barth, The Religions of India, p. 8.

consciousness. The laws of Manu close with the sentiment: "He who in his own soul perceives the Supreme Soul in all beings, and acquires equanimity towards all, attains the highest state of bliss." The Stoics, and Spinoza, and some of the sayings of Emerson, are anticipated in this Hindoo sentence. All the horrors of transmigration, and all the torments of Brahminical asceticism, have a genetic relation to this fundamental pantheistic tenet. Buddhism is the religion which at present is most lauded by those who would put Christianity on the same general level with the heathen creeds. We may pass by the perplexing inquiry as to the life of its founder, as to what is history, and what is myth, in the narrative. That he was an earnest man, struck with a sense of the misery of the world, and anxious to do good, may be safely concluded. That he made large sacrifices of worldly good in pursuit of his benevolent purpose, is equally certain. That the moral precepts which he enjoined, and the moral spirit which he recommended and practised, are characterized by a benevolence not to be found in the same degree elsewhere outside of the pale of Christianity, is evident. Yet nothing can be better adapted to impress one with the immeasurable superiority of Christianity to heathenism in its best forms than a close attention to the Buddhistic system.

What now, according to Buddha, or Çâkyamuni, is the cause, and what the cure, of the ills of life? His theory is embodied in the four principles: (1) Existence is always attended with misery; to exist is to suffer; (2) The cause of pain is desire, which increases with its gratification; (3) Hence the cessation or suppression of desire is necessary; (4) There are four stages in the way to this result, — four things requisite. These

are, first, an awakening to the consciousness that to exist is to be miserable, and to the perception that misery is the fruit of desire or passion; secondly, the escape, through this knowledge, from impure and revengeful feelings; thirdly, the getting rid successively of all evil desires, then of ignorance, then of doubt, then of heresy, then of unkindliness and vexation. When the believer has reached the fourth stage, he is ready for Nirvâna. What is Nirvâna? What is the blessed goal where all self-discipline reaches its reward? It is the extinction of personal being. It is annihilation. That this is the doctrine of Buddha, scholars generally hold.[1] The same scholars who declare this to be the outcome of the latest and most thorough investigations also find that Nirvâna was held to be attainable in this life;[2] that is, this term was applied by early Buddhist teachers to the serenity which is reached by the saint here. But this does not imply that there is a continuance of individual being beyond death.[3] The most that is claimed by the most competent scholars for Buddha under this head is, that he steadily refused to give an answer to the question.[4] It is sometimes thought that transmigration is inconsistent with the denial that the soul is a substantial entity. But the pantheistic theory as seen in the Brahminical system, while it subtracts

[1] See T. W. Rhys Davids's Art. Buddhism, Encyc. Brit., vol. iv. p. 434; Barth, p. 110; Tiele's Outlines of the History of Religion, etc., p. 35; Koeppen, Die Religion d. Buddha, i. 306; Edkins, Chinese Buddhism, p. 45.

[2] Rhys Davids's Lectures on Origin and Growth of Religion, etc., pp. 100, 253.

[3] Rhys Davids's Lectures, etc., p. 101.

[4] "Orthodox teaching in the ancient order of Buddhists inculcated expressly on its converts to forego the knowledge of the being or non-being of the perfected saint." — *Oldenberg:* Buddha, His Life, His Doctrine, His Order, p. 276.

personality from the soul, may hold that the finite being which we call "the soul" may be embodied not once only, but an indefinite number of times. Yet to exist as distinct from the Absolute, or as self-conscious, is the evil of evils. But while Buddha may possibly have himself held to the "vaguely apprehended and feebly postulated *ego*," passing from one existence to another, — a doctrine found in the Sanskrit books of the North,[1] — the accepted doctrine of the sect was, that the Buddhist, strictly speaking, does not revive, but another in his place, — the "Karma," which is the re-union of the constituent qualities that made up his being. "Such is the doctrine of the entire orthodox literature of Southern Buddhism."[2] "Buddhism does not acknowledge the existence of a soul as a thing distinct from the parts and powers of man which are dissolved at death; and the Nirvâna of Buddhism is simply extinction."[3] The Buddhist aspires to Nirvâna, to the end that he may avert the pains of transmigration from another, his heir or successor.

It is in this method of self-discipline, and in the tempers of heart which are inculcated, that the attractive points of Buddhism are comprised. Chastity, temperance, patience, and, crowning all, universal charity, are to be earnestly cultivated as the indispensable means of redemption from the dread of transmigration and from the pains of existence.

It is obvious where the merits of Buddhism lie, and how restricted is their circumference. Buddha was not an antagonist of the traditional Brahminical religion. He set on foot no crusade against caste. We do not

[1] Barth, pp. 112, 113.

[2] Burnouf, Introd., p. 507 (Barth, p. 112).

[3] Rhys Davids, Encyc. Brit., vol. iv. p. 434, where the proofs are given.

know how far the caste organization was developed when Buddha taught. Whatever hostility there was to Brahminism and caste arose later. There is a common family likeness between his doctrine and the contemporary speculations of the philosophy of the Brahmans. "Atheism, scornful disregard of the cultus and tradition, the conception of a religion entirely spiritual, a contempt for finite existence, belief in transmigration, and the necessity of deliverance from it, the feeble idea of the personality of man," — these are among the features found in Buddhism and the Upanishads.[1]

Buddha created a monkish system as blighting in its influence on intellectual development, and as adverse to the well-being of men, as any thing in the Brahminical creed or rite. This was an essential part of his system. Monasticism, as Kuenen has justly remarked, is an excrescence in the Christian system. The "Son of man came eating and drinking." "There could be no Buddhism without 'bhikshus' — there is a Christianity without monks." "That which in one case constitutes the very essence of the religion, and cannot be removed from it, even in thought, without annulling the system itself, is in the other case . . . the natural but one-sided development of certain elements in the original movement, coupled with gross neglect of others which have equal or still higher right to assert themselves."[2]

Buddha was the great apostle of Pessimism. He sought to point out a virtuous method of getting rid of existence. The Brahman sought to save himself: Buddha sought, also, to save others. But from what? From conscious existence. It is literally a system without God and without hope, save the negative hope

[1] Barth, p. 115. [2] Kuenen, p. 306.

of deliverance from personal life. He invited the victims of sorrow and terror to imitate him with the promise of — annihilation! Contrast the invitation of Him who said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"! This rest was in fellowship with him, bringing in it a communion with the heavenly Father, without whom not a sparrow falls, who makes all things work together for good to them that love him, and opens the gates of heaven at last to the soul that has been trained by earthly service for the higher service and unmingled blessedness of the life to come.

Buddhism, vigorous at its birth, "has been smitten with premature decrepitude. . . . Some are at times fain to regard Buddhism as a spiritual emancipation, a kind of Hindoo Reformation; and there is no doubt that in certain respects it was both." But it created an institution "far more illiberal, and formidable to spiritual independence," than the caste system. "Not only did all the vitality of the Church continue in a clergy living apart from the world; but among this clergy itself the conquering zeal of the first centuries gradually died away under the influence of Quietism and the discipline enforced. . . . All boldness and true originality of thought disappeared in the end in the bosom of this spirit-weakening organization."[1]

What, then, is the real significance of Buddhism as an historical phenomenon? It is the most powerful testimony ever given to the burden that rests on human nature. From its millions upon millions of adherents there arises an unconscious cry for the help which their own system cannot furnish. Buddhism, in its inmost purport, is a part of the sad wail of humanity in its longing for redemption.

[1] Barth, p. 137.

Christianity received from its parent, the religion of Israel, the truth of a living, personal God, — a God not merged in nature, but the Author of nature. The personality of God gives to man his true place. Man is a person; and religion, instead of being a mystic absorption of the individual, is the communion of person with person. Immortality is personal. The guaranty and evidence of it is in the relation of man to God, and in the exalted position which is thereby conferred on man. This guaranty becomes a joyous assurance, when the believer is conscious of being spiritually united to Jesus Christ, and a partaker of his life. The great idea of the kingdom of God is the object of aspiration and of effort, — the goal of history. The life that now is, instead of being branded as a curse, is made a theatre for the realization of a divine purpose, and the vestibule of a state of being for which, when rightly used, it is the natural prelude.

Through such characteristics as these, Christianity is fitted to be the religion of mankind. None of the systems which have aspired to this distinction has the remotest hope of attaining it. None of these systems contains a single element of value, which is not found in its own place in the Christian system: on the contrary, there is nothing in Christianity which forms any permanent barrier to its acceptance by any race or nation. No other religion has in an equal degree proved its adaptedness to be the religion of the world. It addresses itself, not to a single people, nor to any branch of the human race exclusively or specially, but to mankind. The apostles were directed to carry it "to every creature." The idea of the brotherhood of the race becomes in Christianity a realized fact. Appealing to a common religious nature, a common consciousness of

sin and of the need of help, a common sense of the burden of sorrow and mortality, and offering a remedy which is equally adapted to all, Christianity shows itself possessed of the attributes of a universal religion. Being, on the practical side, a religion of principles, and not of rules, it enters into every form of human society and every variety of individual character, with a renovating and moulding agency.

How shall the rise of such a religion be accounted for? We are pointed back to Hebrew monotheism. But here we meet with a phenomenon altogether unique, both in its origin and in its effects. That the doctrine of Moses was not derived from the religion of Egypt, scholars of every type of theological belief unite in affirming. The question whence Moses derived his idea of God, says Wellhausen, "could not possibly be worse answered than by a reference to his relations with the priestly caste of Egypt and their wisdom. It is not to be believed that an Egyptian deity could inspire the Hebrews of Goshen with courage for the struggle against the Egyptians, or that an abstraction of esoteric speculation could become the national deity of Israel."[1] "Amongst students of Israelite religion," says Kuenen, "there is not, as far as I know, a single one who derives Yahvism" — the worship of Jehovah — "from Egypt, either in the strange manner hit upon by Comte, or in any other."[2] "It may be confidently asserted," says Renouf, "that neither Hebrews nor Greeks borrowed any of their ideas from Egypt."[3] The Decalogue, which all, save critics of an extreme school, attribute without hesitation — in the substance of it, at

[1] Encyc. Brit., Art. Israel, vol. xiii. p. 400.
[2] National Religions and Universal Religions, p. 64.
[3] The Religion of Ancient Egypt, p. 254.

least — to Moses, commands the exclusive worship of Jehovah, and proves the spirituality of the conception by forbidding all images and representations of him. "In the post-Mosaic period," says Dillmann, "at least in the central sanctuary of the whole people, and in the temple of Solomon, the unrepresentable character of Jehovah through any image was a recognized principle. The worship of an image on Sinai (Exod. xxxii.), in the time of the judges, in the kingdom of the ten tribes, does not prove that a prohibition of image-worship was not known, but only that it was very hard in the mass of the people, especially of the northern tribes, which were more under Canaanite influences, to bring this law to a recognition; and for centuries, in fact, it was a subject of strife between a stricter and a laxer party, since the latter only forbade an image of a false god, the former forbade every image of Jehovah likewise."[1] The prophets Amos and Hosea do not insist on the exclusion of images, as if this prohibition were any thing new. We need not inquire whether the non-existence of other deities was expressly asserted in the Mosaic teaching or not.[2] Since Moses did not derive the idea of God from the Egyptian theology, both the historical records, and the probabilities of the case, testify that it was the God of the forefathers whose existence, and relations to the people, were by him brought home afresh to their consciousness. The entire work of Moses as a founder admits of no historical explanation, without the assumption of a higher religion before, such as, according to Genesis, belonged to the fathers; but such a higher religion necessarily implies personal media, or representatives. "Advances

[1] Die Bücher Exodus u. Leviticus, p. 209.
[2] On this subject, see Oehler, ii. 155.

in religion link themselves to eminent personalities; and the recollection of them is commonly kept up in the people who come after who have been gathered into unity as sharers in common of their faith." Hence the narrative of the faith of Abraham derives a strong historical corroboration from the faith and work of Moses.[1] Whatever difference may exist on the question whether belief in the existence of other gods outside of Israel, inferior to Jehovah, lingered among the people after the age of Moses, all allow, that, as early as the eighth century, the conception of Jehovah as the only existing God was proclaimed by the prophets in the clearest manner. How unique was this monotheism! Other nations somehow made room for the gods of foreign peoples. They brought them into the Pantheon, or they gave them homes within their own proper boundaries. Not so with Israel. Jehovah was God, and there was no other. And he was a *holy* God. In this grand particular, the conception was distinguished from heathen ideas of divinity. How shall this idea of Jehovah, so peculiar and so elevated, be accounted for? The notion of a Semitic tendency to monotheism has a very slender foundation, and would lead us to expect the religion of Jehovah to arise in Babylon or Tyre as soon as among the people of Israel.

If we leave the question of the origin of Hebrew monotheism, how shall it be explained that it did not sink down, when it had once arisen, into Pantheism, as was the fact in other religions, — for example, in the religion of the Hindoos, and in the philosophy of the Greeks, which Lord Bacon calls "the pagan divinity"? How did this unique and extraordinary faith keep up

[1] See Dillmann, Die Genesis, pp. 228, 229.

its vitality, age after age, in the presence of seductive types of heathenism, and in the midst of political disintegration and ruin? How came the light, when it had dawned, to go on increasing to the perfect day, instead of fading out, as elsewhere, in the gloom of night?

Leaving these problems, too, unsolved, how was it that the Hebrew monotheism held within itself the seeds of so great a future? Assailants of the Old Testament religion never tire of dwelling on the alleged narrowness of Jewish theology, and on the selfish and unsocial character of their religious theory. It cannot be denied that the consciousness of being a Chosen People often engendered an arrogant and intolerant spirit towards the nations less favored; that is, the bulk of mankind. Yet what was the actual outcome? It was the religion of universal love, of the equality of men before God, of the fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of the race. It was the religion of Jesus. "By their fruits ye shall know them." The Old Testament was the one book with which Jesus was familiar. In the teaching of the Old Testament, the apostles were steeped. The originality of Jesus is not more marked, and his advance beyond all previous doctrine, than is the organic relation of his instruction and work, of the type of character which he exemplified and enjoined, to the Old-Testament ideas. The God whom we worship, if we believe in God, is the God of Abraham and of Moses, of Samuel, of Isaiah, and of David, of Paul and of John, — even the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no break in the unity of the religious consciousness from that far remote day when Abraham believed in God, and was lifted above the life of sense by his communion with the Invisible. With this religious consciousness, the ethical development up to its con

summation in the impartial justice and unselfish love of man as man, which is the rule of Christ, is inseparably connected. With it is connected the ever-unfolding dictates and corollaries of this principle, by which wrongs and miseries are more and more discerned and lessened.

How shall such a religion, founded on such a conception of God, be accounted for? Who that believes in God can find it incredible that it springs from his revelation of himself, — a self-revelation, consummated in Christ? An examination of other religions, instead of shaking the faith of a Christian, tends to confirm it.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RELATION OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

THE critical discussions which are rife in our times respecting the Bible, the authorship of its various books, and the historical value and doctrinal authority of their contents, make it important to consider the bearing of these inquiries and debates on the Christian Faith. What is the relation of the collection of writings which we call the Bible to the religion of Christ? How far is any particular doctrine on the subject of the Scriptures essential to a theoretical or to a practical reception of the gospel in its real import and just efficacy? Do the results of critical science imperil, or are they likely to imperil, the foundations on which Christianity, viewed as an experience of the soul, or as a body of beliefs concerning God and man, the life that now is, and the world hereafter, reposes?

So much is clear at the outset, that our knowledge of the historical and doctrinal parts of Christianity is derived almost exclusively from the Bible. The same is true of our knowledge of the origin and growth of that entire religious system which is consummated in the work and teaching of Christ and of the apostles. It is not less plain, that the nutriment of Christian piety is derived chiefly from the pages of Sacred Scripture. The instrumentalities of human teaching, the activities of the Church in building up Christian character, and the

rest of the manifold agencies through which the power of religion is kept alive in the individual and in society, draw their vitality from the Bible. The habit of resorting to the Bible for spiritual quickening and guidance is the indispensable condition of religious life among Christians. The practical proof of the inspiration of Holy Scripture — in some sense, which avails to distinguish this volume from all other books known to men — is found in this life-giving power that abides in it, and remains undiminished, from age to age, in all the mutations of literature, and amid the diverse types and advancing stages of culture and civilization. The general proposition, that the Bible is at once the fountain of spiritual light and life, the prime source of religious knowledge, and the rule of faith and of conduct among Christians, admits of no contradiction.

But this general theorem does not cut off those special problems and distinctions which, with a view to precise definition and qualification, constitute biblical criticism, as that branch of study is now understood. The traditional views which were handed down from the Church of the fourth century, through the middle ages, uncritical to some extent as those views were in their inception, could not possibly shun the scrutiny of a more searching and scientific era of human development. The liberty of thought which the Reformation brought in was attended at the outset with a more discriminating and a more free handling of questions pertaining to the origin and character of the books of Scripture, as the example of Luther notably evinces. The separation of the Old Testament apocrypha from the canon was one result of this more bold and enlightened spirit of inquiry. The exigencies of controversy with the Roman Catholics begot, among Protestants of

the next age, a more scrupulously conservative method of enunciating the doctrine respecting the inspiration of biblical books than the pioneers in the Protestant movement had adopted. The maxim, that "the Bible is the religion of Protestants," in opposition to the Tridentine principle of church authority, was so construed as to lay fetters upon the critical spirit among the Protestant theologians of the seventeenth century. More and more the rise of the scientific spirit — the spirit which pursues truth alone as its goal, casting aside every bias as tending to blind the eye, and sifting evidence with an unsparing rigor — could not fail to affect this department of knowledge. More and more this spirit of candid, and exhaustive and fearless investigation, which is the legitimate child of the Protestant movement, insisted upon testing the prevalent impressions concerning the Bible and its various parts, by the strict rules that govern investigation in every other province. Literary criticism, which concerns itself with the authorship and date of the several books, with their real or alleged discrepancies, and with the correctness of the received text; natural and physical science, exploring the origin of the earth and of its inhabitants, and of the starry spheres above; historical and archæological study, exhuming relics of the past, and deciphering monuments of bygone ages, — these branches of knowledge bring, each of them, conclusions of its own to be placed in juxtaposition and comparison with the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. Biblical criticism was something inevitable. It sprang up within the pale of the Church. Its most valuable contributions have been made by Christian scholars. It is true that disbelievers in the divine mission of Jesus, and even in the supernatural altogether, have sometimes devoted themselves to these inquiries

It is a blunder and an injustice, however, on the part of Christians, and a false boast on the part of their adversaries, when, on either side, it is affirmed that biblical criticism, and the certified results of it, are principally due to efforts springing up outside of the Church, among opposers of supernatural religion.

Enough has been said respecting the exalted function of Scripture to preclude misapprehension when we proceed to remark that the Bible is one thing, and Christianity is another. The religion of Christ, in the right signification of these terms, is not to be confounded with the scriptures, even of the New Testament. The point of view from which the Bible, in its relation to Christianity, is looked on as the Koran appears to devout Mohammedans, is a mistaken one. The entire conception according to which the energies of the Divine Being, as exerted in the Christian revelation, are thought to have been concentrated on the production of a book, is a misconception, and one that is prolific of error.

1. The revelation of God which culminates in the gospel, so far from being a naked communication let down from the skies, is in and through a process of redemption. Redemption is an effect wrought in the souls of men and in human society. Christianity is a new spiritual creation in humanity. The product is "new creatures in Christ Jesus," — a moral transformation of mankind. Jesus said to his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world . . . ye are the salt of the earth." From them was to go forth an illuminating, renovating power. Seeing their good works, attracted by their spirit, other men were to be brought to the Father. The brotherhood of Christian believers was the dwelling-place in which the living God made his abode: they

were his "house," as the temple was his house under the former dispensation.[1] They are expressly declared to be the "temple" of God, in which his Spirit abides.[2] The "pillar and ground of the truth" — that which upholds the truth in the world, and is like a foundation underneath it — is the Church. It is not said to be books which had been written, or which were to be written, but the community of faithful souls.[3] A society had been brought into being, — a people of God, with an open eye to discern spiritual things. A vine-stock had been planted, the branches of which, if they did not dissever themselves, would bear fruit.

2. Revelation is historical: the means of revelation are primarily the dealings of God with men. The revelation of God to the Hebrew people was made through the providential guidance and government which determined the course of their history. When the sacred writers — as the authors of the Psalms, or inspired orators like the protomartyr Stephen — speak of divine revelation, they recount the ways in which God has led his people, — the separation of Abraham, the disclosure of God in the history of the patriarchs who followed him, the manifestation of God in the deliverance from bondage in Egypt by the hand of Moses, in the leading of Israel through the wilderness, in the conquest of the land which they inhabited, in the various instances of national prosperity and national disaster which followed. Events had been so arranged, signal rewards had been so made to alternate with signal chastisements, that God was more and more brought home to their minds and hearts in his true character. The nations generally valued their divinities for the protection and help which

[1] Heb. iii. 2, 5, x. 21; 1 Pet. iv. 17, cf. Ephes. ii. 22
[2] 1 Cor. iii. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 16. [3] 1 Tim. iii. 15.

they afforded. This was the ordinary heathen view. Under the divine training of the Israelites, they rose to a higher and altogether different conception. National downfall, and what seemed utter ruin, did not signify that Jehovah was powerless. These calamities were the chastisement inflicted on them by God himself. It was not that God was overcome by stronger powers: it was he himself who had brought on them defeat and exile, and the desolation of their altars and homes. Hence they were moved to cling to him all the closer. They were saved from complete despair. They could believe that God might not have utterly forsaken them. They ascended to a higher point of view. They learned to contemplate God both as holy, as actuated by ethical motives in his government, as just to punish, and merciful to spare and to forgive the contrite, and as the Ruler, not of themselves alone, but of the whole earth. The thread of his all-governing purpose and will ran, not through the history of Israel alone, but through the fate and fortunes of all nations. By experiences of actual life under the providential sway of God, their knowledge of him expanded, their communion with him became more intimate and more intelligent. A father discloses himself to his children by his management of them from day to day, and from year to year. His smile rewards them. He frowns upon them when they go astray. They are trained to confide in him. They know him more and more as they live under his care, and witness the manifestation of his qualities in the successive periods of their lives. The didactic element is not wanting. The father teaches, as well as guides and governs. Explanation, admonition, — it may be, outpourings of grief and affection, — are intermingled with the instruction contained in act

and deed. His dealings with them are not left to be misinterpreted. Their purport is made clear, if need be, by verbal elucidation. They are intermingled with counsel and command. Somewhat after this manner, in the course of the history of Israel, "the servant" of the Lord, not only were heroes raised up providentially to lead armies, and administer civil affairs, but holy men were called upon the stage to make known the meaning of the doings of God, to point the presumptuous and the desponding to the future, to give voice to the spirit of prayer and praise which the character of God, and his relation to them, should appropriately inspire. Prophets, with vision clarified by light shining into their souls from above, expounded the providential dealings of God, read aloud his purposes discovered in them, commanded, warned, and consoled in his name.

If we turn to the revelation of God in the gospel, we observe the same method. It is an historical manifestation. A child is born at Bethlehem, and brought up at Nazareth, consecrated by baptism in the Jordan, collects about him a company of chosen followers, lives in intercourse with men, performs miracles of healing and deliverance, dies, and re-appears from the grave. He teaches; and his teaching is indispensable to the effect to be produced, and is most precious. But his own person and character, his deeds of power and mercy, his death for the remission of sins, his resurrection, ascension, and continued agency through the Spirit — it is in these facts and transactions that the gospel centres. They are the material, the vehicle, of revelation. The didactic element is to unfold their intrinsic significance. It is to insure against misunderstanding, and to impress on the hearts and minds of men the inherent meaning of these deeds of God in human history.

3. The persons and transactions through which revelation is made, one must remember, are anterior to the Scriptures that relate to them. The Apostle Paul traces back the line of God's people to Abraham and to the faith that sprang up in his soul. This faith of Abraham preceded, of course, every record of it, and every thing that was written about it. There could be no narrative of divine judgments and deliverances, and of their effect on the religious consciousness of the people, prior to the occurrences in question and to the observation of their result. As fast as sacred literature arose, its influence would be more or less felt; but this literature presupposed and rested on a progressive religious life and on the historical forces which fostered as well as originated it. The great fact of the old dispensation, its palpable outcome, was a people imbued with the spirit of a pure theism, separated from the heathen world by the possession of an exalted faith in God, and of a great hope of redemption inseparably conjoined with it, — a people bearing witness to God in the midst of the pagan world. In like manner, the Church of the new covenant preceded the New-Testament writings. Jesus himself wrote nothing. As far as we know, at the date of his ascension, nothing respecting him had been put in writing. His words, his miracles, the things that he suffered, his resurrection, were unrecorded. Not less than a score of years may have passed before those first essays at recording what the disciples knew respecting his life, which Luke notices in his prologue, were composed. The oldest writings in the New-Testament collection are certain Epistles of Paul, which were called out by his necessary absence from churches, or by special emergencies. Yet the Christian faith was in being; the Church was in being; the Gospel was

preached; the testimony of the apostles was spread abroad; numerous converts were made. Christianity was not made by the Christian Scriptures.

4. On the contrary, the Scriptures are the product of the Church. They do not create the community: the community creates them. The histories of the Old Testament record the progress and fortunes of the people. The historians are of the people to which their works relate. The prophets, with whatever divine gifts of insight and foresight they are endued, spring, in like manner, out of the people. The fire that spreads along the earth, here and there shoots upward, and sends its light afar. The psalm is the inspired expression of the devotion of the great congregation gathered within the temple. Even the Proverbs have an origin and a stamp among the Chosen People which make them analogous to the proverb elsewhere: "the wisdom of many, and the wit of one."

As the Gospels were for the Church, so they were from the Church. Apostles and their disciples composed them to meet a want in the community in which the authors were members as well as guides. The Epistles were the product of the Church, as well as means of its edification. Their authors were moved by the same Spirit, with whatever difference of mode and of measure, as the membership among whom they ranked themselves as brethren. There was not even an intention to compose a body of sacred literature. The purpose of Providence went beyond the writers' intent. The very word "Bible," denoting a single book, results from a blunder. A Greek word, in the plural, signifying originally "books," it was mistaken in the middle ages for a Latin noun of the first declension singular. It was not until the oral teaching of the apostles was

beginning to be forgotten, and their immediate disciples were passing away, that the churches bethought themselves to gather together in a volume the writings of the apostles, and writings having an apostolic character. The canon was of slow and gradual formation.

The foregoing remarks may throw some light on the question how Christianity stands affected by biblical criticism. The Christian faith is expressed in a summary form in the ancient document known as the Apostles' Creed. In its doctrinal aspect, the Christian faith was formulated early in the fourth century, in the creed called the Nicene, which, as regards its main affirmations, has received the sanction of most organized bodies of Christians. Neither of these confessions make any declaration respecting those particular questions, relative to the origin of books and the kind and degree of authority that pertains to them, which furnish the leading topics of biblical criticism. They are silent on the subject. It is Christianity in its facts and principles which they undertake to set forth. This does not imply an undervaluing of the importance of the question of the inspiration and authority of the Bible. It illustrates, however, the point that the Christian system of truth is separable in thought from varying phases of opinion relative to the origin and characteristics of the Scriptures.

The consideration of divine revelation as having for its end the building up of a community or kingdom, and as made through the vehicle of a history transacted on the earth, lifts us upon a plane where critical problems, within a certain reasonable limit, may be regarded with comparative indifference. Within that limit, literary questions having to do with the authorship of books, as, for example, whether it be simple or com-

posite, and whether traditional impressions as to authorship are well founded; questions having to do, also, with the correctness of the text which has been transmitted to us; questions as to the order of succession in the stages through which the community of God has passed; questions as to the accuracy of details in historical narratives — are no longer felt to be of so vital moment. They are not points on which the Christian religion stands or falls. The timidity which springs out of the idea of Christianity as exclusively a book-religion, every line in the literature of which is clothed with the preternatural sanctity ascribed by Mohammedan devotees to their sacred writings, is dissipated. The Christian believer, as long as fundamental verities and the foundations of belief on which they stand are unassailed, is no more disturbed by the disclosure of the human factor in the origination of the Scriptures, and by finding that it played a more extensive part than was once supposed. The treasure is not lost because it is distinctly perceived to be held "in earthen vessels."

This is not the place to enter into a discussion of the critical questions connected with the Old-Testament books, and of their contents. Yet, on this topic, a single observation may be made, which will serve still further to elucidate the meaning of what has been said above. The observation is, that the religion of Christ stands in an organic relation to the Old-Testament religion, and that this relation, in its most essential features, is an historical fact that admits of no rational doubt, be the views taken of the Old-Testament literature what they may. The people that gave birth to Jesus Christ were a people marked by distinctive peculiarities, which are well known, abundantly attested, and universally

allowed to have existed. They were worshippers of one God, a living God, a Spirit, the Creator and sole Sovereign of the universe. Along with this peculiar, exalted theism there had come to exist the Messianic expectation. There was to be a great expansion, purification, triumph of the kingdom of God, — the community of his worshippers. There was to be a deliverance, a world-wide extension of the true religion. These are acknowledged facts. How did that state of things come to be? How did that peculiar community grow into being, which furnished the human and temporal conditions of the birth and career of Jesus? How shall we explain that he was born of Israel, and not of the Greeks or Egyptians? There is no dispute on the question whether there is a close, organic connection between the religion of Palestine and the religion of Christ. It is a fact too patent to be doubted for a moment.

Back of that peculiar religion, and that whole state of things which existed in the Palestinian community and its foreign offshoots at the time when Jesus was born, there lies a history. So vast and spreading a tree is not without deep roots. It is perfectly obvious that the Old-Testament books are the principal, if not the exclusive, documents from which we can acquaint ourselves with the rise and progress of that unique religion which was the precursor and parent of Christianity. From them we must learn who were the human leaders, civil and religious, through whose mediation that religion advanced from its beginnings, and attained to the development which it is found to have reached at the approach of the Christian era. Now, inquiries may be started as to the order of succession in the laws and in the institutions of worship, which were not always

the same, and even as to what precisely was done and contributed by this or that inspired leader or teacher. These questions do not necessarily touch Christianity in any vital part. They do not necessarily affect in any substantial degree the view that is taken of the history of the people of Israel. Investigations of Roman history, even when they require the modification of previous ideas, do not alter fundamentally our conception of the growth, the polity, and the power of the Roman Empire. They only make still clearer the ruling ideas that animated the Roman people. The history of England is not written now as it was written a hundred years ago; but the existence of the English monarchy, and the turning-points in its origin and growth, are left untouched by the scrutiny of historical criticism.

One of the questions which has occasioned, since the beginning of this century, much debate, is that of the authorship of the Pentateuch, — whether it emanates, as a whole or in part (and, if in part, to what extent), from the pen of Moses. Even the critics who carry the theory of a non-Mosaic authorship to the extreme of denying that the decalogue, in the form in which it stands, proceeds from its reputed human author, do not, as a rule, call in question the fact that Moses was the founder of the legislation and religious institutions of the nation of Israel. Reuss, one of the most learned of the critics of this type, emphatically declares[1] that the agency of Moses was of so influential and far-reaching a character, that in the whole course of the history of Israel, prior to Jesus, there appeared no personage to be compared with him. He towers above all that followed in the long line of heroes and prophets.

[1] Geschichte d. heiligen Schriften d. A. T., vol. i.

On any view that does not pass the bounds of reason, "the law came by Moses." The recollection of the leadership of Moses, of his grand and dominating agency in the deliverance of the people from bondage, and in laying the foundations of their theocratic polity, was indelibly stamped upon the Hebrew mind. To discredit a tradition so deeply rooted in the generations that followed would be a folly of incredulity. It might almost be said that the voice of the great Lawgiver reverberates down the subsequent ages of Hebrew history, until the appearance of Him whose teaching fulfilled, and in that sense superseded the utterances of them "of old time." Ewald has dwelt impressively on the living memory, the memory of the heart, transmitted from father to son, of the great redemption from Egyptian slavery, — the standing type of the mighty spiritual deliverance to be achieved by a greater than Moses. If Moses was in reality so effective an agent in forming the Israelitish nation, and in shaping its peculiar system; if, in truth, so powerful an impulse emanated from him as Reuss allows, the question is naturally suggested, whether there would be wanting (since the art of writing was then well known) contemporary records, and something from the pen of Moses himself. If there is nothing improbable in the statement that he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, then it is surely to be expected that he would, to some extent, have committed his laws and injunctions to writing. If so, it cannot be regarded as unlikely that what he thus composed constitute an important part, to say the least, of the materials of the Pentateuch. But these are critical inquiries upon which we are not called on here to dilate.

In defining the attitude which the Christian believer

may reasonably take in relation to biblical criticism, there are two or three considerations which deserve to be specially insisted on. It is now assumed that the evidences of the supernatural mission of Jesus, and of his miracles, have produced the conviction which they warrant. It is obvious, in the first place, that so far as critical theories spring from the rejection of the supernatural, either as in itself impossible, or as having no function in connection with the religion of Christ, those theories have no weight. They are vitiated by the bias which lies at their root. They proceed upon an unscientific, because disproved, hypothesis, that the religion of the Bible is a purely human product. When it is denied that a particular author wrote a certain book, or that it was written at a certain date, or that incidents related in it are true, or that predictions in it were made, and this denial depends simply on the *a priori* disbelief in the supernatural, it is of no value, and, to a Christian believer, will carry no weight. A theory respecting the matters just enumerated may be broached by one who disbelieves in the resurrection of Jesus, and it may be sound, although it contravenes traditional opinion; but as far as that theory involves, as a presupposition and a *conditio sine qua non*, the denial or doubt of the resurrection, it is worthless. This criterion at once disposes of a mass of critical speculation about the literature of the Bible and its contents, which has no more solid foundation than the arbitrary assumption that a miracle is impossible, or that Christianity is not from God in any other sense than is true of Buddhism. Belief in Christianity as coming supernaturally from God, does not justify one in dispensing with critical investigation, which, it need not be said, in order to be of any value, must be

prosecuted thoroughly and in a candid and truth-loving spirit. Neither does it justify one in disregarding the canons of historical judgment, for the reason that particular features of a narrative are miraculous, and that miracles are possible, and have actually taken place at points along the line of divine revelation. An historical religion must verify itself, not only in general and as a whole, but also in its various parts, to the historical inquirer. That is to say, from the general truth, when once established, of the supernatural origin of the religion of the Bible, the strict verity of all the facts recorded in it, whether natural or supernatural, cannot at once be logically concluded. The tests of historical criticism must be applied as well to details as to the system as a whole.

Does it comport with the essentials of Christian belief to hold that deception may, in any instances, have been used in connection with the authorship of books of Sacred Scripture? For example, can it be admitted that what is known in ecclesiastical history as "pious fraud" had a part in the framing of scriptural books? For instance, is it consistent to allow that an author may have palmed off a book, historical or didactic, as the production of an honored man of an earlier time? In answer to these questions, it is to be said at the outset, that the supposition of an intended deception ought not to be allowed without satisfactory proof. It cannot be safely asserted that the author or authors of the apocryphal book of Enoch, which is referred to in Jude (ver. 14), and no part of which goes back farther than the age of the Maccabees, meant that readers should believe Enoch, "the seventh from Adam," to have been the writer. It may be in this, as no doubt it was in other cases, a mode of giving dignity and weight

to lessons which the real author thought would be less efficacious if put forth in his own name, but which he cast into this form with no intent to have them believed to be productions of the elder time. At the same time, we should be cautious about assuming that a refinement of ethical feeling equal to that which Christianity develops and demands, existed at all periods under the ancient dispensation. If there was, in general, an inferior stage in the development of conscience, it is not incredible, that, even in holy men, there was a less delicate sense of truth and a less sensitive observance of the obligation of strict veracity. How far it may have pleased the Divine Being to allow this lack of moral discernment to affect the literary activity, as we know that it affected in other provinces the personal conduct and judgment, of holy and inspired men, we cannot *a priori* — at least, not with absolute confidence — determine. Every thing must yield at last to the fair verdicts of a searching but reverent scholarship, which explores the field with the free and assured step of a Christian believer.

This brings us to the further remark, that the authority of Christ and of the apostles, once established by convincing proofs, is decisive. Nothing that clashes with that authority, when it is rightly understood and defined, can stand. The evidence against any critical theory, which, if admitted, would be in collision with the authority of Jesus and of the apostles, would tell with equal force against the fundamental faith of a Christian. While this is to be borne in mind, it is equally necessary to avoid erroneous interpretations of their teaching, as far as it bears on literary and critical questions in connection with the Scriptures, their authorship and contents. A dogmatic utterance on such

points, on the part of the Saviour or of the apostles, is not to be hastily inferred from references and citations which may not have been intended to carry this consequence. Not less essential is it to avoid an incautious, unverifiable extension of the teaching function which was claimed by Jesus for himself, and was conveyed by him to the apostles. The incarnation, in the deeper apprehension of it which enters into the evangelical theology of the present time, is perceived to involve limitations of the Saviour himself *in statu humiliationis*, which were formerly ignored. A stricter exegesis does not tolerate the artificial exposition, which was once in vogue, of passages which assert or indicate such a restriction, voluntary in its origin, during the period when the Lord was a man among men. It must be made clear that the Lord intended to declare himself on points like those to which we have adverted, and that, directly or by implication, he included them within that province which he knew to belong to him as a religious and ethical teacher, and in which he spoke as "one having authority."

If so much must be admitted by the most reverent disciple respecting the Great Teacher himself, surely not less must be said of the apostles. How far peculiarities of education, traditional and current impressions respecting the topics involved in biblical criticism, were left untouched, but continued to influence them, — not only while they were with Jesus, but also when the Spirit of inspiration qualified them to go forth as heralds in his service, — can be settled by no *a priori* dictum, but only through processes of careful study. The sooner the wise words of Bishop Butler are laid to heart by Christian people, the better will it be for their own peace of mind, and for the cause of Christianity in

its relation to doubters and in its conflict with foes. "The only question," says Butler, "concerning the truth of Christianity, is whether it be a real revelation, not whether it be attended with every circumstance which we should have looked for; and, concerning the authority of Scripture, whether it be what it claims to be, not whether it be a book of such sort, and so promulged, as weak men are apt to fancy a book containing a divine revelation should be."[1]

The apostles were empowered to understand and to expound the gospel. The real purport and end of the mission, the death, the resurrection, of Jesus, were opened up to their vision. His words, brought back to their remembrance, unfolded the hidden meaning with which they were laden. The relation of the anterior dispensation to the new era, the one being anticipatory of the other, they, if not instantly, at least gradually, saw into. Thus were they qualified to lead, and not to mislead, to teach and to guide the Church. But not only were they men of like passions with ourselves, but in knowledge they had no part in omniscience. That which inspiration made clear to them was not made clear instantly and all at once. He who was not behind the chief of the apostles placed himself among those who now "see through a glass, darkly," and waited for the full disclosure of truth which should supersede his dim and fragmentary perceptions.

There is an order of things to be believed. Before the scriptures of the New Testament, Christ was preached and believed in: so now, prior to minute inquiries, and the exact formulation of doctrines, about the canon and inspiration, Christ is offered to faith. The grand outlines of the gospel, both on the side of

[1] See also the context, Analogy, p. ii. c. iii.

fact and of doctrine, stand out in bold relief. They are attested by historical proof. They are verified by evidences which are irrespective of many of the topics of theological debate and of biblical criticism. The recognition of Christ in his character as the Son of God and Saviour of men, is the prerequisite for engaging successfully in more remote and difficult inquiries respecting the literature and the history of revealed religion.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IN ITS RELATION TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.[1]

By the canon of the New Testament is understood the books, collectively taken, which have authority among Christians as regulative of belief and conduct. The word "canon" signified at first a rule, or measuring-rod. It was applied in the Church to the brief creed or summary of Christian truth, which, in somewhat varying form, as early as the closing period of the second century, was recognized as including the essen-

[1] Only a few words can here be said respecting the canon of the Old Testament. Its three departments comprised: (1) The Thora, or Pentateuch; (2) The Prophets, embracing the historical books from Joshua to 2 Kings (inclusive), Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve "Minor Prophets;" (3) the Hagiographa, comprising all the remaining books usually considered by Protestants canonical. These three collections were made, as scholars now generally hold, separately and successively. Josephus, about A.D. 100, in his vindication of Jewish history against the aspersions of Apion, declares (I. 8) the number of books which are by his countrymen "justly believed to be divine" to be twenty-two. It is clear that he includes all of our Old-Testament canonical books, and no others. His method of combining books — he reckons, for example, the two books of Kings as one — reduces the total number to twenty-two. That this was the canon received by his Palestinian contemporaries in the age of the apostles may be safely inferred. There are several references in the New Testament to things recorded in the apocryphal books; but none of these books are spoken of in terms to imply that they were classified among the authoritative writings referred to above. The whole subject of the authorship and date of the several books of the Old Testament, and of the collection of them into the canon, pertains to a distinct branch of theological science, — the Introduction to the Old Testament.

tials of the common faith, — the *regula fidei* as it was styled. The word "canon" was first used to designate the Holy Scriptures, in the fourth century, by the celebrated Alexandrian Father, Athanasius, who speaks of this definite body of writings as "canonized," that is, as accepted; this acceptance being a part of the canon, or rule of faith. Subsequently "canon" acquired the sense which it now holds, and was used by the Latin Fathers to denote the books, which, to the exclusion of all others, regulate Christian belief and teaching.

On what principle, by what method, and at what time, was it ascertained what books the canon of the New Testament should comprise? How far is the traditional determination of this question to be relied on? If there are disputes or serious doubts respecting particular books, what bearing have these questions on the Christian faith? Do they, or do they not, affect its foundations?

1. It is obvious, that, if we do not acknowledge the infallible authority of the Church of Rome, the questions pertaining to the canon must be determined by historical inquiry. The weight to be attached to tradition and to ancient opinion must be decided by the same method. There is no other course that is open to a Protestant. No verdict on these points has come down from any ancient council having an œcumenical character. Such a verdict, if it existed, could not govern the opinion of a consistent Protestant, since general councils were capable of error.[1] We must look at the evidence, external and internal, on which the claim of each book to apostolic authorship or apostolic authority rests.

2. Even a cursory attention to ancient ecclesiastical

[1] See Article XXI. of the Thirty-nine Articles of the English Church.

history shows that the canon was of slow and gradual formation. While the apostles were living, their oral teaching excited most interest. Their writings were supplementary to their oral instruction.[1] These writings would circulate, to a certain extent, from church to church. In some cases the apostles would direct that a letter should be sent to other churches by the church to which it was immediately addressed.[2] It was only when the apostles had left the world, and the void made by their absence was felt; when heretical leaders, like Marcion and Valentinus, brought in novel and obnoxious doctrines; when sectaries began to alter the writings of the apostles, or forge books in their name; when, therefore, the churches felt the necessity of guarding the legacy of apostolic teaching, and drawing together, for the security of the faith, in a more compact, defensive fellowship, — it was only when this new state of things arose, that collections began to be made, here and there, of books known to be apostolic and authoritative. The Old-Testament scriptures had been received from the beginning, and publicly read, in the assemblies of Christians. Justin Martyr (about A.D. 150), who stands intermediate between the "apostolic Fathers," who had seen the apostles face to face, and eminent writers, like Irenæus, of the next following generation, tells us that the Gospels (the "Memorabilia," composed by the apostles and their companions), were read on the Lord's Day in the churches in city and country. Justin was an opponent of Marcion who was a sincere but one-sided partisan of Paul; and Marcion, we are told, framed a canon of his own, embracing

[1] Rom. i. 10, xv. 3, 28; 1 Cor. iv. 17, xi. 2, 23; Col. ii. 7; 2 Thess. ii. 15 etc.

[2] Col. iv. 16.

a mutilated edition of Luke's Gospel, with ten Epistles of his favorite apostle; the Pastoral Epistles and the Epistle to the Hebrews not being included in his list. Justin gives evidence, incidentally, of an acquaintance with the leading Epistles of Paul, especially Romans, First Corinthians, Colossians, Second Thessalonians, and with the Epistle to the Hebrews. The Apocalypse he mentions by name, ascribing it to John the Apostle.[1] It is safe to infer that the custom of bringing together the apostolic writings into a volume was springing up.

The Syrian canon is, perhaps, the oldest example of collections of this kind. Its date is not later than the closing years of the second century. It was the Bible of the Syrian Christians of that day. The ancient manuscripts of this version comprise the books in our canon, with the exception of Second and Third John, Second Peter, Jude, and the Apocalypse. How shall the omission of these books be accounted for? Probably, if known to the Syrian churches, they were not considered genuine; for, if held to have been written by apostles, they would not have been excluded. Their absence does not prove that they did not exist, or that they are spurious; but it is one fact to be considered, in conjunction with all the rest of the evidence bearing on the case, in determining these questions.

In the company of the Syrian canon belongs the nearly contemporary Old-Latin version. It was the Bible of the North-African churches, where Christianity had been early planted, and had greatly flourished. In it, originally, there were not found the Epistle of James and Second Peter, neither of which appears to have any Latin testimonies in its favor prior to Hilary, Jerome,

[1] See Westcott, **History of the Canon (5th ed.), 171; cf. Charteris,** Canonicity, p. cxviii.

and Rufinus, in the fourth century.[1] Thus we see that James, while known and acknowledged in the Syrian churches, had not found its way into this Old-Latin canon; and we see that the Epistle to the Hebrews, which in some parts of the Church was placed among the apostolic writings, is not acknowledged by the Africans. Before Tertullian, however, that is prior to A.D. 190, this Epistle was added to their list.

The Muratorian canon, which can hardly be later than A.D. 170, is probably of Roman origin, and probably represents the canon in use among Western churches at the time of its composition. It is a fragment; but it contained the four Gospels, and most of the writings in our canon. It omits James, First and Second Peter, Third John, and the Hebrews. It mentions an Apocalypse of Peter, with the remark that some will not have it read in the churches. The Shepherd of Hermas, it says, may be used for private reading, but not publicly. It has been conjectured that the document is imperfect, and that James, Hebrews, and First Peter may have stood in the list; there being no other evidence that First Peter was ever disputed, and since Hebrews and James, which are supposed to have been then known to the Roman Church, are not mentioned, even in the way of exclusion. The mention of the Shepherd of Hermas indicates the line of distinction that was more and more drawn between canonical writings and those merely having a high repute for their edifying quality. The allusion to the Apocalypse of Peter indicates the criticism that was exercised, and shows a disposition to weed out apocryphal writings.

[1] See Westcott, p. 258. The case of Second Peter we refer to later A different view on this question is still not without its advocates. See Professor B. B. Warfield's elaborate essays (Southern Presbyterian Review, January, 1882, April, 1883), who thinks that this Epistle was used even by Clement of Rome (*circa* A.D. 97).

Prior to the date assigned to the Muratorian canon, there is no distinct trace of Second Peter. The Epistles of James and of Jude, Hebrews, and Revelation, are received in some places, but not in others. No strict lines are drawn about a canon, nor are its criteria and boundaries a theme of controversy or of ecclesiastical action.

Of the leading ecclesiastical writers, Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons (about A.D. 190), born in Asia Minor, and a representative of the churches in Gaul, contains no passages implying the use of James, Third John, Second Peter, Jude, or Philemon; nor did he attribute the Epistle to the Hebrews to Paul, or treat it as authoritative.[1] All the other books in our canon are recognized by Irenæus. Clement of Alexandria, a contemporary, does not recognize as canonical James, Second Peter,[2] and Third John. The Epistle to the Hebrews he ascribes to Paul, but suggests that it was turned into Greek by Luke. Tertullian has no knowledge of Second Peter, or Second and Third John: he ascribes Hebrews to Barnabas, and puts it, with First Peter and Jude, into the second grade of apostolic writings.[3] There are few traces of the use of First Peter in the Latin Church prior to Tertullian. This Epistle was written to Christians in Asia Minor. Origen, the most scholarly of the Fathers living in the next age (he died A.D. 254), is not inclined to ascribe the Epistle of James to the Lord's brother; he doubts the authority of Jude; he does not recognize Second and Third John or Second Peter; he finds in Hebrews the doc-

[1] See Westcott, p. 384. Cf. Schmidt, in Herzog and Plitt's Real-Encykl., Art. Kanon d. N. T., p. 459.

[2] On Clement in relation to Second Peter, see Westcott's Discussion, pp. 256, 258 Charteris, lxxxii.

[3] Cf. Schmidt, p. 459.

trine of Paul, but leaves the problem of its authorship undetermined. In the East, as late as Chrysostom (who died A.D. 407), we find that the canon of the Peshito is still accepted. He does not quote the four omitted catholic epistles, and makes no mention of the Apocalypse.

It must be remarked here, that the early writers, in some instances, attribute a special sanctity and authority to certain books written by apostolic Fathers. These books were sometimes read in churches. They are found, in several cases, connected with manuscripts of the New Testament. There were three books which in particular were objects of special veneration. One of these was the Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians. It is quoted by Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and by Origen, in terms which imply an extraordinary estimate of its value. It was read in the Church of Corinth, and in other churches. It is found, but placed after the Apocalypse, in the Alexandrine manuscript of the Greek Bible. The Epistle of Barnabas, an epistle written by an unknown author, near the beginning of the second century, who delights in the allegorical exegesis of the Old Testament, enjoyed a high repute, especially at Alexandria. It is referred to by Clement and Origen as an authoritative writing, its author being styled by Clement "the Apostle Barnabas;" and it is a part of the Sinaitic manuscript. The Shepherd of Hermas, another writing of the second century, is quoted as "Scripture" by Irenæus: it is placed by implication on a level with the apostolic writings. It is considered by Origen to be inspired; although he states, that, though used in the Church, it is not regarded by all as sacred, and by some is contemned. It was reprobated by Tertullian, who declares that it had been

adjudged apocryphal and false by every council, orthodox or heretical.[1] It is included, however, in the Sinaitic manuscript and in Latin Bibles. Notwithstanding the anathema of Tertullian, founded on certain doctrinal objections, the Shepherd maintained its popularity for a long time afterwards.

These three books won this peculiar esteem, partly from the nature of their contents, and partly from the idea — which was true in regard to Clement's Epistle — that they were composed by pupils of the apostles. Both of these considerations were blended, since the Epistle of Polycarp and the Epistles of Ignatius were never raised to this level. It is evident, however, that inspiration was not always conceived to be strictly confined to the circle of the apostles. It might naturally be thought to extend to the helpers who stood in close connection with them. It deserves to be remarked, that neither of the three writings itself lays claim to apostolic authority. The Epistle of Clement is couched in a strain of somewhat imperative admonition, especially in the concluding portion, which has lately been brought to light. But the name of Clement does not appear. It is a letter from the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth. There is no design to exceed the limits of paternal exhortation. In the Epistle ascribed to Barnabas the name of Barnabas does not occur. Its allegorical treatment of the Old Testament, as was before remarked, would commend it to favor in the community where the style of interpretation introduced by Philo transmitted itself to the Christian schools. The Epistle of Hermas was written during the time of Pius, bishop of Rome from A.D. 139 to A.D. 154. The author was conjectured by Origen to be the Hermas

[1] De Pudicitia, 10; cf. 20.

mentioned by Paul in the Epistle to the Romans. But it was the character of the book, which was made up of visions, that chiefly secured for it so high esteem. It has been compared, as to the pleasure with which it was read, to the *Pilgrim's Progress*, although its author was intellectually at a world-wide remove from the genius of Bunyan.

We come now to instructive statements of Eusebius in his Church History, which was completed in A.D. 324 or A.D. 325. In addition to observations in different places on the authorship and standing of scriptural books, there are two passages in which he speaks more at length on the subject of the canon.[1] He divides the books claiming to be authoritative into three classes. The first, the Homologoumena, comprises the universally acknowledged books. The third class, called Spurious, comprises those received by none; that is, heretical and apocryphal works, such as the Acts of Paul, the Apocalypse of Peter, etc. The second class — the Antilegomena, or disputed books — comprises those which were received by some, but not by all. Making up this second class from the various passages in Eusebius, we find it to be composed of the Epistle of James, Jude, Second Peter, Second and Third John, — which he tells us were recognized by most, — also, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Apocalypse. Eusebius himself thinks that Paul was the author of a Hebrew original of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which some other, probably Clement of Rome, rendered into Greek. Respecting the Apocalypse, he gives no decided opinion. Hermas, in one place, he ranks with the third class, — the spurious writings: elsewhere he states that his book is considered by some most necessary to such as need

[1] H. E iii. 25, iii. 3, 24. See also ii. 23, iii. 16.

elementary instruction in the faith. Towards the close of the fourth century Jerome accepts as canonical all of the books in our New-Testament canon. The diversity between First and Second Peter he would explain by the supposition that the apostle employed different "interpreters." But Jerome brings out the difference of opinion that existed among his contemporaries. Some held that James did not write the Epistle to which his name is attached. Most people thought that Second Peter was not the work of the apostle. Many attributed Second and Third John to the Ephesian presbyter of the same name. Jude, on account of its reference to Enoch, had, for the most part, no authority. As to Hebrews, he remarks, that among the Romans it is not attributed to Paul. Augustine accepts the canon of the New Testament as it now stands, although he appears to doubt the Pauline authorship of Hebrews. Finally, at the third synod of Carthage (in A.D. 397), where Augustine was present, the canon of the New Testament was fixed at its present limits.

Had this judgment respecting the Antilegomena been the pure result of critical investigation, it might be considered conclusive. But even Jerome, and still more Augustine, was not governed so much by critical arguments as by a disposition to acquiesce in what had become the more general usage of the Church. Through the middle ages the debate slumbered. With the revival of learning it was unavoidable that it should be renewed. The question about the seven disputed books was revived. Erasmus, the foremost scholar in the later period of the Renaissance, maintains that the Epistle to the Hebrews was not written by Paul. He thinks that James wrote the Epistle which bears his name, but expresses his surprise, that on these problems

none "are more bigoted in their assertions than those who cannot tell in what language it was originally written." "We are reckless," he adds, "in proportion to our ignorance."[1] The Second and Third Epistles of John he ascribes to a second John, — John the Presbyter, the supposed contemporary of the apostle at Ephesus. He enters fully into a statement of reasons against the opinion that John wrote the Apocalypse, — a book which he will not accept save on the authority of the Church. Possibly there is a tinge of sarcasm in this last utterance.

Jerome among the ancients, and Erasmus among the moderns, stimulated the critical studies of the reformers. Luther expresses, with characteristic freedom, his opinions on the disputed books. He places the Epistle to the Hebrews, James, Jude, and the Apocalypse, at the end of his translation. In the Preface to Hebrews he says, "Up to this point, we have the right certain Capital Books of the New Testament. The four following, however, have had of yore a different standing (ansehen)." The Epistle to the Hebrews was written by a disciple of the apostles, an excellent, learned man, whose book deserves all respect, although "wood, hay, or straw may be mingled in it; and it must not, indeed, be put on the same footing with the apostolic Epistles." Jude, he says, is a book worthy of praise, but not to be ranked with the Capital Books, which lay the foundations of the faith, since the author shows that he is a disciple of the apostles, and appeals to sayings and narrations that are nowhere found in Scripture. He admires the Epistle of James, and holds it to be good; but as it teaches the law rather than Christ, and gives righteousness to works, it is no apostle's writing. "It

[1] Nov. Test., p. 625.

is the work of some good, pious man, who perhaps caught up some sayings from disciples of apostles, and threw them on paper." Compared with the writings of John, Paul, and Peter, it is an epistle of straw (eine recht stroherne Epistel). Of the Apocalypse, Luther judged still more unfavorably: its contents, he thought, disproved the idea that an apostle wrote it.[1]

Calvin speaks of the First Epistle of John, and takes no notice of the Second and Third Epistles of John. In like manner, he leaves untouched the Apocalypse. The Epistle to the Hebrews he accepts as an apostolic Epistle; although he denies that Paul wrote it, and credits it to a disciple of the apostles. Of Second Peter, he says, that, since the "majesty of the Spirit of Christ" is exhibited in it, he hesitates to reject it wholly, and is inclined to attribute it to one of Peter's disciples. James he sees no reason to reject; and Jude he will not discard, since it is useful to read, and contains in it nothing at variance with the purity of apostolic doctrine.

It is common to criticise the opinions of Luther on the various books of the New Testament as being "subjective" in their character. But, if this be a ground of censure, Calvin is hardly less at fault. Tyndale is also in the same condemnation with Luther. In his first edition, the English translator presents twenty-three books which he numbers, and then adds, without numbers, Hebrews, James, Jude, and the Apocaylpse. In a later edition he is silent upon the Apocalypse, but judges of the other disputed books more favorably than Luther. Yet, while not pronouncing on the authorship of Hebrews, he declares it to be "holy, godly, and

[1] The passages relative to the canon are collected in Walch's ed. of Luther's Writings, Theil xiv.

catholic," and not to be refused; and says of the Epistle of James, that though its authorship has been doubted, and "though it lay not the foundation of the faith of Christ," it still ought to be received as Holy Scripture.[1] Before censuring the reformers on this score, it must be considered, that, in judging of the authorship of books, their internal character, as well as the external testimonies, must be taken into view. Moreover, it is common to credit the early Church with the possession of a certain tact which helped to distinguish apostolic or inspired compositions from other works on a humbler level. If there be such a tact, it can hardly be confined to any one age of the Church: it may belong to a reformer as well as to a father. Besides, the Protestant theologians and the Protestant creeds made much of the "testimonium spiritus sancti," or the impression which the Scriptures themselves make of their peculiar elevation and divine origin. This impression is the feeling or judgment of the individuals who are brought into contact with the contents of the Bible in its various parts. Luther discriminated between the several books of the Bible: some were more essential, some were better, than others. He said of John's Gospel and his First Epistle, of Paul's Epistles (especially the Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians), and the First Epistle of Peter, that they "are the books which show thee Christ, and teach all which is needful and blessed for thee to know, even if thou shouldst never see or hear any other book or any other doctrine." From the four evangelists, and the principal undisputed Epistles of Paul, he grasped the gospel in its essential principles, and experienced it in its life-giving efficacy. From the point of view thus attained,

[1] The passages may be found in Westcott, p. 497.

he weighed the value of all other writings transmitted in the canon, and, without neglecting the external proofs, judged of their authorship. Their internal conformity or disconformity to the spirit of the principal books went far towards determining in his mind the question whether or not they emanated from apostles.

The method of Luther is parallel to the ordinary procedure in literary criticism. By the study of the main, undisputed Dialogues of Plato, a student acquaints himself with the style, spirit, and tenets of that author. By thus entering into the mind of Plato, he gets a criterion which is used to determine his judgment on the authenticity of Dialogues which are thought to be open to question. He pronounces them to be, or not to be, Platonic. The method is legitimate. Yet the criterion is fallible. The subjective impression may be faulty. Thus, for example, Zeller rejects the Laws, in the teeth of the testimony of Aristotle. A wider view of the philosophical system, or a more just estimate of the particular book in question, might reverse the critic's unfavorable verdict.

While the method of Luther's procedure in judging of the canonicity of books is not so exceptional, or so obnoxious, as it has sometimes been pronounced to be, it is another thing to assent to all of his applications of it. The Epistle to the Hebrews, which he is disposed to refer to Apollos, he justly appreciates. Traces of the use of this Epistle are found in Clement of Rome — that is, before the end of the first century — and in Justin Martyr. The doubts about its right to a place in the canon sprang from disbelief in its Pauline authorship. But if it proceeded, as the preponderance of critical authority, both ancient and modern, decides, from some man of as high consideration as Apollos,

whose name Paul associates with his own as one of the founders of Christianity (an origin which its wide acceptance at an early day would indicate); if its author is imbued with the essential principles of Paul; if, moreover, in elevation of style and of thought, it is raised above all the sub-apostolic literature, as the common judgment of the Church has recognized, — then, equally with the writings of Luke and of Mark, it is entitled to stand among the documents possessed of normative authority, even though it is not esteemed precisely as it would be, had an apostle written it with his own hand. The Epistle of James, which was a part of the old Syriac canon, is too well attested to be rejected on account of a type of doctrine somewhat varying, though not discordant, from that of Paul; especially since its doctrine is in consonance with all that we know, from other sources, of James, the presiding elder at Jerusalem. The Apocalypse lacks the testimony of the Peshito; but, with this exception, its external proofs are remarkably strong, since it is ascribed to John by Irenæus and Justin Martyr. Its rejection, for a considerable period, in the Eastern Church, was owing to the great re-action against Chiliasm, which had drawn support from it; although Dionysius of Alexandria, in the middle of the third century, who imagined that the Presbyter John wrote it, brings critical objections to its apostolic origin. The still mooted question of its authorship must be determined chiefly by the internal evidence. The Second and Third Epistles of John, being addressed to individuals, would naturally be slow in gaining currency, especially as the name of the apostle is not attached to them. Yet, as Bleek well remarks, this last circumstance is an argument for their genuineness, for which this moderate and candid critic

contends.[1] Mangold, the editor of Bleek, attributes both writings to the author of the First Epistle bearing the name of John.[2] That the apostle wrote this First Epistle there is no sufficient reason to question. It must be remembered of the catholic or general epistles, as a class, that, not being addressed to a particular church, they might not circulate so rapidly and readily as the other class of epistles. The minor Epistles of John were not much contested. Not so, however, with Jude and Second Peter. It is obvious that one of the authors of these writings made a free use of the work of the other. The coincidences of thought, as well as of expression, prove this beyond all doubt. Which was the prior? The weight of critical authority is, on the whole, decidedly in favor of the priority of Jude. There is much evidence in favor of its genuineness. The circumstance that two apocryphal books are referred to — the book of Enoch, and the Anabasis of Moses (a work known to Origen) — can be urged against its apostolic authorship, only on the ground of an *a priori* view of the method of writing which an apostle would adopt, or of a theory of inspiration which on critical grounds cannot be assumed. More doubt has rested upon Second Peter than on any other book in the New-Testament canon. The scanty patristic evidence in favor of it, and the extent to which its claim to be a writing of Peter was denied in the early centuries, not to speak of more recent ages — to say nothing of certain internal peculiarities giving rise to suspicion, — incline many at the present day, who are not prone to literary or religious scepticism, to disbelieve in the Petrine authorship. Such a theory, however, is always possible, as that which Calvin and

[1] Bleek, Einl. in d. N. T., p. 690. [2] Ibid., p. 694.

others have suggested, of an indirect and partial connection of Peter with the composition of it. The decision, in the absence of conclusive external data, turns upon the impression made by the contents of the Epistle. On this point the most competent Christian scholars have thus far failed to agree.

The foregoing remarks connect themselves with the classification of books by Eusebius. The inquiry may be started whether this historian was sufficiently well informed to make it certain that all the books designated "Homologoumena" had really a unanimous acknowledgment. The possibility, of course, exists, that there may have been dissenters, in the case of one or more of these books, of whom Eusebius had no knowledge. Yet his means of information were very unusual. It was a matter in which it is evident that he was deeply interested; and there is nothing from any other source of evidence tending to correct or disprove his statement.

The question, which is the proper subject of this chapter, can be shortly answered. If any of the books which are included in the volume called "The New Testament" could be proved to be not genuine, they would have to be subtracted from that body of documents from which we derive authentic knowledge of Christ and of the teaching of his chosen apostles. If there were any thing in such doubtful or spurious books which is peculiar to them, and is not found in the books known to be genuine, so much would have to be deducted from the sum of authoritative doctrine. It is obvious at a glance, however, that, even were all of the books enumerated under the head of the Antilegomena eliminated from the canon, the loss, however considerable, would not obliterate a single essential fact, or a

single essential doctrine, of the Christian system. The example of such a believer as Martin Luther may reassure timid souls, who conceive that absolute certainty respecting the authorship of all the books in the canon is an article of a standing or falling church.

In these observations we have not considered the sceptical propositions of a modern date, such as the Tübingen school has brought forward with regard to New-Testament books not embraced in the list of Antilegomena. Later adherents of the Tübingen criticism have, as concerns several of the apostolic Epistles which were rejected by Baur, dissented from him, and affirmed their genuineness. As far as the main books, from which the historical facts and the substance of apostolic teaching are chiefly learned, are concerned, the vindication of their genuineness, in case they are questioned, is a part of the evidences of Christianity. As regards other books not included in this category, the preceding remarks respecting the Antilegomena are applicable to them.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CONGRUITY OF THE NATURAL AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES WITH THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

It is not uncommon at present to hear it asserted or insinuated that religion, and the Christian religion in particular, has been an obstacle in the way of the progress of natural science, including, under this designation, the various departments of research which concern themselves with the material world. Sometimes Christianity is spoken of as an enemy still formidable. Sometimes the pæan of triumph is sounded as over a slain foe. There has been, if we are to credit the writers referred to, one continuous conflict between the religious class on the one hand, and the devotees of scientific knowledge on the other. The students of nature have had to press their way forward in the face of the sword and the fagot. Scientific inquiry has been confronted by preconceived opinions concerning its subject-matter, having their basis in the theological creed. Dogmas of the Church have warned off the student who has been disposed to look upon the heavens and the earth with an open, inquisitive eye. He has been enjoined to see to it that his investigations conduct him to certain fore-ordained conclusions. Independent judgment, founded on an unprejudiced inspection of the phenomena, in the light of inductive logic, has been branded as profane. The naturalist has had to pursue his toilsome search with telescope and micro-

scope while the din of ecclesiastical rebuke has tormented his ears. The questions which he has striven to settle by observation and reasoning, he has been told are already determined, once for all, by the infallible authority of the Bible. What is the flickering torch of the feeble intellect of man, ever stumbling on his way, by the side of a direct illumination from the Source of all light, irradiating the mind of prophet and seer who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost? The pulpit, it is said, is always ready to thunder forth anathemas upon the head of the pioneer who opens new vistas of truth in the field of scientific exploration. If flames and torture are dispensed with, it is very likely from lack of power. The spirit of religious intolerance in relation to the sciences of nature is the same as of old. The weapons of warfare are blunted, but the nature of the struggle is unaltered. Christianity assumes to define within a realm which science claims as its own. It looks on science as a trespasser breaking down sacred landmarks. Science, on the contrary, within its province, disowns the usurped authority of religion. It holds the definitions of the creed as of no account.

This will be recognized as a not unfair paraphrase of what one may frequently meet with in the books and periodicals of the day. The errors and distortions mingled in representations of this sort, I shall hope to point out. At the beginning, however, it is well to confess that the general allegation is not without plausibility. It is not a pure fabrication. There are facts on which it is founded, whatever mistake and whatever exaggeration are carried into the interpretation of them. That in the name of religion, in past times, nearer and more remote, the legitimate pursuits, researches, arguments,

and hypotheses of physical inquirers, have been frowned upon, denounced, and proscribed, is undeniable. That bodily punishments have been inflicted, and, in other cases, the penalty of unpopularity and ostracism, on account of opinions, and well warranted opinions, in natural science, history is a witness. In antiquity, prior to Christ, science was not without its persecuted votaries. Socrates, to be sure, was convicted, and put to death, not for heresies in physics; for the study of physical phenomena appeared to him to be time wasted, and an encroachment on a province that might better be left to the regulation of the gods. Aristotle was threatened with persecution, like Socrates, for alleged mischievous teaching in relation distinctively to theology and ethics. But Anaxagoras was arraigned before an Athenian court for holding impious physical doctrine, such as the opinion that the sun is an incandescent stone, larger than the Peloponnesus; and he owed his deliverance to the friendship and the eloquence of Pericles. Passing down into Christian times, with which we are now specially concerned, it is a familiar fact, that, in the middle ages, the students who early interested themselves in chemical experiments — whether in the hope of transmuting the baser metals into gold, or for some better reason — were suspected of having entered into a league with the devil, and of accomplishing their experiments with the aid of this dark confederate. Even Albert the Great, the teacher of Aquinas, did not wholly escape this dangerous suspicion. At a later day Roger Bacon had more to endure on the ground of analogous imputations. At a time when the air was thought to be thronged with invisible demons, it was natural to attribute the strange effects produced by chemical manifestation to a preternatural cause

Turning to still later times, we are at once reminded of the ecclesiastical antagonism to astronomy, and of the memorable case of Galileo. The publication of the documents connected with this case has put it into the power of every candid person, who will give the requisite attention to them, to get at an exact knowledge of the facts; and it has put it out of the power of theological partisans to conceal or distort the truth. It is true that much is still said of the Florentine astronomer's imprudence in the advocacy of his doctrines, and of his temerity in venturing to discuss the biblical relations of his discoveries, instead of leaving the interpretation of texts to the authorized mouthpieces of the Church. Even the writer of the article on Galileo, in the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, lays stress on the "sanguine" habit of the philosopher, and on the harm which it brought upon him. It is true that Galileo's anxiety to spread the knowledge of his wonderful discoveries led him into covert means of accomplishing his end. It is true that his ethical feeling, like that of too many Italians of that day, made prevarication, and, when driven to the wall, direct falsehood, facile to him. But nothing that he did affords any valid excuse, or hardly even a faint palliation, for the enormous wrong of the organized, unrelenting endeavor to suppress the publication of important scientific truth, and for the more terrible sin of driving an old man to perjure himself by abjuring beliefs which his tempters and persecutors well knew that in his heart he really held. The lesson which ought to be derived for all time from this glaring instance of bigotry and cruel intolerance will be lost if the real character of it is allowed to be covered up by sophistical apologies. It is a fact, that at the command of Pope Paul III. in

1616, by a decree of the Congregation of the Index, the Copernican theory was declared to be false, and contrary to Scripture; that in 1633 Galileo, with the approbation, if not at the command, of Urban VIII., was condemned to abjure the doctrine as heretical, which, seventeen years before, had been pronounced false, and contradictory to Scripture. This abjuration, together with the judgment of the Inquisition, at the command of the Pope were published to the world. The prohibition of the books which teach the Copernican doctrine is in all the issues of the Index that followed: it is in that approved expressly by a bull of Alexander VII. in 1664; and it remained in the Index until its partial removal, by Benedict XIV., in 1757. The circulation of books which inculcate the Copernican theory was not expressly authorized until it was done by Pius VII., in 1822.[1] It is beyond all dispute that a Congregation, acting under the commission of the Pope, condemned as false a truth in science; that, by the express authority of the Pope, the condemnation and abjuration of this truth by Galileo were ordered to be published abroad to the Church.[2] This comes perilously near an *ex cathedra* declaration from the throne of St. Peter. What could the faithful infer from such proceedings, taken under the express authorization of the Pope, but that the Copernican theory is false and unscriptural? This is a point, however, with which we are not at the moment specially concerned. It is easy to understand the tremendous shock which the Copernican theory gave to existing religious views. It was

[1] See, on the whole subject, the proofs given by Reusch, Der Process Galilei's, etc. (Bonn, 1879). Reusch's conclusions are on pp. 450, 451, 462 seq.

[2] See Berti, Il Proc. original. di Galileo Galilei, etc. (Roma, 1876) Doc. lxiv. p. 121.

not merely that particular texts — like the command of Joshua to the sun to stand still, and the assertion of the Psalmist, that the sun rejoices as a strong man to run a race in his daily path across the sky — appeared to be contravened: the whole cosmological conception of Genesis, besides numerous echoes of it in subsequent pages of Scripture, seemed to be subverted, at the same time that established ideas respecting the future state of existence, and the location of the different abodes of the good and the evil, — ideas sanctioned by patristic and scholastic authority, — were shaken to the foundation.

Nothing so disgraceful as the condemnation of old Galileo, and his abjuration compelled under menace of the torture, can be laid to the charge of Protestants, as regards the treatment accorded to the devotees of natural science. But Protestantism has to acknowledge that the same sort of mistake has been made, with circumstances less tragic and signal, by professed advocates of a larger liberty of thought. From the first rise of geology, down to a recent day, the students of this branch of science have had to fight their way against an opposition conducted in the name of religion and of the Bible. They were charged with a presumptuous attempt to contravene the plain teaching of revelation. Cowper, in satirizing the dreams and delusions which get hold of the minds of men, does not omit to castigate those who

> "Drill and bore
> The solid earth, and from the strata there
> Extract a register, by which we learn
> That He who made it, and revealed its date
> To Moses, was mistaken in its age."

There is no doubt that the amiable poet intends to pour scorn upon the theory that the globe is more than

about six thousand years old, — a theory then novel, but now universally accepted. The geologists were flying in the face of Moses: they were audaciously setting up their pretended record, dug out of the earth, against the Creator's own testimony, given in writing. What could indicate more palpably the arrogance of reason? How many pulpits thundered forth their denunciation of the impious fiction of the geologists! The teachers of the new geologic cosmogony were pelted with the grave rebukes or contemptuous sneers of good men who considered themselves called to crush the adversaries of a tenet long established, and having its firm warrant in Scripture. In this country Professor Moses Stuart, who fifty years ago was the leading biblical scholar among us, — a man of brilliant talents and of extensive if not entirely accurate learning, — took the field against the conclusions of geology, which he considered at war with any fair interpretation of the opening page of the Bible. The late Professor Silliman was obliged to contend, for many years, with sceptical theologians, on whom his arguments made no more impression than hailstones upon a rock. Sometimes it was said that the fossils which are found embedded in the mountains, or buried on the seashore, are the relics of the great and devastating Noachian deluge. Not unfrequently it was deemed sufficient to declare that God may have created them just as they are, and where they lie. Hugh Miller, even at the late day when he wrote, found it requisite to argue from analogy, — from the inference justified in the case of cemeteries which contain human bones, — that the hypothesis of the immediate creation of fossils in the fossil form is inconsistent with sound logic, and involves a disparagement of the Creator's veracity. The most recent instance of mistaken religious zeal in

a blaze against the naturalists is furnished by the advent of Darwinism. The recollection is still fresh of the anathemas which the appearance of Darwin's *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man* provoked. How far the different sorts of animals and other organized beings are bound together by a genetic connection is still an open question; although the traditional beliefs as to the origin of these various divisions may be said to have dropped, for the most part, from the scientific creed. Even if species come into being by descent, it is problematical whether the doctrine of natural selection is a solvent of so great power as the Darwinian form of the evolution-hypothesis has maintained. But the bearings of Darwinism, in the shape in which its author propounded it, upon theism and Christian belief, are now well understood. It has been abundantly shown that it leaves the being and attributes of God, as Christians conceive of them, untouched. Speculations of Darwin pertaining to the origin of the mind and of the moral faculty may wear a threatening look. But these are a subordinate part of the Darwinian discussion; and it should not be lightly assumed that even these, of necessity, clash with the Christian idea of man as a spiritual and responsible creature. A preacher of so high a type of ecclesiasticism, and of an orthodoxy so stainless, as Dean Liddell, tells us, in a sermon preached since Darwin was entombed, that the theory which has made his name famous carries in it no antagonism to the creed of a Christian. The conflict about which there has been so great a noise is pronounced to be unreal. If this be so, then the guns of a myriad pulpits have been turned upon a man of straw.

The causes of the attitude of intolerance which has frequently been taken by religious men towards new

opinions in natural science are multiple. There is, first, the customary impatience of new truth, or of new doctrine which stands in opposition to cherished ideas, — ideas that have long had a quiet lodgement in the mind. This species of conservatism is far from being peculiar to theologians or to the religious class: it belongs to other classes of human beings as well, and is manifested equally in connection with other beliefs. Innovators in politics, or in these very sciences which have to do with the material world, are very apt to be confronted with resistance — often with stubborn and angry resistance — from people engaged in the same pursuits. Few ministers expressed a more unsparing antipathy to Darwinism than Agassiz, the apostle of a different zoölogical system. The path which scientific discoverers have to tread, apart from the religious and ecclesiastical jealousies which they are liable to awaken, is not apt to be a smooth one. The *odium theologicum* is only one specific form of a more generic odium which vents itself in learned scientific bodies and in the controversial papers of rival schools of *savans*. It would seem as if men come at length to look on their established opinions as a piece of property, and upon all who seem disposed to deprive them of this agreeable possession as thieves and robbers. Fanaticism may be kindled in behalf of any cause or creed with which personal feeling has become associated, or with which intellectual pride has irrevocably become involved. Hence every important revolution in scientific opinion has succeeded, not without a conflict with the adherents of the traditional view, — an internecine war among the cultivators of science themselves.

Then, secondly, religious faith, as it exists in almost every mind, is habitually associated with beliefs errone

ously supposed to be implicated in it. Beyond the truth itself on which a man really lives, there is a mass of connected belief, which not one out of a hundred, to speak moderately, either attempts to dissever from it, or imagines it possible to dissever. To disconnect this accretion of secondary beliefs, be they well founded or ill founded, from that which is vital, it is tacitly taken for granted, is out of the question. That which would remain after the amputation it is silently assumed would bleed to death. It is only the few disciplined and rigorously logical minds who approximate closely to a perception of what is and what is not vital to a doctrine or a system. Such a discrimination is seldom made with any high degree of accuracy. Hence one may think that his life is threatened when the surgeon's knife is lopping off an excrescence, or is removing a member the loss of which leaves the body with undiminished or increased vigor. Religious beliefs, in the average mind, are so interwoven with one another, as the mere effect of association, where there may be no necessary bond of union, that, where one of them is assailed, the whole are thought to be in danger. Time was, when a belief in witchcraft was held by many to be an *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiæ*. Even John Wesley expresses this opinion, or something equivalent. It was a belief that had existed so long, it had been adopted and practised on by so many of the bad and good, it was judged to be so recognized in the Scriptures, it entered so intimately into the accepted mode of conceiving of supernatural agents, that the loss of it out of the faith of a Christian was felt to be like a displacement of a stone from the arch: it would lead to the downfall of the whole structure. The old Greeks held that the stars were severally the abode of deific

beings: they were animated and moved by intelligences. Plato and Aristotle were not delivered from this way of thinking. When a man like Anaxagoras said that the sun was a stone, the entire theological edifice was felt to be menaced with overthrow. Men did not at once discern that atheism did not follow. They did not see that a belief either in one God, or in gods many or lords many, might still subsist, and subsist just as well, when the traditional tenet which personified the stars had been relinquished. It is a matter of daily experience to witness a vociferous opposition to the introduction of some new mode of conceiving of a religious truth, or of defending it, where the motive of the imbittered outcry is a misconception of the effect of the opinion in question upon the substance of religious belief. The disposition "to multiply essentials" good Richard Baxter considered the bane of the Church, the prolific source of intolerance and division. The tendency to identify accident with substance, the failure to discern the core of a truth from its integuments, is at the root of much of the rash and unreasoning and vehement resistance that has been offered in past times to the advances of natural science.

In adverting to the occasions of conflict between persons specially interested in religious truth, and students of natural science, there is one other observation to be made, to which it is well for theologians to give heed. The ground is often practically taken, and sometimes avowedly, that the views relative to the teaching of Scripture respecting the material world, both as to its meaning and authority, which have come down to us, we ought to cling to until we are *forced* to abandon them. The maxim is to part with the traditional opinions on this topic only when the concession is extorted

by evidence no longer to be withstood. Never yield an inch of ground until it is found impossible to hold it. This way of viewing the subject is wholly unscientific, and unworthy of theology, if theology would keep its place as a science. It rests on a false assumption respecting the rightful relation of religion to the studies of nature. It is mischievous, it is hurtful to the cause of religion. It is in fact, in its proper tendency, suicidal. It is unscientific, in the first place. If the progress of natural science has taught in repeated instances, and taught impressively, that the traditional views taken of the Scriptures contain error, the aim should be to eliminate that error, and to do it, if possible, forthwith, and not wait to receive blow after blow. Some new canon of interpretation should be found which places the reader of the Bible above the reach of these rude disturbances of his belief. If this is found impracticable, if it is found that fair interpretation, without any such strain as offends the critical sense and the ethical sense as well, fails to set the scriptural expressions in harmony with the ascertained results of inductive science, then let the inspiration-dogma be revised. Let the theory relative to the authority of Scripture be formulated in accordance with the facts. Our position is, that it is unworthy of the Church to stand idle and passive, but prepared to give up one point after another as it may find itself obliged to do so. This is virtually the position which many would assume. They stand waiting for some new demand from natural science, — stand shivering, perhaps, lest they should be stripped of another inherited view respecting the world and the way in which it was made. The proper course for the thinkers of the Church to take is to anticipate the demands of natural science,

and, as far as the light they possess will enable them, take up a position as to the teaching of Scripture and the substance of the faith from which they cannot be dislodged. No course could be better adapted to excite a general distrust of Scripture than that of making a stand at one point after another, only to beat a retreat at the first regular onset of the assailant. The policy which we here condemn rests upon the assumption that natural science is to be looked upon as an adversary bent upon conquest, instead of a branch of human knowledge to be hailed as an ally and a friend. The progress of physical discovery has gone far enough to render it practicable for Christian theologians, if they will clear their minds of bias, either on the side of tradition or of innovation, to compare the utterances of the Bible with the settled doctrines of science, and then determine what modification of formulas and interpretations is required. The seventeenth century was far less favorably situated than the nineteenth as regards the discrimination between the human and the divine factors which conspire in the production of the Scriptures. The proper authority of the Bible, and the bounds of that authority, it is now more practicable to define, since the phenomena of Scripture are more thoroughly understood, and other branches of knowledge which require to be consulted as aids in the investigation have made an immense advance.

Having made these preliminary remarks on the causes of complaint which students of nature have had in times distant and recent, we proceed to affirm, that the general allegation against religion and Christianity, of having proved a hinderance to the advancement of scientific knowledge, is without any just foundation. The school of Buckle, whose superficial and pretentious

History of Civilization abounds in manifestations of anti-Christian prejudice, is fond of representing religion as in perpetual "conflict" with science. In the patristic age, in the history of ancient Christianity, these writers can find little that can help them to bolster up their fictitious charge. To understand the middle ages, one must take into view the domination of Aristotle, which, partly for good and partly for evil, established itself in the thirteenth century in the educated class. At first Aristotle was resisted, especially when the Arabic Pantheism linked itself to his teaching; but finally he came to be considered as a chosen man who had exhausted the possibilities of natural reason. Considering what the character of civilization was in that era, the influence of the Stagirite was natural, and not without a great intellectual benefit. With the Reformation, his sceptre was broken. The way was opened by this emancipation for the progress of physical and natural science. The epochs in this great emancipation are marked by the advent of the voyagers Columbus and Da Gama, by the discoveries of Copernicus and Vesalius, by the revolution effected by Newton, by the extension of astronomical science through the elder Herschel, and by the final triumph of the method of experimental and inductive research which owed much to the influence of Bacon, but the glory of which must be shared by a multitude of explorers. To figure this progress of culture, through Aristotle's reign and since his downfall, as a "conflict with religion," is a proceeding as shallow as it is calumnious.[1]

The late Dr. John W. Draper may be taken as an

[1] Zöckler's work, which I had not examined until this chapter was mostly written, Gesch. d. Beziehungen d. Theol. u. Naturwissenschaft (1877), contains interesting matter on the points here considered.

example of a class of authors who have labored to disseminate the impression which is here contradicted. A man of marked ability, and justly eminent in certain provinces of scientific knowledge, he has, nevertheless, in his work on *The Intellectual Development of Europe*, and in a smaller work on *The Conflict of Religion and Science*, given currency to what we consider a false and injurious view of the proper tendency and actual influence of Christianity. It is true that Dr. Draper is much more lenient in his judgment of Protestantism than of Roman Catholicism. But his thesis is, that "a divine revelation must necessarily be intolerant of contradiction; it must repudiate all improvement on itself, and view with disdain that arising from the progressive intellectual development of man."[1] His representation is, that there are always two parties, — science on the one side, and religious faith on the other. The drift of his teaching is to the effect that the great mistake, — the "great neglect of duty," — on the part of the heathen sages of antiquity, was in failing to make provision for the propagation of their saving doctrines; the design being, apparently, to suggest that the world would have been delivered from the blinding and narrowing influence of that system of religious belief which actually obtained sway in Europe.[2] There is a certain *naïveté* in this lament; as if the failure to engage in active propagandism did not grow out of the essential character of the systems which the much lauded sages and philosophers cherished. This is one point in Dr. Draper's view of history. Another ground of lamentation is found in the failure of Arabic culture and philosophy to become dominant. Coupled with this sentiment is an exalted view of the scientific merit

[1] Hist. of the Conflict of Religion and Science, p. vi. [2] Ibid., p. vii

of the Saracenic philosophers in comparison with the Christian culture and philosophy which displaced them. The ideal system appears to be found in the pantheistic speculations of Averroes. The indebtedness of Europe to Arabic science is depicted in warm colors.

All this involves a considerable amount of error and exaggeration. It is conceded that Christian writers have been sometimes niggardly in awarding credit to the work done by Mohammedan scholars in the earlier portion of the middle ages. Religious prejudice has had its effect in lowering unduly the estimate which should be put upon Arabic learning, and the services rendered by it in the education of Europe. The universities of Bagdad and Damascus, of Cordova and Seville, were lights in a dark age. The knowledge gained by inquisitive ecclesiastics from the North in the Moorish schools of Spain communicated the impulse out of which scholasticism sprang into being. The schoolmen owed their first knowledge of Aristotle to Latin translations from Arabic versions of his writings. In several of the sciences, as medicine and astronomy, the Arabs gained a knowledge above that of their contemporaries, and even contributed, in no inconsiderable measure, to the advancement of these branches. Laudation of the Arabs cannot justly go much beyond this point. In the first place, it is to be remembered that the Arabians derived their science from the Greeks. Not only their methods, but the greater portion of their stock of knowledge, were acquired from the ancient writers, whom they studied through the medium of translations. In the second place, it is not to be forgotten that the Arabs were indebted to Christians for their introduction to, and knowledge of, Greek authors. Versions of Aristotle and of other authors were made

into Arabic by Syrian Christians. Nestorians were the tutors and guides of the Arabs. Alfarabi and Avicenna were pupils of Syrian and Christian physicians. In the ninth century, Hassein Ibn Ishak was at the head of a school of interpreters at Bagdad, by whom the Arabs were furnished with the treatises of the Stagirite and of his ancient commentators.[1] Thirdly, the additions which the Arabs made to the stock of learning were comparatively small. We say "comparatively." In comparison with what they learned from the Greeks, their contributions were small; but, especially in comparison with the scientific achievements of Christian students of later days, the discoveries of the Mohammedans were insignificant. Whewell, in his *History of the Inductive Sciences*, has brought out very distinctly the fact, that it was not until scientific discovery and experiment were taken up under Christian auspices and by Christian explorers, that the astonishing advances were made which give character to modern science. In astronomy, the favorite study of the Arabs, and one in which they really did much, what is all their original teaching when set by the side of the work done by Copernicus, Galileo, Tycho Brahe, Kepler, and Newton? The methods, the instruments, the observations, the brilliant inductions, which have revolutionized our conceptions of the sidereal universe, are not due to the Arabs. They are owing to the genius of the Christian masters whose names have just been given, and to others who have trod in their path. It is in the atmosphere of Christianity, amid the influences which Christian civilization has originated, in the bosom of Christian society, that the amazing progress of natural and physical science in all of its departments has taken

[1] See Ueberweg's Hist. of Philosophy, i. p. 410 seq.

place. It is not that praise of the Arabs for what they learned and taught is begrudged: it is only that the praise bestowed on them is exaggerated, and that the idea of some stupendous work which they *would* have done if they had been let alone, is illusive and visionary.

The foregoing remarks are to show that the accusation of having been, on the whole, a barrier in the way of science, which is brought against Christian society at large, is founded on a misjudgment respecting the factors concerned in the development of modern civilization and culture. A kindred fallacy inhering in this allegation is in the identifying of the acts of ecclesiastical rulers with the sentiments and inclinations of the body of Christian people. The proceedings of the hierarchy of the Latin Church in particular cases are not to be confounded with the spontaneous voice of Christian society as a whole. The multitude of communicants, even in that body, might not concern themselves in these measures of persecution. We may take as an illustration the case of Galileo. How much did even Catholics generally know of what the Inquisition was doing in this affair? The body of the laity were not consulted. There was no room for a free expression of their sympathy in one direction or the other. For ages the Christian Church was dominated in the West by the Latin hierarchy. To hold the Church at all times much more Christianity itself, responsible for every deed of cruelty and fanaticism which the rulers of the Church committed, is a manifest injustice. Yet it is the fashion of censorious writers who would fain exhibit religion as hostile to science, to rake together from the annals of the past all the instances of priestly intolerance of this nature, and to lay them in a lump at the door of the Christian Church.

A fallacy still more flagrant, of which the class of writers to whom we are referring are guilty, is deserving of special attention. The exposure of it goes far to nullify the popular assertions with regard to the opposition, in past days, of religion to natural science. These writers unconsciously overlook the fact, that, for the most part, the pioneers of scientific discovery who have had to endure persecution for broaching novel views upon the constitution and origin of nature have been themselves Christians. It has not been a war of disbelievers and sceptics, on the one side, who have been obliged to suffer at the hands of believers in Christianity for teaching scientific truth. It has commonly been a contest of Christian against Christian. Where there has been a combat of this sort, it has been an intestine struggle. To represent by implication that in one camp have been found atheists and infidels, eager and successful in exploring the secrets of nature, while in the other have been collected the host of Christian disciples, their persecutors, is utterly false and misleading. Where the war has existed, it has been a war of Greek against Greek. Christian men, taught in Christian schools, or stimulated intellectually by the aggregate of influences which Christianity has in the process of time, to a great degree, called into being, make some new discovery in science, which clashes with previous opinions, and strikes many as involving the rejection of some article of Christian belief. Debate ensues. Intemperate defenders of the received opinion denounce those who would overthrow it. Intolerant men, if they have the power, instigated by passion, and probably thinking that they are doing God service, resort to force for the purpose of suppressing the obnoxious doctrine, and crushing its advocates. These advocates,

denying that Christianity is impugned by their new scientific creed, stand, with more or less constancy, for the defence of it. In some cases they are imprisoned: in other cases they are driven into exile, or put to death. Some become martyrs to science: some weakly renounce their convictions. This, in the main, is the story of persecution as directed against promoters of natural and physical science. It has been, with some exceptions, the melancholy tale of Christians so far misled by passion, or by bad logic, or by false notions of duty, as to interfere with the proper liberty of fellow-Christians who are blessed with more light.

Let us glance at some of the individuals who have been named among the votaries of science that have earned reproach for supposed religious aberrations. Albertus Magnus should hardly have a place among them; yet his name figures often among those who are said to have suffered, on account of his interest in alchemy. Some of his ignorant contemporaries, it is true, thought him a magician. But this great light of the Dominican order, and teacher of Thomas Aquinas, was as far as possible from free-thinking in religion. It was his fame in the Church that gave him the title of "the Great." He was a Christian thinker, justly held in honor in his own generation, and somewhat in advance of his times in the interest which he took in natural science. Who was Roger Bacon, who is so often pointed out as one of the victims of religious bigotry? His eminence, when compared with the men of his time, there may be a tendency at present to exaggerate; but he was unquestionably on a level with the greatest minds of the thirteenth century, so prolific in examples of intellectual power. He was persecuted by reason of the scientific spirit which he manifested and

exemplified in his researches. His lectures at Oxford were interdicted by Bonaventura, the general of the Franciscan order of which he was a member. He lived at Paris, under a sort of ecclesiastical surveillance, for ten years. Later his books were condemned, and he was in prison for fourteen years. This is one chapter of the story. On the other hand, he was himself a sincere Christian believer, — as firm a believer as were the ecclesiastics who imposed penalties on him for his teaching. This is not all. Among his numerous supporters was that liberal-minded man, Robert Grosseteste, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln. Moreover, it was Guy de Foulques, after his election to the Papacy under the name of Clement IV., who called upon him to write out a treatise on the sciences, which, when a papal legate, he had requested of him. This Pope, it would appear, interested himself in his favor; and it was not until the accession of Nicholas IV. to the papal chair, a man of a very different temper, that the persecution of Bacon was begun with renewed severity. It must be remembered, that the philosopher had inveighed with vehemence against the vices of the monks and of the clergy, and against their ignorance, and had gathered against him, on this account, an array of personal enemies. The story of Roger Bacon is the story of a contest within the Church in a half-enlightened age, — an age when European life was emerging out of the barbarism that followed upon the fall of the Western Empire, and that was only briefly and partially interrupted in the era of Charlemagne, to return again in the tenth century with increased darkness and confusion. The story of Bacon is the story of a conflict between an able Christian teacher, who was decorated with the honorary appellation of "Doctor Mirabilis,"

who counted prelates and a pope among his friends, and a much more numerous set of adversaries, partly frightened by the new ideas that he broached, and partly exasperated by the stinging rebukes, however deserved, which had flowed from his sharp pen. To represent this as a contest between "religion and science," under the implication that anti-Christian students of science were on one side, and the collective body of Christians on the other, is to misrepresent history, with the result, if not for the purpose, of feeding in infidel prejudice. As for Galileo, there is no reason to question that he was a Christian believer and a Catholic, with a low ethical standard as regards the obligation of veracity, which was only too common among the countrymen of Machiavelli. There is no proof that he doubted the divine authority of the Bible more than did Cardinal Baronius, to whom Galileo refers, not by name, as the author of the remark, that the Scriptures were given to tell us how to go to heaven, and not how heaven goes. Nor was Galileo without warm sympathy from ecclesiastics, some of them high in station, who went as far as they dared in the attempt to shield him against the implacable bigotry by which he was pursued. Among his opponents were not a few men of science, ardent Aristotelians, who combined with ill-informed and narrow churchmen to bring down upon the head of their illustrious rival the wrath of the Inquisition. The history of Galileo is the history of a Christian man of science having among his friends and supporters no inconsiderable number of Christian people, who constituted, however, in Italy, at that time, a powerless minority in the face of the organized and relentless vigilance and force of the party of bigotry and intolerance. Coming down to recent days, we find

that the earliest and most efficient promoters of geological science were not unfriendly to the doctrine of theism or of revelation. In this country they were Christian believers, like the late Professor Silliman and President Hitchcock. Such men as these, with candid Christian scholars and ministers among their auxiliaries, fought the battle between the cause of science and its well-meaning but mistaken and often intolerant opposers.

The aspersions cast upon Christianity and the Christian Church for an alleged interference with the progress of science would be very much diminished if the authors of them would learn to discriminate between science and philosophy. Under the ægis of what is called "science," assent is claimed for guesses and theories which belong, if they belong anywhere, in the domain of metaphysical speculation. They seek to pass unquestioned in the livery of "science." In themselves they may deserve respect or disrespect; but it is a mere blunder, or a trick, to proclaim them as the legitimate products of inductive investigation. When a bright-minded physicist proclaims that Plato and Shakspeare are potentially present in the sun's rays, he is not speaking in the character of a sober student of nature, but of a metaphysical dreamer. His proposition is without proof, and is absolutely incapable of proof by any process known to physical science. The authority that may justly pertain to him when he stands on his own ground, he loses utterly when he leaps the fence into a field not his own. When a biologist assumes to be an oracle respecting the origin and end of the universe, the freedom of the will, and the nature of consciousness, his utterances may be wise or foolish; but they are, at least, not at all authoritative.

If the prominent naturalists, or several of them, would stick to their province, they would be more instructive, even if less notorious. The agnosticism of Herbert Spencer is an idea of Hamilton and Mansel as to the relativity of knowledge, caught up, and dissevered from its adjuncts, — an idea derived first from Kant. So far from having any verification in natural and physical science, it lies quite outside of that realm. Yet this underpinning of Spencer's system is gravely mistaken by some for a "scientific" truth, instead of a philosophical assumption of such a character that the structure reared on it is a house built on the sand.

If all that has been said of the opposition offered in past times to scientific progress by Christian people were true, — and we have tried to state how much of truth there is in the imputation, and how much of error, — no conclusion adverse to the truth of Christianity could be inferred. To justify such a conclusion, it would be necessary to prove that the Christian faith, the doctrine of Christ and of his redemption, carries in it by natural or necessary consequence this antipathy. It might be that the professed adherents of a religious system fail, in numerous instances, to apprehend in certain particulars its true genius. They may identify their own preconceptions with its actual teaching. They may misinterpret that teaching in some important aspects of it. They may carry their own ideas into the sacred books, instead of receiving their ideas from them. They may fail to apprehend clearly the design and scope of their sacred writings, the character and limits of their authority. They may cling to the letter, and let the spirit, in a measure, escape them. They may fail to separate between the essential and the accidental in their contents, the truth and the vehicle which em-

bodies it. Unless it can be shown, then, that Christianity involves a view of the material world and of its origin, of the laws of nature and its final cause, and of man, which is at variance with the results of natural investigation, nothing which the adherents of Christianity have said or done in this matter is of vital moment. That Christianity, fairly understood and defined, involves no such contradiction to scientific belief, is capable of being proved.

This division of the subject we have now to consider. A sense of the beauty and sublimity of nature pervades the Bible. The keen relish of the Hebrew writers for the grand and the lovely aspects of nature is specially manifest in the Psalms and prophets. The starry sky, forest, and mountain and sea, filled the Israelite's heart with mingled awe and rejoicing. Nor was he insensible to the influence of gentler sights and sounds, — to the bleating of the flocks on the hillside, the songs of birds, the flowers and fruits with their varied colors. That sort of asceticism which turns away from nature as something, if not hostile to the spirit, yet beneath man's notice, is in absolute contrast with the tone of the Scriptures. The religion of the Hebrews, not less than the religion of the New Testament, looking on the visible world as the work of God and a theatre of his incessant activity, allowed no such antipathy. It left no room for a cynical contempt or disregard of external beauty. The glowing descriptions of poets and seers, reflecting the spontaneous impressions made by nature on souls alive to its grandeur and its charm, naturally inspired an appreciation of that kind of knowledge which was ascribed to the king who "spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon even unto the

hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes" (1 Kings iv. 33).

The unity of nature is presupposed in the Scriptures. It is the correlate of the strict monotheism of the Bible. There is no divided realm, as there is no dual or plural sovereignty. Humboldt refers to the hundred-and-fourth Psalm as presenting the image of the whole cosmos: "Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot," etc. "We are astonished," writes Humboldt, "to find in a lyrical poem of such a limited compass the whole universe — the heavens and the earth — sketched with a few bold touches. The calm and toilsome labor of man, from the rising of the sun to the setting of the same, when his daily work is done, is here contrasted with the moving life of the elements of nature. This contrast and generalization in the conception of the mutual action of natural phenomena, and this retrospection of an omnipresent, invisible power, which can renew the earth, or crumble it to dust, constitute a solemn and exalted, rather than a glowing and gentle, form of poetic creation." It "is a rich and animated conception of the life of nature." [1] This one thought of the *unity* of nature is not an induction, but an intuitive perception involved in the revealed idea of God, and gives to science by anticipation one of its imperative demands.

Not only does the Bible proclaim the unity of nature; it views nature as a system.

In the first place, the operation of natural causes is

[1] Cosmos, vol. ii. p. 412 (Bohn's ed.).

recognized. In the story of the creation, every sort of plant and tree was made to yield "fruit after its kind, *whose seed is in itself;*" and every class of animals, to produce offspring "after its kind." One has only to look at Job and the Psalms to convince himself that the reality of nature and of natural agents is a familiar thought to the sacred writers. It is true that these writers are religious: they do not limit their attention to the proximate antecedent: they go back habitually to the First Cause. They may often leap over intermediate subordinate forces, and attribute phenomena directly to the personal source of all energy. This involves no denial of secondary, instrumental causes, but only of an atheistic or pantheistic mode of regarding them. If we say that Erwin von Steinbach built the spire of the Strasburg Cathedral, we do not mean that stones and derricks were not employed in the construction of it. We simply trace it immediately to him whose plan and directive energy originated the structure. When the Bible says that "by the word of the Lord were the heavens made," there is involved no denial of the nebular theory. Hardly any assertion relative to the subject is more frequent than that the Scriptures recognize no natural agencies. It is unfounded. It springs from a dull method of interpreting religious phraseology, and from a neglect of multiplied passages which teach the contrary.

Not only are natural causes recognized: nature is governed by law. Its powers are under systematic regulation. To the Hebrew poet, says Humboldt, nature "is a work of creation and order, the living expression of the omnipresence of the Divinity in the visible world." [1] There are no dark realms given up

[1] Cosmos, vol. ii. p. 412.

to unreason and disorder. Everywhere the power and wisdom of the Most High have stamped themselves on the creation. The same writer from whom we have just quoted, remarks of the closing chapters of the Book of Job: "The meteorological processes which take place in the atmosphere, the formation and solution of vapor, according to the changing direction of the wind, the play of its colors, the generation of hail and of the rolling thunder, are described with individualizing accuracy; and many questions are propounded which we, in the present state of our physical knowledge, may indeed be able to express under more scientific definitions, but scarcely to answer satisfactorily." [1] In these chapters of Job the mysteries of nature are set forth in connection with the reign of law and the impressive demonstration afforded by it of the inexhaustible wisdom and might of the Creator and Sustainer of all things. The waters in their ebb and flow, the clouds in their gathering and their journeys, the stars and constellations in their regular motion, the course of the seasons, the races of animals, with the means given them for safety and subsistence, in a word, every department of the physical universe, is brought into this picture of the ordered empire of Jehovah. Looking at the Scriptures as a whole, we may say, that, so far from contradicting science in their views of nature, they anticipate the fundamental assumptions of science which induction helps to verify, and that nothing in the literature of the remote past is so accordant with that sense of the unity, order, not to speak of the glory, of nature, which science fosters, as are the Sacred Writings.

It was to be expected that a revelation having for its end the moral deliverance of mankind would abstain

[1] Cosmos, vol. ii. p. 414.

from authoritative teaching on matters relating to natural science, except so far as they are inseparable from moral and religious truth. Theism, as contrasted with atheism, dualism, pantheism, and polytheism, is a fundamental postulate of revelation and redemption. That the only living God has created, upholds, and dwells in the world of nature, that the world in its order and design testifies to him, that his providence rules all, are truths which enter into the warp and woof of the revealed system. So man's place in creation, his nature, sin as related to his physical and moral constitution, the effect of death, are themes falling within the scope of revealed religion. In general, we find that the Bible confines itself to this circle of truths. The ideas of nature, apart from its direct religious bearings, are such as contemporary knowledge had attained. The geography, the astronomy, the meteorology, the geology, of the scriptural authors, are on the plane of their times. Copernicus and Columbus, Aristotle and Newton, are not anticipated. The Bible renders unto science the things of science. The principal apparent exception to this procedure is in the somewhat detailed narrative of creation in the first chapter of Genesis. It is obvious that details, if such there be, which go beyond the limit defined above, are of the nature of *obiter dicta*, — information vouchsafed beyond that which might reasonably be expected.

Respecting this passage, it deserves to be remarked, that elsewhere in the Old Testament no stress is laid upon the details as there found. The allusions to the origin of things in Job, the Psalms, and Proverbs, do not exhibit the succession of organic beings in just the same order. Even in the hundred-and-fourth Psalm, where the same order in the works of creation appears,

— the writer having in mind the Genesis narrative, — no weight is attached to the number of days.[1]

If we glance at the history of the interpretation of this passage, we shall find that the meaning given to it in different periods is generally matched to the science of the day. From Philo and Origen the allegorical treatment spread in the ancient Church, and prevailed in the middle ages. Augustine considered that the works of creation were in reality simultaneous, or that creation is timeless. His view was, that time begins with creation. In truth, one principal difficulty with interpreters down to recent days was that creation, which is by an instantaneous fiat, should extend over days. The time was thought to be, not too short, but too long. That God created the universe; that things came into being in orderly succession; that the crown of the creation is man; that man, though material on one side of his nature, was made for a higher end than the animals were; that he was to use them in his service; that his sin was not an infirmity of constitution, but a wilful disobedience to God; that conscious guilt and shame followed sin, — these great truths, to say the least, are embodied in the Genesis narrative, in the estimation of all who receive the religion of Christ.

But since the rise of modern astronomy and geology, new difficulties have arisen. The physical system, as conceived by the Genesis writer, is said to be geocentric. The origination of the luminaries above, of the earth and of the organized beings upon it, seems to be placed at an epoch only a few thousand years distant, and to be represented as taking place in a few days. On the contrary, geology, to say nothing here of ethno-

[1] See Dillmann, Die Genesis, p. 12; cf. Isa. xxvi. 7–10, xxxviii. 4 seq.; Prov. viii. 24 seq ; Ps. xxiv. 2.

logical and archæological science, shows that the system of things has come into being gradually, that creation stretches over vast periods in the past. Enough has been said already to indicate how groundless are the objections which spring merely from inattention to the religious point of view of the biblical writers. The First Cause is brought into the foreground: proximate antecedents are passed over. The features of the Genesis narrative which seem to clash with science are chiefly the order of succession in creation, and the chronological statements.

Various hypotheses for the reconcilement of Genesis and science may be left unnoticed, for the reason that they are either given up, or deal too largely in fancy to merit serious consideration. There is one theory, however, which is not wanting in able advocates, and is entitled to a hearing. A number of eminent naturalists, with whom coincide numerous theologians, look on the Genesis narrative as an epitome of the history of creation, "days" being the symbolical equivalent, or representative, of the long eras which science discloses; there being, however, a correspondence in the order of sequence, — a correspondence of a very striking character, and giving evidence of inspiration. It is not supposed that the facts of science were opened to the view of the writer of the first chapter of Genesis; but he saw, possibly in a vision, or through some other method of supernatural teaching, the course of things in their due order. The length of time really consumed in the process, he, perhaps, may have been as ignorant of as were his readers.

Plausible as this theory may appear to some, and supported though it be by distinguished names in science, as well as in theology, it has to encounter grave diffi

culties. Not a few learned naturalists regard the alleged correspondence in the order of events as unreal, or as effected by a forced interpretation of the narrative. For example, the earlier animal species did not wait to become extinct until the earlier species of plants had passed away, but both simultaneously perished, while, according to Gen. i. 10, 12, the vegetable kingdom was brought into being as a whole, and the divine approval was pronounced upon it; and not until after the interval of a "day" were the first animals created. With these naturalists many judicious critics and exegetes are agreed. The matching of the narrative to the geological history is thought to require a more flexible and arbitrary understanding of words and phrases in the former than a sound method of hermeneutics will sanction.[1] Another circumstance which tends to give a precarious character to the hypothesis in question is the documentary composition of Genesis. It is generally agreed that there are two distinct accounts of the creation, from somewhat different points of view, placed in juxtaposition. The hand of the compiler is plainly seen. It may be thought, however, that the first of these fragments owed its origin, in the first instance, to a vision, or to some other special extraordinary communication from Heaven. Yet this theory would require to be established. The new light which has been obtained upon Oriental history and religions raises additional doubt as to the tenableness of the hypothesis of which we are speaking. A mistake has often been made, especially by naturalists, in assuming that the first chapter of Genesis stands by itself, instead of being one of a series of narratives which extend over the earlier portion of the book, and must be examined and

[1] See Dillmann, p. 11.

judged as a whole. Now, we have ascertained that narratives bearing strong marks of likeness to these were current among the other Semitic peoples with whom the Israelites were related, — among the Phœnicians, and among the Babylonians and Assyrians. Some of the Chaldæan legends or traditions appear to have formed one stock with the Genesis narratives, at the same time that these, in their present form, are distinguished by their freedom from polytheistic myths, and by the lofty theistic features which have been pointed out. How far back can the purer or the Genesis form of these narratives be traced? Are they to be considered the original, most ancient form of traditionary belief, of which the other Semitic legends are a corruption? Positive evidence of an historical kind for such a view is wanting. There is one recent theory which appears void of probability. It is, that the narratives in the first nine chapters of Genesis were taken from the Babylonians by the Jews during the exile, and then, for the first time, introduced into their Scriptures. The supposition that they would borrow a cosmogony, with the connected narrative, from a detested nation of idolaters, is in the highest degree unlikely. Dillmann has shown that the Genesis stories bear a closer resemblance to the Phœnician than to the Chaldæan legends, as far as these last are at present known by the cuneiform monuments. The conception of a first man in a garden, in fellowship with God, and falling into sin, is not met with in the Chaldæan stories, nor is it met with anywhere but in Genesis.[1] The idea of a tree of life is common in Semitic and Iranian legends. It is pre-exilian, being adverted to in the book of Proverbs. The story of the Flood

[1] Dillmann, **Über die Herkunft d. urgeschichtl. Sagen d. Hebräer** (Berlin, 1882), p. 5.

is not peculiar to Babylon. It is a wide-spread tradition among many nations. If, therefore, the narratives in Genesis are of Babylonian origin, it is by some indirect path, and this derivation is of a very remote date. Can it be reasonably thought that narratives involving so pure and exalted a theism were brought by Abraham from the land of his fathers into Palestine? If not, then the expurgation and ennobling of these hoary traditions must have been the work of minds illuminated by the revelation to Moses. The divine or inspired element in the Genesis narrative of the creation would thus be made to consist in the exclusion of elements at war with the religion of Israel, and in the casting of the ancient story into a shape in which it should become a vehicle of communicating, not scientific truth, but the great religious ideas which form the kernel of the Mosaic revelation.[1] It cannot be denied that this would be an important step taken in the deliverance of the Israelites from polytheistic superstition. It might be all that God saw it wise to effect on that stage of revelation. To substitute a scientific cosmogony for the inherited beliefs of the early Israelites would require magic rather than miracle. It would be either a supernatural teaching of what it belongs to the inquisitive mind of man and the progress of science to discover, or it would be a kind of inspired riddle, the meaning of which could not be in the least divined — in this respect differing from prophecy — until science had rendered the ascertainment of its meaning superfluous.

No theory of evolution clashes with the fundamental ideas of the Bible as long as it is not denied that there

[1] Among the writers who defend this general view is Lenormant, The Beginnings of History, etc.

is a human species, and that man is distinguished from the lower animals by attributes which we know that he possesses. Whether the first of human kind were created outright, or, as the second narrative in Genesis represents it, were formed out of inorganic material, out of the dust of the ground, or were generated by inferior organized beings, through a metamorphosis of germs, or some other process, — these questions, as they are indifferent to theism, so they are indifferent as regards the substance of biblical teaching. It is only when, in the name of science, the attempt is made to smuggle in a materialistic philosophy, that the essential ideas of the Bible are contradicted.

As regards the idea of creation, or the origin of things by the act of God's will, it is a point on which science is incompetent to pronounce. It belongs in the realm of philosophy and theology. Natural science can describe the forms of being that exist, can trace them back to antecedent forms, can continue the process until it arrives at a point beyond which investigation can go no farther; then it must hand over the problem to philosophy. To disprove creation would require an insight into the nature of matter and of finite spirit such as no discreet man of science would pretend for a moment to have gained. This question, too, the question what constitutes the reality of things perceived, is one of the mysteries to the solution of which natural science lends a certain amount of aid, but which metaphysics and theology have at last to determine as far as the human faculties make it possible.

Christianity touches the domain of science in the Christian doctrine of physical death as the penalty of sin. Do not all living things die? Do not the animals,

those whose organization most resembles that of man, perish at the end of an allotted term? Are not the seeds of dissolution in our physical constitution? Do not the Scriptures themselves dwell on man's natural frailty and mortality? Does not an apostle — the same who asserts that death came in through sin — speak of the first man as of the earth, and mortal?

These questions are to be severally answered. The narrative in Genesis does not imply that man was immortal in virtue of his physical constitution. It teaches the opposite. Its doctrine is, that had he remained obedient to God, and in communion with him, an exemption from mortality would have been granted him. Not only would he have been spared the bodily pains which sin directly entails through physical law, and the remorse and mental anguish which are "the sting of death," but he would have made the transition to the higher form of life and of being through some other means than by the forcing apart of soul and body The resurrection of Jesus, and the promised resurrection of his followers, is the giving of a renewed organism — "a spiritual body" — in the room of "flesh and blood." This involves the idea of a restoration of man to that which he forfeited through sin; and it aids us in conceiving of a transformation, the method of which is altogether a mystery, through which unfallen man would have been developed into a higher mode of existence, reached by a process less violent and more natural than the crisis of death. The science which is adventurous enough to find Plato's Dialogues and Shakspeare's plays in the sunbeams will hardly assume to deny the possibility of such a transmutation. Christianity does not permit sin, and the effects of sin on human nature, to be lightly estimated. A moral dis-

order, a disorder at the core of man's being, brings consequences more portentous than are dreamt of in the philosophy which will not recognize this terrible but patent fact. It is true that the lower animals die. But man is distinguished from them. He is more than a sample of the species. He is an individual. He includes, in his principle of life, rationality, conscience, affinity to God. If he were nothing but an animal, then it might be irrational to think of his escaping the fate of the brute. But, being thus exalted, there is no absurdity in conceiving of an evolution from the lower to the higher stage of existence, effected without the need of shuffling off the body, — an evolution, however, conditioned on his perseverance in moral fidelity and fellowship with God. When the Scriptures speak of human weakness, frailty, and mortality, it is to mankind in their present condition, with the consequences of sin upon them, that they refer.

The Scriptures point forward to the perfecting of the kingdom of God, the consummation of this world's history. The physical universe is not an end in itself. It is subservient to moral and spiritual ends. It is not to remain forever in its present state. It is to partake in the redemption. The material system is to be transfigured, ennobled, converted into an abode and instrument suited to the transfigured nature of the redeemed. "Without the loss of its substantial being, matter will exchange its darkness, hardness, weight, inertia, and impenetrability, for clearness, brilliancy, elasticity, and transparency." [1] The mystery that overhangs this change is no ground for disbelief. As far as physical science has a right to speak on the subject, it furnishes

[1] Dorner, Christl. Glaubenslehre, ii. 973.

arguments for the possibility of such an evolution, and corroborates the obscure intimations of Scripture.[1]

The remark is not unfrequently heard, that, though there may be no positive dissonance between science and Scripture, yet the whole conception of the universe which science has brought to us is unlike that of the biblical writers, — so unlike, that the biblical doctrine of redemption is made incredible. The earth, instead of being the centre of the sidereal system, is only a minute member of it. It is, one has said, but "a pin-point" in the boundless creation. Consequently, man is reduced to insignificance. How can we imagine a mission of the Son of God, an incarnation of Deity, in behalf of a race inhabiting this little sphere? The incredibility of the Christian doctrine is heightened, we are told, by the probability, given by analogy, that other rational beings without number, possibly of higher grade than man, exist in the multitudinous worlds which astronomy has unveiled.

The whole point of this difficulty lies in the supposed insignificance of man. He who entertains such thoughts will do well to ponder certain eloquent sayings of Pascal. What is the physical universe, with its worlds upon worlds, compared with the *thought* of it in man's mind? Who is it that discovers the planets, weighs them, measures their paths, predicts their motions? Shall bulk be the standard of worth? Shall greatness be judged by the space that is filled? One should remember, also, the sublime observation of Kant on the starry heavens above us and the moral law within us, — one connecting us with a vast physical order, in which, to be sure, we occupy a small place, but th

[1] See **Tait and Stewart, The Unseen Universe.**

other binding us to a moral order of infinite moment, giving to our spiritual being a dignity which cannot be exaggerated. As to possible races of rational creatures in other worlds, who, if they exist, can affirm that the mission and work of Christ have no significance for them? But, not to lose ourselves in conjecture, the objection is seen, on other grounds, to be without any good foundation. The existence of any number of rational creatures elsewhere does not diminish in the least the worth of man; it does not lessen his need of help from God; it does not weaken the appeal which his forlorn condition makes to the heart of the heavenly Father; it does not lower the probability of a divine interposition for his benefit. Shall the Samaritan turn away from one sufferer at the wayside, because myriads of other men exist, many of them, perhaps, in a worse condition than he? This method of reasoning and of feeling is quickly condemned when it is met with in human relations. It would deaden the spirit of benevolence. It is not less fallacious, and not less misleading, when applied to the relations of God to mankind.

INDEX.

Abbot, E., 190, 194, 201, 223, 234.
Abbot, E. A., 240.
Acacius, 331.
Agassiz, L., 453.
Albert the Great, 447, 464.
Anaxagoras, 447.
Anselm, 40, 74.
Ansgar, 287.
Antilegomena, 432 seq., 435.
Antinomies of Kant, 87.
Apocalypse, authorship of the, 237, 441.
Apollinaris, Bishop of Hierapolis, 247.
Apollonius of Tyana, 286.
Apostles, authority of the, 425
Arabs, their science, 459 seq.
Aristotle, 74, 447.
Arnold, Matthew, 123, 299.
Arnold, T., 287.
Athanasius, 428.
Athenagoras, 232.
Atticus, Archbishop of Constantinople, 381.
Augustine, his reports of miracles, 293.

Bacon, F., on prophecy, 321.
Bacon, Roger, 447, 464 seq.
Barnabas, the Epistle of, 433.
Baronius, 466.
Barth, 395.
Baur, his theory of Christianity, 223 seq.; his theory of John's Gospel, 253; on Paul's conversion, 311.
Becket, Thomas à, 289.
Berkeley, 49.
Bernard, St., 290.
Beyschlag, 257.
Bleek, 190, 316, 321, 325.
Boniface, 287.
Bowne, B. P., 26, 33, 35.
Boyle, R., 65.
Buckle, his school, 457.
Buddha, 24, 129.
Buddhism, 129, 396 seq.
Buffon, 66.
Burke, Edmund, 291.
Burnouf, 398.
Butler, Bishop, 279.

Calderwood, H., 39.
Calvin, on the books of the New Testament, 438.
Canon, Muratorian, 431.
Canon, Old-Latin, 430.
Canon, of the Old Testament, 427.
Canon, Syrian, 430. *See* Peshito.
Celsus, 232.
Charity, how promoted by Christianity, 379 seq.
Chastel, 381.
Cheyne, 328.
Christ. *See* Jesus.
Chrysostom, 293, 382.
Clairaut, 66.
Clement of Alexandria, 183, 195, etc.
Clement of Rome, 149, 184; his Epistle to the Corinthians, 433.
Collins, 11.
Comte, 78 seq.
Confucius, 24, 128.
Conservation of energy, 18.
Constantine, 298.
Copernicus, 65, 66.
Cowper, 450.
Creation, the idea of, 479.
Credner, 191, 200.
Cunningham, on the Epistle of Barnabas, 232.

Dana, J. D., 62.
Darmestetter, J., 128.
Darwin, 46, 53 seq., 452, etc.
Descartes, 2, 40, 74.
Dillmann, 403, 474.
Dorner, 64, 238.
Douglas, 281.
Draper, J. W., his historical theory, 458.

Eckermann, 339.
Edwards, J., 188.
Enoch, the book of, 422.
Epictetus, 104.
Epiphanius, 199.
Erskine, T., 67, 127.
Euemerus, 22, 175.
Evolution, 52 seq.; Spencer's doctrine of, 86 seq.; in relation to Scripture, 478.
Eusebius, 183, 199, 222, etc.
Ewald, 131, 241, 316, 318, 319, 331, 420, etc.

Fairbairn, A. M., 89.
Family, influence of Christianity on the, 372.
Fénelon, 45.
Fetich-worship, 20.
Fichte, 75.
Flint, R., 41, 68, 79.
Francis, St., his biographies, 300; his alleged miracles, 302; his *stigmata*, 303.
Froude, J. A., 187, 290.

Galileo, 66, 448 seq., 466.
Genesis, the narrative of the creation in, 473, seq.
Gibbon, 185, 298, 348.
Gieseler, 186.
Gnostics, and John's Gospel, 234.
Goethe, 338.
Gospels, the apocryphal, 206 seq.
Gray, A., 57, 62.
Gregory of Nyssa, 287.
Grotius, 149.
Guizot, 298.

Hamilton, Sir William, 27 seq., 87, 98.
Harnack, 182, 205.
Harvey, 65.
Haug, 128.
Hegel, 75 seq.
Henslow, G., 60.
Herbert, T. M., 17.
Hermas, 232, 433, 435.
Herschel, Sir J., 49.
Hilgenfeld, 149, 182, 190, 226.
Hippolytus, 195, 222.
Hobbes, 9, 11.
Holtzmann, 213.
Homologoumena, 435.
Hopper, 391.
Humboldt, A. von, 470.
Hume, 6, 8, 97, 110, 282, etc.
Hutton, R. H., 245, 339.
Huxley, T. H., 8, 55 seq., 62, 63; on Hume and miracles, 111 seq.

Irenæus, 182, 184, 185, 186, 188, 432, etc.

Jacobi, 32.
James, the Epistle of, 441.
Janet, 60, 66.
Jesus, his life momentous, 122; his personal claims, 124 seq.; compared with other religious founders, 128; insanity has been imputed to him, 130; his sanity, 132; his sinlessness, 134 seq.; union of virtues in him, 137; free from self-accusation, 137; his denunciation of the Pharisees, 141; tried by suffering, 142; his divine mission proved by his own testimony and character, 145 seq.; his injunctions not to report his miracles, his cautions against an over-esteem of them, 153; connection of his teaching with miracles, 155; the proof of his resurrection, 166 seq.; Renan's conception of, 177 seq.; his discourses, 247 seq.; his motive in the choice of the disciples, 267; his birth and childhood, 279; predicted in the Old Testament, 321 seq.; his own predictions, 334; his work as the Saviour, 346 seq.; his teaching respecting God, 354; his teaching respecting man, 355; his incarnation and atonement, 360; his new ideal of man and of society, 369; his authority, 423.
John the Baptist, 155 seq., 162.
Josephus, on the canon of the Old Testament, 427.
Julian, 298.
Julian, the emperor, 367.
Justin, 190 seq., 198, 214, 231, 429, etc.

Kant, 15, 84, 87, 97 seq.; on the argument of design, 48 seq.
Keil, 245.
Keim, 123, 165, 169, 174, 225, 227, 240 241; on Paul's conversion, 311.
Kempis, Thomas à, 347.
Kepler, 65.
Koran, character of the, 393.
Kuenen, 326 seq.

Lactantius, 195.
Laplace, 66.
Last Supper, the date of the, 244.
Legge, 391.
Liddell, Dean, 452.
Lightfoot, J. B., 150, 182, 185, 205, 208, 209, 210, 211, 213, 229, etc.
Lipsius, 199.
Logos, in the Fourth Gospel, 238 seq

Lotze, 26, 35.
Loyola, 286.
Lucretius, 19, 51 seq.
Luther, on the books of the New Testament, 438 seq.

Maine, Sir Henry, 23.
Mangold, 190, 216 225, 231.
Mansel, 25, 87, 99.
Marcion, 214, 233.
Marcus Aurelius, 104, 297.
Martineau, J., 77.
Maurice, 291.
Maxwell, Clerk, 18.
McCosh, J., 39, 40.
Melito, 232.
Meyer, 141, 150, 245.
Miller, Hugh, 451.
Mill, J. S., 3, 7, 10, 11, 63, 79, 100, 277, etc.
Miracles, a constituent of revelation, 105 seq.; their relation to the uniformity of nature, 108; rest on historical proof, Hume's argument respecting, 109 seq., 277; Huxley on, 111 seq.; not isolated events, 114; their relation to "the order of nature," 115; their relation to internal evidence, 116; Rothe on, 117; importance of, 118 seq.; wrought by the apostles, as they thought, 148; injunctions not to report, 151; not to esteem too highly, 153; inseparably connected with authentic teaching, 155 seq.; not attributed to John the Baptist, 161; nor to Jesus prior to his public ministry, 162; proved by the faith of Jesus in himself, and by the apostles in him, 162; links in the chain of events, 164; the resurrection of Jesus one of them, 166; Renan's theory respecting, 177; not capable of demonstrative proof, 180; in the Gospels, no presumption against their genuineness, 181; value attached to them in the Fourth Gospel, 257; Bishop Butler on, 279; to attest revelation, 281; the ground and source of faith, 283; not the result of fraud, 284; competence of the witnesses to, 287; none of them tentative, 288; dignity and beauty of, 290; alleged post-apostolic, 291; wrought by prophets, 331.
Miracles, ecclesiastical, not to attest revelation, 282; frequently mere marvels, 282; for the furtherance of an existing system, 284; explainable by natural causes, 285; incompetence of witnesses to, 286; often tentative and doubtful, 288; often grotesque, 289; possible occurrence of, 291; in the patristic era, 292; reported by Augustine, 293 seq.; in the lives of the saints, 299; Niebuhr's view of, 299; related of St. Francis, 300 seq.
Mivart, 54, 62.
Mohammed, 24.
Mohammedanism, 367, 388, 393.
Monotheism, Hebrew, its origin, 402 seq.
Mozley, J. B., 62, 113, 115, 117, 134, 231.
Müller, Julius, 29 seq., 35, 42.
Müller, Max, 392.
Muratorian canon, 184, 231.

Natural laws, 108 seq.
Nature, biblical views of, 469 seq.; final transfiguring of, 481.
Neander, 280, 298.
Newman, J. H., 281, 287.
Newton, 65.
Nicholson, E. B., 202.
Nitzsch, 35.
Norton, A., 190, 207, 244.

Oehler, 316, 322.
Origen, 185, 196, 474, etc.
Owen, R., 54, 62.

Pantheism, in the religions of India, 1.
Papias, 184, 210 seq.
Park, E. A., 111.
Parker, T., 141.
Pascal, 482.
Paul the apostle, 139, 167; on seeking for God, 36; at Athens, 106.
Paulus, 175.
Peirce, B., 45, 65.
Pentateuch, its origin, 419.
Peshito, 184.
Peter, Second Epistle of, 443.
Pfleiderer, 20.
Philo, 474; in relation to the Fourth Gospel, 240.
Philostratus, 286.
Pollock, 75.
Polycarp, 186.
Polycrates, 246.
Porter, N., 39, 64.
Pothinus, 186.

Reid, T., 28, 97.

Reformation, its effect on biblical criticism, 408.
Renan, 123, 131, 132, 141, 165, 177 seq., 220.
Renouf, 392.
Reuss, 277.
Revelation, its relation to redemption, 410; historical, 411; anterior to the Scriptures, 414, etc.
Rhys Davids, 397.
Ribadeneira, 286.
Riehm, 316.
Robinson, E., 244.
Ropes, C. J. H., 182.
Rothe, 117.

Sadler, 191.
Sanday, W., 190, 191, 214, 232.
Saturlinus, 234.
Schaff, P., 217, 311.
Schelling, 75.
Schenkel, 226.
Schleiermacher, 33, 117, 168.
Schmid, R., 53, 62.
Semisch, 190.
Seneca, 104.
Silliman, B., 451.
Slavery, relation of Christianity to, 384.
Socialism, its relation to Christianity, 383.
Socrates, 130, 447.
Spencer, Herbert, on free-will, 7, 13; on the origin of religion, 21 seq., 39, 85 seq., 101, etc.
Spinoza, 6, 7, 9, 10, 39, 73 seq.
State, influence of Christianity on the, 373.
Stewart, D., 28.
Strauss, 123, 157, 163, 176, 242.
Stuart, Moses, 451.
"Supernatural Religion," 200.

Tatian, his Diatesseron, 204 seq., 232.
Taylor, Jeremy, 201.
Taylor, W. M., 139.
Tertullian, 183, 185, 197, 203, 214, 260, etc.
Theodicy, Christian doctrine of the, 361.
Tholuck, 244.
Tillemont, 182.
Trendelenburg, 39, 41, 64
Tschirnhausern, 75.
Tyndale, on the books of the New Testament, 438.
Tyndall, 81.

War, effect of Christianity on, 383.
Weiss, B., 131, 140, 141, 211, 218, 280.
Wellhausen, 402.
Wesley, J., 15.
Westcott, 201, 218, 220, 241, etc.
Whewell, 461.
Whitney, W. D., 392, 394.
Wieseler, 244.
Williams, Monier, 129.

Ueberweg, 74.
Ulrici, 26, 33, 35.

Valentinus, 234.
Variability, 56 seq.
Venables, 227.
Virchow, 62.

Xavier, St. Francis, 286, 290.

Zahn, 182, 205, 227.
Zeller, E., 222, 238, 440.
Zöckler, 458.
Zoroaster, 128.

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