

Other little stars are near,
Form'd into a group of love :
And methinks my list'ning ear
Hears their music from above.

"Jesus, lover of our race,
Slain to bring us infants nigh,
Lo! thy plenitude of grace
Flows to friends still doom'd to die.

"But on us, thou King of kings,
Heavenly glories now unfold ;
Praise him saints with all your strings,
Praise him on your harps of gold."

E. S. ELY.

FOR THE REMEMBRANCE.
EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

NO. III.

Πασα διδασκαλία και πασα μαθησις διανοητικη εκ
πρόσπαρχουσας γινεται γνωσις.

Aristotle Anal. Post. L. 1.

"Every doctrine and demonstrable truth, must rest on antecedent elements of truth, naturally and intuitively perceived."

When a great and complicated theme is proposed for investigation ; a theme in its nature awful, and involving in its consequences the whole circle of human interests, for time and eternity ; one, moreover, which has long been perplexed by the artificial sophistries of some men, and the improper concessions of others ; and which is, and ever must be, obnoxious to the lusts of the human heart ; it becomes a matter of solemn duty to define, with all possible accuracy, the question at issue ; and to fix those general truths to whose intuitive or acknowledged evidence the appeal must be made in every step of the discussion. The correctness of these remarks is as obvious, as their applicability to the subject in hand is indisputable. Waving, therefore, all further observations respecting the adventitious difficulties with which the Christian cause has become embarrassed, I shall proceed to state the question.

The question, then, is simply this ; whether the Christian Religion ; or, in other words, whether the religion of the Bible, or Holy Scriptures, be supported by such evidence of Divine origin and authority, that every rational man, who examines *this* evidence with due candour and care, must of necessity be convinced of the truth of *that* religion, and of his own obligation to submit to it in its fullest extent.

The reasons why candour and care are required of the person who desires to be satisfied respecting the truth and authority of Christianity, will suggest themselves in a moment. Few readers will need to be informed that it has been made an objection to the Christian cause, that it has failed to carry conviction to the minds of men of acknowledged talents and splendid literary acquisitions. The question, indeed, can no longer be put : "Have any of the Rulers or of the Pharisees believed ?" Have any persons, distinguished beyond the vulgar herd, for genius and erudition, stooped from the soaring heights of philosophy, and humbly bowed themselves before the authority of the Christian religion ? The question is not how *some* have been convinced ; but why *any* such men should remain any longer in doubt ? It has even been asked, If Christianity be a religion devised by an omniscient and good God, for the human race, and promulgated under eternal and tremendous sanctions, how comes it to pass that any human being, living within the reach of its light, should be capable of entertaining a doubt of its truth, or of hesitating to submit to its rule ?

One is ashamed to waste time in replying to such frivolous allegations ; but it is impossible not

to be struck with the singular infelicity of *religious truth*, whose hard destiny it is never to appear without being assailed by a train of petty and vexatious objections, never heard of on any other subject of inquiry. Who ever heard it urged as an objection against mathematics, or any branch of general philosophy, that because those who have scarcely so much as spared a thought to such subjects, are ignorant of their doctrines, and perhaps, in some instances, deny and oppose them ; that therefore such sciences must necessarily be deficient in evidence. Such cavils would be spurned with contempt, and by none sooner, than by the men who urge them so confidently against the credibility of Divine Revelation. But why should Christianity be the only subject in the world capable of being understood without investigation ? A mean and worthless system it must be, if every drudge of mammon, every slave to licentiousness, every giddy, thoughtless, fluttering thing, must, without examination, necessarily comprehend it. No grasp of genius, no extent of scientific knowledge on other subjects can compensate the want of a particular acquaintance with the Scriptures themselves. Sir Isaac Newton and Dr. Halley were philosophical friends, well able to appreciate each other's splendid scientific attainments ; though they took opposite sides on the great question of Christianity. On a certain occasion when the Doctor was throwing out something derogatory to the Christian cause, a thing, but too frequent with him, Sir Isaac is said to have replied : "Dr. Halley, I am always happy to hear you speak on mathematical and philosophical subjects ; because you have studied them thoroughly and understand them ; but I am pained whenever you open your lips on the Christian religion, because you have never studied it, and really know nothing about it. I have studied it long and with great care, and I assure you Doctor, it has evidence enough to satisfy me."

With respect to those learned men who have, unfortunately for society, thrown away their great talents in opposing the doctrines of the Bible, an opportunity will offer in a future part of these essays, to shew that there is reason for something more than a suspicion, that many of them were no more than *professed* infidels : Infidelity was their *popular* creed, it was the arena which they had chosen for the display of their genius ; where ingenuity of argumentation was allowed to supply the place of wisdom, and eloquence employed to cover the sophistry from detection ; while at the same time the truth of the system which they opposed had its secret witness in their heart. I know what an awful charge this implies ; but alas ! who is so little acquainted with human nature as not to know that literary men sometimes contend for glory, not for truth ; and that paradoxes are often preferred to plain truths, as furnishing larger scope to the play of imagination ; stripping defeat of its disgrace, and adding additional glories to the laurels of triumph. We will not much err in ascribing a great part of the infidelity of the present age, to the same causes which Plato assigned to the atheism of some ancient Greek philosophers ; namely, to ignorance, which exposed them to false opinions ; to vicious habits, which drove them into false theories as the sole refuge from remorse and shame ; and to vanity, which involved them in paradox and absurdity, that they might not seem to think with the vulgar.

If, after all, there should be found, among those who have paid attention to the subject, a few (and a few only will be found) who honestly believe that the Christian religion is not supported by proof, I would wish to know whether these same men be not completely sceptical on all subjects whatever, especially on all moral subjects. Such seems to have been the case with Hume. From the memoirs of the late Earl of Charlemont, a very interesting work, we learn that Mr. Hume had succeeded completely in depriving his mind of the certain perception of truth ; and was a sincere and honest

believer of his own creed, "that we should doubt of all things and doubt even of our doubts." I need not add that sceptics are no where found but among the opposers of the Bible. And it is a subject of curious and interesting speculation, that the same train of thinking which led them to deny the truth of Christianity, should lead them to deny every truth of every kind. It would seem as if the tornado of argument which was necessary to prostrate this sturdy and venerable oak, so long the monarch and glory of the forest, could not accomplish that purpose without at the same time levelling every green thing in the dust.

After these explanatory observations on the statement of the question, I proceed to remark, that the acknowledged principles of truth which must be assumed as the basis of the whole argument are only the two following. I speak not of those very general and abstract principles which belong equally to every subject, but simply of those radical truths which are proper and peculiar to the subject in hand, without the admission of which we cannot advance a step in the investigation, and on the admission of which we can conduct the argument to its final decision. The truths alluded to are these,

1. That there is a God who created the universe, and of consequence must be possessed of all the perfections displayed in his works ; and that he possesses all these perfections in that degree which fair reasoning proves to belong to the attributes of an independent, necessary, and eternal Being.

II. That the Creator of the universe has a right to govern it, and actually does govern it according to his own counsel and will.

These principles exclude all Atheists from any interest in the present question. For if any man should deny that there is any such being, as we denominate God, it would be perfectly impertinent and absurd to attempt proving to him that Christianity is a revelation from God. The same may be asserted with equal justness respecting the man, who, admitting the existence of a God, and even his creation of the universe, denies his Providence or government of his works. For as the Christian system professes to have been introduced by the immediate Providence of God ; and is in its nature nothing else than a system of government for the human family, by far the most valuable part of this lower world, it is apparent that all its pretensions are blown up and annihilated, if there be no Providence. The questions respecting the Being and Providence of God must be settled on their own proper grounds, with these gentlemen, before they can have any direct and immediate interest in the question at present agitated.

I have now stated my subject, and laid down my first principles, it is time therefore to proceed to the distribution of my matter. I apprehend then that the general question mentioned above may be conveniently resolved into the four following.

I. What is Christianity ?

II. What is the nature of evidence ?

III. What is that particular evidence which Christianity ought to have, that it may be entitled to assume the dominion over our faith and conduct ?

IV. Is it possessed of that evidence ?

The reader is now in possession of my plan and design ; and if he can prevail on himself to move along in company with that leisure, which my tardiness renders necessary ; and will be content with the sober charms of truth, without exacting that drapery and those ornaments, with which a mere specious rhetoric would not find it difficult to embellish this theme ; I will venture to promise him this much, and no more, that if what shall be offered, should not much enlarge his information, it shall at least not obscure his principles : That if some arguments should fail to convince his understanding, there shall not be a single one addressed to his prejudices : That if Deists are not convicted, they shall assuredly not be abused : and that if any light be thrown on any part of this extensive sub-

fect, it shall be of the same in kind, however small in degree, with that which shines in the inspired oracles themselves; which, while it pours demonstration on the intellect of man, purifies his affections, elevates his hopes, sublimates his ambition, and makes him feel the dignity of a nature formed for eternal communion with the Eternal Source of all that is great and good, and glorious.

CRITO.

FOR THE REMEMBRANCE.

THE PRISONER'S HYMN.

Composed by the REV. E. S. ELY, and sung in the Prison in Philadelphia on the 13th of March, 1814.

1. JESUS, on whom the Spirit came
Like a descending dove,
Thou art a purifying flame,
Thou art the God of love.
2. Anointed Son of David, preach
Good-tidings to the meek,
And broken-hearted sinners teach
The oil of joy to seek.
3. Bid mourning captives all be free
From ev'ry galling chain;
And give each prisoner liberty
From Sin's accursed reign.
4. Th' accepted time, the day of grace,
Let mercy long proclaim,
And warning vengeance clearly trace
The path to endless shame.
5. To those who mourn in heaviness,
For ashes, beauty bring;
That cloth'd in Christ's own righteousness
Each saved soul may sing:
6. "Prisoners of hope, lo! Zion's King
From sin has made us free;
"Then let the heavenly arches ring
"With Christian liberty."
7. How chang'd the pardon'd convicts' state
Who from Death's dungeon rise!
The brightest crowns of glory wait
Their ascent to the skies.

A PARABLE.

Containing an example of a perfect man in Christ.

(concluded from page 112.)

The scholar was more and more astonished at the answers of the beggar, who as to all that outwardly appeared of him, was a most unfortunate and unprosperous man, unhappy even to the last degree: But who still persisted to maintain the contrary of what appeared to the eye. So that he was greatly puzzled what to think of him; and had some suspicion that all this might be perhaps only for a trial of wit. "What mean said he, these words of yours? Again I wish you happy, and the best fortune in all your undertakings. In a word, may every thing happen to you as you desire: May you have all you wish to have." I have no reason, saith the beggar, for complaint. Because all things happen as I will, though I never so much as set my mind upon fortune.

At which the scholar, as if he were about to take his leave of him, said to him: God keep you, honest friend, since you care not for fortune. But tell me now, I pray you, are you the only happy person among miserable mortals? Job then is out, who affirmeth, "That man born of a woman is of short time and full of miseries." And how have you alone escaped all evil days? Whom make you yourself to be? I do not sufficiently understand your meaning. God save you. Now at last speak to me more plainly.

To whom the beggar: That I will do very willingly. You did wish me at first a good morning:

And after that you wished me also a good day. And I answered you, that I never had to my remembrance an evil morning or a bad day. And it is even so in truth, as I said. For every morning is to me a good morning, being given me by my Father in heaven: And every day is to me a good day, he having graciously vouchsafed his word to be the light thereof. Therefore I praise him every morning: And day unto day sheweth more and more of his goodness. Hence it is that I never have had one unprosperous day; but all things have succeeded for the best, ever since I first entered into this course wherein you now see me: notwithstanding any appearances to the contrary.

For what the world doth generally call misfortunes are no more than appearances. These therefore hurt me not at all, nor cause me an evil time: But I am made to continue under them, by the grace of God, always the same. The lot which is assigned me of God, whatsoever it be, or howsoever it appear, I am certain must be good: And therefore I thank God for it. If it appear an evil, I am sure it will be good for me, yea very good, unless it be my own fault: And therefore for all that falleth upon me, I say *Blessed be the name of the Lord*. In every season, in every weather, in every change of the times, thus have I still a blessed morning, and a good time. Whether I be full or empty, I praise God. When I am pinched with hunger, I praise him; or if with cold, I praise him also. If it hail, if it snow, if it rain, if it thunder, if the heaven be fair or foul; I praise God. In a word, if I be ever so wretched in the eye of the world; and despised and reproached of men, as the very offscouring of the earth, I likewise praise God: And therefore there hath never happened any bad morning unto me, nor hath any evil day overtaken me; but I have ever had a good time of it, and peace in God.

Wherefore when you wished me peace, I answered that it was with me already: and I heartily wish that it may be with you likewise, as it is with me; whence I said, *And with thy spirit*. This inward peace of mind under all events, is that which hath supported me so very wonderfully; for it hath a certain transmuting power, by which the bitter is made sweet, and which can change even curses unto blessings, as experience hath taught me. Wherefore professing this gift of God, I fear not either the terror by night, nor the arrow by day, knowing no evil can happen unto me, nor any plague come nigh me, to annoy me, who by faith abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

You did likewise wish that I might be fortunate:—And I answered you, that I never had been unfortunate. You wished me in the name of the Lord good luck: and I told you, that I never had any bad, neither feared any. Because I know to live with God, and to rest under his defence: And am certain that whatsoever he doth cannot but be well done; yea that it cannot but be the best that can be, all things considered. And hence whatsoever he bestoweth upon me, or permiteth to happen unto me, whether it be agreeable unto me or not, whether it be sweet or bitter, I gladly receive it at his hands; I am satisfied that nothing could be better for me: and therefore I am never unfortunate.

Wherefore when you wished me prosperity, I answered, that I was never unprosperous. Because all that God doeth, or disposeth, doth prosper with me; and I am fully therein satisfied. For I know that my lot is cast by him: and I commit myself fully to his good providence, not doubting of success. Those monsters, fortune and misfortune hurt nobody but him that is willing, or at least fearful, to be hurt; therefore I am not at all concerned for them. Nor do I ever once call upon fortune, that I may prosper: I pray not to her; but I pray to my Heavenly Father, by whom the events of all things are ordered. And he having the ordering of them I have all the reason in the world to be contented, yea to rejoice: since I know that he careth for me.

You desired moreover, that God would be pleased to make me happy: Whereunto I did answer in like manner, that I had never been unhappy. For I have proposed and determined to adhere only to the will of God, or rather to *inhere* in it: into which I have so wholly transfused mine own will, as whatsoever God *willeth*, that I *will* also. And for this cause, as I said, I have never been unhappy; seeing that, as I mentioned my determination hath been to cleave perfectly to the Divine will alone, and I have resigned up entirely my own proper will to God, that he may dispose of me in every thing as to him seemeth good.

When the beggar had spoken these things, this learned man was filled with exceeding great wonder; and seriously reflected upon the heavenly voice which had directed him hither. However he could hardly yet believe the words which he had heard: And therefore, he addressed the beggar again, and spake to him as followeth: "Strange, indeed! But if your will be so wholly resigned up to God, and transfused into his will, that you can be content, to be disposed of by him in every thing without reserve; pray what would you do, should it seem good to him, for the manifestation of his Omnipotent Majesty, to cast you down into the abyss of hell? What would you then do? Could you be content, think you, with his will and pleasure? Speak out plainly?"

He cast me into the abyss of hell! said the beggar, with a cheerful smile, his countenance here beginning to shine like an angel. But let even this be supposed; seeing that we may suppose as well what cannot, as what can be. Why certainly, if he should; I have two arms, whereby I would embrace him still, and not let him go. The one is true humility; and that I lay under him; and by it I am united to his most sacred humanity. The other is divine charity; which is the right arm: And that I cast about him; and by it I am united to his divinity. And by his arm I would hold him so fast, and clasp about him, as he would be forced to descend into hell with me. And I cannot but think, it is much more to be wished to be in hell with God, than to be in heaven without God. Heaven without him would be a hell to me: and hell with him a heaven. For wherever he is, there must heaven be also.

By all this the doctor was convinced, that the most compendious way to God doth consist in true and perfect resignation of the will with profound humility. And he praised God, that he had found one to shew him this short way: and determined to walk therein ever afterwards.

And hereupon he enquired earnestly of the beggar, Whence he came; as desirous of being more nearly acquainted with him, from whom he had learnt so much already: And the beggar answered him, that he came from God. And when he asked him, where he found God? After a little pause, There, said he, *where I left all creatures*. Then he proceeded to question him, where he had left God? The poor man answered, in clean hearts, and men of good will.

Then the doctor, as one ravished with his answers, cried out, Good God what art thou? Upon which he said, that he was a king. Art thou then a king? said the doctor. To whom he again: Maiest not; I am verily a king. Now upon saying that he was a king, and his persisting thus in it, the other's inquisitiveness was the greater; and he pressed him to let him know, where his kingdom was. Whereto he answered: My kingdom is in the soul. And further he added: I reign, by the grace of God, over my outward and inward senses: and can so govern them, as all the affections and powers of my soul are in perfect subjection to me. Now this kingdom is certainly preferable to all the kingdoms of the world.

The doctor here readily consented, that it was indeed far better than all the kingdoms, sceptres, crowns and glories of this world: But, said he, what brought thee to such a perfection? What made