8.15.28

HOLY SCRIPTURE VERIFIED;

OR, THE

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DIVINE AUTHORITY

OF

THE BIBLE,

CONFIRMED BY

AN APPEAL TO FACTS OF SCIENCE, HISTORY, AND HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS.

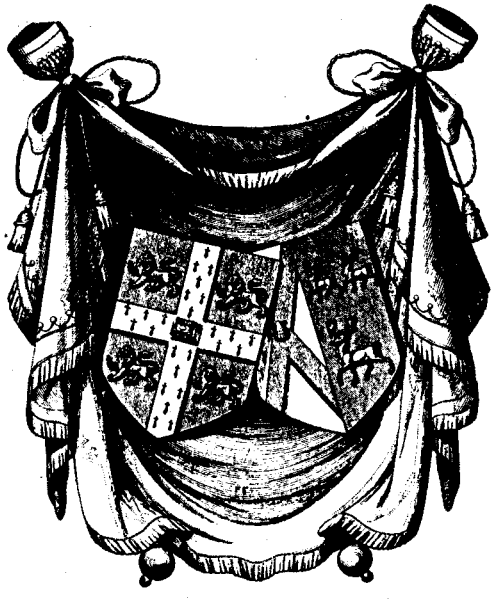
BY

GEORGE REDFORD, D.D., LL.D.

Ου δύναται λυθῆναι Η ΓΡΑΦΗ'.
JESUS CHRIST.



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PREFACE.

THE subject of the following Lectures, all will admit to be of supreme importance. Whether the Bible is true, and worthy of all acceptation, or whether it is a wicked fabrication, and a clumsy imposture, is a question not merely nor mainly speculative, but strictly and highly practical, involving the interests, the happiness, and the obligations of all. As we believe and feel upon this question, so will our conduct be affected for good or evil; and in so far as the generations coming after us, in succession and dependence, must take their education, their institutions, their habits, and their religion, from us; so far their condition, also, to an extent scarcely appreciable, will depend upon the opinions we may form upon this momentous subject.

In an age when the inroads of Infidelity are feared by some, and the growth of Popery by others, it cannot be deemed unseasonable to attempt an illustration, under a somewhat new form, of the eternal and blessed verity of Holy

Scripture. It is highly desirable that the young, and especially the educated young, of all our Protestant communities, should be fortified against errors, which will inevitably be urged upon them by the controversial spirit of the times. The bulwark of their faith will henceforth be found in the Bible—"the Bible only." If that cannot stand before the scrutinizing temper which is now rife among us, then their faith must be soon and utterly subverted: but if that divine foundation cannot be invalidated, then the faith that rests exclusively upon it, will be safe. Infidelity and Popery may rouse themselves to gigantic efforts, but all will be unavailing; the former will neither persuade us that the Bible is a lie; nor the latter, that, though inspired, we cannot understand it. He who, like Timothy, has known the Holy Scriptures from his childhood, and by *them* been made "wise unto salvation," will identify both these parties in the results at which they aim; he will perceive that they endeavour to remove his heart and conscience from under the immediate influence of the divine authority; that the infidel does it by affirming, that there is no such authority in the Bible; and the Roman Catholic does it by interposing a *human authority*, a medium which distorts and defiles the whole revelation; but a medium which he insists is absolutely necessary, to prevent the heavenly light from becoming downright darkness, leading those who confide in it to destruction.

The best, because the only efficient, defence, against these fatal extremes of credulity and disbelief, is obviously to be found in that reverence for the Holy Scriptures, that assured belief of their inspiration, which is the result of modest and careful inquiry. Let this be universally encouraged. We fear nothing in the cause of the Bible, but lukewarmness and apathy; we ask nothing of its adversaries, but candour and justice. Let all search the Scriptures, and the issue can scarcely be doubtful. Those who had believed at the dictation of others, would then say with the Samaritans, (John iv. 42,) "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have seen him ourselves, and *know* that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world;" while objectors, by such a course, would be convinced, or, at least, staggered and silenced.

The Bible is a universal boon to mankind; and we who believe in its inspiration should do our utmost to give it extension and effect. It is not written for any particular nation or age. It does not depend for its authority or its vouchers upon any church or all churches. It stands upon its own peculiar evidences; and no more requires the endorsement of the church to make it current, than the sun requires the authority of the astronomers to warrant our belief in its existence, or our perception of its light and heat. The Bible belongs to the world, like the air, the ocean, the rivers, and the fountains of water. It is a com-

mon light, a common blessing, the imperishable heir-loom of humanity: our whole inheritance lies there. No party can claim any special property in it; none has any right to monopolize it, or dogmatize upon its contents. It adequately vindicates its own claims, by the light, and truth, and love which never forsake it. Happily it has long since achieved for itself an emancipation from the priestcraft which had restricted its circulation, and dictated its import to the world. It has since been gradually diffusing its light, and advancing towards that universal dissemination which its own prophecies foreshow as certain, and the auguries of these times indicate as near. Great and auspicious events to mankind seem to be travailing for their birth-hour. But whatever character they may give to the eras which have yet to revolve, our own times have received their appropriate stamp; they can hardly miss the designation of the BIBLE AGE. Happy will it prove for ourselves, if we are found as diligent in studying the contents of THE BOOK, as we have been zealous in promoting its circulation.

Worcester, November, 1837.

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that degree of public attention to which they are entitled, and yet might be both qualified and disposed to undertake courses of lectures on subjects of interesting importance, not included within the ordinary range of pulpit instruction. To illustrate the evidence and importance of the great doctrines of Revelation; to exhibit the true principles of philology in their application to such doctrines; to prove the accordance and identity of genuine philosophy with the records and discoveries of Scripture; and to trace the errors and corruptions which have existed in the Christian Church to their proper sources, and, by the connexion of sound reasoning with the honest interpretation of God's holy Word, to point out the methods of refutation and counteraction, are amongst the objects for which "the Congregational Lecture" has been established. The arrangements made with the Lecturers are designed to secure the publication of each separate course, without risk to the Authors; and, after remunerating them as liberally as the resources of the Institution will allow, to apply the profits of the respective publications in aid of *the Library*. It is hoped that the liberal, and especially the opulent friends of Evangelical and Congregational Nonconformity will evince, by their generous support, the sincerity of their attachment to the great principles of their Christian profession; and that some may be found to emulate the zeal which established the "Boyle," the "Warburton," and the "Bampton" Lectures in the National Church. These are legitimate operations of the "voluntary principle" in the support of religion, and in perfect harmony with the independency of our Churches, and the spirituality of the kingdom of Christ.

The Committee deem it proper to state, that whatever responsibility may attach to the reasonings or opinions advanced in any course of lectures, belongs exclusively to the Lecturer.

Congregational Library,
Blomfield Street, Finsbury, Nov. 1837.

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"These are but the conclusions and fallible discourses of man upon the Word of God, for such I do believe the Holy Scriptures; yet, were it of man, I could not choose but say, it was the singularest and superlative piece that hath been extant since the creation. Were I a pagan, I should not refrain the lecture of it; and cannot but commend the judgment of Ptolemy, that thought not his library complete without it. The Alcoran, of the Turks, (I speak without prejudice,) is an ill-composed piece, containing in it vain and ridiculous errors in philosophy, impossibilities, fictions, and vanities beyond laughter, maintained by evident and open sophisms, the policy of ignorance, deposition of universities, and banishment of learning: *that* hath gotten foot by arms and violence: *this*, without a blow, hath disseminated itself through the whole earth. It is not unremarkable, what Philo first observed, that the law of Moses continued two thousand years without the least alteration; whereas, we see the laws of other commonweals do alter with occasions; and even those, that pretend their original from some divinity, to have vanished without trace or memory. . . . . *Men's works have an age like themselves, and, though they outlive their authors, yet have they a stint and a period to their duration.* THIS ONLY IS A WORK TOO HARD FOR THE TEETH OF TIME, AND CANNOT PERISH BUT IN THE GENERAL FLAMES, WHEN ALL THINGS SHALL CONFESS THEIR ASHES."

SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

" If these Scriptures, impregnable in their strength, sustained in their pretensions by innumerable prophecies and miracles; and by the EXPERIENCE of the INNER MAN, in all ages, as well as by a concatenation of arguments all bearing upon one point, and extending with miraculous consistency through a series of fifteen hundred years; if all this combined proof does not establish their validity, nothing can be proved under the sun, but the world and man must be abandoned, with all its consequences, to one universal scepticism."

COLERIDGE.

LECTURE I.

THE MOSAIC STATEMENT OF NATURAL AND PHYSICAL FACTS RELATING TO THE CREATION AND THE HUMAN RACE, COMPARED WITH THE DISCOVERIES OF SCIENCE, THE RECORDS OF HISTORY, &c.

General Introduction.

UPON the admission that there exists a Supreme Intelligence, the Creator of all things, it seems a perfectly just and reasonable expectation, that every work of his power and wisdom should contain indubitable marks of its high origin. We accordingly find, that though the productions of the Divine Power may be finite and frail, for the most part brief in their duration, and insignificant when viewed in their individuality, they nevertheless exhibit, both in their creation and conservation, from the most minute to the most stupendous, the inimitable signature of supreme skill and power. Hereby they seem to become designedly legible to human reason, as inscrip-

Works of God.

LECT. I.

tions recording the name of their Divine Author, and proclaiming their origin by those bright and peerless characteristics which effectually distinguish them from all the productions of human and finite power.

Inimitable seal of God discoverable.

It is the proper business of reason to recognise this impress of the divine hand upon all those works of the Almighty, which come within the range of our observation; and, moreover, it is highly gratifying to perceive how sober and diligent inquiry is rewarded, as we proceed, by the development, at every step, of a wisdom more profoundly wise, and a skill more admirably skilful. The first inspection neither discloses all, nor, indeed, the most impressive and commanding proofs of the exhaustless wisdom and power of the Creator.

Nature inexhaustible.

This fact seems to be fully recognised by our men of philosophy, for they never appear to tire of their investigations, or to think that they have ascertained all that can be known of any given object. The reason manifestly is, because no part of nature can be fairly said to be exhausted, to have unfolded all its involutions, or revealed all its secrets to the most inquisitive and sagacious of the philosophers. The horizon is never approached; it does but recede and widen as we advance. After the most consummate genius has spent its energies on a single object, or class of objects, and has brought to light the hidden and beautiful laws, the mysterious properties, the nice relations and extended dependencies, and a temporary pause seems to be given to curiosity, because the world is engaged in admiring and verifying these researches, yet at length science is again seen pluming her wings for a new flight, and aspiring to a higher summit. It is found that the discoveries already made, only prepared the way to more brilliant ones; only supplied a vantage ground for a wider and more glorious prospect; fresh inquiries all through nature still leading to fresh discoveries; and so on interminably.

LECT. I.

The mysterious cause unapproached.

Hence there arises, in all the departments of natural philosophy, a perpetual stimulus to research. The most acute and lofty minds, through all civilized nations, are thus constantly occupied in prying into nature's plans and laws, seeking a deeper and yet a deeper depth; as if they would fathom the whole mystery, which yet they seem conscious is practically, if not really, *unfathomable*. For most certain it is, that, after all, the grand secret is still impenetrable. The mysterious cause is hidden behind the veil of its own effects. For "who by searching can find out God?" The mass of our knowledge may be augmented by the discoveries of science, but our substantial ignorance remains. We remove forward the boundaries of our own proper territory from time to time, but we move always within the limits of the creation, which every where imparts its hidden treasures, and displays its

LECT. I. beautiful unity, but uniformly prohibits, as by an impenetrable frontier, the ulterior step. The Creator, in his infinity, is still unapproached and unapproachable by these processes. In all our inquiries, we ultimately arrive at that which is too subtile, or too dark, or too minute for further analysis. We trace grandeur of design, and exquisite adaptation, but inexplicable mystery, in all the systems of nature; yet, as Paley has justly and beautifully noticed, "We never get among "such original or totally different modes of exist- "ence, as to indicate that we are come into the "province of a different creator, or under the "direction of a different will."* Thus a homage is rendered to the sacred seal, which the Almighty has set upon each of his works. The unrivalled productions of his creative wisdom and power, every where, constrain the reason of man, intentionally or unintentionally, to confess the peculiarity, to admire the perfection, and to adore the inexhaustible opulence of his works. These inimitable characteristics, visibly impressed upon his various productions, not only create a line, broad and clear, between *them* and the works of human skill, but they seem, though silently, yet triumphantly, to set at defiance all the resources of human art and ability; I need not say, to rival or imitate, but even thoroughly to explore the divine workmanship. If *that* transcends our com-

* Nat. Theology, p. 650.

prehension, what wonder that the Infinite Author himself should be cognizable only by his own light, and only so far as he may condescend to explain himself. LECT. I.

Revelation must have its divine characteristics.

Let us suppose, surely no unreasonable supposition in the abstract, that he has made some sort of revelation. We will not yet assume *what;* but, supposing it to exist, it will be fair and just to expect, that evidences somewhat similar to those which avouch his works, should accompany his word. We may presume that, like nature, it will possess characteristics *all its own;* that its facts and principles will be in harmony with the universe, with human history, and consciousness; and that it will not simply sustain its authority by the *à priori* argument of miracles and prophecy. And, farther, that as the *à posteriori* argument for the being of a God is found the most satisfactory, and, perhaps, the only efficient one, so a similar argument, in behalf of revelation, may be found correspondingly powerful and convincing. It is true, in such a case, we must first assume that we possess a divine revelation, and then proceed to show how facts accord with its statements; but, in so doing, we merely proceed according to the rational method, by which the verity of any written document is ascertained. Whether it be a professed narrative of events, a theory on some scientific subject, or a mere *seriatim* catalogue of things, yet, if it give a true detail, facts will tally

LECT. I. with its statements, and it will be pronounced *faithful.*

To be tried by facts, &c.

Now, if there does exist such a thing as a real revelation, it will doubtless bear a similar examination. The application of the test may be delicate, but it must, in the main, be clear and decisive; and it is quite certain that, in no case, can the document and the real fact contradict each other. A true revelation cannot stand opposed to nature, history, or the facts of human consciousness. The words of Scripture may be misinterpreted—its facts may be mistaken—it may leave many things involved in mystery, and quite unapproachable by our present powers of discrimination; but if it professes to give information upon events that have transpired, or things that exist, there must be, and be discoverable, a harmony in the main, and without any positive discord. This correspondence, if it can be traced to any considerable extent, will very materially subserve the cause of revelation. The one will be to the other as the key that passes the wards of the lock, or as the clue by which we thread a labyrinth.

We can conceive it possible for God to have made a revelation upon matters concerning which neither our experience, nor science, nor the course of history might have supplied any corroborative evidence. Such a revelation might have rested solely on the direct proof of divine authority in the

method of communication. Its subject matter might have been placed far beyond the reach of any test we could employ; but if we possess a revelation which, besides the direct and primary proofs of divine intervention, affords us the opportunity of verifying its statements, by matters coming within the sphere of our own experience and observation, it must then, I think, be admitted, that such a revelation possesses all the evidence we could reasonably desire, perhaps all of which any revelation is susceptible. LECT. I.

It is not, however, pretended that this view of the christian evidence possesses any novelty; or that this mode of testing it has not often been adopted, both by friends and enemies. Yet, I think, it must be admitted that the subject has generally been treated in a partial and desultory manner; very rarely in a distinct and separate form; usually it has constituted only a section or an item of a general argument; or has been merged in questions of prophecy and history. It has certainly been made, by the enemies of revelation, a most prolific source of objection. It has presented a field where they have gallingly paraded their forces, and harassingly hung upon the rear of the christian argument.

This argument susceptible of expansion, in the present state of science.

Now we have imagined, whether wisely or otherwise, you must judge, that this argument, from the verification of Scripture, is susceptible of considerable expansion and confirmation, in the

LECT. I.

present advanced state of human knowledge, and that something should be attempted by way of making the contributions, both of science, history, and human experience, serviceable to the cause of revelation.

Science tributary to natural theology.

Much has been effected of late to elucidate and confirm the doctrines of natural theology, by bringing to their aid the valuable and important discoveries of modern physical science through its various departments. So that the argument for the being, perfections, and providence of God, may be said to be wrought up to the improved state of natural knowledge. It has been, if not strengthened in the nature and construction of the argument, yet carried out by new illustrations, and reinforced by being pursued up to the ultimate discoveries of philosophy.

Moreover, several able writers, as well philosophical as theological, have shown that the discoveries which have of late years been going forward in one particular and popular branch of science, hitherto suspected of a hostile aspect towards revelation, has brought to light no facts subversive of the Mosaic cosmogony. So far scientific discoveries are found, on the one hand, to subserve the defence and elucidation of natural theology, while, on the other, they are shown to be at least inoffensive, or neutral towards revelation. Every thing beyond this, such as the effort to make science, history, and human experience corrobo-

rate the testimony, and contribute to the evidence of revelation, falls properly within the province of the theologian.

LECT. I.

Danger of resting in natural theology.

I can, of course, have no reason to depreciate the important inquiries of natural theology, but I may be permitted to say there is considerable danger of reposing in them, complacent in the fundamental truths they establish, and satisfied with the important and interesting results to which they lead. The theism which is so often attempted to be grounded upon them, apart from the discoveries of revelation, proves in the issue a system of delusion and mischief. It is built up of crude and incongruous materials, which do but deceive and baulk the hope of their admirers, and which at last crumble into dust in the rough hand of time, and before the test of experience.*

* I trust, however, when I speak thus of the danger lest natural theology should be consulted as an oracle, in the formation of religious belief, or itself be mistaken for a complete system of religion, I shall not be understood as reflecting, or intending to reflect, in the slightest degree, upon the eminent and accomplished individuals who have lately made such valuable additions to our stock of arguments for the being and government of God. It is abundantly evident, from most of the Bridgewater Treatises, that their authors had found no satisfaction in a scheme of mere theism; and many admirable passages might be adduced, to show that they are devout believers in the inspiration of the Scriptures; and further, though this was not their object, it is evident, that they would be rejoiced to find their writings tributary, in any degree, to a similar faith in their readers. They have openly professed their

LECT. I.

Natural theology only relatively useful.

It is not improbable that a sentimental kind of religion, scarcely a shade brighter than the gloomy deism of the last century, may be fostered in the minds of some men of science, by the eloquent and elaborate writings on natural theology which have recently been given to the world. If young inquirers should unhappily repose in these arguments, they may be preserved from embracing the absurdities of atheism, but it is equally certain they cannot be accounted Christians. I derogate nothing from the importance and value of the arguments such works present, when I say, that their utility is chiefly *relative*. They constitute but a link in a chain. *Apart* they are of little worth. They form but one of the steps to the Temple of Truth; a step far enough from being the last, and if it should unhappily be made our *resting place*, instead of one of the *stages* of our ascent, we shall

adherence to the sacred records, and rendered becoming homage to revelation, as the only adequate and final authority in religion. Hereby they have done honour to their own enlightened understandings, to their own great genius and learning. This is highly satisfactory as to the individual authors of those works. We are, moreover, quite sure they would deprecate any use of their writings that might either seem directly to militate against the dictates of revelation, or to supersede it by the substitution of natural religion. But we cannot suppress the fear, that such a misuse, as we have alluded to, may be made, and has, probably, already been made, by those who have paid little attention to the whole subject of religion, and possibly none whatever to the evidences of revelation.

find it but a comfortless and unsatisfactory position, scarcely out of sight of the dark abyss of atheism, and far below the light and security of that high abode which true religion has prepared for us. Natural theology, at best, can only lead us to the exterior of the magnificent and universal temple of nature; show us its vast extent and its deep foundations; demonstrate its exact arrangements and its graceful ornaments; and thus, from the complicateness, the perfection, and the exactness of the whole work, instruct us to infer, that this temple had an architect, and that this architect must be infinitely wise, powerful, and beneficent. But the nobler province, the higher office of moral and religious instruction, pertains to revelation; that leads us into the interior of the temple; unveils to us the shrine of the indwelling Deity; permits us to hear the voice of the living oracle, and instructs us to pay our homage at his footstool.

LECT. I.

Completed by revelation.

On all accounts, then, it is infinitely desirable that revealed religion should appear to be true. To resist fair and substantial evidence on its behalf, or to thrust its divine, its unrivalled benedictions from us, is to turn recreant to humanity, and act the assassin upon the purest and noblest aspirations of our nature. If what we hear within this temple is indeed a true and divine oracle, proceeding from that same wisdom which designed the vast fabric of the visible universe, then we may expect, that there will be discoverable indubitable evidence of harmony with all the other

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parts of the system; and as, in natural theology, we can perceive a convergence of proof, arising from the physical and moral systems, to one and the same point, namely, the identity of the author of both, so we may hope to trace in revelation a still more marked, refined, and mysterious correspondence with the physical system, with our universal history, and our entire nature; and thus will be made certain the momentous, the deeply interesting proposition, that the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Founder of the moral system of man's nature, and the Author of the sacred volume, is ONE and THE SAME SUPREME and ETERNAL BEING.

General evidences of revelation.

There are chiefly two classes of arguments, or modes of reasoning, by which the sacred Scriptures are proved to be of divine inspiration; they are usually denominated the *external* and the *internal* evidences. The arrangement has been objected to, and it may not be strictly and critically exact, but it is sufficiently so for all ordinary purposes. These evidences it is not our intention to discuss, further than as some portions of them will be necessarily involved in our design.

The argument intended to be pursued in the present Lectures.

We propose to take the Bible upon its own pretensions, that we may have the opportunity of comparing it with facts, and thereby of showing, in case the argument shall be found satisfactory, that a strong additional evidence thus arises to its truth, and, consequently, to the identity of its authorship with that of the material system of the

universe, and the mental and moral constitution of man. This is the great proposition, the establishment of which, even after the admission of the direct arguments for the inspiration of holy Scripture, seems essential to the triumph of the christian faith. If the other evidences are necessary to prove the divine inspiration of the written word, this is necessary to establish its truth practically. For although its veracity would legitimately follow as a necessary inference, drawn by our reason from the already proved fact of divine inspiration, yet it will be an additional confirmation to our faith, of incalculable value, to perceive how its statements are experimentally and historically verified. In the one method we should infer its truth from its divine origin or inspiration; in the other, we shall ascend from its accomplishment to its veracity, and its divinity will then follow as an undeniable consequence.

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The direct evidences, as you are aware, are exceedingly numerous, arising from different and unconnected sources, complicated in their character, and continually augmenting. Virtually, or relatively to us, they may be denominated boundless and inexhaustible, because always progressive, thereby supplying matter to engage the diligent inquiries, and reward the fixed attention of every successive generation; though to each, from the very first, has been afforded an ample sufficiency to justify its cordial reception of that measure of revelation which it possessed, and to

LECT. I. render disbelief inexcusable. It is, however, particularly in the department of corroborative and historical evidence that our advanced position in science proves a vantage ground for the further corroboration of Scripture. The records of history, the researches of philosophers, the discoveries of antiquarians and travellers, frequently make important additions to the general fund, and clear up points only partially known, or involved previously in impenetrable mystery. All these sources are, at the present time, supplying numerous verifications, which could not have been anticipated by any projected calculation of probabilities, or any cautious process of analogical argumentation. But, as yet, little has been attempted in the way of collecting these scattered materials, reducing them to an orderly arrangement, or displaying them so as to make them bear conjointly on the evidence of inspiration. The very scantiness of what has been hitherto accomplished in this department, while it may justify the present attempt, will, it is hoped, form some apology for the deficiency and immaturity which will doubtless be but too obvious to able and accomplished judges.

Some reasons for the present undertaking might be derived from the very nature of the argument we propose to pursue. It seems to possess, at least, one special recommendation. A very large proportion of the direct evidences, both internal and external, require much time, close attention, and some learning, duly to feel their force and

appreciate their value; but, if I am not deceived, LECT. I. the argument to be adduced from the fulfilment and verification of the Scripture, is one that ordinary minds may more readily feel. Mankind at large display a greater aptness for perceiving a conclusion that depends upon experiment and observation, than one which rests upon abstract reasoning. Possibly this circumstance may add some value to the present undertaking, and warrant some hope of its utility.

I shall now proceed to call your attention to the first class of revealed truths or facts, which seem to receive corroboration from our own proper knowledge and experience.

They may be denominated

THE NATURAL AND PHYSICAL FACTS RELATING TO THE CREATION AND THE HUMAN RACE.

Date of the world — Extinct races — Geological epochs — Order of creation — Theory of light — Origin of the human race in a single pair — Man's dominion over the mundane creation — The social propensity of mankind — The sentence denounced on the man and woman respectively after the fall.

Mosaic statement. Many distinct statements, brief, indeed, but yet involving comprehensive and general principles, are laid down upon these subjects in the very first pages of revelation. From their re-

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markable agreement with what appears in the condition of man, and of this terrestrial creation, it seems highly improbable that they should have proceeded from any source but that which comprehended the nature, the laws, and the relations of all things. They appear to imply a knowledge which could not have been acquired by any of those means which men possess. They display an insight into the laws and facts of nature, which we find it impossible to ascribe to the individual writer, or the people among whom he had received his education. If the information imparted by this writer upon the subjects about to be examined shall be found of so peculiar a character, so accurate, so comprehensive, so anticipative of all that has been brought to light by science and been experienced by ourselves, as to preclude the possibility of attributing it to the ordinary sources of human knowledge, we seem, then, to have no alternative left us, but to accede to his own statement; a statement, be it observed, supported by various other more direct evidences, that he was a prophet sent of God.

Difficulty of establishing general principles of nature.

So far as general truths and universal principles of nature can be discovered by human effort, we know perfectly well, that great labour, cautious investigation, patient research, and much time are demanded. They require a large induction of particulars, and a great accumulation of facts, before they can be securely and confidently asserted. It is a rare case for such principles or

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truths to be brought to maturity by a single mind. The first, in general, merely suggests them. Others, frequently in a long succession, and after elaborate investigation, verify and prove them in all their bearings. When, therefore, we perceive how slowly great principles and general laws are discovered, even by the most comprehensive and accomplished minds in the present day, it must appear altogether incredible that Moses should have ascertained all the great natural truths, which he records, by his own researches, or derived them from the wisdom of the Egyptians.

Methods of accounting for the knowledge Moses displays.

None, we presume, will attribute to him such vast attainments in human philosophy, as to suppose that his cosmogony was built upon principles which he himself had scientifically wrought out. This were a supposition, so unsupported by any facts, and so wholly unsanctioned by analogy, that it would seem to require supernatural endowments, and, in the issue, be found to imply scarcely less than the inspiration we claim for him. It would, indeed, involve far greater difficulties than the frank admission of his prophetic character. But the other supposition, which has been a favourite one with some adversaries, that the source of his extraordinary knowledge is to be found among the Egyptians, may be proved quite as untenable, and may be almost as readily disposed of.

Egyptian science.

There was a time, indeed, when Bailly, Voltaire, and Volney disturbed the faith of Christians, by

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their crude speculations upon the advanced state of Egyptian and Indian philosophy. They paraded their zodiacs and astronomical calculations, and determined the existence of science in those countries, to be at least ten or twenty thousand years prior to the date of Moses. And then there were the Egyptian hieroglyphics, the hoary monuments of early science, which, if they were but deciphered, would not only demonstrate the inaccuracy of the sacred chronology, but show that all the peculiarities of the Mosaic narrative, the simplicity and sublimity which had so long been the admiration of the christian world, was all contained in the amazing wisdom of the Egyptians, and borrowed originally from them. How did these worshippers of the yet unknown and mute spirit of Egyptian philosophy long for the day which should unlock the hidden treasure? How did they sigh for the diviner that should expound the hand-writing which was destined to overthrow the Bible, and prove the great Hebrew legislator a mean and hypocritical plagiarist. But the day, which these vain boasters were spared the mortification of living to witness, is arrived. The skilful and gifted diviners have appeared. The hieroglyphics are read. The hand-writing is interpreted, and the last of the *savans*, such as Greppo, Bovet, Rosellini, Burton, Wilkinson, and Major Felix, who have, since Young and Champollion, made these ancient monuments the subject of their learned and laborious researches, all testify that their discoveries tend uniformly and invincibly to support the accuracy of the Mosaic records. We shall have occasion for showing, hereafter, in reference to particular facts, that no such knowledge as Moses displays ever existed in the schools of Egyptian wisdom, and it may, therefore, be merely observed in brief here, that if the Egyptians had possessed this knowledge, and taught it generally in their schools during the early life of Moses, it must have been a matter of common belief, and of ordinary instruction: and, further, that it must have perpetuated itself among them, or have left clear traces, identifying their knowledge with that of Moses.

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Moreover, the science which they possessed must have passed to other nations, who are well known to have copied from their system. The discoveries which have of late been made in their early history, must have brought to light some traces of these doctrines, and proved the Egyptians to have been men of true science. But nothing of the sort is the case. All we have ever learned of the Egyptians, places them and their opinions, at that early period, or, indeed, at any period of their history, far enough from any identity of opinion or belief with Moses; while their chronology is now shown accurately to correspond with his.

The Mosaic statement original.

But here are his writings, certainly originating at or about the date ascribed to them by the Jews, as can be proved by various collateral and undeniable testimonies, containing a system of cosmo-

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gony, a theory of the origin, condition, and laws of human nature, and affording such a statement and explanation of facts and first principles, as was not merely *sui generis*, and peculiar to that single writer, but the only ancient statement or theory consistent with itself; the only one that has stood the test of time, experience, and philosophy. Surely, if we can make out a harmony between its statements and such facts as could not have been foreseen by human wisdom, nor predicted by natural science, we shall be entitled to the benefit of an undeniable inference in favour of the inspiration to which Moses lays claim.

Date of the world—Extinct races—Geological epochs—Order of creation.

In the first place, it is to be observed, that the order of creation, as detailed by Moses, though very brief, and by no means to be subjected to severe and fastidious criticism, yet involves facts and statements which require to be verified by sound philosophy. If Moses was the inspired legislator we believe him to have been, it is impossible that his statement can be at variance with those records of the divine power and skill, which are imprinted upon the rocks, or conserved in that splendid museum of nature, which the perforated earth is now everywhere disclosing to us. The statement Moses has put on record, brief as it is, and designed as it must have been, not for the critical eyes of philosophers, but for general and popular information, yet affords, as we conceive, a remarkable test of the peculiar knowledge, and perfect accuracy of the writer. The facts he has

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ventured to record, include the origin of the present system of the heavens and the earth, the primeval state of the latter, with the date and order of the present creation.

Geological theory.

This inquiry, then, must at once bring under our notice the conclusions at which our modern geologists have arrived upon the same subjects. Their theory states, that the present surface of the earth must have been the result of a protracted series of operations, involving, as we recede, the creation and destruction of several systems of animal and vegetable life, prior to the production of the present one. In this retrogression they pass from the creation that first involved animal and vegetable life, to the stage which shows water and air acting upon the fractured rocks, to produce the soil necessary for the vegetable creation; and this wearing away of the rocky surface, they show, must have required an immense period of years for the adequate accumulation of the separated particles. But, even prior to this, they state that there must have been an era when the rocky crust of the whole earth was broken up into fragments, by the action of volcanic forces moving from the interior; that still prior to this the rocky crust of the earth must have been formed by the gradual cooling of the mass, which must once have been in a state of fusion, and that the whole globe may be still further simplified into a fluid or gaseous sphere, which brings us near to the earliest act of creative power. Thus, from the first produc-

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Specimen of the grounds on which this theory rests.

From the laws of the radiation of heat, and from the ascertained nature of comets, it is inferred that the earth must have existed once in a fluid state. What is now rock is supposed to have been in a state of fusion with a surrounding atmosphere. Mathematical principles, in connexion with the laws of motion, are then adduced to prove that a rotatory motion would impart to such a fluid mass just the form which we know the earth now possesses. Next, supposing radiation of heat to commence at the surface of this fluid globe, the consolidation would go on gradually, according to well known laws, till a considerable crust of rock was formed around the whole exterior. At this stage geology steps in and confirms the theory, by the probability that the interior of the earth still consists of such heated matter; that the rocks have been formed by the process of cooling, and that this being the source of the lowest and first formed rocks, all the other strata have been produced in consequence of the first consolidation, by various subsequent processes. Further, that the ruptured state of all the strata is to be attributed to the various volcanic eruptions which have been caused for the purpose of breaking up the rocky crust into fragments, without which water could never have been collected, nor vegetation produced, nor any of the subsequent developments of creative wisdom and power made; because, without such disruptions, the whole surface of the globe must have remained one universal sphere of impenetrable rock. Thus it appears a most important

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work has been effected by those various and violent convulsions from within, which have first broken up the rocks, then given opportunity for the collection of waters, and for the wearing away of the shattered mountains by rains and by rivers, whereby vast beds of alluvial matter have been borne into the seas; these have again been raised from the bosom of the ocean by the internal forces, and become fit for the reception of vegetation; and after vegetation had proceeded for another long era, that has been buried by similar convulsions, and treasured up to form vast depositories of coal. Upon the same convulsions, it is shown, depend the springs, as well as the possibility and means of reaching all the mineral treasures of the earth. The great characteristic of this geological theory is the vast lapse of time which all these successive changes have occupied, and which, upon the admission of the theory, we should have to harmonize with the sacred history.

Gradual development—Analogies.

It may be proper here to remark, however, that apart from the question of the Mosaic cosmogony, there appears nothing in the theory itself, of these long eras, essentially incongruous with those ordinary operations of the Creator which fall under our own notice. Progression, time, and growth seem to pertain to all the Creator's works, and (with some license, at least as to the latter term) even to the globe itself. Growth, or progressive advancement, is characteristic of every animal, every vegetable, every mineral, yea, of

every rock and every stone. This analogy seems to pervade the whole system of the world, and, perhaps, of the heavenly bodies too; and so far the theory of the geologists appears to be sustained by the plea of an analogy so comprehensive, that we can scarcely suppose it to have been violated in the production of a suitable habitation for the human race. Yet, strong as the analogy is, and greatly as it tends to confirm the theory of the geologists, it would not be entitled to much consideration, in a case which might possibly be unique, and justly claim to be so, provided the testimony of Moses were obviously and directly opposed to the notion of antecedent eras. But, should it appear that this testimony can be reconciled, both with this general analogy of the divine operations throughout nature, and with the geological theory of the earth's formation, and the gradual development and destruction of previous systems, we shall then, I think, have attained all that can be fairly required on this important and interesting branch of our subject.* Still, when we bear in mind that this science is even yet in a very imperfect and immature state, that its history records no less than eighty different theories

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Grounds for hesitation.

* It is proper, however, to inform the reader, that some authors, of no mean name, deem the admission of these theories by no means necessary to explain geological facts, the whole of which, they conceive, can be successfully harmonized with the popular interpretation of the Mosaic narrative. I refer particularly to Mr. G. Fairholme's "New and Conclusive Physical Demonstrations," and to the Rev.

LECT. I. of the earth, which have in succession been embraced and abandoned by scientific men, that its masters are by no means agreed in first principles, that they are not yet in possession of a complete view of the natural agencies which may have been in operation at any given period, and that the comparatively limited scale of their observations and experiments must necessarily leave them in nearly total ignorance of the effects of such powers, for instance, as those of magnetism, electricity, light, heat, and, possibly, other yet undiscovered agencies, upon the materials of which the earth is composed, or was at first composed, it cannot be deemed an unreasonable demand that the new theories, upon the periods required to explain geological facts, should be viewed with some suspicion, and received with some reserve. For it can hardly be doubted, that a different combination of causes from that which falls under our observation may have produced, in a comparatively abridged period, all the results which we might conclude could only be the effect of the causes we can observe operating through a much longer period. We never can be sure, that we are in possession of all the agencies which have been antecedently employed, in states of the earth

T. Gisborne's "Considerations on Modern Theories of Geology, &c." a pamphlet which undoubtedly shakes the basis on which some of the inferences of the geologists rest, and points out the invalidity and inconsistency of several of their conclusions.

different from the present one, nor of the exact relative proportions and amounts of their respective influences, through those vast periods which we suppose to have elapsed. Some may have exhausted themselves in their results, and disappeared, as we know takes place in some chemical agencies; others may remain, but in a lowered degree, and the relative proportions of the present known agencies may have altered greatly in the long succession of ages, as it is ascertained some of them actually have done. LECT. I.

Some perfect results implied in creation.

Moreover, the admission of a creation at all presupposes the production of some results perfect at once; for instance, of man and woman, as mature in the first moment of their existence as we become in thirty or forty years. Any argument, therefore, from the laws of our own development, made to bear upon the first man, must prove invalid and deceptive. So some results in the condition of the globe, which, according to our observations and calculations, would require a thousand or ten thousand years, may have evolved mature at once, by the effort of creating power. We are entitled, therefore, to put in a bar against the validity of any conclusion that so long a period would, *in the first instance*, have been absolutely required to form a given specimen of primitive rock, because this would imply that the effect could not have been produced in any other way than the theory supposes; whereas, for aught we know, there might exist a different combination

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of natural causes and chemical agents, which might materially expedite the result, or it may at once have been produced by creative power, with all the appearances of a gradual and long travailing process, and with all the marks of a venerable age. The law which regulates any department or object of creation is not to be supposed in operation till its object has an existence; and that law which is now efficient to its conservation has no reference whatever to its original production. Conservation of objects already existing is one thing, creation is another.

The geological theory not incompatible with the Mosaic.

But, indeed, so far as philosophers have hitherto prosecuted their discoveries into the wonderful works of the Almighty, we might safely accede to the general requirements they make, since they are not absolutely inconsistent with revelation. It seems in itself not unlikely, and, judging analogically, highly probable, that there had been developments of creating power and wisdom in the formation of the material universe, and of the globe which we inhabit, with some degrees of organization, previous to that creation which Moses relates, and the origin of which it was his chief object to record; just as there had been a creation of intelligent spirits, certainly prior, perhaps long prior to the creation of the human soul. We conceive no objection to his cosmogony can arise from discoveries which are supposed to penetrate into the ages or eras preceding those events which exclusively concerned the human race. Let

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us bear in mind, that he was not commissioned to impart a system of philosophy generally, or of geology in particular, but a theory of religion and morals, with only so much of the history of the present system as concerned ourselves, and the maintenance of just views respecting the Lord and Creator of all, and we shall then find, not merely that geology has brought to light nothing which invalidates his record, as a general statement of first principles, but that much light may be thrown upon it, and some confirmation derived to it by the recent disclosures of science. For, in the first place, all these discoveries tend to show, that whatever was the fact as to previous states of this globe, the present races, both of men and animals, cannot be placed farther back than the date to which he assigns them. He affirms nothing to contradict the supposition of a previous creation. He leaves all the antecedent duration open to the discoveries of philosophers. Science, it is true, has disclosed to us numerous races of animals and vegetables supposed to be extinct, all deemed referrible, from the positions in which they are found, to what are called the geological eras, as distinguished from the Mosaic; but no human remains yet brought to light, have been referred to a date so early as that attributed to the fossil remains of the extinct animals.*

* Buckland's Bridg. Treatise, vol. i. p. 103. But human remains are equally absent from the highest strata, which were confessedly formed by the general deluge.

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Secondly, it may be shown that the doctrine of periods of duration, antecedent to the date of the Mosaic creation, is not only compatible with his statements, but seems to be, if not expressly alluded to, yet required by his language, and that of other inspired writers. This it shall be our object further to show.

Scripture distinct from our interpretations.

We call upon you to make an important distinction here between the interpretations which have been fixed upon the Scripture, and the Scripture itself. When any fact in nature, or a theory established by philosophy, in reference to any class of facts, is found to be irreconcileable with any particular interpretation of Scripture, it is our duty to re-examine the interpretation, and not hastily to infer that facts are at variance with Scripture, because they are at variance with our interpretations of it. Were we to rush upon such a conclusion, we must either shut our eyes upon facts, for the sake of abiding by Scripture, or we must give up Scripture, for the sake of the fact.

The position in which we are placed by the discoveries of geology is of this very kind. It is thought that we cannot abide by the popular notion, so long maintained by many interpreters of Scripture, that Moses actually records the very

Hence this fact supplies no ground for attributing a greater antiquity to the animal fossils than to the human race. See Prebendary Gisborne's "Considerations on Modern Theories of Geology," p. 43, &c.

commencement of the earth, its production out of nothing, and, at the same time, credit the facts discovered by geology. One or the other of these must give way. LECT. I.

Now, before we call upon the geologist to yield to our interpretation, and abandon what he conceives to be an unquestionable deduction from his discoveries, it behoves us to revert to the original document, for the purpose of examining whether we have not, in some respects, either fallen upon a wrong interpretation, or extended its meaning to matters of which it was not designed to afford us information. Let us see whether, after all, both Moses and the geologist may not be credited and reconciled, and whether, if this can be fairly done, and without any sophistication of the sacred document, it will not receive confirmation of the most important and valuable kind by this harmonizing process. We must, therefore, proceed to examine the statement as it stands in the sacred record.

Scriptural statement examined.

First, we find the introductory sentences, *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; and the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*

The usual construction put upon the first clause of these verses is, I believe, that in the beginning of that era or week immediately in connexion with the earliest day of our time, God brought the

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Parallel passages.

For instance, the following places have the same expression; John i. 1, "*In the beginning* was the word.—The same was *in the beginning* with God." Prov. viii. 22. "The Lord possessed me *in the beginning* of his ways before his works of old;" and, again, in the next verse, "*from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever* (before) *the earth was.*" These verses clearly place the terms, *from everlasting* and *in the beginning* as equivalents, while they speak of what was before time, perhaps, before the geological eras; for it says, *before his works of old, or ever*, that is, *before the earth*

*was.** Heb. i. 10, (a passage referrible to the very same matters as Gen. i. 1,) "Thou, Lord, *in the beginning*, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hand." Compare Ps. cii. 25. The Psalmist says, *of old*, (Heb. לְפָנִים *Sept.* κατ' αρχας.) The apostle, quoting, probably, from the Septuagint, says, *in the beginning*, but the Hebrew word is not the same as in Genesis i. 1, (בְּרֵאשִׁית). LECT. I.

Usual interpretation.

There are but two other places, in which these precise words occur throughout the English Bible, and they are both necessarily limited, the one by the connexion and the subject, (2 Sam. xx. 18,) "*they were wont to speak in old time*," (beginning,) and the other, (Phil. iv. 15,) by a following term, thus, "*in the beginning of the Gospel.*" But, in the passages enumerated, in which the simple expression stands unqualified, as in Genesis, thus, "*in the beginning*," it not only does not mean the beginning of time, but must be referred to the eternal ages prior to time: and, moreover, I believe, in several of these instances, orthodox interpreters have been accustomed to understand by the phrase in question, *the eternal ages before time began to be reckoned*, or all that preceded it.

If this remark is well founded, we may then ask, why should the phrase in Genesis mean *the beginning of time*, when every where else it sig-

* The whole connexion of Prov. viii. 22, viewed in reference to the geological theories, is highly interesting.

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nifies an indefinite space, or duration; in fact, the whole eternity past?

This interpretation anticipates the geologists.

With this interpretation before us, then, I think we ought to understand Moses as saying, '*indefinitely far back, and concealed from us, in the mystery of eternal ages, prior to the first moment of mundane time, God created the heavens and the earth,*' &c. If this interpretation be just, and I know not how it can be shown to be otherwise, we shall then have in the Mosaic record, not only nothing incompatible with the doctrine of preceding eras, but a clear *anticipation* of the most mysterious and sublime fact discovered by modern science, the actual existence of the heavens and the earth, not, indeed, as now, but in an incipient or progressive state of organization, preparing the way for what the geologists denominate the gradual development of systems, or organization and animal life regularly advancing, till the whole system was ripe for the creation of the human race. Such gradual development, we have seen, finds its analogy through all departments of the divine operations, evincing, by the length of time required for the maturity and consummation of his great purposes, the eternity of his nature, and the perpetuity of his counsel.

Opinion of Dr. Buckland and others.

The mode of harmonizing the Mosaic record with the conclusions of the philosophers now proposed, had occurred to me long since, upon comparing the analogy of the language in the first verse of Genesis with the first verse of John's

Gospel. I was, therefore, peculiarly gratified to LECT. I.
discover that Dr. Buckland takes the same view of the phrase in the following passage,—"The Mosaic "narrative commences with a declaration that, 'In "the beginning God created the heavens and the "earth.' These few first words of Genesis may be "fairly appealed to by the geologist, as containing "a brief statement of the creation of the material "elements, at a time distinctly preceding the ope- "rations of the first day; it is nowhere affirmed "that God created the heavens and the earth in the "*first day*, but in the *beginning*; this beginning "may have been an epoch at an unmeasured dis- "tance, followed by periods of undefined duration, "during which all the physical operations disclosed "by geology were going on. The first verse of "Genesis, therefore, seems explicitly to assert the "creation of the universe, 'the heavens,' including "the sideral system; 'the earth,' more especially "specifying our own planet as the subsequent "scene of the operations of the six days about to be "described. No information is given as to events "which may have occurred upon this earth, un- "connected with the history of man, between the "creation of its component matter, recorded in the "first verse, and the era at which its history is re- "sumed in the second verse; nor is any limit fixed "to the time during which these intermediate "events may have been going on; millions of mil- "lions of years may have occupied the indefinite "interval between the beginning, in which God

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" created the heaven and the earth, and the even-
" ing, or commencement of the Mosaic narrative."*

The learned professor supports his opinion in a note from the pen of the Rev. E. B. Pusey, Professor of Hebrew at Oxford, who shows that this is no new interpretation of the phrase in question, but that it was the opinion of many of the fathers and others.†

Proof of inspiration.

Here, then, upon the assumption that this interpretation is the correct one, we have, in the discoveries of modern science, an invaluable attestation to the truth and authority of Moses, and that upon a subject which, it is quite clear he never could have investigated scientifically, and equally clear he could not otherwise have understood, except by inspiration.

Fluidity of the earth's surface.

We proceed to observe, further, that he represents the earth as existing in a state of fluidity, or semifluidity, at least as to its upper surface. It can hardly be alleged that the proof of this was so obvious as to have warranted any careful observer in the conclusion. Because we know that the most careful and philosophic observers, until recent times, were, to say the least, much divided in their opinions upon the point; and many of them conceived that the statement could not pos-

* Buckland's Bridgewater Treatise, vol. i. pp. 20—24.

† He also refers to Professor Silliman, of Newhaven; Bishop Gleig, in his edition of Stackhouse's Bible; Dr. Chalmers, and various other eminent authors, as all coinciding in this interpretation of the first verse of Genesis.

sibly be proved, and was altogether most unlikely. LECT. I.
What, then, is to be now said, concerning his statement, when it is found, that after extensive research and continued theorizing, it has become a fixed and admitted conclusion, that this was really the fact? Even concerning the lowest known strata of rock, which the geologists term *primitive*, their highest authorities determine that they were formed under a *fluid*.* It will hardly be said, that this was either a supposition of Moses, or the result of such a continued process of investigation as the geologists of modern times have for many years been pursuing; a result of speculation which they have evolved after inventing, maintaining, and dismissing many conflicting theories. It would be a very singular case, indeed, if this *opinion* or supposition of Moses, resting on no better foundation than the mere glance of his eye over the surface of the very small tract of country to which his travels and inspection were confined, should be found, after so many centuries of doubt and ignorance, to have been a most perfect and complete anticipation of the fact, that science has now, with infinite difficulty, discovered in the same case.

* See Cuvier's Essay, p. 18; *Kerr's Translation*, and Buckland's Bridgewater Treatise, vol. i. p. 50. Mr. Fairholme states some apparently unanswerable objections to the igneous formation of the primitive rocks, and forcibly argues that they were of exclusively aqueous origin as well as all the rest. See his " New and Conclusive Physical Demonstrations," p. 90, *et seq.*

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Order of creation.

But the evidence of his inspiration will appear more clear, if we proceed to observe his statement respecting the order of God's works. We find that, after the creation of the earth in the mass or chaotic state, the first effort of divine power was made in the production of light, then in the separation of land and water, then in the production of the vegetable creation, then of the sun and moon, thence proceeding to fishes, then to birds, afterwards to quadrupeds, and, finally, to man. It might have been supposed that the question as to the precise succession of these different orders was one which could never be determined, nor even approached, and, therefore, that an impostor, or a mere speculator, would not have concerned himself about precision; because he would never have suspected that it was a point on which his accuracy could possibly be tested. But, in the present case, the geologists have proceeded quite irrespective of Moses, many of them with views, in the first instance, far from friendly to him; often, it is to be feared, with an intention to confront and overthrow his statements. But what are now the conclusions at which they have arrived by pursuing their own independent reasonings? It is, that the order of creation in these various particulars must have been nearly, perhaps exactly, as given in Genesis. Discoveries, which it was little expected could ever be made, have pointed out a singular coincidence with these

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particulars, and have thereby verified the scriptural account.*

Creation of light.

There appears, in the Mosaic record, a remarkable statement in reference to light, which has often been appealed to by infidel objectors, as a decisive proof of the inaccuracy and self-contradiction of the writer. It is stated, in the first chapter of Genesis, that God said, on the first day, "*let light be*," and yet it is distinctly represented afterwards, that the sun and moon were not created, or made to shine upon our earth, until the fourth day. It has long been deemed impossible to reconcile these apparently hostile and contradictory accounts. Yet it is difficult to conceive that an impostor could have hazarded a statement so obviously contrary to probability, so apparently chargeable with inconsistency, and so unlikely to gain credit with those who reasoned upon appearances, and judged only by their senses. But how singular is the fact, that the modern discoveries of astronomy have rendered it more than probable, that luminous bodies in the heavens first exist as a diffused and expanded element, before they become condensed into a regularly formed and compact mass. Dr. Buckland observes,—"It appears highly probable that "light is not a material substance, but only an "effect of undulations of ether; that this infi-

Modern theory.

* I do not refer to particular authors, because nearly all the geologists coincide in this matter with Moses. They fall into his track, because they can strike out no other.

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" nitely subtile and elastic ether pervades all " space, and even the interior of all bodies; so " long as it remains at rest, there is total dark- " ness; when it is put into a peculiar state of " vibration, the sensation of light is produced; " this sensation may be excited by various causes, " *e. g.* by the sun, by the stars, by electricity, " combustion, &c. If, then, light be not a sub- " stance, but only a series of vibrations of ether, " *i. e.* an effect produced on a subtile fluid, by " the excitement of one or many extraneous " causes, it can hardly be said, nor is it said, in " Gen. i. 3, to have been *created*, though it may " be literally said to be called into action."* The discoveries and observations of the late Sir. W. Herschell, continued through a long life, first made it probable that a process, similar to that only briefly stated by Moses, is continually going on in the remote parts of the heavenly system. Herschell's observations have been confirmed by his son, and many other eminent philosophers. The received theory among astronomers now is, that those expanded masses of faint light, denominated luminous *nebulæ*, and which have long been known to exist to a very considerable extent in space, are formed, by a regular process of condensation, first into a spherical form, then into a stellar nucleus, and, finally, into the regular shape and brilliancy of a fixed star. I cannot better express the bearing of these facts upon the veracity

* Bridg. Treat. vol. i. p. 32.

and inspiration of the sacred historian, than in the following words of Dr. Shuttleworth,—" From " the uniformity of this operation, as far as it " has been remarked, and from the vast multitude " of instances in which it has taken, and is still " taking place, it seems natural to infer that a " large portion of those stars, whose places have " been recognised in the heavens from time im- " memorial, derived their origin from the same " process. But it is also the generally received " opinion, that the sun of our planetary system " is a star precisely of the same nature with the " rest; and, if so, it seems not improbable, from " analogy, that it derived its present form from " the same cause of condensation, and that its " original state of existence was that of a thin " luminous fluid, occupying a vast portion of the " orbits of those planetary bodies of which it is " now the centre. It is surely not a little re- " markable, that what might a century ago have " been quoted as a seeming absurdity and over- " sight in Scripture, should be found thus sig- " nally to accord with one of the most curious " discoveries of modern astronomical science." *

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Upon the admission of this theory we perceive a beautiful harmony with the systems of incipient

Harmony of the theory with Revelation.

* Shuttleworth's Consistency of Revelation, pp. 53, 54. The inquisitive reader may find this hypothesis very ably and candidly stated and examined by the Rev. W. Whewell, in his Bridgewater Treatise on Astronomy and General Physics, chap. vii. p. 181.

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organization which the geologists maintain. A long antecedent preparation is shown to have been going on, both of the heavens and the earth, for the reception of the noblest and most richly endowed of all sensitive beings; the only one destined to bear, in an emphatic sense, "the image of God." Moses, then, is not to be understood as saying, that on the first of the six days work the element of light was called into existence; for the previous existence of light, to some considerable degree, seems now unquestionable, from the facts which geology has established; the existence of vegetation, in many analogous species to our present vegetation, and the provision made, in the extinct races of animals, for the exercise of the faculty of vision, evidently demonstrating the same, or nearly the same relation between their optical organs and the element of light, as now prevails. But at the period referred to by the Mosaic statement, light may have attained that degree of condensation which was requisite to constitute it a defined orb, and the expression, "*let light be*," may express its more perfected and *recommencing* operation in the mundane system, after that cataclysm which, it is supposed, destroyed the previous creation of animal and vegetable tribes, and marked the commencement of the new and more perfect creation, which was to accompany the introduction of the human race, and to indicate the adaptation of all things to their use and comfort. So far, then, we conceive the discoveries of our modern geology, though they modify considerably our views of the Mosaic account, are by no means hostile to it, but rather serve to illustrate and confirm it; and that especially by demonstrating the absence of all facts that could clash with the Mosaic date of the present races of living beings. The declaration of Moses, that the earth in the beginning, or prior to the first day, was without form and void, and that darkness was upon the face of the deep, seems both to imply that it had a previous existence, and that it had undergone an entire disruption of its surface and destruction of its organized contents, to make way for the new and higher order of things just about to be introduced, and thereby coincides with the whole theory of geology, and receives most valuable confirmation from its sublime discoveries.

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Demiurgic days of creation.

It may be deemed a further recommendation of the geological theory, that, by its disclosure of antecedent eras, it relieves us from the necessity of expounding the days of the Mosaic creation, as inclusive of any longer period than a natural day. Some eminent critics and philosophers had been induced to adopt such an exposition, in order to meet the difficulties which geology, in its earlier stages, seemed to present. But these difficulties appear to be all adequately met by the modern interpretation of the phrase, "*in the beginning.*" I am happy to find that Dr. Buckland perceives no necessity for putting

LECT. I. on the *six days*, specifically mentioned by Moses, any but the ordinary sense. Indeed, the notion of giving to these *days* an indefinite expansion of years, always appeared to me unnatural and forced, as well as irreconcilable with the mention of the "*morning*" and "*evening*;" terms which seemed to limit the idea of day to its ordinary measure. It is still more gratifying to find, that these views are now adopted by one who formerly was strongly disposed to think that the term *day*, in the first of Genesis, must have signified a long period of years. The following note, at the end of Dr. Buckland's Bridgewater Treatise, (second edition,) shows the change which has taken place in Mr. Faber's opinion upon this subject.

"Since the publication of my first edition, I "have been favoured by the Rev. G. S. Faber "with a communication of his opinion respecting "the views propounded in my second chapter, on "the Consistency of Geological Discoveries with "Sacred History, and am much gratified by his "permission to state, that he is satisfied my views "upon this subject are consistent with a critical "interpretation of the Hebrew text of these verses "of Genesis, with which they may, at first sight, "appear to be at variance. This opinion of Mr. "Faber is enhanced in value by his adopting it, "to the exclusion of a different opinion published "in his Treatise on *The Three Dispensations*, "(1824,) in which it was attempted to reconcile "geological phenomena with the Mosaic history,

"by supposing each of the demiurgic days to be LECT. I.
"periods of many thousands of years."

Origin of the Race in a single Pair.

Origin of the human race.

We proceed next to consider the scriptural statement, that the human race sprang originally from a single pair, and that these were constituted of a material animal body, and of an immaterial intellectual soul, distinctly marked in its origin, as communicated by and from the divine Intelligence. The human beings thus created are represented as differing essentially from the brute creation, as placed expressly over them, and endowed with a peculiar proprietorship in the earth and all its contents. To descent from this first pair of human beings, the Bible traces all the successive generations of mankind, as inheriting the likeness, corporeal, mental, and moral, of their first parents. It hereby establishes the doctrine of a common nature, and an intimate relationship among all the branches of the human family; for "God has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth." In the identity of this nature, and the consequent closeness of this relationship, is laid the foundation of all social duties and affections. Man is the only terrestrial being capable of recognising such community of nature, such intimacy of relationship, and he is the only one whose conservation and happiness depend upon the discharge of the duties involved in them.

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Its date agreed to by theorists.

Now, according to Moses, nearly six thousand years have elapsed since the creation of the first man and woman. It is a coincidence worth observing, in reference to this point, that geologists, from principles and reasonings of their own, have arrived at the conclusion that such must have been about the date of the human race. Their speculations agree with Moses, that mankind have not existed during a longer space. There are nearly a thousand millions of human beings on the earth; they are divided into numerous nations and tribes, they include many varieties, yet the whole are found to harmonise in all the essential peculiarities of humanity, to afford no serious difficulty to the doctrine of derivation from a single pair, but rather to render it, in a philosophical view, far more probable than the contrary notion, of different species at the commencement.

The Mosaic statement disputed as to one pair.

This fact, however, as stated by the Bible, has been much disputed and denied. Extensive and minute researches have been made, with the view of proving that there are facts in the natural history, or anatomy, or mental endowments of some tribes, irreconcilable with the Mosaic theory. The recent tendency of research, however, upon this subject, conducted upon scientific principles, has clearly been towards the simplicity of the scriptural statement. The philosophers have gradually *narrowed* and not *widened* their views of original diversities. Some naturalists have divided the human race into seven or eight, others into

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four or five distinct species. These they describe under the following terms: 1, the Caucasian; 2, the Negro; 3, the Tartar; 4, the American; and, perhaps, as a 5th, the Malay; but even these have been of late further reduced to *three*. Each of these includes many minor varieties of colour and form, which the naturalists are constrained to admit, from well ascertained facts, may all be the work of time and physical causes. But this very admission seems fatal to the theory of any original diversity. For if time and physical circumtances may have produced such differences, they will find it exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to prove that causes somewhat "more powerful, and acting for a longer time," as Sir James Mackintosh observes, "may not at length have produced the wider differences."*

Probabilities derived from analogy.

In fact, it appears more in analogy with what is well known of the varieties which occur among the animal races, to trace all those found among men to the causes alleged for some of them, than to suppose four or five different originations of mankind; especially when, after all, the human race are found to include fewer and less important diversities than the animal tribes. A natural and highly probable origin of these diversities can be traced in the very constitution of mankind. The human being possesses, physically, a far greater capacity and facility of adaptation to the varying circumstances of his condition, than any other

* Mackintosh's England, vol. i. Introduction, p. 4.

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animal. There are no laws of his nature that impose upon him what the naturalists denominate a special *habitat;* but he appears to have been designed to live on every part of the earth's surface, and upon a far greater variety of sustenance than any other creature.

Varieties less among men than among animals.

The varieties among the human tribes are stated, by the most eminent naturalists, to be much less considerable than are found to obtain among the animal races. Between the man of the American forests in the north, or the Patagonians of the south of the same continent, and the native of Southern Africa, or of New Holland, or the European, the physical differences are far less than between brute animals of the same species from the same places. "Nature," says the Count de Buffon, "seems to have adopted a smaller "scale, in the formation of *animals* for the new "world, and to have formed *man* alone in the same "mould as elsewhere." Sir Charles Bell says, "Man is superior in organization to the brutes, "superior in strength, in *that constitutional pro-*"*perty which enables him to fulfil his destinies by* "*extending his race in every climate, and living on* "*every variety of nutriment.* Gather together "the most powerful brutes from the arctic circle "or torrid zone to some central point, they will "die; diseases will be generated, and will destroy "them."*

Indeed, the opinions and theories of naturalists

* Bell, on the Hand, p. 37.

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have for many years been gradually undergoing a process of simplification; and, since the appearance of the elaborate work of Dr. Pritchard upon this subject, which seems to take it up in all its possible aspects and bearings, we should fully expect, that the notion of an original diversity of races can find no subterfuge in analogical reasoning, and as little in historical facts.

Results of Dr. Pritchard's inquiries.

It will, perhaps, be most satisfactory to present to you the results of these extensive inquiries in Dr. Pritchard's own words. He says,—"In the "first book I endeavoured to find a solution of "the problem, whether in each particular species, "both in the animal and vegetable creations, "it is probable that there exists only one stock or "family; or whether, in general, it may be sup-"posed to have been the method of nature, if such "an expression may be allowed, to spread the "same species at once over distant countries from "many different centres. This question was "investigated by observing the distribution of "genera and species over different parts of the "earth. From the facts that plants and animals "of each kind have their existence chiefly in "tracts, whither they may have wandered, or may "have been conveyed by accident from certain "points, the common and original centres, as it "would appear, of particular tribes, and are else-"where scarcely to be found, it was inferred that "the whole number in each species respectively "has probably descended from a single primitive

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" stock. This inference was strengthened by a " consideration of the wonderful means provided " by nature for the extension and dispersion of " species; means which appear to be requisite " only on such an hypothesis. It seemed, on the " whole, to result, as the most probable conclusion, " that Providence thought fit, in the first place, " to call into existence only one family, or race, " in each particular kind, and did not at once " diffuse it over the world from a variety of " different origins.

" This fact being established with respect to " organized beings in general, with what success " the reader must judge, it remained to inquire, " whether there are among mankind any specific " diversities, or any physical differences of such a " description, that they must be looked upon as " original characters, and, therefore, as consti- " tuting distinct species. If this question be deter- " mined in the affirmative, it obviously results " that men are of more than one original family; " but, if in the negative, it must be concluded " that all mankind are, according to the law " already shown to exist through the organized " world, descended from a single stock.

" This inquiry was commenced in the second " book; and, in the first place, the different " methods of determining the limits of species, " and of discovering what races are the same, and " what of distinct species, were pointed out. It " was observed, that there are four methods of

" examining this question, each of which is capable LECT. I.
" of elucidating it more or less. The first, or what
" may be termed the physiological method, is
" founded on a comparison of the principal facts
" relating to the animal economy, or physiological
" character of the tribes to be considered, such as
" the term or duration of life proper to each kind,
" the circumstances connected with their breeding,
" the periods of uterogestation, the number of pro-
" geny, the laws of the natural functions, the
" diseases to which each tribe is obnoxious, and
" the character of its faculties, instincts, and habits.
" If, in all these circumstances, in respect to which
" strongly marked differences occur between spe-
" cies very nearly resembling each other in out-
" ward form, no material difference can be found
" to exist between any two races which are the
" subjects of comparison, a probable argument
" results for concluding them to be of one species.
" A second criterion for determining on the unity
" or diversity of species has been sought by many
" naturalists, in the capability of propagating, or
" sterility of the animal which is the mixed pro-
" geny of two races. The validity of this crite-
" rion has been called in question, and it seems,
" that in some instances hybrid animals, properly
" so termed, are capable of procreating. Yet
" there is evidently in nature a principle, by
" which the casual intermixture of species is
" guarded against. It is unnecessary to repeat
" the remarks that were made on this subject

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" in the place referred to, to which the reader " may revert. It may suffice to observe, that on " applying both of these two first methods of " inquiry to the particular instance under con- " sideration, the result seemed clearly to be that, " as far as the evidence derived from these sources " extends, we have no reason to believe that there " is more than one species of human beings in " existence.

" A third method of inquiry is the analogical " or comparative. It is resolved into the question, " whether the particular diversities we have to " account for, are analogous to those deviations " from a common type, which are known to " make their appearance as varieties in the pro- " geny of a single race? When this appears, " after due investigation, it is fair to conclude " that such diversities are analogous in their " nature, or resolvable into the same class of " natural phenomena. This inquiry, in respect " to the most remarkable varieties in the form, " structure, complexion, and the other peculiarities " which occur in mankind, was pursued through " the remainder of the second book, in as full " and particular a manner as seemed requisite, " and the conclusion which resulted was, that " the diversities which are known in mankind are, " in the most important particulars, similar in " kind to the natural varieties discovered in " other species of animals; and, therefore, as far " as we can rely upon an inference drawn from

" analogy, they afford no reason for supposing LECT. I.
" that there is more than one species of men. It
" was observed, that the probable inference de-
" duced from the comparison of parallel, or
" analogous phenomena, would be very much
" confirmed, if it should appear, on investigation,
" that varieties, such as those which are the
" subject of discussion, do, in reality, take place
" in particular races of men, and originate in the
" progeny of the same stock. And this brings
" us to the fourth part of our inquiry, which has
" been followed through the remainder of the
" work. In the third, and the succeeding books,
" we have examined the history of the different
" races of men, and have taken notice of the
" instances of variety in form and complexion
" which appear to have arisen from the same
" stock, and of the most remarkable differences
" in physical character which exist among tribes
" nearly allied to each other in kindred. In the
" course of this inquiry we have seen that certain
" deviations display themselves at once in strongly
" marked examples, some striking phenomena of
" complexion or figure appearing in the imme-
" diate offspring of races, or families, in which
" they had been before unknown. In other in-
" stances such variations take place by slow and
" imperceptible degrees. It appeared, from the
" whole of this examination, *that there is no*
" *clearly traced and definite line which the ten-*
" *dency to variety or deviation cannot pass*, and,

LECT. I. " THEREFORE, NO SPECIFIC DISTINCTION. The " character of one race passes into that of ano- " ther, and this not merely in the sense often " attached to such an expression, implying the " want of any exact limit between them, but by " actual deviation and transition. Even within " the limits of one particular race it is sometimes " possible to point out a wide range of varieties, " and, in some instances, it may be shown that " the most different complexions, and the greatest " diversities of figure known to exist, are to be " found among tribes which appear to belong to " the same nation, or family of nations.

" These conclusions have resulted from a sur- " vey of the physical history of the most exten- " sively spread nations, and, indeed, of all the " principal departments of mankind. The va- " rious races, constituting the population of Africa, " were first surveyed; then the different nations " scattered through the Austral countries and the " islands of the Indian Ocean; afterwards, the " several branches of the Indo-European stock, " including the nations of India and some other " parts of Upper Asia, and most of the countries " of Europe. Next to these followed the Semitic " or Palæ-Syrian nations. A survey of the races " of people near the chain of Caucasus prepared " us for passing over this limit, and proceeding " to the northern and eastern nations of Asia: " this part of the work was closed with the eighth " book, which comprised an account of the native

" or aboriginal inhabitants of America. In all LECT. I. " these several divisions of the human family, im- " portant physical diversities were shown to have " arisen, and in each of them remarkable ap- " proximations to the characters prevalent in " other tribes. On the whole it appears, that " the information deduced from this fourth me- " thod of inquiry is as satisfactory as we could " expect, and is sufficient to confirm, and, indeed, " by itself to establish the inference, that the " human kind contains but one species, and, " therefore, by a second inference, but one race.

" It will, I apprehend, be allowed, by those " who have attentively followed this investigation " of particulars, that the diversities in physical " character, belonging to different races, present " no material obstacle to the opinion, that all " nations sprang from one original, a result " which plainly follows from the foregoing con- " siderations." *

Argument from similarity of languages.

It seems scarcely necessary to add any thing to the opinion of this learned naturalist, yet I cannot omit the present opportunity of referring to the favourable aspect which the most elaborate modern speculations upon etymology and grammar bear towards the doctrine of the original identity of the human species. For a long period the researches of the learned, upon the diversity of languages, seemed to threaten a result adverse to the sacred history. No harmonizing

* Pritchard's Nat. Hist. of Man, vol. ii. p. 584. 2d edit.

LECT. I. principle seemed to be evolved by which original affinities might be discovered. The opponents of revelation triumphed in what they considered the *irreconcilable confusion of human speech.* But a most conspicuous and important revolution has been witnessed. The simplifying process adopted by modern inquirers has led them generally to the conclusion, that all the known languages of the world are but dialects of one now most probably lost; and that, as all the different nations, in their most extended varieties, have yet general features of agreement which approximate them to a common standard, so their languages also are reducible, first to clusters and families, and these again, by still further simplification, to a common origin, in one fountain, whence they have all evidently flowed. The French Academy have given their decided approbation to this opinion, after deliberate and long research; while Frederic Schlegel, one of the most distinguished of scholars, has expressed his decided adhesion to the same theory.* Thus we have the additional testimony of the most elaborate researches into language, conducted upon ground altogether irrespective of the physiological inquiries already referred to, that all mankind sprang from a common stock. I have here touched but slightly on this subject, because a future opportunity will be afforded of more fully considering the primitive unity of

* See the "Philosophische Vorlesungen uber philosophie der sprache und des wortes."

speech. The reader is, therefore, referred to the *second* Lecture, in which the confusion of languages is more fully discussed. LECT. I.

There appear to be only two ways in which the force of this evidence, in favour of the inspiration of Holy Scripture, may be evaded. Supposing it admitted, that the researches of physiologists have now brought their theory into perfect agreement with the Mosaic statement, and the fact itself is allowed to be satisfactorily settled, still it may be alleged that the earliest traditions are in favour of the same theory, and that the different mythologies of all the most ancient nations bear traces of the same opinion, and, therefore, it may be thought that Moses required no special revelation to enable him to record it. We should be perfectly content to admit the truth, or at least the strong probability of the premises, but we demur altogether to this being brought forward as an explanation of the reason why Moses *knew* the fact. Upon the supposition that he was delivering, on the authority of a divine communication, the statement that the human race sprang originally from one pair, we might very reasonably expect that the traditions of all nations would correspond generally with the fact, as stated by him; while those traditions would by no means alone form an adequate ground for the origin of the opinion, nor would it follow, as a necessary or self-evident proposition, that these traditions were the source of his information; they may very

Objections considered.

Tradition.

LECT. I. naturally agree with his statement; that is obviously to be expected; but that they could not be the source or authority of his statement, may be rendered at least highly probable by the following considerations:—Although we, in the present day, may have ascertained that the traditions of all nations favour the statement of Moses, and embody the fact among their fables, yet there is no probability that Moses had any means of ascertaining the agreement of these traditionary accounts. The state of knowledge, at that period, furnished no means for enabling any one to say what was the general testimony of tradition upon this subject. It would be irrational to suppose, that Moses would assume the traditions of the two or three nations with which he might be acquainted, as a sufficient foundation for his statement; because, upon the slightest reflection, it must have occurred, that if these were not well founded, or even if they were, the traditions of other nations might be of an opposite character, and the vast majority, for all he could foresee, might unfold a totally different view of the matter. The probability, therefore, is, that if he had been an impostor, and had possessed the sagacity hereby imputed to him, he would have abstained from committing himself to a positive statement upon a fact, which he had no adequate means of knowing, and which might not improbably be contradicted by a more enlarged examination of the traditionary evidence of other nations. There

appears, therefore, no probability that he would LECT. I.
assume the very limited traditions of which he had heard, as an adequate basis for his theory; and it is equally improbable that he could possess that extensive knowledge of traditions on this subject, which we enjoy only after a lapse of many ages, and as the fruit of the most extensive travels and inquiries. His statement is so simple, so clear, so consistent in all its parts, and with all the other particulars included in the narrative, is so free from all fabulous dress, and from all semblance of derivation from any such source, that he must be a very perverse and obstinate reasoner, who can ascribe it to any such origin. He might surely perceive, that to attribute to Moses such a comprehension of view, such a prophetic insight into the results of all learned speculations upon the subject, such an anticipation of the philosophers in their own conclusions, and all this attributed to an author, who had no better materials than the obscure, confused, and fabulous traditions of a few nations, would really approach, if not actually include, inspiration. This theory, therefore, involves insurmountable difficulties. It is far more credible that Moses was inspired, than that he wrote as a man. After all, the agreement of tradition with the Mosaic account proves that account true, and this is the main point to be ascertained. Upon this ground the objector is deprived of his hostility to inspiration so far; that is, he admits the *truth* of the state-

LECT. I. ment. We allow that it does not hence, at once, necessarily follow, that Moses was inspired, but that point also becomes more probable than the reverse, by the considerations we have offered: for to admit that he makes a true statement in such a case, and under such circumstances, is to admit that he states a truth which he had no means of ascertaining, and could not possibly have affirmed without inspiration. The main point, however, is conceded to us, when the truth of his statement is admitted.

Whether derived from the Egyptians.

The only other method of accounting for the accuracy of the Mosaic statement would be to attribute it to the wisdom of the Egyptians, among whom he had been brought up.

To render this supposition tenable, it must be shown, that such a doctrine was about that time taught in their schools. But all that has been ascertained of their wisdom, supplies no materials for such a conclusion. No sort of analogy can be traced between the theory which he has left us, and any of the speculations which they indulged. Sir William Jones says,—"There is "no shadow, then, of a foundation for an opinion, "that Moses borrowed the first nine or ten chap- "ters from the literature of Egypt; still less can "the adamantine pillars of our christian faith be "moved, by the result of any debates of the "comparative antiquity of the Hindoos and Egyp- "tians, or of inquiries into the Indian theology."

It is true, we have not yet received very complete

information of what was meant by the wisdom and learning of the Egyptians at that early period. But, judging from the analogy of what we do know of their attainments, especially from the amount of recent discoveries, we can by no means imagine it to have been very eminent, nor much, if at all, in advance of other ancient nations existing and flourishing about the same time, and whose wisdom has been embodied and transmitted to later times. There is every probability that it related rather to the arts than to the sciences, or philosophy in its proper sense. Moreover, it is worthy of observation here, that several early and renowned nations are well known to have derived many opinions, and, indeed, a large part of their mythology, from the Egyptians; and it seems impossible for the theory Moses gives us to have been originally Egyptian, without some traces of it, or, indeed, without the whole of it descending along with the *wisdom* which they transmitted to other nations. Though all traces of this opinion were supposed to have perished among the Egyptians themselves, yet, as they were at that period one of the most advanced and mighty people, and as they were much respected and consulted for their wisdom, and mainly imitated by younger and less powerful nations, especially by the acute and philosophic Greeks, we should certainly have found traces of this opinion among other portions of their learning, transmitted and perpetuated among some of those who are well known to have bor-

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The same remark is applicable to the whole cosmogony of Moses. It is impossible to suppose that it existed and was taught in the schools of Egyptian wisdom, without, *first*, having led to far more rational and refined opinions, than we know their early mythology embraced;—nor, *secondly*, without having commended itself to the sages and philosophers of other nations, who early derived their opinions from the Egyptians, and through whom it must have been transmitted and preserved along with many other portions of their science and religion.

No foundation for this opinion.

Neither the Egyptians nor Moses could, at that early period, have found any historical *data* extensive enough, or any researches of a philosophical character sufficiently accurate and comprehensive to have supplied a foundation for such a theory. The appearances and circumstances of the different nations with which they might have been acquainted, would, if we are to judge after the analogy of philosophizings of later times, have suggested an opposite theory. With the varieties existing among different races they might have been acquainted to some extent, particularly as to colour, hair, form of the skull, &c., but if they formed what might be called a speculative opinion upon this point, there is every probability that it would have been the reverse of the Mosaic account. There is, however, no

evidence, so far as our knowledge extends, that they ever speculated on the subject. If they did so, it must have been on very inadequate and partial information. But philosophical speculation of this kind appears to have been far enough from their habits in those early times. Their mythological system, so far as it has come to light, abundantly attests how utterly unfitted they must have been, notwithstanding all that has been said of their wisdom, for attaining to any rational and just views upon such a question. LECT. I.

Improbability that Moses borrowed his statement.

It is also worthy of remark here, how improbable it would be, upon the supposition that Moses was not the inspired legislator of Israel, that he should begin his work with borrowing from the theory of the Egyptians, when he was aiming to establish his own authority, as an inspired teacher, upon purely independent grounds; and when the whole end of his enterprise was to set up and confirm a system of religion and morals, altogether opposed to that of the Egyptians, and one that should embody the alleged revelations previously granted, and handed down among the Hebrews from the time of Noah, some memorials of which had most probably been preserved in the family of Abraham. Even upon the very supposition of our adversaries, that he was merely aiming to found a new religion of his own, it seems essential to his success that not the slightest resemblance should appear between his theory and that of the Egyptians.

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Inevitable conclusion.

There seems, therefore, no ground left to account for his possessing this portion of correct and curious information, and for his recording it in so distinct and decisive a manner, but to ascribe it either to that divine instruction which

he professes to have received, or to trace it to LECT. I. that unbroken chain of sacred tradition which might have brought it to him direct from Noah, and which the very fact of his authority, as the divinely appointed legislator and captain of the Hebrews, additionally and sufficiently confirms. In either of these ways his possession of it may be explained rationally, and its veracity established, but, as it appears to me, in no other. In his writings it is first found, on his authority it rests, as professedly a part of inspired Scripture; its author having been divinely called to the office of instructing and guiding Israel before he recorded this fact.

Could not be conjecture.

Since, then, it was so early put on record, and after being so severely contested, is at length found to comport with the most extensive and elaborate researches of naturalists and physiologists; and since there is every rational probability that it is a perfectly original statement, it must either be at once ascribed to revelation, or be set down as another *happy conjecture* of this extraordinary individual, a position rendered the less likely, that it would be another, added to those already noticed, and to the many others still to be traced to the same individual. It would, indeed, be a rare and unexampled case to find happy conjectures so often repeated, and on such confessedly obscure subjects, by one man, and especially when such conjectures appeared *primâ facie* any thing but true, and have now come

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to be accounted happy ones, only because philosophers can find no facts to invalidate them, and are led by their own independent investigations to the same, or nearly the same, issue. Those must, indeed, have been singularly sagacious conjectures which anticipated so long beforehand, and, in many instances, against appearances and probabilities, the researches which can now neither show a contrary result, nor add any important information to the sacred record, but which are of immense value as scientific verifications of what were before truths of mere authority, and, therefore, liable to be questioned by those who deemed the evidence of that authority doubtful.

Man's Dominion over the Mundane Creation.

Charter of man's dominion.

Among the great transactions recorded by the pen of the Jewish legislator, and connected with the beginning of time and of the human race, this great charter of man's superiority stands prominently forth, as the express endowment of his Creator, couched at once in the most emphatic, most comprehensive, and most explicit terms. It constituted a direct and exclusive proprietorship in all terrene beings, with dominion over them; though held under the Creator as the Supreme Lord. Viewed as a most important and essential part of the first order of things, nothing can appear more appropriate than its introduction in the very place that it occupies,

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and nothing more accordant with the high dignity assigned to man as made "*in God's image.*" The fact itself is in most perfect harmony with the whole representation of the divine wisdom and benevolence. It appears to crown with peculiar lustre the narrative of the creation, and shines forth as one among many features of true sublimity, which characterize the whole of the Mosaic narrative. It is scarcely possible to read it without being struck by its simplicity, its beauty, and its truth; nor without perceiving how well it harmonizes with the whole of that brief account, and how essential it was to complete the whole theory of man and his primitive condition. "*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed, to you it shall be for meat.*" Genesis i. 26—29.

The same fact is alluded to in other parts of

LECT. I. Sacred Scripture, as in Psalm viii. ver. 5--8. "*Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea.*"

General correspondence of facts.

Now the facts of human history, collected upon an extensive scale, most accurately correspond with this primitive endowment. The partial and trivial exceptions in the case of some few very degraded tribes, form, we conceive, no real objection, since even these exhibit decided confirmation of the subsequent account of man's fall, which it was perfectly reasonable to expect would lead to degradation and a forfeiture of primitive glory and honour, the precise extent and operation of which none could previously determine, and the partial interference of which, with the law of primitive superiority, in no material respect invalidates the original grant; but, by the very exceptions they present to the condition of the rest of mankind, (exceptions only apparent and temporary, as we shall have occasion to show presently,) serve to demonstrate the reality of such a grant, and its continued efficacy, notwithstanding the disturbance that has intervened. Moreover, it is of essential importance to observe here, that this primitive endowment is never really

extinct, even where mankind have continued for unnumbered ages in a condition scarcely superior to that of the brutes. Their nature still retains some superiority, and remains capable of this pre-eminence. LECT. I.

Man stands sole in dominion.

We are, then, first concerned with the general fact, now clearly ascertained by the extensive researches of naturalists, that mankind, through the whole world, with some rare and very limited exceptions, enjoy an undisputed dominion and unquestionable superiority. There is no animal, however powerful, but man can conquer. In many instances he can so subject even the larger animals, as to make them subservient to his own purposes. There is no creature that attains to an equality with him, none that acquires an analogous or parallel dominion over any other classes of creatures, except that which consists in mere superiority of physical power or cunning, in simply ensnaring their prey, and this is usually limited to a very narrow compass.

But man is lord, not only of the creation that is *upon* the earth, but of all that is *within* it; a magazine of invaluable materials, which displays as manifest proofs of being designed for his welfare and advancement, as the animals and vegetables which are continually reproduced upon its surface. He is clearly lord of all, and the whole system is evidently upheld for his use, for his gradual advancement, both in social and moral refinement.

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Partial and temporary exceptions.

But let us next advert to those cases of apparent or partial exception which have been already alluded to, before we proceed to apply the general fact to the corroboration of the Mosaic testimony. The cases in question are those of the Esquimaux, the Hottentots, including the two principal tribes of the Caffres and Bushmen, the Alfourons or Endamenes, and Australians. These are usually selected as the very lowest and most wretched of all the human tribes. They have been represented, by many writers, as quite on a level with the brute creation around them. These accounts are found, however, upon calm and close investigation, to be somewhat exaggerated; for even the most wretched of men evince many traces of superiority, especially in domestic affections and sentiments, in friendship for each other, in the universal use of speech, in some arts of life, of warfare, and defence, and in various principles, feelings, and sympathies; displaying a sense of moral obligation, some notions of invisible agencies, and of a future state. There are none of them but employ a degree of reflection and contrivance in taking and preparing their food, in escaping from or conquering those enemies that are physically more powerful than themselves, vastly superior to any such qualities among the animal tribes. Altogether, then, even in his very lowest state, man is practically and really found to be possessed of a superiority over all other creatures. His occasional degradation from the high and

noble superiority accorded to him, as already remarked, constitutes no real infraction of the rule, as a divine bestowment, when viewed in connexion with the subsequent fact of his fall, which might be fairly expected to prove a practical counteraction of the original grant, likely to extend its consequences even beyond what is found to be the fact. But we may admit, even to the full amount, the statements made respecting the deep degradation of some tribes, and were those statements even more humiliating, did they involve undoubted proof of a degradation, even below some of the brute species, they would not appear to form an invalidation of the original charter, since the possibility of the ascent and gradual elevation even of the most degraded tribes, can be no longer a matter of question. Man's *nature* at least is essentially superior, since he is capable of a degree of improvement and elevation, to which none of the animal races aspire; which none of them can communicate to others of the species, and of which all their races are absolutely and universally unsusceptible, even under the culture of *superior* beings. Let man every where be compared with the other animals around him, as to capability of acquiring dominion over them, and of turning every mundane object to his use, and the efficiency of the original endowment will be as certainly recognised as in the most civilized and scientific nations. "The "same race who, in the age of Tacitus, dwelt

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" in solitary dens amid morasses, have built Saint " Petersburgh and Moscow, and the posterity of " cannibals and phthirophagi now feed on *pillau*, " or wheaten bread. The habits of men undergo " changes from time to time, in all that refers to " their diet and the supply of bodily wants, and " they do not admit of comparison with the uni- " form customs of the lower tribes, which are " precisely the same in every respect to-day " that they were in the times of Homer and " Aristotle."*

Man gradually improves.

If, therefore, in that rude and savage state, which has befallen some few of the human tribes, man does not actually enjoy that universal dominion granted to him at his creation, yet he readily acquires it by instruction *from his own species*, and frequently by the continuance of his own unaided efforts through a length of time. Even isolated tribes, shut out from the access of their more refined brethren, are known to acquire a wonderful power over the brute creation; and though, for a time, they roam the wide wilderness alone, or in small bands, yet, in many instances, they gradually acquire a superiority over all around them. Though man is by no means the swiftest in motions, or the keenest in his perceptions, yet he uniformly becomes more than a match for those animals that surpass him in these qualities, and, in the course of ages, learns to bring them within the grasp of his power.

* Pritchard's Nat. Hist. of Man, vol. i. p. 174. 3d edit.

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Even the whole frame and fabric of the globe stands to him nearly in the same relation. He is lord of all, to occupy, to use, and to enjoy it, from generation to generation. He transmits his natural superiority, and the results of his experience, skill, and art, to his children and successors; and thus, by degrees, all are employed, excited, and improved. Every object in nature affords a stimulus to his faculties. The earth, not only in its surface, but in its interior contents, ministers to his comfort, and supplies some of the most valuable and useful materials by which the frame-work of society is maintained, and its advancing state embellished. The sea and the rivers, and the fountains of water, the rocks and the minerals, air, earth, and wind, the still more hidden and secret powers of nature, magnetism, electricity, heat, and steam, all submit to be his servants and obey his will. In all this the words of early Scripture are verified, in a manner fitted to convince us of the high authority which dictated them.

Accumulates and transmits his power.

Value of the coincidence.

It is not intended to attach an undue importance to the coincidence of human history, in this particular, with the statements of Moses; but it well becomes us to consider whether such a statement, given forth at so early a period, does not evince an exactness and degree of knowledge which could not be attributed to human sources of information, or to Moses, considered simply as a man. The determination of this question will

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An objection considered.

It may be alleged, that it required no divine authority to determine a fact so evident as that of man's superiority. If this were really the case, we admit that the coincidence would prove nothing of moment in favour of Moses. But we think there is ground to demur to the conclusion, that there were sufficient grounds to enable Moses, or any other person, to state so general a principle in that early age; and to have done so upon the very scanty information then possessed, must have been, to say the least, a bold and venturous assertion, the result of which could not have been foreseen. Let the charter of superiority represented by Moses as granted, at first, on divine authority, be construed, as it fairly must be, upon the supposition of being universally applicable to all the tribes of human kind, as descending from one stock, and it will then appear a thing by no means certain, before actual ascertainment, that all these tribes, through all their generations, should either possess such an inherent, or attain such an actual, supremacy. On what ground could any mere speculator or fabricator of an imposture, then, have ventured confidently to state, that God had given to man an original superiority over all other creatures,

which he is never represented as annulling or retracting? How could Moses, or any one else, have been confident that this would be found essentially true every where, and always, of each human being? To have announced it as he does, would, without inspiration, have been, indeed, a bold conjecture. It is quite certain, that the very facts which have so perplexed naturalists, as to make them long doubt the identity of the human tribes, would go far to render questionable, in a scientific view, this superiority ascribed to the whole race. And hence it would appear by no means likely that Moses could have gained a knowledge of this law of our nature scientifically; because a full induction of all the particulars would have made him doubt, as it has made others doubt. Upon a partial or imperfect induction he could have felt no confidence, but must have been perpetually liable to contradiction, by the occurrence of hostile facts. "If," says Dr. Pritchard, "a person, previously unaware of "the existence of such diversities, could suddenly "be made a spectator of the various appearances "which the tribes of men display in different "regions of the earth, it cannot be doubted that "he would experience emotions of wonder and "surprise. If such a person, for example, after "surveying some brilliant ceremony or court "pageant, in one of the splendid cities of "Europe, were suddenly carried into a hamlet "of Negroland, at the hour when the sable tribes

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" recreate themselves with dancing and barbarous
" music, or if he were transported to the saline
" plains over which bald and tawny Mongolians
" roam, differing but little in hue from the yellow
" soil of their *steppes*, brightened by the saffron
" flowers of the iris and tulip; if he were placed
" near the solitary dens of the Bushmen, where
" the lean and hungry savage crouches in silence,
" like a beast of prey, watching with fixed eyes
" the birds which enter his pitfall, or the insects
" and reptiles which chance may bring within
" his grasp; if he were carried into the midst of
" an Australian forest, where the squalid com-
" panions of kangaroos may be seen crawling in
" procession, in imitation of quadrupeds; would
" the spectator of such phenomena imagine the
" different groupes which he had surveyed to be
" the offspring of one family? and if he were led
" to adopt that opinion, how would he attempt
" to account for the striking diversities in their
" aspect and manner of existence?"*

Speculation likely to have led to a different conclusion.

Moreover, upon the supposition that Moses knew nothing of the case but from observation, or mere human wisdom, his opinion might very reasonably have been opposed to this doctrine of the universal superiority of man: at all events, it must have remained doubtful. He must have felt, that he was utterly destitute of any sufficient foundation to warrant so decisive and solemn a statement as that which he has recorded. The

* Pritchard, vol. i. 3*d edit.* pp. 1, 2, *Introduction.*

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superiority which he would, in that case, attribute to man, he could not but perceive, depended partly on his original endowments, but not on these alone. A slight degree of reflection must have made it obvious, that it depended also on the laws relating to the *whole animal creation;* because, by the maintenance of these alone could the animals be kept in their inferiority, and not allowed to advance upward towards man, to dispute the superiority with him. Suppose it possible, either that man should have continued to degenerate, as Moses might have known he had done in some instances, and this had gone on for a series of ages; or, on the other hand, that some of the animals had continued to advance and improve, man's superiority might soon have come to an end.

Opinion of Schlegel.

I am happy to be enabled to confirm these views, by the opinion of the celebrated Frederic Schlegel, in his Philosophy of History. He says, " When man had once fallen from virtue, no " determination could be assigned to his degra- " dation, nor how far he might descend by " degrees, and approximate even to the level of " the brutes; for as from his origin he was a " being essentially free, he was, in consequence, " capable of change, and even in his organic " powers most flexible. We must adopt this prin- " ciple, as the only clue to guide our inquiries, " from the negro, who, as well from his bodily " strength and agility, as from his docile, and,

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"in general, excellent character, is far from "occupying the lowest grade in the scale of "humanity, down to the monstrous Patagonian, "the almost imbecile Peshwerais, and the horrible "cannibal of New Zealand, whose very portrait "excites a shudder in the beholder. So far from "seeking with Rousseau and his disciples for the "true origin of mankind, and the proper founda- "tions of the social compact, in the condition of "the best and noblest savages, we regard it, on "the contrary, as a state of degeneracy and "degradation."*

Extensive knowledge implied in the statement.

Moses, *as uninspired*, could have known nothing of the possibilities that might arise in the lapse of years on both sides of this case. The maintenance of the disparity between man and other animals, depended altogether upon laws which, at that period, no uninspired man was sufficiently acquainted with, to enable him to say, that God had bestowed upon mankind an absolute, universal, and perpetual supremacy over the earth and all its contents. The power itself depended on the divine will, and its continuance, not to say its enlargement, through all ages, even as a probable fact, rested upon the same determining authority, and involved the entire laws, both of man and the whole animal economy. Had it pleased the Creator to bestow upon any of the animals an improvable mind, similar to man's, they might

* Philosophy of History, pp. 48, 49.

soon have gained the ascendancy, and disputed with him the sovereignty of the earth. LECT. I.

No sufficient grounds.

We conceive, therefore, that this was an original purpose of the Creator, not clear from facts when Moses wrote, only of late decided as a matter of science, and, indeed, scarcely yet clear to some obstinate speculators, who still insist that the monkey may be transformed into a man, or that the original state of mankind is to be found in that of the most degraded savages.

It appears, then, certain, that no human calculation of chances or probabilities could have satisfactorily determined that this superiority should always and every where remain with mankind, and that, in spite of all intervening and disturbing contingencies, and the apparent exceptions that should arise in the case of tribes that might, through unforeseen circumstances, sink to a level with, or even below, the brutes, the original power conveyed by the grant of the Creator should never pass from man; that these cases should form no real exceptions to the universal rule, while the capability of recovering the lost superiority remained in man's possession. On the other hand, it must be considered as justifying our conclusion, that it could not be foreseen, by human sagacity, that no similar capability should ever be discovered among the brutes. So far from it, many theorists, at one time, seriously judged that some other species were just as capable of improvement as mankind. Yet it is now made quite

Human opinion long opposed to the doctrine.

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certain, that no alteration whatever can take place in the relative position of any of the animal tribes. Even under human tuition, each is found to preserve his place and his instincts within the given limits, without any, even the slightest, advancement, and without the power of transmitting his habits, or any small degree of knowledge he may acquire from human tuition, to his offspring. As to improvement from themselves, it never takes place; they neither ascend nor descend from age to age.

But man, on the other hand, had a vast range conceded to him. He was subjected to no other created being for improvement; and he possessed no means of acquiring any, but from his own species. He had no teacher but God himself. The charter of his rights was, therefore, large and liberal. A wide sphere was given him to move in, and to which the inward impulses of his nature invariably and powerfully direct him. He may rise, or he may sink, in reference to a given standard; but let him sink never so low, he possesses the power of rising again, as is abundantly evinced in the improvements which have, for a considerable period, been going forward among the Esquimaux, and latterly among the still more degraded Caffres and Bushmen of Africa, who have been uniformly placed by naturalists at the very lowest point of the human scale.

Man's superiority founded in nature.

Now this improvableness of man evidently depends upon an original law of his nature; however his degradation may be viewed, his great susceptibility, both of moral and mental cultivation, is still a matter of fact; it rests upon unquestionable evidence, and is past dispute. By instruction, civilization, christianization, and all the blessings which accompany or flow from these, man may be elevated from his very lowest condition; and if not raised, within any moderate period of years, to an equality with the more enlightened and scientific nations, he may yet be so far elevated, as to afford the most satisfactory ground for concluding, that he will ultimately reach an equality with such races, or that yet, if he never should rise to such a point, there can be no doubt of his realizing a station vastly superior in all respects to that of the brute creation, and at least fully answering to the original charter of superiority and supremacy over the earth and all its contents. None of the *Simia*, or monkey tribes, nearly as some of them have been imagined to approach to the lower races of mankind, display the least capability of such improvement, or the slightest bias towards such a superiority over the other parts of creation. It is, indeed, humiliating to think that any persons denominated philosophers should ever gravely and complacently have maintained the theory that represents man's nature as merely a self-prompted perfecting of the "ape's maliciousness," or that men are only an improved breed of monkeys.

That man should possess such an improvable

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nature, and the *Simia* tribes, with their partial resemblances, have no type, no particle of it, must be an ultimate fact, for which no reason is discoverable, but that man was originally designed to possess such dominion over them, and they were not designed to enjoy such dominion over man. This law implies the will by which it was originated. The inspired legislator lays it down perfect at once, as an invariable and perpetual law, universal in its application.

The proof required time and research.

But the practical verification of this law depends upon long-continued and extensive research, minute inquiry, and anxiously repeated experiment. A naturalist or philosopher, in these days, may say he does not want revelation to tell him that mankind every where practically possess this supremacy, or are capable of acquiring it. But that is not the question before us. It is this; could Moses have become possessed, by any natural means, of that extensive knowledge which *we* enjoy—could he have that perfect and extensive acquaintance with all the tribes of the earth, so scientific an insight into the laws of body and mind, as to enable him to venture, without inspiration, upon such a grand and sweeping statement of human supremacy? We think that, viewed as a mere man, he could not possibly have ascertained all the facts requisite to warrant such a statement. He could not have predicted what might be elicited by investigation; and, for aught that science then could show, some tribes of men

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might have sunk below the brutes, or brutes might have been raised above men.

Summary of the argument.

We have, therefore, now before us, *first*, the broad and explicit statement of an original charter of human superiority over the whole mundane creation, given by an author who professes to be under divine inspiration, and whose statements, viewed already in reference to other very important and interesting subjects, bears strong evidences of clear, infallible knowledge and foresight; *secondly*, we have before us the high probability, amounting, indeed, to a certainty, that he could not have ascertained the fact of this superiority by science or history; and we have, *thirdly*, the now well ascertained conclusion, agreed in by nearly all scientific men, that this superiority does every where belong to the human race, is, for the most part, attained in a very eminent degree, and where it is not so clear and well marked, still there can exist no longer any doubt, that the principle of it remains in the psychical nature of the very lowest human tribes, most of whom are, at the present moment, in a state of gradual but decided improvement by the labours of missionaries and others.

Even the philosophical inquirer must admit, that this superiority of man is the result of original and primitive law, both in reference to man himself, the animal creation, and the contents of the earth.

Moses anticipates the result.

If so, then the Mosaic account *anticipates* all

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the discoveries of the philosophers; for that states the whole fact at once, and ascribes it to its final cause. Nothing can be more evident, or better ascertained, than that it was the will of the Creator there should be one, and but one, lord over all the earth, and immediately under himself. The concession of this, therefore, according, as it does, to the Mosaic statement, corroborates all we have before observed, of the perfect accuracy of that account. Nothing can be conceived with more propriety; nothing can appear more harmonious with the whole description of man's origin; nothing can surpass it in unaffected simplicity and true dignity.

High interest of the fact.

The coincidence is, therefore, well worth observing, especially because it is so distinctly marked by Moses, and is found by observation to be so uniform and universal a fact—a fact which no authority but that of inspiration could have made certain, in the first instance, and scientific researches in our own times. The concession of such a proprietorship over all is deeply interesting, when viewed in reference to the advancement of mankind. It then assumes the character of a principle, or a law, out of which has arisen all our improvement in natural knowledge and social refinement. It is also highly interesting, as still presenting a wide field for the progressive advancement of human power and happiness in ages to come. It is, indeed, true, that we cannot escape from the humbling and bitter evidence of our

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degradation, turn where we may. Yet the lesson is profitable and humanizing, which, while it teaches us that the most degraded savage shares with ourselves the nature of a man, yet shows that he too may aspire, as well as ourselves, to the sublime hope of immortality.

There is another topic intimately connected with the present, which, though it cannot of itself supply so satisfactory a test of the inspiration of Moses, as many other facts, yet ought not to be omitted, since it evinces a penetrating insight into the constitution of man, and displays a quality of his nature of great interest, admirably comporting with every other part of the characteristics attributed to him, and serving to strengthen the general evidence of the divine wisdom by which Moses was uniformly guided. It is

The Social Propensity of Mankind.

Social propensity.

God is represented as saying, "*It is not good that man should be alone.*" A companion was, therefore, in the very first instance, formed for him. It was hence manifestly the intention of the Creator, that man should not merely propagate his race, but that he should also enjoy the society of his kind. In this respect, then, we see that he is pre-eminently distinguished. There is no other creature so dependent upon the joys of society, so much improved and advanced by social intercourse, so fitted for giving and receiving pleasure from this source. Indeed,

LECT. I. we may affirm that, apart from the consideration of the continuance of the race depending on this sociality, it would be impossible, or next to impossible, for mankind to exist without intercourse with their fellow-creatures. The idea of seclusion and solitude seems almost as repulsive to our nature as that of annihilation. The very faculties which we possess appear to require such intimate and continued intercourse for their development and pleasurable exercise. There is an innate constitutional tendency, which we may call a law of nature, or an original bias, drawing and constraining human beings into different kinds of associations, as under the influence of a law of mental attraction. All the tendencies, aptitudes, and provisions of our mental and moral endowments, alike fit us for the action and re-action of social life. Every thing in our nature marks out the companionship of our fellow-beings, as the proper sphere for the development of our faculties, the proper element of our being. The origin, or the centre, is, indeed, marriage; but out of this arises the family association, a natural and necessary bond of union. For there is no animal nature so entirely and so long dependent on parental care as the young of the human race. This leads to an association of families for mutual help, protection, and enjoyment; and this is but the embryo, or first form of the social state, out of which grow, by time and improvement, and of necessity, all the forms, institutions, and authorities of civil society. "Both in the reciprocities LECT. I.
"of domestic life, in those wider relations which
"bind large assemblies of men into political and
"economical systems, we shall discover the incon-
"testible marks of a divine wisdom and care,
"principles or laws of human nature, in virtue
"of which the social economy moves rightly and
"prosperously onward, and apart from which
"all would go into derangement; affinities be-
"tween man and his fellows, that harmonize the
"individual with the general interests, and are
"obviously designed as provisions for the well
"being, both of families and nations."*

Becomes a law.

Thus, through all time, and in all nations, the tendencies of mankind altogether, and their civil and social history, illustrate and confirm the decision of Sacred Scripture, "*it is not good for man to be alone.*" This law is not, cannot be, reversed. All attempts to produce a contrary state have been against nature, and have uniformly tended to, and terminated in evil.

Value of the coincidence.

If this fact in our history cannot be considered as verifying a prediction, it is at least a striking illustration of the truth of the aphorism attributed to God by Moses. Yea, it is even a proof of the divine wisdom of that saying; for under what other authority could it have been so oracularly, universally, and justly decided of the whole race? Who, in that early and inexperienced age, only about 800 or 900 years after the flood, could have

* Chalmers' Bridg. Treat. *Introd.* p. 10.

LECT. I. felt perfectly sure that it was not good for man to be alone? Who could then have decided, that under no change, no condition, no advancement, no possible circumstances, it should be desirable or good for man to seclude himself? It is, then, to say the least, a memorable circumstance, that this should have been laid down at first, as a general law or principle, and that we and all mankind should feel the force and the truth of it, in our own nature. Many writers, since the time of Moses, and even considerable bodies of men, have endeavoured to contravene this law, but nature has proved too mighty for them. The *law* has prevailed, and does prevail; and the scripture is thereby verified.

We may proceed next to consider

The Sentence denounced on the Man and Woman respectively. Genesis iii. 16—19.

The sentence after the fall.

After the creation of man and his liberal endowment with all temporal and spiritual felicity, the next principal event, subject to comparison and scrutiny by facts in human history, is the *fall.* But, as the narrative given of this event is to be verified chiefly by reference to the mental and moral circumstances of mankind, it will come to be considered in a subsequent Lecture. For the present, therefore, we must pass it by, that we may confine our attention, according to the arrangement proposed, to facts and circumstances strictly of a *physical character.* We come, therefore, in close connection with the account of the fall, to the sentence denounced upon the man and woman respectively, and which has an exclusive reference to their natural condition. With the moral cause, or the reasons of this sentence, we have at present no concern. Our inquiry must first regard the import of the sentence attributed by Moses to the Creator; next we must notice the facts, which seem to verify this sentence; and, finally, the evidence, afforded by this presumed coincidence, of the inspiration by which Moses was guided, when he recorded it as the law of man's altered condition.

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The sentence itself is recorded in Genesis iii. 16—19. "*Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*"

On woman.

First, we have a specific and appropriate sen-

LECT. I. tence upon the human female, containing the infliction of peculiar pain in child-bearing; *secondly*, the prediction of a predominant desire* towards her husband; and, *thirdly*, a subjection to his will and authority—"*he shall rule over thee.*"

An altered condition.

All this expresses, we conceive, an altered condition, and predicts what should be the state of the human female through all her generations. It represents this alteration in her state as made by a divine decree, and with a direct reference to her priority in the transgression. It is characterized by special features of severity, both in her painful bodily sufferings, and her entire subjection to man. This being represented as an expression of the divine displeasure, we may expect to find it universally verified in the condition of woman. But, along with the physical indications attesting the high authority which effected this change, we may reasonably expect to find some traces of the primitive condition still displaying themselves, in connexion with the several evils thus

* Dr. Boothroyd renders this passage, "to thy husband thou shalt be in subjection, and he shall rule over thee." In a note, he cites, on the word *desire*, Gen. iv. 7, where it is applied to the dominion of Cain over Abel. It seems, in this case, to reciprocate with the word *rule—he shall look up to thee, or feel subject, and thou shalt rule over him.* If this view be adopted, the sentence on the woman contains two distinct inflictions. Dr. Adam Clarke, however, takes a different view, rendering the word *appetite.* There are, however, some formidable objections to this interpretation, that need not be here stated.

denounced and inflicted. As it appears to be a superinduced state, it will not altogether obliterate the primitive constitution. But it will be submitted to with reluctance, and as an evil. There will appear, through the imposed necessity of suffering and submission, a nature designed for a superior condition, yet subjected to inevitable and peculiarly marked sorrows. LECT. I.

Distinguished from that of man.

There is to be observed, moreover, in the whole of this sentence, a characteristic distinction from that pronounced on man. The woman is not specifically doomed to the same labour, nor to derive her support immediately from her own exertions. Yet her sentence is, in some respects, heavier and more severe than that pronounced upon man. Her principal sufferings are to arise from parturition, consciousness of inferiority, and subjection to her husband's rule. The sentence is peculiar and appropriate.

Early observed.

Let us now see how far it is verified by the actual condition of the human female through all nations and ages. The extraordinary lot of woman was pointed out ages ago by Aristotle, who knew probably nothing of the account given by Moses of the origin and cause of the fact. He observed, that woman is the only mother under heaven, subject to this peculiar severity of suffering. There are, no doubt, some varieties observable among the females of different human tribes, as to the degree of their sufferings. Generally those of rude and savage tribes suffer less than those

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of refined and cultivated nations. This fact has been established by the inquiries of physiologists, but it is found to form a variety merely in degree. The general law is still observable in all the varieties of the human race. It does not appear that animal nature in general is subject to any uneasiness, sickness, and debility, after conception; or that, in parturition, they sustain any thing like the pangs of women. The females of most of the animal tribes are believed to be in better health, and frequently to exhibit more strength, after than before this state. But the human female is subject, through a great part, frequently through the whole of her period, to various distressing symptoms.

Peculiarity of it—*first*, in child-bearing.

There seems, moreover, a peculiarity in her case, intimated in the expression, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and *thy conception*." It is an ascertained fact, that the conceptions of the human female, especially in civilized nations, become sources of multiplied sorrows far beyond those of any other animal, and that her abortions are far more numerous. There is also a far greater degree of mortality in child-bearing, and attendant upon the young of the human race, than pertains to other animals. It is stated, by those who have minutely examined this subject, that if the mortality common to woman and her young were common to the animal tribes, it would not be possible to preserve them in sufficient numbers for the support and service of mankind. And

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yet, under these extensive calamities, the human race is not only preserved undiminished in numbers, but is, in all probability, increasing, and increasing rapidly, even where these calamities are most keenly and extensively experienced; that is, in the most civilized and refined nations. So that, while this sentence is most felt where it ought to be felt, it is prevented, by other circumstances, from tending, as it otherwise would do, to the diminution and ultimate extinction of the race.

No sufficient reasons apparent but those stated.

Since these facts, then, are all obvious, are matters of experience, and are of universal occurrence, we may well ask, what natural reason could exist for this marked difference in the providential arrangements concerning the human race? Why should woman, a partaker with man of a rational soul, fitted to be both his companion and his peer, endowed with all that distinguishes humanity from the brutes, and fits mankind to enjoy a supremacy over every thing that is on the earth, be thus subjected to pangs and perils which no other living creature suffers? The same Almighty Power which constituted other animals differently, and made their propagation scarcely, in any degree, a matter of suffering, could not want the ability, and could be as little destitute of the will, to form the noblest of animated natures, so as to secure the continuance of the race ordinarily, without that intensity of suffering, that protraction of pangs, and that preceding

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uneasiness, which marks human parturition. The noblest and highest nature of all would appear to be unequally treated, if this had been an original, and not a superinduced condition. The facts themselves must be ascribed either to the primitive and arbitary arrangement of the Sovereign Power, and would then appear to want equity and benevolence, or they must be admitted to have a retributive character, and a moral cause, and so to comport harmoniously with the Mosaic narrative, and add greatly to its probability.

Peculiarity—*secondly*, in subjection.

But let us further inquire if there is any thing peculiar in the latter part of the woman's sentence—"*thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.*" There was probably no reason for any such subjection in her primitive condition. None, we conceive, can be detected in nature, or the relations of the two parties to each other. We can discover no reason for it in any physical or mental disparity. It does not any where appear, that such subjection and dependence on the will of another was the primitive law of the woman's nature. From the account of the creation, it would seem that woman was designed to enjoy a perfect equality with man. But her dependence upon the will of her husband, and her enthralment to his absolute rule, are facts which seem to admit of no solution, except that which Sacred Scripture affords. God was pleased to inflict this sentence upon her, because she was first in the offence, and the

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occasion, at least, of her husband's fall. She is, therefore, marked out, by her appropriate sentence, as the victim of deeper and more frequent sufferings than man.

Probable reason.

Her sin had consisted in an independent exercise of her will, and an inordinate ambition to rise above her natural condition. This seems to imply, that in her perfect state she entertained no sense of inferiority, dependence, or subjection, but felt as competent to judge and act for herself as under the direction and will of her husband. But her sin appears to have arisen from ambition to be as God, and to enjoy an independence of him with whom she was to have been perfectly one; and her punishment was hence characteristically marked by dependence and subjection through all her future generations, a subjection which she cannot throw off, which has become a uniform law of her condition, and which, it must be confessed, to the dishonour of man, is but too commonly made an occasion for cruel oppression and wanton tyranny. Her lot is hereby made heavier, by the ungenerous and contemptuous treatment to which she is so extensively exposed.

Facts in the condition of woman.

Let any careful observer of humanity judge how deeply degraded the female condition is in all heathen countries; to what a state of depression it was reduced through all ancient times, how literally *subject* it is still every where, and how obviously woman is still labouring under every part of this singular sentence. Even where chris-

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tianity improves and elevates the character, both of man and woman, it does not obliterate the general facts of her sorrow and subjection, but leaves these as an inscription legible to every eye, but yet one which can be interpreted and reconciled with the goodness and wisdom of the Creator, only by the light of the Mosaic narrative, and which, as natural facts, could have been traced in woman's nature exclusively by the finger of the Almighty.

Sentence on man.

We come next to notice the part of this sentence which relates expressly to man, "*By the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread, until thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*"

Criterion of an altered condition.

Upon the assumption that this describes an altered or superinduced condition, we may expect to find here, as in the case of the woman, both the new law of subjection to toil, generally enforced, and yet some traces remaining of the primitive condition. The subjection will be of *necessity*, not as of *nature's choice*. Do not these two opposite principles uniformly appear in man's present state? Human nature every where prefers exemption from labour, loves ease, self-indulgence, and rest. There is a strong propensity to avoid laborious exertion. Human ingenuity has always resorted to expedients for escaping from it. Nothing but the peril of starvation would induce men, generally, to submit to this necessity; and so strong is this love of independence and freedom,

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that many tribes prefer to endure privation, and run the risk of want, rather than be subjected to order, and sustain the irksome drudgery, as they deem it, of tilling the ground.

Early evasions of the law.

The first means to which men resorted for the purpose of evading the necessity of labour, which God laid upon them, were rapine and violence. These have uniformly had their origin in a love of ease and idleness. One man watched for the fruit of another man's toil. He saw that he could supply his wants without submitting to the necessity of labour, and thus, by degrees, succeeded all the dire evils of contention and war; the stronger appropriating the possessions of the weaker; thence would follow resistance, warfare, victory, vassalage, a condition, most probably, very early arising out of the propensity to escape from the necessity of personal labour, by the oppression of other men, and the appropriation of their persons as well as of their possessions. In the traditions of all nations, violence and robbery are mentioned as among the earliest of crimes, and slavery as their attendant evil. By such circumstances the few would, at least in part, be released from the pressure of the sentence, to toil for their individual support, but it would fall the more heavily upon others. Notwithstanding all the inequalities which would result from these and various other sources, still the great law would necessarily prevail, as to the mass of mankind,

LECT. I. and the exceptions, as to the few, would be rather apparent than real. For it is worthy of remark, here, that amidst all the varieties of human condition, which have arisen out of the improved or artificial state of mankind, in large and cultivated nations, still the sentence of the Almighty may be fairly said to be every where efficient. Even in those cases where it is not literally fulfilled, as when property is accumulated, or where mind and talent become the immediate sources of supply, yet, even there, the sentence is virtually accomplished; for riches bring envy, anxiety, and uneasiness, while mental exertion can scarcely be denominated an exception in any sense.

Apparent exceptions in migratory tribes.

Neither can those cases be considered as opposed to the general sentence, where human tribes are migratory and wandering in their habits, and live principally upon the animals they are able to ensnare, or the fruit they gather from the woods, or the roots they dig up from the earth; for in all these cases their toil is scarcely less. Nearly their whole time is occupied in providing their food, and their existence is proportionably degraded and miserable. It is observable, also, that under such circumstances their improvement is very slow, frequently imperceptible, through long periods; their population rarely augments, and, in many instances, is either stationary, or actually diminishes. So that in proportion as the sentence is counteracted by man's reluctance to labour,

his enjoyments, his improvement, and the propagation of his race, become limited, or even retrograde. LECT. I.

Improvement depends on submission to this law.

From all that can be learnt of the condition of mankind, in all their tribes, over the wide earth, and in all the different degrees of civilization, the sentence expressed by Moses, as the law of their degraded condition, appears to be invariably enforced. Man can procure little or nothing without toil, and his improvement in all respects depends upon his practical submission to the law of his nature. In all his more artificial or cultivated states, in which by far the larger portion of the whole race is found, and where the *many* do not literally till the ground, but where the labouring is of a different kind, and in a different direction, as in all the arts of civilized life, still his necessities have to be supplied from the ground by the labours of the industrious husbandman, which the artizan procures for himself at the expense of other labour, for the most part equally hard, and frequently far less healthful. Still it holds good, that "*by the sweat of his face he eats bread.*"

Wisdom in the law.

This, then, virtually and really, is the condition of man every where, and under all the artificial varieties of human society. There appears, therefore, a far greater equality in this respect among all mankind, than might at first be supposed. It is a wonderful and striking fact that it should be so, and that the rule should be so singularly

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and universally verified, both in its subserviency to the welfare of man, and in the adaptation of his ability to comply with it to the necessity of its observance. For it is another and additionally convincing proof of the wisdom and goodness exhibited in the rule, and its universal enforcement, that where less labour can be sustained, owing to the physical circumstances of man, there less seems to be required. It may be laid down as a general fact, that in those countries where the earth is more prolific, and vegetation more luxuriant, still labour is never dispensed with, but the balance is still nicely preserved between what is requisite, both to make the supply meet man's necessities, and comport with his ability to endure the requisite measure of exertion. Thus Providence equalizes the relative condition of the race, either adapting nature to the human ability, or the human ability to the state of the earth and the climate, but preserving, under all circumstances, the invariable and obvious predominance of this great law. We are able every where to procure enough, rarely more than enough, for ourselves and our dependents. Supply and demand balance each other. Thus effort or labour becomes the lot of all, some in one way, some in another. The hand of the industrious alone can procure from the bosom of the earth, or through the means of intervening arts, an adequate supply for all. In some way or other, man must exert himself, or he must possess some

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artificial means of turning the industry of others to his own use.

Nature presents a different aspect to man and the animals.

From these general facts it appears, that the earth is in a totally different state, in respect to man, from what it is in respect to the inferior animals. To him it offers nothing, or next to nothing, of its own accord; to them it gratuitously offers every thing they ever want. To him it brings forth briars and thorns; to them it is a storehouse always sufficient. He reaps not unless he ploughs and sows; they neither sow nor reap. Why this repulsive, frowning aspect to the noblest and highest of its inhabitants? The beast roams the plain or the forest, finds and enjoys his food, lies down to rest, and knows no care for tomorrow. But man must labour and sweat through the whole length of the year, and scarce enjoy a breathing time, save that which his merciful Creator has allotted to the interests of his spiritual nature.

Singularity of this fact.

Is there not something extraordinary in all this? It is a condition of our nature not to be harmonized with its original supremacy; it does not comport with the character of a proprietor and lord of all the earth. It is not in unison with the state of animal liberty and enjoyment appointed to inferior beings. Man alone is a perpetual slave to his own necessities. View him through all his gradations, from the lowest to the highest, and vast as is the disparity of his various states, still he never rids himself, or at best but

LECT. I. in semblance, from this yoke which sits so heavily and closely upon his neck.

Wisdom of this apparent.

I am aware that it may be alleged, with propriety, that it was a most wise arrangement of Providence to subject mankind to the imperious necessity of tilling the ground, or of pursuing some kind of occupation in lieu of it, because his health, his morals, and his happiness, in a great measure, depend upon his being actively employed. But we conceive that this very view of the subject, instead of proving any thing hostile to our argument, or contrary to the Mosaic account, that the sentence consigning man to labour arose out of his moral apostacy, serves but to illustrate and confirm that statement, by admitting, as it does, that there existed such defects and evils in his nature, as would inevitably lead to the misery and ruin of the whole race, if not counteracted by a law subjecting him to constant occupation. For what would be the general effect of exemption from labour, is abundantly evinced in those cases where such exemption is only in part obtained.

The admission implies the necessity of the law.

The admission, therefore, that labour was necessary for man's welfare, seems to imply the previous admission, that his propensity to evil rendered such a law necessary and wise; but, unless our views are extended beyond this, we should be reduced to the necessity of supposing that man was originally created in this imperfect state, with a nature so propense to evil, that a

counterpoise was required to supply a constant check, and that this was found in subjecting him to incessant toil to procure his support, a natural condition for the noblest of terrestrial beings, sharply and irreconcilably contrasted with that of other living creatures. The difficulties attending such a supposition would seem to implicate the wisdom and benevolence of the primitive plan, and appear to be insurmountable. Why should he not have been created free from those propensities to evil, which rendered such a subsequent arrangement necessary?

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Comports with the Mosaic statement.

But, upon the statement of Moses, that the original condition of man was perfect, and involved no such subjection to severe and incessant toil, but was altogether answerable to the station of superiority over the whole creation, conceded to him by the wisdom and benevolence of his Creator; and that this sentence, now so fully corroborated by the facts of his experience and history, was an equally wise and benevolent law, demanded by the altered moral condition in which he had placed himself; every thing, then, appears harmonious and reasonable; the divine character is vindicated, and the sentence first delivered by Moses, and realized subsequently in our actual condition, is shown to be a most wise and merciful arrangement, to preserve us from the consequences of unbridled passion, and to secure the conservation and improvement of the entire race.

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Applied to our general argument.

We conceive, therefore, that we are now entitled to apply the remarkable coincidence between the sentence in all its parts, and the facts of the human condition and history, to the general argument in which we are engaged. Have we not a marked and most accurate fulfilment of the very words of the sentence attributed by Moses to the Supreme Being? And is there any probability that such a sentence would have been invented for the purpose of imposture? Or could any fabricator or deceiver be supposed likely to fall upon a statement so peculiar in its nature, so uncalled for, and yet so accurately and comprehensively anticipative of all that has transpired, and is transpiring, in connexion with the history of our race?

Improbable that an impostor would state it.

Certainly, to say the very least, it was highly improbable that the fabricator of a false religion should have gratuitously ventured upon such delicate ground. The utterance of general principles of the description involved in the Mosaic account, would have been cautiously avoided by any one who wished his system to be free from objection, and secure from the peril of collision with facts and experience. Neither can any thing be less likely, than that Moses should be possessed of sufficient knowledge of the human condition, to enable him to extract the laws in question from what he observed. We know that knowledge of this kind was not accumulated in that age. And the acquaintance with facts

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which Moses, or any other wise man, might have had in those times, could by no means have supplied *data* for a rule which was to be applied to all mankind through all ages. Mere human science, had it been much more extensive than we know it really was, never could have emboldened any one safely to lay down such comprehensive and accurate principles.

Implies supernatural knowledge.

This insight, therefore, into the human condition, is so perfect, so strikingly minute, characteristic, and particular, that he must be a daring reasoner who would venture to attribute its accuracy either to the natural penetration, or the acquired science of the sacred author. Nothing can be more foreign from the general character of human research, observation, or scientific discovery, than the decisive, oracular, and yet simple air of the Mosaic statement. Who could, for a moment, suspect the writer of delivering, in these sentences, the result of mere human observation or of philosophic induction?

The alternative left to objectors.

There seems, then, to be no alternative left to us, but either at once to concede to this extraordinary man the inspiration he professes, and of which we have already traced several striking evidences, or to conclude, that the statement under review is another of those successful conjectures, which have already multiplied upon us, as we have proceeded, without a single occasion to place even a solitary fact or sentence to the opposite side of the account. It would, indeed, be a

LECT. I. singular case of human sagacity, to find all its conjectures thus happy; a case which could not, indeed, be paralleled in the history of the world. But the supposition cannot be maintained in reference to any of the statements of Moses, because they anticipate facts which must either have defied conjecture altogether, or else have suggested conjectures of an opposite description. To suppose him a mere happy speculator in these matters, and to admit, thereby, that his speculations have all come true, would again involve us in far greater difficulties than the frank admission, that they are such comprehensive, such accurate, such far-seeing statements, as can be accounted for only on the ground of his having enjoyed divine inspiration.

But we will not yet enforce this conclusion, nor attempt to drive our opponents on the dilemma to which, we presume, the still greater force of evidence yet behind must finally reduce them.

LECTURE II.

THE MOSAIC STATEMENT OF NATURAL AND PHYSICAL FACTS RELATING TO THE CREATION AND THE HUMAN RACE, COMPARED WITH THE DISCOVERIES OF SCIENCE, THE RECORDS OF HISTORY, &c.

(Continued.)

Traces of a universal deluge—The covenant with Noah—The Rainbow, &c.—Tower of Babel—Confusion of languages—Origin of nations—Tripartite division of mankind—Traditions of the place whence the human tribes originally diverged—Principal divisions of the human family—Prophecy of Noah respecting the national character and condition of the races derived from his three sons, &c.

LECT. II.

Introduction. Accumulative nature of the argument.

In our former Lecture we traced some important and highly interesting coincidences, which history and the researches of scientific men have established between various facts of nature and the very early statements of the Mosaic record. We endeavoured to show how these coincidences bear

LECT. II. upon the inspiration of the sacred writer. In entering upon the consideration of some further verifications of the same class, not less important and interesting, allow me, in brief, to remind you, that the whole argument they are intended to sustain is one of accumulation. Justice cannot be done to the sacred volume, unless it is borne in mind that every separate coincidence, clearly established, not only possesses the weight of its own independent evidence, but that it both gives and receives strength by its harmony with others. It renders those already established more forcible, and itself derives much additional value from its combination with them. The ancient and well known simile of the bundle of sticks appropriately illustrates this observation. If we could draw out and easily break each separate stick, yet we could not break the whole when bound together. The argument from the harmony of facts, when viewed in connexion with the testimony of the record, is of this description.

Traces of a universal Deluge, as ascertained by Science.

Characters of the Mosaic narrative of the deluge.

The narrative of this event, as given by Moses, is affecting and solemn in the highest degree. It possesses all the marks of simple truth, and appears in perfect harmony with all the other events included in the general statement of the creation, the fall, and consequent degeneracy of mankind. The account of the deluge is fuller and more

particular than the earlier statements of the Mosaic narrative. Hereby it affords a greater variety of circumstances for the application of the test, which we have already found, in various instances, corroborative of the high authority of Moses.

First, we have a distinct statement of the moral cause of the deluge. It is represented as a divine visitation for the wickedness of mankind, then, as foretold some years before; next, as in part provided against by the preparation of an ark, for the purpose of preserving the human and animal races from extinction. The account seems further to imply, that the event itself was miraculous. We dismiss, for the present, all consideration of the reasons which are represented as inducing the Almighty to inflict this judgment, that we may concentrate your attention on the fact itself, and the agency, both primary and secondary, by which it was brought about.

Has there been a general deluge?

The general question, whether there ever has been a universal deluge, has been much discussed, learnedly and scientifically argued. It would be quite a hopeless task to attempt to set before you even an outline of the different speculations and theories upon this subject, which have been maintained at different times, and by authors of high celebrity. Most of these theories have been found scientifically untenable, and have given way, one after another, as time and research have brought new facts to light. Our

LECT. II. chief concern will now be to inquire how far the present state of scientific knowledge verifies the general statement of Sacred Scripture, or how far it seems to be hostile to that account, or only in some respects to modify the interpretations put on Moses.

Testimony of universal history and tradition.

Before I enter on what may be termed the geological test of Moses, it may be desirable to examine how far his account is confirmed by the histories and traditions of nations generally. It will form a good presumptive proof that Moses is correct in this matter, if it shall appear that ethnical traditions generally (and still more if they do universally) commence with this fact.

The earliest account, next to that given by Moses, was preserved by Berosus, in the Chaldean annals, being extracted from records which he found at Babylon during the period of the Macedonian kings. This account states that a deity appeared unto king Xisuthrus, in a dream, to warn him that all mankind would be destroyed by a flood, and that he might save his family and relations, together with birds and beasts, by preparing a ship. This singular narrative coincides, in every important particular, with the statement of Moses.*

* Alex. Polyhistor extracted this account from the 2d Book of Berosus; and Eusebius gives it in his Greek Chronicle. Josephus against Appion, Cyril against Julian, Syncellus and Apollodorus, quote the same passage from the Chaldean Annals.

Abydenus, a writer of Median and Assyrian history, preserves a similar account; and Diodorus Siculus ascribes a tradition of the same event to the Egyptians, who said that they were the first of mankind, and were either preserved from the universal devastation, or sprang up anew from the teeming earth after the time of Deucalion. The harmony of the Greek mythologies with these traditions is too well known to need more than a brief reference. They represent the Supreme Deity as determining to destroy the wicked who lived in the brazen age; that Deucalion, directed by Prometheus, constructed a vessel, (λαρνακα,) that having stored it with necessary provision, he took his wife Pyrrha, and entered it. Jupiter then caused it to rain to such an excess, that all mankind perished, except a few who found refuge on the summits of the highest mountains. Deucalion and his wife having floated on the waters for nine days, at last rested on Mount Parnassus. Deucalion then entreated that mankind might be renewed upon the earth, and, in answer to his prayer, he was directed, with his wife, to throw stones over their heads, and these were to be transformed into men and women.

Lucian, Plato, and Aristotle, all testify to the belief of a universal deluge, though Aristotle probably thought that it ought to be considered as limited to Greece; he is, however, far from affirming that it was not universal. There are many other remarkable coincidences between the Gre-

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cian traditions and the Mosaic record, which need not here be noticed. A very complete and interesting review of them may be found in Mr. Sharon Turner's Sacred History of the World, vol. 2. p. 312.

It may be quite sufficient for my present purpose to observe, that these traditions were, in substance, universally prevalent in the ancient world, and are found disseminated among modern nations in the most distant and opposite parts of the earth, and in all their different degrees of civilization. Mr. Sharon Turner, in his Sacred History, has collected them from the Chinese, the books of the Parsees, the Shanskrit, the Arabians, the Turks, the Africans, from the different nations of North and South America, and even from the various isles of the Southern Ocean. Wherever, indeed, there is any attempt to account for the existence of the present population, it begins with the preservation of one pair of human beings, or a single family, by some floating vessel. This is usually connected with a previously existing race, with the anger of the Supreme Being against their sins, and with the desolation of the earth and the race of men, by a general inundation. The leading facts are sometimes obscured by fabulous and absurd additions, or mythological fancies, evidently graduated to the degree of cultivation and the particular superstitions in each separate country, but still incorporating the grand catastrophe, together with the means stated by Moses,

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for the preservation of the human race from total extinction.

The evidence upon this branch of our subject is, therefore, both universal and complete. There are, in fact, no conflicting traditions. The harmony among all nations is such as could have arisen only from the fact itself. We find Chaldeans, Phœnicians, Assyrians, Medians, Persians, Druids, Greeks, Romans, Goths, Hindoos, Chinese, Burmese, Mexicans, Peruvians, Brazilians, North Americans, Taheitians, Sandwich Islanders, Western Caledonians, all preserving in their mythologies, or their histories, the principal facts recorded by Moses. There is no clashing testimony to be derived from the traditionary accounts of either the ancient or modern nations. They all embody but one story.

Cuvier's remarks on the traditionary evidence.

Baron Cuvier makes the following appropriate and just observation in reference to the epocha of the deluge:—"Is it possible that mere accident "should afford so striking a result, as to unite "the traditional origin of the Assyrian, Indian, "and Chinese monarchies to the same epocha of "about 4000 years from the present time? Could "the ideas of nations, who possessed almost no "natural affinities, whose language, religion, and "laws had nothing in common; could they "conspire to one point, did not truth bring them "together?" But this view of the traditionary evidence, let it be remembered, is taken quite irrespective of any appearances which the earth

LECT. II. itself affords of such a general catastrophe. Strong as it is apart, it appears to become much stronger when we bring into connexion with it the indubitable traces which the earth every where presents, of having undergone precisely such a calamity.

Other alleged deluges.

But this evidence is at present somewhat confused by alleged discoveries, which, though they do not set aside the proofs of one general deluge, yet indicate, it is supposed, large inundations, both of an earlier and of a later date.

Now, supposing the theories that include such events to be well founded, we cannot perceive how they invalidate, in the slightest degree, either the testimony of Moses, or appearances which agree with that testimony, as to one universal deluge, at the date specified by the sacred record, and so generally ascertained by an examination of the whole surface of the earth.

The earth at first covered with water.

In the first place, that account is connected with the previous statement of the condition of the earth, as *altogether covered with water* prior to the date of the Mosaic creation: this fact, therefore, gives scope for the theories which refer some appearances of a deluge to a date anterior to the Noachic flood; for it is expressly recorded, that "*the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the* FACE OF THE DEEP; *and the Spirit of God moved upon the* FACE OF THE WATERS. *And God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the*

waters from the waters." Gen. i. 2, 6, 9. It LECT. II.
would appear, from the sacred record itself, that the whole surface of the globe was under water *in the beginning*, or prior to the first day of our time. The discovery, therefore, that some general flood must have preceded the Noachic, affords not the slightest ground for invalidating the Mosaic account; while all the researches of the geologists tend to confirm that account, by the remarkable fact, that no human remains can be traced to any previous flood, probably none even so far back as Noah's. I am aware that, upon this point, the geologists are at variance. Some contend, that they have found human remains of the same age as the extinct fossil animals; but Dr. Buckland, who has referred to this subject in his late Bridgewater Treatise, assigns all those that have yet been discovered to a much more recent period. Mr. Fairholme insists that they are of the same age as the animal fossils in the same places. It is very evident that there is yet no infallible test of their antiquity; but should it appear, in due time, when the parts of the earth in which the human family resided, prior to Noah's flood, shall have been adequately examined, that none have been preserved in a fossil state from even so early a date, it will not be at all surprising or inconsistent, upon the probable supposition that the human population was comparatively small, perhaps, also, circumscribed as to their dispersion, and because they would more readily

LECT. II. be chosen as prey by the monsters of the deep, or by those larger amphibious animals that might, for some time, abound in the waters, and which, even during, and long after their subsidence, must partly seek their prey on the surface of the earth. It is also to be observed, that mankind would not take refuge in caves or dens, as many of the larger animals evidently did, from their natural instinct, such places being their accustomed haunts, but men would naturally flee to the neighbouring hills, from whence they would necessarily be washed off, and be the first to lodge on the parts which began to be left dry, where they must inevitably perish from the effect of the atmosphere. There is, therefore, on every account, less reason to expect that the earth should contain human remains than those of the inferior animals. The fact, as far as at present examined, turns out precisely in accordance with these suppositions.

Other limited floods since.

But if the Mosaic account is perfectly harmonious with the theory of a flood long anterior to that of Noah, as we have shown it is, so it is surely compatible with the admission of any number of local or limited floods since that date. We are merely informed that this was the first and only general deluge which has occurred since the creation of man; that it took place at a certain date; that it destroyed man and beasts, with the specified exceptions. Geology itself fully corroborates so much of the sacred testimony, and

this corroboration extends even to the determination of the fact, that the great destruction of the existing races of animals took place, not in the great anterior inundation, nor at any date subsequent to that assigned by Moses, but precisely all over the earth, as far as yet examined, at or about the same time; and that time, as nearly as it is possible for those researches to decide, at the very age of Noah. I am aware that the theories of some eminent geologists have tended to throw a considerable degree of doubt around the Mosaic statement. But I think the hesitation, which is produced in some minds, and the direct disbelief which prevails in others, is to be altogether attributed to the rashness and presumption of theory. A probable theory for explaining some phenomena has been adopted by scientific men, frequently on the authority of an eminent individual, and then this theory becomes a standard to which they try to reduce every thing else. It is with difficulty they are induced to question the validity of their reasoning; the easier method is to question the divine authority, which contradicts the theory, or to explain away its assertions, till they become vague and unmeaning. Those speculations of some geologists, which are opposed to the Mosaic account of the deluge, are far more likely to be unsound in their principles, than that Moses was mistaken, or the traditions and histories of all nations erroneous. It becomes these geologists, therefore, to re-consider the first principles

LECT. II. they have adopted, and especially to take notice of the very slender and questionable ground upon which they stand.

It is with much pleasure I here refer to the recent work of Mr. Fairholme on this subject,* in which he has apparently shown the rashness of some modern theories, and suggested a far more simple and satisfactory explanation of the visible phenomena of the earth, and the date of these phenomena, than had before been given. It is not possible to present here even an outline of the method by which he endeavours, and, as I cannot but think successfully, in the main, to prove that the present appearances of the earth's surface may all be more readily harmonized with the doctrine of a universal deluge than with any other theory. The arguments by which he arrives at the date of the present phenomena of the earth's surface, appear far more comprehensive and satisfactory than those which support any other theory it has ever been my lot to examine. According to his views, every appearance and every operation now going on, may be reconciled with the date of the Noachic deluge, and can be harmonized with no other date, and explained by no other theory. To his work, destined, as I cannot but think it is, to work a very considerable change in the views of geologists, I refer those readers who

* "New and Conclusive Physical Demonstrations, both of the Fact and Period of the Mosaic Deluge." Ridgway, 1837.

are curious in this matter, and who wish to see the subject more fully handled than is compatible with the plan of these Lectures. The following abstract of this theory, in the author's own words, must suffice for our present purpose. LECT. II.

"1. We find, by an extended view of the "systems of valleys, over the whole earth, that "they form groups and combinations of inland "drainage, falling, *in all directions*, from the "summit levels of the dry lands, of whatever "degree of elevation, to the *exact level* of the "present sea. This reminds us of precisely such "facts as are seen on a small scale, in nature, "and leads directly to the inference which Hutton "and Playfair drew from them, viz. that valleys "unquestionably owed their origin to water. "Here we find cause, however, for diverging "from the Huttonian theory on this point; for, "instead of supposing with these philosophers, "that the water here spoken of was that of "*existing rivers*, working out their own channels "during immense periods of time, we are led "to a totally different conclusion, by the innu- "merable dry valleys, which equally accord in "their levels with the rest of the system; and "which distinctly prove, *that the agent by which "these grooves were scooped out, is no longer to "be seen on the surface of our continents.*

"2. We find further testimony to this *aqueous* "agency, in the fact of the side valleys falling "into *inland lakes*, being all hollowed out, whe-

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" ther dry or otherwise, *to the exact level of such* " *lakes respectively*, as the larger drains are to " that of the ocean. In this particular, these " *lake-tributaries* differ materially from the uni- " versal character of *river-tributaries*, which latter " join a central inclined plane, on both sides, each " valley *at its own proper level*, as Playfair has " justly remarked, in proving an aqueous agency.

" 3. We find, in these facts, the clearest testi- " mony in proof of the whole system having been " *simultaneously* formed; for we perceive no pause " nor check, in descending from the highest " Alpine summits, down to the very level of the " sea, in which all main valleys, whether of " *one mile* or of *one thousand miles* in length, " finally terminate.

" 4. Having proved that valleys cannot have " owed their origin to the streams which now flow " through them, and that, on the contrary, the " streams originating in the condensed atmosphe- " ric vapour, naturally pursued, at their birth, " such courses *as they already found prepared* " *for them;* we are next led to the consideration " of such abrading action as they have ever since " exercised, at every rocky impediment over " which they have been forced to leap. We have " seen that, in almost all well-defined waterfalls, " the amount of loss can be shown to be but " small; and that they, consequently, oppose, in " the strongest manner, the theory of immense " periods of time. But, at Niagara, we have

" found such a combination of immense *power* LECT. II. " in the agent, and of *weakness* in the resisting " body, together with so singular and complete " a corresponding link, in the superficial form " of the continent, that we are irresistibly forced " to a point, in space, beyond which the evidences " of this action *suddenly cease to conduct us:* and " we are compelled to admit the fact of that " *commencement*, which De Luc more dimly " perceived; which Hutton and Playfair over- " looked or rejected; and which has hitherto " escaped the notice of all subsequent writers on " geology.

" 5. From this point, *in space*, we are next " called to the consideration of an equally definable " point *in time*, to which these phenomena irre- " sistibly conduct us. For as the cataract of " Niagara is evidently working, at a certain rate, " in a hundred years; and as the distance from its " present site is only about *seven miles* to the " point where this natural *saw* must necessarily " have been first set in motion, we cannot avoid " arriving at a *definite period* for that interesting " event. The widest calculations do not lead " to a period of more than about 10,000 years, " as the duration of this ceaseless action; and " we have shown that, as the agent has been of " *equal power*, while the resisting body has been " *by one-half weaker* than it is now, we must " necessarily reduce that period in proportion,

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" to only about one-half that time; that is, to a " period of *about four or five thousand years.*

" 6. Considering that the waters of Niagara " compose the drainage of fully one half the " breadth of the North American Continent, and " that all the other systems and groups of rivers " of the New World are exactly similar, (with " the exception of this great natural chrono- " meter;) we are led, by fair analogy, to similar " conclusions with regard to them, even in the " absence of similar proofs; and we thus find, " that as the *birth* of every river must have taken " place *from the very first day that the lands* " *became elevated above the ocean*, (under which, " we know from the strata, and their fossil con- " tents, that they once were;) and as the opera- " tion of Niagara also began at Queenstown, *on* " *that same day*, when the shallow basin of Lake " Erie *first* overflowed its margin; we are then " led, by all laws of inductive reasoning, *to the* " *origin of the whole American Continent, as a* " *dry land, at a period not more remote than* " *about four or five thousand years.*

" 7. From this branch of evidence, we next " come to a still more conclusive chain of testi- " mony, afforded by the sea coasts in every land. " We have then, at length, perceived the glaring " fact, which has so long escaped attention, *that* " *the superficial forms of all the lands have* " *an inclination towards the level of the ocean,*

" and that, in the known principle of two lines LECT. II.
" inevitably crossing each other, if extended at " different angles, this sloping line of land *in-* " *variably touches the horizontal line of the sea,* " at but a very small distance from the base of " the present cliffs.

" 8. Hence we are again led to an unavoidable " period of *commencement.* For, as the action of " the restless surge is to the sea coasts, what that " of Niagara is to its rocky channel, *namely,* " *ceaseless* and *destructive,* we altogether lose " sight of the *possibility* of this marine action, " at the exact point beyond that where the super- " ficial outlines of sea and land come in contact. " There the *first* waves broke upon the new-born " land, *on a certain day;* since that time they " have never ceased advancing upon the shore; " and as the dry lands all slope *upwards*, while " the level of the sea continues the same, the " cliffs necessarily become every year *higher*, and " so they must continue to do. But while this is " going on before our eyes, we are brought to " a complete pause, *beyond the above point of* " *contact.* We know that ever since wind and " water have existed, there must have been *waves;* " we know and see the destructive effects of such " waves; but beyond this point of contact, *there* " *could be no destruction*, simply *because there* " *was no land for waves to break upon.* The " present lands, then, rose into existence, above " the level of the waters, (or that level was

LECT. II. " depressed, which comes to the same thing,) *at*
" *a certain definite period;* and since that period,
" when a point of resistance was first offered to
" the waves, these latter have never ceased to
" bite into the shores.

" 9. The results of many observations, on the
" sea coasts of France and England, lead to the con-
" clusion, that *not more than from a few hundred*
" *yards, to a mile,* have been already worn from
" the sloping lands. In a few remarkable cases
" of low and soft shores, (as in Norfolk, Suffolk,
" &c.) the loss may be a little more than a mile;
" but the general average of loss may be stated
" at but *half a mile,* or 880 yards. This space,
" (or 31,680 inches,) if divided over a period of
" 10,000 years, gives *an average annual loss* of
" only about *three inches,* which is evidently too
" little to correspond with the amount of loss
" which we now see in progress. We are, there-
" fore, under the imperative necessity of greatly
" diminishing the period; and we are thus forcibly
" led to some point between the historic times
" and the above 10,000 years.

" 10. Nearer than this to the truth we cannot
" at present come, nor indeed is it necessary.
" But as such evidences are to be seen throughout
" all our sea coasts, without exception, and as we
" thus establish innumerable indexes, where *cause*
" and *effect* are in complete and invariable ac-
" cordance; the whole indicating the birth of our
" European lands, *at the very same period* with

" that which Niagara points out as the origin of LECT. II.
" the New World, we thus form a chain of cor-
" responding testimony, such as, perhaps, cannot
" be surpassed in any branch of science; and
" prove to demonstration, not only the long
" denied fact of a *commencement* to the present
" system of things, but also the very *recent*
" period of that commencement." p. 329.

Instead, then, of geology being really hostile to revelation, its testimony is, I conceive, beyond all that might have been anticipated, confirmatory of the grand general statement.

Theory of the causation of a deluge.

Though we might here be entitled to pass over the speculations and theories which relate to the causation of the deluge, or the several deluges, whether general or local, which are alleged to have taken place, yet I am unwilling to allow it to be thought, that we shrink from any true discoveries of science, or that we wish to shelter revelation from the application of any fair test to which it can be subjected. Yet the geological theorist has no right to complain, if, while we admit every well-authenticated fact, we demur to some of the inferences deduced from such facts, or hesitate to accept his theory for explaining or grouping his facts under general laws. We are fairly entitled to do so, upon the past history of this new and popular science, since we have continually seen the ablest cultivators of it constrained to abandon theory after theory, conclusion after conclusion; since we see, moreover,

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that there are scarcely any two of its advocates who agree in any thing beyond facts, and that these are not always so clear as to preclude disagreement; since, again, we find that no theory of the formation of the different classes of rocks can be yet made to comport, even generally, with facts, for we hear one of the first rate geologists admitting, that "Much remains to be done before "the structure of the various formations of the "British isles can safely be appealed to, as one "of those complete middle terms of comparison, "by help of which the disjointed fragments of a "former world may, in *imagination*, be reunited; "that, respecting the perplexing phenomena of the "crag beds on the coast of Suffolk, we are gene-"rally deficient of information; that the accounts "of all our tertiary strata, however excellent at "the time they were written, must be entirely "remodelled; that even the history of the *oolitic* "series, (the boast of English geology,) to which "foreign naturalists are *attempting to conform* "*some of their own secondary rocks*, is defective; "that the history of the coal formations is not yet "perfect; that the great corresponding deposits "of Cumberland are undescribed."* When these admissions are made by the ablest geologists, surely it evinces not too much caution to say, we hesitate in accepting any thing that militates against evidence which, in so many mysterious matters, has not only been proved correct, but

* Sedgwick.

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absolutely anticipative of the most material discoveries of real science. These observations are intended to be used only in bar of the theorizings which cannot be admitted to be perfect or sound. In particular I apply them to the question of *causation*, which we must now proceed to examine according to the views given of it by some of the modern speculators in geology, and principally, as that view is intended to bear against the miraculous production of the great Noachic deluge.

Whether by purely natural causes.

It has, of late, been attempted to contradict Moses, by endeavouring to prove that the great deluge, to which the sacred record and all national traditions refer, might have been brought about by perfectly natural causes,—causes still in operation, which have been in operation through interminable periods, and which are destined, after a given cycle of ages, to issue again in the same results. This speculation carries, indeed, the authority of one of the first names in geological science; but since it is a speculation depending altogether on the ascertainment of laws, which at present lie far beyond the reach of human discovery, and depends upon a science, the very first principles of which are imperfect and fluctuating, we cannot but deem it, in every view, highly presumptuous and improbable. It might be a sufficient answer to this bold speculation, to cite the opinion both of Cuvier and Buckland, that no known causes in nature will account for the facts which every where appear. Dr. Buckland says,—

Opinion of Cuvier and Buckland.

LECT. II. "In the whole course of my geological travels, "from Cornwall to Caithness, from Calais to the "Carpathians, in Ireland or in Italy, I have "scarcely ever gone a mile without finding a "perpetual succession of deposits of gravel, sand, "and loam, in situations that cannot be referred "to the action of modern torrents, rivers, or lakes, "or *any existing causes;* and with respect to the "still more striking diluvial phenomenon of "drifted masses of rocks, the greater part of "the northern hemisphere, from Moscow to the "Mississippi, is described, by various geological "travellers, as strewed on its hills, as well as its "valleys, with blocks of granite and other rocks "of enormous magnitude, which have been "drifted (mostly in a direction from *north* to "*south)* a distance, sometimes, of many hundred "miles from their native beds, across mountains "and valleys, lakes and seas, by a force of water "which must have possessed a velocity to which "nothing that occurs in the actual state of the "globe affords the slightest parallel." That the same *general* causes are in operation now which have been in operation ever since the present system of the world was established, may be fully conceded, and that such causes are sufficient to account for local and limited inundations; but when we consider what a coincidence, what a simultaneous co-operation of these would be required all over the world, to produce a general deluge, and that it is highly unphilosophical to

Inadequacy of natural causes.

suppose such a universal coincidence, when we can produce no fact that proves any analogous coincidence ever to have taken place, we are constrained to say that the admission of all such known causes affords no suggestion whatever towards the explanation of a general deluge; because they are never known to produce the same effect every where at the same time, and it is highly improbable, not to say impossible, that they ever should. All that they have ever been known to effect have been inundations of a very limited and local nature, and by no means presenting results parallel to those which attest the universality of the great general deluge.

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Our appeal, then, is to the broad, the universal testimony of nature, that it has undergone a violent disruption, a catastrophe in every part of the whole surface of the earth, as nearly as can be ascertained, *at once*, the traces of which are as clear as if they had been impressed only a few years ago. It is certain that the appearance of all lands, sloping, as they uniformly do, from their highest hills or mountains, by one series of valleys after another, regularly down to the level of the ocean on all sides, indicates, as some think, an aqueous cause rather than an igneous and volcanic one, as having imparted to them their last and present form.* But the powers which could have conspired to produce all these effects

General appearances strongly favour an aqueous cause.

* For the fuller illustration of these views, I must refer to Mr. Fairholme's work before mentioned. See p. 118.

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now nowhere appear. Many of the particulars of this catastrophe may be explained by the observations to which geology has led, and its theory for the production of partial inundations may be true, and yet fall infinitely short of accounting for that deluge, which must have been every where contemporaneous, comparatively sudden, and, in some respects, violent; not like the partial ones, slow and gradual. Moses asserts that the waters prevailed "fifteen cubits above the tops of the highest mountains," and the mountains themselves every where attest this truth. But where can we find any cause now in operation that could be imagined capable of producing this phenomenon at the same time in every part of the earth's surface? Geology has certainly discovered none; and, so far as the laws of nature are known, a universal flood appears to be an impossibility, and could have been effected only by miracle. Wherever the mountains have been examined, they are found to contain, even on their summits, shells and skeletons of fish from the deep beds of the ocean, mingled with the bones of animals that inhabit the forests. The Alps, Ararat, Libanus, the Apennines, the Pyrenees, all retain proofs that the sea has passed over their summits, leaving deposits behind which could have been brought there only by some extraordinary power, operating to raise the sea far above its ordinary level, and causing it to sweep over the continents, bearing many of their heaviest

contents along with it, while it deposited many of its own in their stead. LECT. II.

Geology has shown no cause equal to this effect.

Now to have produced this all round the world, at or near the same time, would imply such a power acting upon the whole body of the waters, as we cannot discover in any of the known laws of nature, and such as appears altogether different from that which Mr. Lyell has described in the formation of *deltas*, at the mouth of large rivers, producing those gradual and comparatively quiet and contracted inundations, which have invaded some countries, and permanently overwhelmed some large tracts of land; or such, as he supposes, may have been produced by the bursting of large lakes through their earthly barriers—effects which cannot be supposed ever to have taken place to any thing like the adequate extent, and certainly not simultaneously over the whole world.

Indeed, none of these cases present to the imagination any parallel to a universal deluge, or afford the slightest clue to the discovery of any cause that could account for it. The sea could not have arisen to the requisite height over the lands and mountains without forsaking its own proper level, and leaving its bed just so much lower than it now is. We know of no cause that could have raised it to such a height, and borne it across the lands, while its natural tendency would have been to keep its level. But its surface must have been reduced just in proportion to the quan-

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tity of water required for flooding the continents. No power discoverable in nature could have thus reversed its tendency. It appears, moreover, just as unsatisfactory to allege the operation of volcanic power as the cause, either of upheaving the dry lands, or of forcing the waters of the ocean over the whole surface of the earth; since all that has ever appeared of such forces falls infinitely short of the effect to be accounted for. It is inconceivable that volcanos could have imparted to the hills, and vales, and plains, their present appearances, and equally inconceivable that volcanos should have effected this *every where*, and, as most observers agree, nearly, or exactly, at the same time. It is, therefore, utterly vain to adduce the force of volcanic eruptions, since, if they were a thousand times as great, and a thousand times as numerous as they are, or ever have been known to be, still they could neither upheave all the lands out of the sea, supposing them under its level, nor throw up all the requisite waters over the lands, supposing those lands, at the time, above the level of the sea. It appears equally vain to refer for illustration of the supposed cause to the production of local inundations, by the gradual stoppage of the mouths of large rivers; since, if all the rivers in the world were to keep time with each other in this process, which would be something about as miraculous as making all the clocks and watches in the world to go precisely together, still the inundations could never rise

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above the level of the ordinary tides, would be far enough from reaching the tops even of moderate hills, to say nothing of the highest mountains, and, besides, must still be a gradual flood, altogether destitute of those violent effects, and of that uniform character, described by Dr. Buckland, of flowing from *north* to *south*, which seems to be precisely contrary to what must have been the course of the waters, if they had risen naturally. They would then have flowed from their great depositories in the south.

Failure of all theory on this fact.

The principal facts, therefore, speak for themselves. They seem utterly to defy the attempts of the philosophers to constrain them into theories, or reduce them to the known laws of nature. If there was miracle any where, or, at least, the intervention of divine power, it was seen in the deluge. Creation itself would scarcely be a more decided proof of a divine power in immediate operation. Many wonderful facts are, we admit, brought to light by geological researches; but it has hitherto made little advance in accounting for the effects it has traced. Its course has all along been marked by too great a fondness for generalizing, too great an antipathy to admit almighty power, and a fond credulity of every thing that might afford an opportunity for calling in question the accuracy of Moses. Hence it is continually obliged to retrace its steps, and abandon its own favourite and most cherished speculations. None of its discoveries have yet been

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wrought into a valid impeachment of any part of the sacred record. There are, we admit, many difficult and unexplained facts; nor is it wonderful that, in so vast, so profound, so difficult a subject, there should be; but the two grand points, the universality of a deluge, at the date assigned to it by Moses, and the miraculous nature of the agency by which it must have been effected, appear to be confirmed by all the facts hitherto discovered, as well as by the conspicuous failure of all other explanations.

The striking verification which the first of these points has received by the discoveries of science, and by the negative kind of proof which is alone applicable to the other, or our ignorance of all causes adequate to its production, save the divine agency, is such as cannot be counteracted by a few difficult or unexplained phenomena. Revelation has the unrivalled honour of recording, by anticipation, the substance of all the investigations and researches of science on this sublime and difficult subject. The accurate knowledge possessed by the inspired writer, it is obvious, could not have been obtained by the same process of investigation as that which has led many of the most eminent geologists to the same general conclusions. He could have been qualified to impart all this information only by that Spirit of divine wisdom, which we have already traced in so many remarkable and convincing particulars.

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Remaining difficulties comparatively trivial.

It would be very unworthy of a philosophic spirit to allow our knowledge on the great leading facts to be disturbed by our ignorance on a few points, that are yet veiled in darkness, and which, judging from our experience in similar cases, there is every probability may be yet shown to comport perfectly with the sacred narrative. Facts quite as difficult to reconcile with the Mosaic statement, as any now ascertained, and which at one period were deemed absolute evidence against the truth of his record, have been shown either to have been mistaken, or reasoned upon hastily, and made the basis for the announcement of laws, which other facts have entirely demolished. It is, therefore, not a little astonishing, that the frequent failure of the geologists to make good their theories, the constant remodelling of them by their own hands, and the gradual convergence of all their established principles to these four points; the universality of at least one grand catastrophe; the accordance of their own date of that catastrophe with the time of Noah; the agency of it by water, influenced by some unknown power; and the origination of the present race of mankind with this catastrophe; it is astonishing, I say, that these things do not repress their theorizings, and constrain them to confine themselves to the collection of facts.

Illogical procedure of some theorists.

They start in the race of speculation upon ground which we cannot concede to them, that

LECT. II. all the different masses of matter of which the earth consists, have been formed originally according to the laws which they now observe to be in operation; that is to say, that natural causes have produced the primitive creation without the intervention of an intelligent Creator. This we pronounce at once to be absurd, because there can be no natural laws without a creating power, an arranging mind, and a previously existing creation. Mr. Sharon Turner well observes,—

"It is even a contradiction to suppose that the "natural causes now in operation, could have "formed our world. It is from its completed "formation that they arise, and are what they "are. They are the *produced*, and not the pro-"ducers. Natural causes are the result of crea-"tion, not its makers. They arise from the "construction, composition, positions, and ma-"terial relations, and arranged agencies of the "created things; but they have not fabricated "them. All the laws of nature in our world are "*posterior* to its structure, not anterior framers "of it. It is the artificial creation of all things, "by an intelligent Artificer, which gives to all "natural laws and causes their very existence. "They are not in being until the fabric and the "mechanism are completed; until each is placed "in such relative positions, and in such com-"pounds, and endued with such properties, and "associated with such moving agencies, as we

"can become cognizant of, and from which they LECT. II. "originate."*

If a creation is to be admitted at all, then this presupposes the production at once of effects, to which no laws were previously applicable. Geologists may say, that it requires so many myriads of years to produce the primitive rocks, but their reasoning, though apparently analogical, is inapplicable to the case in hand, because it commences with applying laws which they have deduced from things now in existence, to the very production of those things. If we should apply the law of our own progressive and slow growth to the first man, as formerly hinted, we should be guilty of denying the possibility of his creation in a perfect state at once, and of attributing a law which belongs to a particular order of created beings, to one not yet in existence. We should suppose the law, before we have supposed that to which it relates; or we should be guilty of the absurdity of just making the law the *Creator*, which assuredly were less rational than to suppose an intelligent Creator. But the first man could not possibly have come into existence in the same way as others, because he first existed alone—they are born in a natural way. He could not have been born, because the supposition that he was first, admits that there was no human being *before* him. Therefore, it required none of the present laws of our nature to produce him; moreover,

Creation precedes all laws.

* Turner's Sac. Hist. vol. ii. p. 366.

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they could have had no existence till *he* existed. He could not, therefore, have come into existence by the same physical causes as all the rest of his race. He is admitted to have been created, and he could not have been created a babe under the same physical laws as ourselves; for, in that case, he must have perished immediately. Every view, therefore, of the production of the first man, or the first animal, necessarily involves a creation; the production of a being mature at once; whereas, to perpetuate or propagate that being, the intervention of laws, and of time for those laws or natural causes to operate, was indispensable; but no such laws, and no such time are requisite upon the supposition of a creation. And without a creation, as may be shown, nothing could ever have existed. This reasoning holds good equally in reference to man or animals, rocks, or earth, or water. Admit a creation, and they are brought into existence perfect, and the theories invented to account for the origin of all things appear absurd, and vanish; deny the fact of a creation, and you are left without laws, without matter, without being, without cause, and equally without effect. Upon the whole, then, it appears, that philosophy can ascertain no laws, till it admits the existence of a creation.

The Mosaic statement gradually, though slowly confirmed by tradition and science.

Further, the Mosaic account of the disruption to which the creation has been subjected, appears to be strikingly verified, both by the history and traditions of all nations, and by the entire mass

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of facts collected by the naturalists. During the last hundred years, we have seen the theories of philosophers, as to the laws of nature, gradually correcting and adjusting themselves towards a perfect agreement with the sacred record. The most formidable difficulties have been overcome; the doctrines of the decomposition of lava, and of the formation of different species of rocks, have been revolutionized, and every theory directly hostile to revelation has been swept away, not by *authority*, but by *science* itself; which is, even now, gradually, though reluctantly, approximating towards the testimony of Moses, in the arrangement and systematizing of all the phenomena. There is, for instance, at the present moment, strong reason to doubt the theory which has been adopted to account for the formation of the primitive rocks. Instead of being produced from a state of fusion, it appears more likely, that their component parts were in a state of aqueous solution. We cannot, therefore, doubt, but that a perfect harmony will be ultimately established, and a still more minute confirmation be supplied by true science to the authoritative record. There may remain, and perhaps for many years yet to come, some few facts which it may be difficult to explain; and what wonder, if, on such a subject, it should be so? These may afford occasion for minds, previously indisposed to receive the testimony of revelation, to get up special cases, and confront them with the divine word. The discoveries men-

LECT. II. tioned by Brydone, at Etna, and the theory of the well dug in the lava-beds of *Jaci Reale*, so long vaunted as decisive testimony against the chronology of Moses, have now been proved to be altogether delusions, and that no such length of time as 14,000 years is necessary to produce the appearances he observed. Other similar cases might be mentioned.

We have abundant reason, therefore, to expect, that science will gradually rectify all its own mistakes, will supply the refutation of its own false theories, and ultimately prove itself, as it has so often done before, a slow, but sure witness to the truth of the sacred record. Hitherto the verification of the Scripture is striking and satisfactory in the highest degree. Its friends may well triumph in the utter failure of every attempt to shake its authority, and may congratulate each other upon the immutability of that rock on which their hopes are built.

The Covenant with Noah—Rainbow, &c.

Exemption of the world from any future deluge.

There are some other minor particulars connected with the account of the deluge, which ought not to be entirely passed over in the present argument, although they may not afford so clear and striking a verification of the sacred record, as we have been able to trace in reference to the leading facts of the narration. I refer particularly to the divine promise made to Noah upon the subsidence of the flood, and the sign or memorial of that engagement, to which the Almighty is represented as appealing, Gen. viii. 21, 22, and ix. 1—17. The substance of this covenant was, that God would not again destroy all flesh and the earth by a flood, and that seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, should not again fail, or be disturbed in their order, as long as the world, or the present order of things and beings, should last. This covenant implies the previous fact, and the immediate interposition of the divine power and will by which it was effected. It is, moreover, in harmony with the sentence which doomed man to labour for his support, since in vain would he have tilled the ground, unless the orderly succession of the seasons had secured to him the reward of his labour. Though it is, no doubt, clear that this had been the course of things prior to the flood, yet the interruption for a whole year, by that event, and the various changes, both in the state of the earth's surface and the atmosphere, which it had effected, seem to render such an engagement, as that now made, highly appropriate and seasonable for reviving the confidence and stimulating the industry of mankind, by which alone their race could be propagated and preserved in the world.

Immediate advantages of this promise.

Without such an assurance, then, from the Almighty, the sons of Noah for many years must have lived in perpetual fear, and upon every recurrence of heavy rains, might have anticipated a repetition of the great catastrophe, which had

LECT. II. destroyed the previous race, and all their works. It is certain, without such a covenant, they could have felt little confidence in proceeding with their needful labours, and whenever appearances became unfavourable, must have sunk into an abject and disconsolate state of mind. This covenant was, therefore, at that crisis, a most merciful and most necessary appendage to the sentence, which had so materially altered their physical condition, as to make their preservation dependant on their own strenuous and persevering industry.

Verification by subsequent history of man.

The history of the world, ever since this period, affords an interesting verification of this divine engagement. It particularly merits observation, that Moses, in recording such a declaration, supposing him not to have enjoyed divine instruction, was laying himself open quite gratuitously to the chances that might occur through all time, then future and yet future, that a similar catastrophe might return. How else, but by revelation, could he know that it would not? Had he judged only from probabilities, nothing could have appeared more likely, than that a catastrophe, which had once arisen out of physical and natural causes, might occur again; and an impostor, writing at the time of Moses, and knowing that there had been one universal deluge, was, we conceive, far more likely to have predicted its repetition, and to have endeavoured to alarm mankind by threatening it, than to have quieted their fears by assuring them that a similar event

should never recur. It would much better have served the purposes of imposture and superstition, as well as his own personal importance, to have done so, than otherwise. But those who can imagine Moses to have been an impostor, destitute of all divine information upon this subject, must perceive, that the conduct they attribute to him would have been irrational, and, according to all the calculations he could have made at the time, more likely to issue in the entire subversion of his authority, than in its establishment. LECT. II.

Reason would have inferred the probability of its recurrence.

We find proofs, in the present day, among the geologists, of what was likely to have been the inference human reason would have drawn from the evidence of one universal deluge; for they boldly tell us, that, after a given cycle of ages, a similar event must occur, since the causes which produced the one remain in operation, and will be sure to repeat the grand cataclysm at the destined period. They do not, indeed, inform us precisely how soon the cycle will be completed. The period may be longer or shorter; but such is the calculation of their philosophy; and such, then, might have appeared, upon any rational speculation, in the time of Moses, far more probable than the contrary.

On this very ground, then, we make our appeal on behalf of the sacred writer. Is it at all conceivable, that any mere impostor would have ventured to risk his own pretensions on so improbable a thing, as the non-recurrence of a flood,

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when one had manifestly occurred but a few centuries before? or is it probable, that he would needlessly have risked his reputation at all, by putting forth a decisive opinion one way or the other? Upon the supposition that he was an impostor, and conscious that he could establish no claim to an infallible decision of the matter, we conceive it quite improbable that he would have made so gratuitous a venture of his authority; but that, had he resolved with himself to record any opinion, it was far more likely than otherwise that he should have foretold a repetition of the event. This the impugners of his authority admit is the more rational inference, from the actual occurrence of a deluge once, and from their own assumption, that all the causes which produced it continue still in operation, and are maturing and accumulating their results for a similar catastrophe.

Revelation alone could give immediate confidence.

But here, then, we have the rationally and philosophically improbable fact, asserted in the most unequivocal terms, that a similar desolation shall never take place; then we have all time, as far as time has rolled on, and that no inconsiderable period, confirming in the fullest manner the highly improbable prediction of the sacred writer. There have been partial inundations, occasional and local visitations of famine, failure of harvests in some places, or in some portions of the requisite sustenance of man; but these have evidently been no impediments to the preservation and increase

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of the human race, any more than diseases, earthquakes, volcanos, and similar local and limited disasters, which seem to be wisely permitted to maintain some fear of God, and preserve from generation to generation a sense of man's dependance, and an evidence of the retributive system under which he is placed. Yet there has been no extensive failure of the ordinary constitution of things, no suspension, or alteration, or cataclysm of a universal kind.

The prediction has been realized.

As a grand general fact, it must, therefore, be admitted, because it is evident and undeniable, that for more than 4,000 years, Providence has uniformly co-operated with, and blessed the labours of mankind, and neither suffered a deluge to occur, nor the ordinary seasons to fail, nor the human race to be again swept away. This, then, is no inconsiderable test of the accuracy of Moses. The providence of God has confirmed the written word, and in opening to the supply of the constantly augmenting population of the globe, new objects of industry, and new means of adjusting the productiveness of the earth to the wants of mankind, we have, at least, so far as this long lapse of ages affords it, an indubitable verification of the promise, that there should be no repetition of the deluge, and no further interference with the regular succession of those yearly seasons on which the conservation of the human race depends. The very accurate adjustment of the earth's fertility to human necessities, affords a

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striking illustration of the merciful provision of the Creator, combined with an evident intention to maintain every where an obvious and imperative proof of dependance.

Dependance of the race on this promise.

The fact is, probably, well known, that the population of the globe could not be preserved, if but a single harvest were generally destroyed. Each nation has ordinarily not enough for two years' consumption, and usually but little more than enough for one. There is a small surplus in all, evidently adapted to supply the seed for the succeeding year, and to meet the casualties which occur by partial failures, as well as to supply the means to all that are industrious, of procuring some additional comforts, and of gradually advancing in civilization, by providing for the support of those who are employed in arts and sciences, and who impart the result of their thought and ingenuity, in barter for those necessaries of life, which the others are able to give in return for the comforts and luxuries which art and science supply.

There is only one point further to which it will be necessary to advert, in completing our remarks upon the deluge, and the connected circumstances—that is,

The Rainbow.

The rainbow —usual explanation of it.

The reference made by the Almighty to "the bow in the cloud," has appeared to many, a matter involved in some obscurity. It has been usual to admit, that its appearance, after the deluge, could not have been its first appearance; but that, being a natural phenomenon, depending on causes strictly physical, as Sir I. Newton has shown, nothing more could be meant by the divine reference to it, than that it should be a sort of pledge, or memorial, to bring to the remembrance of man the fact of the deluge, and the covenant God then made to exempt the human race in future from a similar calamity. The appearance of the bow, therefore, in all countries, would thus be connected with the divine engagement, and suggest it to mankind, while its perpetuity, secured by the immutability of the laws on which it depended, would serve as a perpetual recognition of the divine engagement, and stand forth as a sort of sign between God and man, reminding both of the solemn assurance the Almighty had given of his everlasting mercy to the offending race.

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Although this exposition must, we think, be admitted as a sufficient vindication of the propriety of such an association between this natural phenomenon and the covenant of God, yet it has been thought, that the divine appeal to the bow would be more striking and satisfactory, if that had been the first time of its appearance.

It has been suggested by some modern writers,* Some probability that this was its first appearance.

* I might have said, *and by at least one ancient speculator upon these subjects*, viz. Burnet. He insists very strenuously upon the certainty, that the rainbow had not

LECT. II. that this is very likely to have been the case. They have argued, that the density of the atmosphere around the antediluvian world, must have been greatly different from what it was afterwards. That, in consequence of the flood, there would be a great change of temperature, and also of the hygrometric character of the atmosphere. Such a high degree of density necessarily presupposes the absence of clouds and of rain in the primeval world. The wonderful change produced by the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep, would account for the waters which would descend from the aerial medium; and on the altered state of the atmosphere, thence arising, would depend the appearance of clouds and the descent of rain; and then, *first*, would be seen the bow of promise in the heavens. To this it is added, that no mention of rain is ever made in the account of the antediluvian world; but it is expressly said, Gen. ii. 5, 6. "*The Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth; but there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.*" It is certainly questionable how far this declaration is to be extended forward from the period of the creation, and it may, therefore, be advisable not

appeared before the flood; and, for aught I know, his suggestions upon the subject may have led to the theory to which I now allude. The reader, who is curious upon this question, may refer to Burnet's Theory of the Earth, Book ii. Chap. v.

to lay much stress upon it. It is important, how- LECT. II.
ever, to observe, that, in mentioning how the earth was watered, Moses notices only the *dew*. This, viewed in connexion with the other part of his statement, that "*the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth*," seems greatly to favour this speculation. "The most plausible "surmise we can make," says Dr. Shuttleworth, "both with reference to the language of Scripture, "and in explanation of existing phenomena, seems "to be, that some important change was produced "at that important epoch upon the surface of the "globe, by which the relative proportion of land "and sea became permanently altered. What "that change was, however, it is difficult, if not "impossible, to form a well-grounded opinion. "There appears to be some warrant in Scripture "for the supposition, that rain was unknown in "the antediluvian ages. At least, the appearance "of the rainbow upon the subsidence of the "waters of the deluge, is described in a manner "to leave the impression of its being the first "occurrence of that phenomenon; and with re-"gard to the state of the world, before the fall of "our first parents, it is expressly asserted, that "'no rain fell from the heavens in those days, "but there went up a dew, which watered the "ground,' whilst no intimation is given that this "state of things was altered till the time of the "deluge. We can, however, account for the

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" absence of rain upon any known natural prin-
" ciples only, by the supposition that the propor-
" tion of sea, as compared with that of dry land,
" was much less in the antediluvian ages, than
" it has been subsequently to that crisis. The
" diminished evaporation which would take place
" under such circumstances, would apparently
" produce the results now supposed. So long as
" the earth was only thinly and partially peopled,
" such a state of things as that here surmised,
" would not be incompatible with the wants of
" mankind, though it would be perfectly incon-
" sistent with the general diffusion of population
" over the whole globe. The change which took
" place at that same period, in the average dura-
" tion of human life, would also seem to indicate
" some alteration of a permanent character in the
" condition of man's abode upon earth, less fa-
" vourable to our animal powers. That change,
" we may observe, though immediate in a great
" proportion, was not total and complete till after
" the lapse of a considerable time subsequent to
" Noah: a circumstance which well accords with
" the hypothesis above stated, since it is natural
" to suppose, that the stronger stimulus of vitality
" would not yield immediately to the operation of
" changes in climate, or other similar causes,
" but would adapt itself gradually, and through
" successive generations, to its new position, until
" it had reached its maximum of depression, at

" which it would remain stationary."* The vali- LECT. II.
dity of the argument must depend, at least, as a verification of scripture, upon the ascertainment of the relative proportions of land and sea, as well as of the greater density of the atmosphere before the flood. If these should ever be made out, they will certainly prove, that a far greater mass of water might be suspended in the air, which, upon the sudden change of the temperature, and degree of density, must fall in rain, and be thereby made one of the instrumental and co-operating causes of the deluge. It is, moreover, stated, that this supposed greater density of the atmosphere would account for the gigantic size of the animals and plants, whose fossil remains have been discovered, as well as for the longevity of mankind in the antediluvian age. These are, however, merely noticed as undecided speculations, and we have alluded to them, to show that the theories of the philosophers may possibly, in this instance, yet subserve the interests of revelation, and ultimately render it highly probable that the bow in the cloud, in the day of rain, had never before appeared to mankind.

The next important event after the flood, is the building of

* Dr. Shuttleworth's "*Consistency of Revelation,*" pp. 80, 81; and "*The Truths of Revelation, demonstrated by an Appeal to existing Monuments, Sculptures, Gems, Coins, and Medals. By a Fellow of several learned Societies,*" p. 128.

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The Tower of Babel, and the Confusion of Tongues.

ABOUT THE YEAR OF THE WORLD, 1757. BEFORE CHRIST, 2247.

Tower of Babel.

The Scripture asserts, that some time after the flood, probably about a century, or a little more, mankind migrated from the place of their first residence in the East, to a plain in the land of Shinar. Noah must have been still alive, but we are not informed whether he journeyed with them. Shortly after their settlement in this spot, they determined to build a city and a tower, for the purpose of perpetuating their names to future ages. When we recollect what human nature still is, and what remarkable circumstances had, in those early times, been connected with their immediate ancestors, it will not appear wonderful that an ambition of this kind should fill their minds. The spot they had chosen for their residence was one of the most favourable for the support of a large and rapidly increasing progeny; and the object they had in view, by the erection of this city and tower, appears to have been, though a very natural one, yet evidently contrary to the divine purpose. They wished to prevent the dispersion of their race, by attracting and binding them to one spot. But God had designed that they should be spread abroad, and people the whole world. They could scarcely be ignorant of the divine commission, first given to Adam, and subsequently renewed to Noah, to be

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fruitful and replenish the earth. Their plan was, therefore, frustrated, because it contravened the divine purpose.

Mosaic account agrees with all historians who notice it.

Now, since Moses wrote the account of this tower within about eight hundred years from its erection, his mere knowledge of its existence, or account of the design the builders had in view, would be no absolute proof of inspiration, because it is quite possible, and indeed probable, that the Egyptians, before his time, were acquainted with its existence, whether in ruins or used for idolatrous purposes. We, therefore, lay no stress upon the agreement of the Mosaic account with that preserved by the earliest historians, who have mentioned and described these ruins, because Moses might have obtained his knowledge of the existence of such a tower in the ordinary way; and, consequently, though his statement might be valuable and curious, as containing the earliest notice of this erection, which other ancient historians have described more fully, and under circumstances which confirm his account, yet this agreement would afford no test of his inspiration.

The test of his inspiration is in this case involved in the judgment on the builders.

But we are principally concerned with the building of Babel, as the occasion and the scene of one of the most peculiar judgments and miracles, which the Mosaic record connects with the history of the human race. Before we enter into the consideration of this remarkable fact of the confusion of languages, it may be interesting to notice briefly, how far the testimony of the earliest hea-

LECT. II. then historians accords with that of Moses, because, though this agreement will not prove his inspiration, it will illustrate at least his accuracy and credibility.

Historic confirmations as to the building.

He clearly states that the building was in a plain in the land of Shinar; that it was constructed of burnt bricks; that it was, or was intended to be, very high; and that it was left unfinished. Now the earliest Greek historians mention various particulars, which enable us to identify these ruins even in the present day. They denominate the building the *Temple of Belus*, and nothing is more probable, than that this vast edifice should have been subsequently used for idolatrous purposes, though such does not appear to have been its original destination. Herodotus and Arrian both described the building, when it was only partially in ruins. Their testimony is, of course, given quite irrespective of the Mosaic account, and, most probably, in total ignorance of its existence. Herodotus states, that it was 600 feet in length and breadth. Strabo also makes it the same in height, and adds, that it was 179 feet higher than the highest pyramids of Egypt. These authors describe it as of a pyramidical form, having eight square towers, gradually decreasing in breadth, as it rose towards the top, with a winding road on the outside, wide enough to allow horses and carriages to pass each other and to turn. The whole is described as built, not of stone, but of burnt bricks, imbedded

in slime, and most firmly cemented together. LECT. II. This circumstance clearly indicates the great antiquity of these ruins. The quarrying and hewing of stones, as well as the machinery necessary for the employment of them in building, all belong to a later age.

Greek historians.

According to the accounts which all the Greek historians have preserved, this must have been a stupendous structure, and probably far surpassing any thing which the history of Assyria or Egypt presents. It seems fully to authenticate the saying of the builders who planned it—"a tower, whose top may reach to heaven." Herodotus saw it above a thousand years after the time of Moses, or about one thousand eight hundred years from the date of its erection, and found it in a state answerable to the Mosaic narrative, and connected with the structures which, in after ages, had arisen in the same neighbourhood. For it became the seat of the great Babylonish kingdom, and, in the times of the Greeks, presented altogether a vast mass of ruins, spreading to a very considerable extent, and convincing all the inquirers of that age, that it had once been the seat of a mighty empire.

Used subsequently for idolatrous purposes.

There can be no doubt, from the Mosaic narrative, that the plain of Shinar was becoming, when the tower was erected, the residence of a powerful people, and it would be perfectly reasonable to expect, that long after the confusion of

LECT. II. tongues, it would present an attractive spot, and the tower thus begun would, as mankind degenerated from the religion of the first age, be very likely to be turned to purposes of idolatry. All we are anxious, however, to note here, is the substantial agreement of all antiquity in the main points of the Mosaic narrative. Herodotus, Strabo, Diodorus, Ctesias, and Alexander the Great, who also visited the ruins, though differing in some minute particulars, dependant on the accuracy of their several observations, and the general sources of their information, yet agree in all the main facts, and present just such a statement as, considering the age in which they lived, and all the circumstances of the case, we might have expected. Every thing comports minutely and perfectly with the much more brief and much earlier record of Moses.

Confusion of tongues.

But the most remarkable circumstance, connected in the Mosaic record with the origin of this building, is the alleged miracle of the confusion of tongues, employed to arrest its progress and scatter its builders. This statement has to be tested, both by the facts and by the reason of the case. The existing diversity of languages is, by believers in revelation, attributed to this origin. Here is presumed to be their source; and, if this narrative is true, then we conceive there may be found satisfactory proof, that nothing short of the agency here exhibited could have originated that

diversity which we now find existing, no doubt greatly increased from the first confusion, among the languages of mankind. LECT. II.

Traditions upon this subject.

Before we enter upon the inquiry, whether any natural causes could have produced this diversity, in the first instance, it may be interesting to observe, how all early and traditionary accounts correspond with the Mosaic in this particular. The Greeks attributed the diversity of human languages to a divine interposition, and so far they confirm the main fact, though, according to their custom, they have wrought it up into a fable. They report, that, under the happy reign of Saturn, all terrestrial creatures, including birds, beasts, and men, had but one common language, and that they sent a deputation to Saturn, complaining that they should be denied a prerogative granted to serpents, which are annually renewed by shedding their old skin; and, at the same time, entreating that they also might be endowed with immortality. Saturn, in great indignation, refused their petition, and, in judgment for their ingratitude for what he had, in sovereign pleasure, bestowed upon them, confounded their language, and thereby separated and scattered them.*

Mr. Jacob Bryant also gives us, from a Greek author, an account of a tradition relative to the confusion of tongues, preserved in an Egyptian

* Plato in Politico, and Philo *de Confus. Ling.* may be consulted.

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temple of great antiquity. The translation is as follows:

"But when the judgments of the Almighty God
"Were ripe for execution; when the tower
"Rose to the skies upon Assyria's plain,
"And all mankind one language only knew;
"A dread commission from on high was given
"To the fell whirlwinds, which, with due alarm,
"Beat on the tower, and to its base
"Shook it convulsed. And now all intercourse,
"By some occult and over-ruling power,
"Ceased among men; by utterance they strove,
"Perplexed and anxious to disclose their mind,
"But their lips failed them; and, in lieu of words,
"Produced a painful bubbling sound: the place
"Was hence called Babel; by th' apostate crew
"Named from th' event. Thus severed far away,
"They sped, uncertain, into realms unknown:
"Thus kingdoms rose, and the glad world was filled."*

But we must now approach the principal inquiry, with which the authority of Moses, as an inspired historian, is implicated.

The general question consists of two parts.

There are two branches into which this question divides itself. The *first* is, whether human language appears to have been originally one, or bears traces of several independent originations: the *second* is, whether, supposing its primitive individuality, the cause assigned by Moses for the existing diversities, is the true one, or whether they might not all have grown, by time and the

* "Bryant's Mythol." vol. iv. p. 100, and "Clarkson's Researches," p. 163.

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changes of human affairs, out of the single original language. These two inquiries must be separately pursued, before we can complete our argument, and arrive at a satisfactory conclusion.

First inquiry. Results of philological researches.

The first is a question which has been long and laboriously treated, and, until late years, with an aspect far from favourable towards the Mosaic record. The course of inquiry seemed to prove, that the immense differences existing among the languages of the world, could never have arisen out of a common or parent stock; but as these inquiries have advanced, and become matured, unsuspected affinities have been discovered, and fragments of some original tongue have appeared every where traceable, as supplying common elements to them all. Moreover, it has been determined by these researches, that as each class of languages is marked by affinities with other classes, and these affinities bear no trace of being descended lineally from each other, but to be independent branches from a common root or stock; the conclusion is naturally and necessarily drawn, that, at one period, there existed only that one form of language, which has communicated these common elements to all, and which so identify and concentrate them, as to make it next to impossible that they should have had independent and original formations of their own. The differences are not great enough to necessitate independent originations, and the resemblances are too striking to comport with any theory but that

LECT. II. of a common source. So that the strictly philological controversy may now be said to have deprived the unbeliever of all right to question this one part of the Mosaic statement.

Opinion of celebrated philologists.

Before I proceed, however, to the remaining branch of our inquiry, it may be gratifying to lay before you a few of the conclusions at which the most eminent philologists have arrived, upon the primitive unity of human speech. Even those who, like Klaproth, entertain no reverence for the sacred history, still accede to the theory of a single primitive tongue, and differ from Scripture only as to the cause of the first deviation. This celebrated philosopher says, referring to his own researches, "The universal affinity of "language is placed in so strong a light, that "it must be considered by all as completely de- "monstrated. This (the affinity) appears inex- "plicable on any other hypothesis than that of "admitting fragments of a primary language "to exist through all the languages of the old "and new world."* Frederic Schlegel, Paravey, Mérian, Humboldt, Herder, and all the most eminent linguists and philosophers, have come to the same conclusion. The celebrated philologist, Court de Gebelin, who, thirty or forty years ago, published his great work, entitled "*Le Monde primitif analisé*," &c. in 9 vols. quarto, and from which his work, on "The History of Languages," was extracted, and published sepa-

* Asia Polyglotta, Vorrede, s. ix.

rately, appears to have anticipated the results of more recent researches, by expressing his decided opinion, that all existing languages are derived from one. Herder, though by no means willing to concede to the inspiration of Moses, is yet as clear and strong upon this point as we could wish. He says, "As the human race is a progressive whole, "the parts of which are intimately connected, so "must language form also a united whole, depen- "dent upon a common origin. There is a great "probability that the human race, and language "therewith, go back to a common stock, to a first "man, and not to several, dispersed in different "parts of the world." He even infers, that mankind must, in the first instance, have been widely and suddenly divided. And yet he most strangely treats the record, which stated, so long beforehand, these elaborated conclusions, as a *poetical fragment in the oriental style*. His own philosophy, however, brings him into an almost perfect agreement with the sacred record. But we pass by his infidelity, and, as we think, his inconsistency, for the sake of availing ourselves of his philological authority, which might be readily shown to be scarcely consistent with his opinion of Moses. We pass on to Abel-Rémusat, the author of "Researches into the Tartar Languages." He admits that, "beyond the epoch when profane history ceases, "there was a confusion (of tongues) which gave "rise to them all, and which such vain attempts

LECT. II. " have been made to explain."* The most eminent writers on this interesting subject have not overlooked the position in which they are placed by these admissions. Their surrender to Moses of the fact, so long and so sturdily disputed, that originally all mankind used one speech, approximates them so nearly to submission to the inspired authority, that they have found it necessary explicitly to deny the miracle, and labour, with double diligence and skill, to prove it fabulous. With what success we have yet to see. Some of them have, indeed, clearly perceived that, upon the admissions already made, they can hardly hesitate to proceed to the next step, because they cannot satisfy themselves that any known causes, or any process observed by them, can adequately account for the first deviation. This point, however, I reserve, and shall, at present, only lay before you the opinions of two more eminent scholars. Niebuhr's early opinion was opposed to the doctrine of a violent and miraculous confusion, but his later and more matured judgment is given in favour of the scriptural statement. He says, " This fallacy escaped detection among the " ancients, probably, because they admitted several distinct races of mankind. *They who deny " these, and go back to a single pair,* MUST, *to " account for the existence of idioms different in " structure,* SUPPOSE A MIRACLE; and for those

* Vol. i. p. xxix.

" languages which differ in roots and essential LECT. II.
" qualities, adhere to that of the *confusion of " tongues.* The admission of such a miracle " offends not reason; since, as the remains of the " ancient world clearly show, that, before the " present, another order of life existed, so it is " certainly credible that this lasted entire after " its commencement, and underwent, at some " period, an essential change."*

I will trouble you with only one opinion more. Adrien Balbi says, " No monument, either his- " torical or astronomical, has yet been able to " prove the books of Moses false, but with them, " on the contrary, agree, in the most remarkable " manner, the results obtained by the most learned " philologers and the profoundest geometricians."†

These opinions, you will perceive, bear first upon the question of only a single primitive Value of these opinions.

* Niebuhr Romische Geschichte, 3 *Ausgabe* Ier. Th. s. 60. In the 2d *edit.* he stated his opinion as follows: " They who do not recognize such a plurality, but ascend " to a single pair of ancestors, betray that they have no " idea of languages and their modifications, unless they " cling to the miracle of the confusion of tongues, a miracle " which may suffice with respect to such races as present " no striking physical difference." p. 44. Even this shows that, in Niebuhr's opinion, upon the admission of a single pair, and one original language, nothing can account for the present diversities of language, but a miracle. His opinion, as given in the text above, from the 3d edition, appears to have become still further modified, and to have approached nearer to the Mosaic statement.

† Atlas Ethnographique du Globe. Mappemonde, Eth. I.

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tongue, and upon the necessity, on that admission, of explaining the great diversity that obtained among the earliest nations, by some sudden and violent cause. But these testimonies are of immense importance to our present argument, because they come from persons, for the most part, unfriendly to revelation, none of them expressly engaged or concerned in defending it, and led to their conclusions by facts and reasonings quite irrespective of its statement. These admissions simplify and facilitate the remainder of our argument, *first*, by establishing the fact of an original unity of speech; and, *secondly*, by narrowing our inquiry to the cause or causes of the first deviation.

Second question—The cause of existing diversities.

Moses attributes this first diversity which arose in human language to a miracle. We apprehend it will be found, upon examination, that no other adequate cause can be assigned for it; for though, at first sight of this question, it would naturally be suggested, that many diversities of language, and even entirely new ones, have arisen in a manner perfectly natural and explicable, yet none of these cases can be applied to the solution of the difficulty before us.

It is perfectly intelligible how two languages, commixed by colonists from different places, or by the invasion of the one upon the other, should produce a third language; but the admission of this throws no light upon the case of a solitary language in the world, spoken by all the human

beings then in it, becoming two or more. For, admit that mankind once consisted of a few families, all speaking the same language, and suppose them to multiply ever so fast, yet it is obvious, that the parent's language will still descend from father to son, just as readily and as necessarily as his nature. There being supposed no new language to arise from any foreign quarter to invade the old one, from whence is any sudden infraction or alteration to originate? It would appear, that the child *must* learn the language of the parent; he can learn no other, and so on, through the entire succession of human generations. He can be under no inducement, he can be influenced by no imaginable cause to leave it off, and invent another for himself. He cannot, even if he would, abandon his mother tongue. His very ideas are all bound up in it. He must, in like manner, transmit his native language to his children; and thus no new language could possibly arise out of a single one, but by a process, in the first instance, inconceivably slower than that which we witness in the present day, when changes are flowing in from various causes which could not then have supplied them, because they did not exist.

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It is conceivable, and perfectly natural, that as mankind went on advancing in knowledge, in art, in science, and in social refinement, they must enlarge their number of words, they must improve their speech, both in its accuracy, variety,

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and harmony. It might become more artificial, it might be systematized, reduced even to written characters or signs, but it would necessarily remain substantially the same language.

Objections to the miracle.

It has been stated and argued by the impugners of revelation, that this account of the miraculous confusion of tongues is irrational, and the miracle needless, because a variety of languages must, in the course of time, naturally arise, as mankind increased and multiplied. Hence many have set themselves to show how all existing languages might be traced up to a few primitive sounds, and so they imagine they can account for one of the most remarkable facts attendant on the condition of human nature.

But let it be imagined, that mankind increased ever so fast, and that this led to their separating for the sake of support, and that they thus became distinct nations, as widely spread, or as distantly separated, as you will, yet we may challenge opposers to the proof, that this could effect any thing more than a very slow and gradual change, by no means answering to the great diversities which prevailed immediately after the deluge.

There is a marked and powerful tendency in human nature to preserve a tongue once common, even under every disadvantage arising from the introduction of a commingling race and language. We have, at the present day, a striking proof of this, in the maintenance of the ancient British tongue, which, there can be no doubt, is radically

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the same as it was more than 2,000 years ago; and the same is true of the Chinese, and the languages of India, for a still longer period.

Insufficiency of other explanations.

A writer on the opposite side of this argument, in reply to Dr. Waterland, many years ago, endeavoured to remove the difficulty, by observing, that the cause of the variety of languages in the world, is "grounded on reason and nature; in the "necessary mutability of human things, the rise "and fall of states and empires, change of modes "and customs, which necessarily introduce a pro-"portionable change of language."* But this is altogether unsatisfactory. It will account for increasing varieties, where variety already exists, for the enlargement of the primitive language, but not for the first introduction of that great diversity which began to prevail at an early period. Mankind, we admit, gain their ideas by degrees, and not all at once. But the introduction of new ideas, and the consequent introduction of new terms, will afford no clue to the change of original terms, and the substitution of new ones for old ideas. Thus, if we suppose mankind universally at one time to have called a *tree*, a *horse*, a *river*, by those very terms, their gaining the new ideas of *frost*, *ice*, and *snow* would be peculiar to the times when they came to inhabit those countries, where they first saw these things, and would yield no explanation why they should, or how they could, ever come to change the names

* Revelation examined with Candour, vol. ii. p. 105.

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of *tree*, *horse*, and *river* into words of a totally different sound, as *horse* into *hippos*, *tree* into *arbor*, *river* into *flumen*.

But, if it should be pleaded that all living languages are in a constant state of flux, that new words are added, and old ones discarded, yet we should then be entitled to ask, whence do these changes now accrue, but from the intercourse of different nations of mankind, speaking and learning different languages, and not at all from any mutability of human affairs? But all these causes being absent in the supposed case, they could have had no influence in the introduction of the first diversity. It is natural and necessary, that the diversity once introduced, should have been kept up, and even increased rapidly, by colonization, and other causes; but it seems altogether unreasonable to expect, that a primitive and solitary language should rapidly, or almost suddenly, split into several, characterized by the greatest diversities.

Difficulty of accounting for the very early diversities.

It is important to observe here, that those who object to the miraculous cause assigned by Moses, have not only to explain how the original change might naturally take place, upon their own hypothesis, they have also to overcome the historical difficulty of the existence of many different languages, from the *earliest time*, to which the records of the most ancient nations extend. Their hypothesis is, that, admitting what the researches of the most eminent linguists have now made

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probable, that all languages have sprung from one source, their present varieties may be sufficiently explained, by the numerous causes which we now observe working changes in existing languages. It might even here be strongly argued, that no such immense differences as are now found, and proved to have existed as far back as we have any records, could have appeared so early, had those differences been produced merely in this way, and without some extraordinary intervention facilitating the operation of such causes. Languages must, in that case, have been, at least, more obviously and closely cognate. In particular, there would not have been such radical, grammatical diversities, nor such totally diverse terms for expressing the same thing; terms between which, after allowing full scope to the imaginations of philologists, no relation of resemblance can be discovered; and no fair genealogy of resembling sounds made out. We are not concerned to deny that there may be such undiscovered, and, at present, undiscoverable resemblances; and that if we were in possession of some intermediate sounds, which may have become extinct, the transmutations might be traceable. All we contend for here is, that there exists no positive proof of such a transforming process, as is required to account for the *very early* existence of those immense diversities, which all ethnical histories attribute to the very beginning of their respective nations. The hypothesis, therefore,

LECT. II. under review, is deficient in its proofs of such early resemblances, as might make it plausible, that there had been only a gradual, and not a sudden divergence from the original unity of speech. Yet the philologist, who adopts the preceding hypothesis, is bound to make this out. We plead against it the improbability that the early nations could have exhibited such very different languages, unless some extraordinary and miraculous interposition had occurred to facilitate the change, and make it comparatively palpable at once.

Time required.

But we are even willing, for the sake of argument, to allow the objector his premises, to admit, that, suppose time enough, there might be causes operating perpetually through an indefinite period, which might produce all the varieties which we now observe in language. Though we have before endeavoured to show, that it is difficult to conceive of the existence of such causes, we cannot pretend, certainly, to *demonstrate* that these never did exist. It may, therefore, for argument's sake, be admitted, that, as the people who spoke the one language multiplied in numbers, extended their territory, and became separated into tribes and nations, various *dialectical differences* might obtain, which would introduce a considerable amount of divergence in the forms and sounds of words, inflections, and termination; that new objects and new modes of life, the result of living in other climates; that new customs and habits, and

the general progress of civilization, might produce LECT. II. a considerable variety of new terms and combinations of old ones; that wars and invasions of one tribe or nation by another, but especially that conquests might again produce fresh combinations of these, at first, comparatively slight dialectical varieties, and that in all sorts of proportions; that the same causes continuing to operate through a longer period, and upon a wider scale, might again multiply, even geometrically, fresh combinations of these combinations, and so on, till all these varieties of languages were produced, which we now find among the nations.

Ordinary rate at which changes proceed.

We have said, that such an hypothesis as to the *possibility* of accounting for the phenomena in question, shall be admitted; but then it is necessary that there should be *sufficient time for the production of the result.* To judge of this, let us consider the rate at which languages usually change, merely under the influence of natural causes. It is to be observed, that we possess ample means for determining the ordinary pace at which these changes advance; and it may, moreover, be fairly argued, that the process by which the one original language would be gradually split into others, must be immensely slower than those produced in any given language, after others have been formed. But we will not insist even upon this, since our argument will allow us to give it up. We will suppose, for the opponent's benefit, that the rate of change has

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If, then, however considerable the difference between modern English and Anglo-Saxon, between modern Greek and ancient Greek, the present language of Italy and the language of classic Rome, the resemblances between them are so striking and undeniable, after all sorts of causes have been working upon them for more than a thousand years, how long a period would be required to ensure the almost total dissimilarity which exists between some languages of the earth, and which (to make the argument complete) have been as dissimilar as they now are from the earliest date of which we have any records. There are some of these languages which have been almost immutably the same, and as much unlike each other as they are now, for the last 2,500 years, some of them for a still longer period, leaving scarcely 1,500 for effecting this total dissimilarity, which, we know, was in existence at the very remotest date to which either history or tradition extends, and in existence in the same degree of dissimilarity, simultaneously, among all the early nations.

Recent date assigned to the human race precludes the space requisite to account for natural infraction.

But, if the objector should reply, he is not bound to the chronology of Moses and the date of Noah's flood, and why allow only 1,500 years for effecting this change; why not allow 50,000,

or 100,000, or any indefinite period? It is answered, but quite irrespectively of the authority of Moses, because it is now universally admitted, that the present races and nations originated at no very remote period.* The most scientific geologists have determined this; and it is confirmed by the total absence of all historical record, and of all tradition beyond the date of 4,000 years from the present time. Hence it clearly appears, that these great diversities could not have been wrought by time, because many of them can be traced up to a date very near to that which is assigned to the present race of men, when it is agreed there was but one speech. So that we find these immense diversities within a century or two of the flood. LECT. II.

Amount of infraction undetermined.

Let it be observed, that our present argument does not require that we should define any thing of the amount of change produced by the miraculous confusion, or the extent of that infraction which was made on the ordinary laws of our nature. Several of the most eminent linguists of the con-

* Humboldt appears to have perceived the difficulty of admitting speech to be a purely human invention. He considers it in that view perfectly inexplicable; although the hypothesis, he says, might be rendered plausible, by supposing *thousands and thousands of years.* Yet this supposition, he did not observe, was precluded by the comparatively recent date of the existing races of mankind. His conclusion is, that "language could not have been "invented without its type pre-existing in man." *Acts of the Berlin Royal Acad.* 1822, *p.* 247.

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tinent have thought that it must have been very considerable, and even extending beyond dialectical varieties. A change of some amount, or an infringement of some extent, is all for which we here contend. It might have consisted either of the substitution of several entirely new languages, or merely of such extensive dialectical differences, as should serve to render men totally unintelligible to each other. The latter would, apart from the examination of the early state of the first languages, appear to be the more probable; *first*, because it would accord with the fact, that all languages seem more or less traceable to one origin or type; *secondly*, because this would appear all that was necessary for the intended result of dispersion, and the Divine Being never works greater miracles than are necessary; and, *thirdly*, it would be in entire harmony with the laws which appear to have been intended, *subsequently* and *permanently*, to produce continued changes in language through all human generations. Diversity of tongues, then, it seems, even in this view, could never have been introduced among mankind, but by miracle. To this, Moses ascribes it, and human history, as well as philological speculation, does but confirm and illustrate his statement.

Conclusion of the argument.

Every attempt to explain this fact, upon the supposition of other causes, has utterly failed, and the more the present diversity is considered, the more certain and reasonable will the Mosaic account of it appear. Here, then, we conceive, is to be found, and here alone, the *true* cause of the first diversity, and in this argument is presented a fresh and convincing proof of the divine inspiration of Moses.

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Origin of Nations — Traditions of the Place whence the Human Tribes were originally derived, with the principal Divisions of the Human Family.

Origin of nations.

The Mosaic narrative, as we have seen, clearly determines the general fact, that the first permanent settlement of mankind, after the flood, was in the plain of Shinar. There they built the stupendous tower, the ruins of which, scattered along the banks of the Euphrates, still indicate this to be the depository of the earliest memorials, both of the human race and of human art. According to the sacred narrative, this must have been the fountain head and source, whence the streams of population have flowed into all the other regions of the earth. If this account, therefore, be accurate, we may expect that the traditions of the different nations will mainly correspond with it, and that various means may be found in ethnical histories of corroborating the sacred record of Moses. This is really found to be the case, for all nations, possessed of any tolerable degree of civilization, and particularly those that can trace any connexion with the earlier branches of the great human family, pos-

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Sceptical speculations on chronology.

It seems necessary here, first, to notice the relation which ethnographical and scientific chronology bears at present to the sacred word. Almost from the infancy of this study, till within a comparatively few years, it has been employed as one of the main supports of infidelity, and a source of formidable impeachment against Moses. At one time it was thought that Assyria and Chaldea must be rich in materials for the confutation of the brief chronology of Scripture, and that, if their antiquities could but be investigated, and their histories recovered, they would supply ample proof of an origin incomparably more venerable than Moses assigns to them. But all the monuments were mute, or the few that spoke disappointed the gainsayer, and corroborated Moses. So the learned unbeliever abandoned these, and turned to consult other oracles.

China next presented a most hopeful source of opportune reinforcement to scepticism, and all that was lacking might, it was supposed, be supplied, by investigating their history and philosophy, prior to the times of their great Confucius. Still Chinese literature, at least so far back, was

inaccessible. Egypt, it was then presumed, must LECT. II. be rich in confutation of the Hebrew legislator; but, unfortunately, a seal was set alike on the lips of their mummies, the tombs of their kings, and the hieroglyphics of their temples, and nothing better than vague conjectures could be collected. But, at last, India, with all its treasures, was laid at our feet. Its philosophy, antiquities, religions, and languages; its subterranean *penetralia*, and its sacred records, as well as its interminable dynasties, would, it was suggested, undoubtedly divulge proofs of an extraordinary antiquity, and, most probably, open some avenue to the literary treasures both of China and Egypt. Long did the opponents of revelation look wishfully forward to the day when these three sources of ancient wisdom should be unsealed to them. They confidently anticipated, many even triumphantly predicted, that a flood of light would be poured upon human history and mundane chronology; but, above all, a whole ocean of shame to overwhelm the sacred historian and all his infatuated disciples.

Early mistakes.

Now, while our knowledge of these ancient nations was young and immature, it was both rash and credulous. Sometimes it was terrified by spectres and giants; often, in its eager haste, it over-leaped the truth, and, without suspicion, credited the enormous calculations and traditions of a fabulous mythology. But, by degrees, it grew manly and wise, cautious and calculating,

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and then the giants dwindled into dwarfs, the mountains sank into mole-hills. The interminable ages we once heard of, have at last melted down into a few centuries, and all the mists, which had distorted and magnified every thing, have disappeared.

Hindoo Astronomy.

The Astronomy of the Hindoos was one of the most vaunted demonstrations, that their eras must be placed long anterior to the times of Moses. Mons. Bailly was the first man of eminent science, who was perhaps himself deluded, but who certainly deluded the scientific, and scared the christian world, with his astronomical calculations applied to the Hindoo chronology. But all his unfortunate theories have been examined and overthrown by his own countrymen, Laplace, Montucla, and Delambre, as well as by Colebrook and Davis, in England. Mr. Bentley, also, in his "Historical Review of the Hindoo Astronomy,"* has placed, beyond all reasonable doubt, the general agreement of their chronology with the Mosaic; and shown that the state of science, which they antedated by several millions of years, cannot possibly be older than the tenth or eleventh century of the Christian era. Laplace, whose wishes to subserve the cause of Moses none will suspect, but whose opinion, upon an astronomical question, few will feel inclined to dispute, says, "The origin of astronomy in Persia and India is "lost, as among all other nations, in the darkness

* London, 1825.

"of their ancient history. The Indian tables "suppose a very advanced state of astronomy; "but *there is every reason* to believe they can "claim no very high antiquity. Herein I differ, "with pain, from an illustrious and unfortunate "friend." Meaning Bailly. Numerous other astronomers and mathematicians of the highest reputation, such as Heeren, Cuvier, Klaproth, and Dr. Maskelyne, have traversed the same subject, and completely exploded, on scientific grounds, the enormous and fabulous antiquity of Hindoo science.

In the historical, philological, and ethnographical departments of the same subject, Sir W. Jones, Hamilton, Wilfort, Col. Tod, and Heeren seem to have left no further room for vague conjecture. Klaproth has even placed the true commencement of genuine chronological history in India at so recent a date as the twelfth century of the Christian era.

Results of learned researches.

The fact now is, after the most elaborate and protracted researches of numerous philosophers of all creeds, and of no creeds, that about 2,000 years before the time of Christ, is agreed to be the very earliest date at which any part of India can be supposed to have been inhabited by powerful and settled nations. This brings their chronology, as Sir W. Jones suggested and anticipated, to about the time of Abraham.

The Chinese chronology, characterized as it is by similar fables, and similar exaggeration, has

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been subjected to the same process of examination, and the analysis scarcely assigns to them so early a commencement. Many of the most eminent chronologers doubt, whether their establishment ought to be dated more than a thousand years prior to the Christian era. The latest authority, and confessedly one of the most eminent upon this subject, is that of Col. James Tod, who, in his "Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan," says, "I venture to place the esta-"blishment in India proper of those two grand "races, distinctly called those of Soorya and "Chandra, at about 2,250 years before the Chris-"tian era, at which period, though somewhat "later, the Egyptian, Chinese, and Assyrian "monarchies are generally stated to have been "established, and about a century and a half "after that great event, the flood."*

Zodiacs, Rosetta stone, Egyptian monuments.

In like manner the zodiacs of Dendera and Esneh, the Rosetta stone, and the tombs of the Egyptian kings, have refused to supply any contradiction of the sacred record. The mysteries expected to be divulged by the Egyptian monuments have all vanished before the eyes of the learned interpreters, and, instead of long lists of princes, extending back to millions of years before the date of Moses, they have decyphered the names of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, Ramses and Shishak; and in place of invalidating the sacred

* Tod's Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, vol. i. p. 37.

record, and disturbing the sacred chronology, every thing hitherto brought to light has not only comported with our Scriptures, but contributed, in a most remarkable manner, such as no forgery could ever admit, to attest their accuracy, and to clear up some points which had before been involved in much mystery. LECT. II.

Universal coincidence with Moses.

Thus, then, we see, that the Indian, Chinese, and Egyptian chronologies are brought, in all their extent and details, by the independent and scientific researches of philosophers, many of them declared unbelievers, into a most singular and unexpected identity with the authoritative document; *unexpected*, because, had some discrepancy been found, it would not have been wonderful on such a subject, and extending into ages so remote. The conclusion to which we are brought then, is this; there is no real chronology, and no true history, earlier than that of the inspired historian. Few national histories can be traced even so far back as the age of Abraham, and most assuredly none prior to the Mosaic date of the confusion and dispersion at Babel. The plain of Shinar, then, was the true nursery and cradle of mankind. From hence, as from a fountain in the mountain's side, small at first, but rapidly increasing, all the streams of human population have flowed and diverged. From the event of their confused speech and necessary dispersion, immediately commenced the diverse nations which sprang up in India, Egypt, Assyria,

LECT. II. and China, mature and mighty almost at once, and fulfilling the renewed benediction of their Creator, "to be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."

But we must now endeavour to lay before you a few *particulars*, in the history of nations, which will still further verify the Mosaic statement.

Tripartite division.

From Noah proceeded, according to the Bible, three principal stems, each of which became the parent-stock of many nations. There are two things to be observed in the history of this tripartite division of mankind, which remarkably verify the sacred record. The *first* is, that most, if not all, the known inhabitants of the world, can be, and, indeed, have been, traced up to the one or the other of these three roots, and *to no others*. The *second* thing, which furnishes a still more striking proof of the inspiration of our sacred books, is the fulfilment of the domestic prophecy of Noah, preserved by Moses, respecting the permanent condition and destiny of his threefold descendants.

Each of these sources of testimony to the truth of the Mosaic narrative must be somewhat further examined. It is difficult to compress the necessary illustration into the limits which can be here allowed to it. But it may be sufficient to present a brief outline, and refer to Mr. Sharon Turner for its fuller illustration and proof.

Ham's descendants.

He begins with Ham, who had four sons, Cush, Mizraim, Phut, and Canaan. These represent

the regions and ancestors of Ethiopia, Egypt, LECT. II. Lybia, and Canaan.

"Cush represents to us the regions and people "of Ethiopia, that part of the east district of "Africa which spread from Meroe, in Upper "Egypt, along the Red Sea, towards the Indian "Ocean. Both the natives and the ancient Jews "denominated this country Cush. They came "from the Indus into this territory, on the fron- "tiers of Egypt, and became distinguished among "mankind for their equity, sagacity, and general "probity.

"From Cush came children, of whom the set- "tlements of some seem to have been in Arabia; "and this may have occasioned his name to be "applied to some tribes or districts in that penin- "sula. His most celebrated son was Nimrod, "the declared founder of that kingdom, which "is called Babel in Hebrew, and which is the "term applied, in the historical books of Jewish "Scripture, for Babylon and its empire.

"From Mizraim, the colonies which established "themselves in Egypt descended. The most "ancient sacred writers, as well as the later ones, "apply the name of this ancestor to this country; "and in the time of Josephus his countrymen "continued to do so. The name of his father, "Ham, was also attached to it. From Mizraim, "also, descended several other tribes, who settled "chiefly in Africa.

"Phut became the ancestor of the Lybian

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" population, and stands in Scripture as the " denomination by which this portion of mankind " is designated.

" From one of the sons of Mizraim sprang that " people who, under the name of Philistines, " were, for some time, formidable to the Israel- " ites, and who established themselves between " the Mediterranean and Judea. His son, Canaan, " is distinguished as the progenitor of the Phœni- " cians; for Sidon is declared to have been his " first-born, and was one of the most ancient and " distinguished cities of the east. The family " of Canaan spread from Sidon to Gaza, along " the Mediterranean, and inland as far as the " Dead Sea; other nations also sprang from him, " among whom the Sinites, from the similarity " of name, may have been those of Tsin, or China. " From Canaan, in the same Ham line, issued " those nations who became so depraved in their " corrupted civilizations, as to be ordained to " perish in their conflict with the Jewish nation, " when, on their refusal to resist *(allow)* their " entrance, they were invaded, subdued, and de- " stroyed by it.

Shem's descendants.

" From Shem proceeded the Abrahamic nations, " and, apparently, the Assyrian state; for Asshur " was his son, and Asshur is said to have built " Nineveh, the metropolis of the Assyrian empire, " and some of its chief cities.

" Four great streams of nations have issued " from Abraham. The *Edomites*, or Idumeans,

" the red men of the East, who fixed their name " on the Red Sea, descending from his grandson, " Esau; the Jews from his grandson, Jacob; the " *Arabs* from his son, Ishmael, by the Egyptian, " Hagar; and those tribes and nations, which " arose in the east of Syria, from his last children " by Keturah. Two of these, the Jews and the " Arabians, we know to have multiplied into great " importance and celebrity, and to have continued " in ever-renewed and preserved generations, " amid all the waste and vicissitudes of destroying " time, from the days of Abraham to our own " time.

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" Japhet, or Japet, seems to have been the " ancestor of the chief populations, both of ancient " and modern Europe, and Higher Asia. He " seems to have been the Japetus, whom all the " Grecian and Roman traditions, transmitted to " us by their poets and mythologists, exhibit as " the ancestor of the human race. Seven sons, " and as many grandsons, from two of the others, " are ascribed to him by Moses. The Turks and " Turcomans, their original stock, deduce them- " selves, and the Tartars and Moguls, from him " by another child. The sons, Medai and Javan, " represent the Medes and Greece.

Japhet's descendants.

" Of the other children of Japhet, his eldest, " Gomer, is considered to be the ancestor of the " Kimmerians. Magog is identified with the " Scythian by Josephus, whose country we now

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" call Tartary, and to whom the posterity of " Magog is extended. Mesech and Tubal are " believed to designate those who settled in Cap- " padocia, and in Iberia, near the Euxine. From " Tiras the Thracians sprung. The grandsons " by Gomer are thus stationed, by the best inves- " tigation of these topics: Askenaz in Phrygia " Minor and Bythinia; and Togarmah in Arme- " nia. Ripath is referred by Josephus to Paphla- " gonia, but may belong to some of the northern " populations of Europe.

" Javan's sons appear to have large relations " with Europe. Elisha is identified with Hellas " in Greece; Tarshish with Tartessus, in Spain; " Kittim is considered to designate Italy; the " other son's name, having been written with a " variation in the commencing letter, can be " less certainly fixed. I may conclude these " derivations by adding, that to Japhet and his " offspring are ascribed generally, by the Mosaic " record, all the insular or maritime populations " and colonies of the Gentile nations."*

From these statements it would appear, that Europe, Asia, and Africa owe their various nations, in their vast extent and long succession, to the three sons of Noah. As we ascend upward in time, the branches every where conduct us to these three principal stems, and these as clearly

* Abridged from Sharon Turner, Sacred Hist. vol. ii. p. 480, &c.

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unite in their common parent, Noah. Of the Aborigines of America, the descent is not yet clearly ascertained.

Two methods of determining affinities.

The two principal methods of determining the affinity of nations are, by comparing their physical characters and their languages with those of other nations. These methods have both been employed in examining the history of the American races. Baron Von Humboldt, Professor Vater, and M. Duponceau have carefully and extensively examined the languages of this continent. They all admit the peculiarity, diversity, and complexity of its dialects generally, but agree that they all appear to have sprung from a common mother-tongue. Strong resemblances have been traced between these languages, and some of those spoken in Northern Asia, from which it is inferred, that there has certainly been an interchange of inhabitants between the two continents.

Physical characteristics.

Of the physical characters, Dr. Pritchard observes, " The evidence arising from this com- " parison, whatever it may be, is of much greater " weight, as coinciding with that obtained from " another quarter. It is in the idioms of Northern " Asia, that the most numerous analogies have " been discovered to those of the Western Conti- " nent, and to the people of the same region, " the physical structure of the American races " displays by far the nearest resemblance." Humboldt says, " We cannot refuse to admit, " that the human species does not contain races

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"resembling one another more nearly than the "Americans, the Mongoles, the Mantchoos, and "the Malays." Dr. Pritchard adds, that "the "opinion of Blumenbach and Von Humboldt has "been confirmed by the distinguished naturalists, "Von Spix and Von Martius, who were lately "sent by the King of Bavaria into South "America.—These writers have made the fol-"lowing remarks on the resemblances between "the native Americans and the Chinese colonists "settled in the Brazils. 'The physiognomy of "'the Chinese was particularly interesting to us, "'and was, in the sequel, still more so, because "'we thought we could perceive in them the fun-"'damental lines which are remarked in the "'Indians.' 'In comparing the Mongole phy-"'siognomy with the American, the observer has "'opportunity enough to find traces of the series "'of developments through which the eastern "'Asiatic had to pass, in order, at length, to be "'transformed into an American.'" It appears, therefore, highly probable that the Aborigines of America are of Semitic origin. But of the modern colonizing, which may be denominated a re-peopling of this vast continent, and which has been proceeding at so extraordinary a rate, the source is obviously and wholly Japetic.

Noah's prophecy respecting his sons.

We now proceed to examine, *secondly*, the prophecy which, according to Moses, was pronounced by Noah upon his three sons, and their descendants. It is recorded, Gen. ix. 25—27, "And he

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said, Cursed be Canaan: a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.* And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant." Canaan is the particular object of the curse, but it seems from the whole narrative, that Ham and his descendants generally were intended. So some manuscripts read, "cursed be *Ham*," instead of *Canaan;* and it is distinctly stated, twice over, that "*Ham* was the father of *Canaan*." The mention of Canaan, in connexion with his father, seems to imply that they were both implicated in the guilt of that horrid deed, for which they were accursed by their great progenitor. But the main question before us is this, does the history of these three classes of nations verify the prediction here pronounced? To this question we presume an answer must be given in the affirmative. The ethnical histories of the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japhet all verify, in an extraordinary manner, these remarkable predictions.

Verification.

Japhet's descendants have been wonderfully *enlarged*, as the name signifies. They now occupy Europe, a great part of Asia; and, certainly, a numerous portion of the American population is of Japhetic descent. It is distinctly said, that Japhet should "dwell in the tents of

Japhet.

* "Accursed shall Ham be in his son Canaan. The most abject slave shall he be unto his brethren."

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Ham. Further, it is affirmed, that Canaan, or Ham and his descendants should be the servants of Japhet; and no fact in history is more clear than the descent of the Africans from Ham, and none is more fully established than the degradation, wretchedness, and vassalage of the African races from age to age. No portion of the human family has been so destitute of high qualities and of civilization, so barren of all that can dignify and elevate human nature, so subject to every species of oppression. The Canaanites, in particular, who proved to be the most obstinate enemies of the descendants of Shem, were given up to slaughter and expulsion. They migrated before Joshua into Africa, and became the founders of Carthage, where they mixed with the other

descendants from their common progenitor, Ham. LECT. II. But after a period of advancement and prosperity, they were utterly overthrown by the Romans, the descendants of Japhet, and driven into the farthest part of Africa. Even to this day, the curse is seen resting upon the natural condition of these children of Ham. For ages past, they have been brought from the interior, and sold as slaves. Their condition is uniformly represented as deplorable beyond description. All along their coast, with the exception of Egypt and Ethiopia, the inhabitants of which claim another origin, they are subject to the haughty and cruel oppression of the Turks. Through all the nations of Asia and America, as well as in the European colonies, the slave-markets are stocked with the children of Ham, sold to perpetual bondage and suffering, under the descendants of Shem and Japhet.

Let us now notice the portion of this remarkable Shem. prediction, which relates to Shem—

"Blessed be the Lord God of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant." The word SHEM, signifies *renown*, or a *name*, and to the descendants of Shem have pertained the greatest temporal renown and glory. They possessed the fairest regions of the earth, and long upheld the mightiest empires. But their chief renown has been in the line of Abraham, from whom descended the promised seed that was to bless all nations, and whom all nations were to call blessed. The wor-

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ship of the true God, the God of Noah and of Shem, was continued in their family, and long confined to them, while all the rest of the nations were sunk in idolatry. "To them," says the Apostle Paul,* "pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises. Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for evermore."†

Conclusion of this argument.

Thus it clearly appears, that a marked division, or classification of the human family, has obtained from the earliest times. None of the changes to which the nature of man and the interests of nations are subject, have availed to obliterate or remove these characteristics. They answer in a most remarkable and convincing manner to their threefold origination, and to the three sentences attached to them by their common progenitor. No one can regard the three great ancient geographical divisions of the globe, without at once perceiving, that there is a clearly marked distinction of national character. Europeans, Africans, and Asiatics, though each including many nations, and many great diversities of character and habit, cannot be confounded together, for each severally retains, to the present day, a marked correspondence in their conditions to the sentence pronounced on them by Noah.

* Rom. ix. 4.

† For a fuller and more complete elucidation of these prophetic sentences pronounced by Noah, and preserved by Moses, the reader is referred to "Lectures on Prophecy, by Mr. C. N. Davies," where the whole subject of the destinies of Shem, Ham, and Japhet is ably examined and illustrated. London, 1836. 12mo.

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Human foresight excluded.

These facts, altogether, are such as no human sagacity could have foreseen. Considering the statement which Moses presents to us, of the origination of all the nations of the world in three parental heads, and the fact that, as we ascend, through the aid of history and language, tradition and antiquities, towards the time and the seat of the first families, we find every thing converging to these three fountains; and, further, that every new discovery, every circumstance that is brought to light, as well as every ancient fable that is analysed, still points to the East as the birth-place of the first men, and to the flood as the means of destruction to a former race, and to the ark as the instrument of preserving a single family for the re-peopling of the world, and then to the grand triple classification; and when we still further consider, in the history of each of these great divisions, the characteristic sentence of Noah, legibly inscribed, at the present time, upon the nations that respectively owe their origin to Shem, Ham, and Japhet,—it seems impossible, certainly unreasonable, to refuse our assent to the inspiration of Moses. No impostor, and no mere philosopher, would have ventured upon such sweeping sentences, views so general, charac-

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teristics so peculiar. The correspondences between the historical facts and the written record are such as no ingenuity, no penetration, no calculations of human reason could have anticipated. Who could have foreseen, in the age at which we are sure Moses wrote, that the Africans would not emerge, and become the conquerors of Europe? or who could have predicted that the Asiatics, then comprising all the mighty empires, and almost all the civilized world, would not overrun and subdue all the rest? Who could have determined that Europe, then as uncivilized and degraded as Africa is now, indeed scarcely peopled, should become the predominant section of mankind, vanquish the vast empires of the East, dwell in the tents of Shem, and make Africa its servant? These great events in the history of nations, then lay hid far beyond the reach of human sagacity, and could have been foreseen only by that wisdom which discerneth the end from the beginning. Yet they were foreseen and described by the pen of Moses, and put on record in those few brief sentences, of which all national histories are now found to furnish the most obvious illustration and confirmation.

This evidence to be added to preceding ones.

This, then, even by itself, would be a most striking and convincing fulfilment of the sacred volume; but when viewed in connexion with the many other remarkable particulars, in which that same record has been already shown to be fulfilled, it augments the strength of the general argument

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to such a degree, as to make it altogether unreasonable to doubt the inspiration of the sacred author.

Predicament of the objector.

If Moses were not inspired, it then devolves on his opponents to show, either that he has anticipated nothing that reason might not have foreseen, and foreseen *in his age and circumstances;* or, that the facts which history has transmitted, or tradition preserved, contradict and confound the statements which he has recorded.

Neither of these things has been done, or can be done. But, on the contrary, the most elaborate and extensive researches into the history, condition, and circumstances of mankind, seem fully to confirm every particular of his record, and to prove, that he could have derived his knowledge from no human source, because it involves many peculiarities, and critical niceties of statement, which could not have been anticipated, and many obvious improbabilities which merely human calculation would have rejected. The inference, therefore, without any reserve or qualification, is forced upon us—*he must have been taught of God.*

LECTURE III.

ON THE MENTAL AND MORAL CONDITION OF HUMAN NATURE, AS CORROBORATIVE OF THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF THE FALL, AND ITS EFFECTS.

Adaptation of the mental and moral economy to the social relations and personal interests—The doctrine of a moral apostasy—How it may be expected to affect our nature—Evidenced by suffering, both mental and bodily—Traces of social and individual degradation, combined with vestiges of primitive excellence—Man's practical aversion from moral goodness—Yet sentimental approbation—Objections and speculative theories considered—Contrarieties and contradictions in human nature—Notion of perfectibility—Passion for immortality—Loss of the true knowledge of God—And, thereby, of the Supreme Good—General review of his condition—And the arguments thence derived in corroboration of the facts and doctrines of Revelation.

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Introductory observations.

THERE appears a remarkable analogy between the conviction of the truth and inspiration of the Bible, ordinarily produced by the candid perusal of its contents, and the conviction generally felt

of the being of a God. The belief of mankind in the latter truth, is not founded in any elaborate or logical arguments of the learned, but is derived from what is visible, what is experienced, and what reason at once pronounces to be necessary. There is a kind of obvious and continuous proof always offered to our understanding, and regularly supplied to each generation, and all through the life and experience of every man. It may be compared to a constant stream of light, reflected upon the rational soul, from all nature, in all its wondrous works and mysterious operations.

The evidence appeals to all our senses, and through them to our reason, in all its degrees, from the lowest to the highest. We feel the great truth thrust upon us by every object and every circumstance. The conception of supreme power and wisdom arises in our minds, as the natural result of exercising our powers of perception and reflection. To counteract this conviction is a work of effort and artifice, of constraint and of delusion, of subtlety and irrational dreaming. And, after all, there are found but an inconsiderable few, who can be perverted and corrupted, or pervert and corrupt themselves, into the contrary opinion. Nature, in man and all his relations, counteracts the doctrine of the atheist. It cannot spread, nor be effectually propagated, though it is found continually springing up afresh, like a noxious weed in a rank soil; still it uni-

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formly finds all the elements around unfavourable to its growth. Every eye is made to behold the works of the Almighty Creator; every mind to contemplate them in their mystery, majesty, and complexity; while reason itself, always searching after causes, discovers none in chance, no rivalry of these works in human art, and no power or will any where to which these works can be attributed, but that which is properly infinite, independent, and underived. Hence all men, with a few inconsiderable exceptions, confess themselves constrained, by reason and experience, to believe that there is a God.

Now something like this is the evidence which the Scripture statements gather from the consciousness and experience of mankind. We see, and we feel, that the whole system and state of things, and especially our own condition, corresponds with the averments of revelation. This conviction does not depend, in the major part of believing minds, upon what is stated to be the numerous and wonderful proofs of inspiration, derived from miracles and prophecy, and other marks of divine authority, but upon what is felt by our common reason to be obvious truth. There is a saying among humble believers, concerning the Bible, which appears to me to possess great emphasis and significancy, "*we feel it to be true.*" Now this conviction seems to be founded upon that fulfilment of Scripture, which is always going on in the experience of mankind; which makes

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it a light to every successive generation; which proves in the heart, like the solution of an enigma or a hieroglyphic: it is a key to move the secret springs of feeling, and by its correspondence with nature in ourselves, or the principles of our moral and intellectual constitution, to attest the authority of that word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. This accordance it will now be our business to prove and illustrate, in a class of coincidences differing essentially from those already discussed, and arising out of the mental and moral condition of human nature.

Adaptation of the mental and moral economy to personal interests and social relations.

In the present branch of this investigation, it seems desirable to premise a few observations, on the human mind itself, since, from the phenomena observable in its operations, we are about to deduce various illustrations and confirmations of Scripture facts and doctrines. Whatever views are adopted by us, as to the essence of the human soul, or however we contemplate what are termed its faculties, whether, as so many distinct parts of a complex object, or as merely distinct acts of a simple and indivisible agent, still the *facts* relative to its state and operations remain the same. They are undisturbed and undeniable. They are a part of its natural history, and by them we must be guided, in all our inquiries, into its moral state.

Body and mind adapted to each other.

The human body and the human soul are admirably adapted to each other. They both

LECT. III. present evidences of design and contrivance, whether viewed unitedly, and so in reference to the social relations; or separately, in reference to the uses and functions of each, as connected with the instrumentality and agency of the other. It is obvious, that as the whole man, consisting of body and soul, is adapted to fulfil certain functions, so the soul apart, and the body apart, is adapted to its own peculiar province, and confined to it by the laws of its constitution, which cannot be contravened.

Mental faculties adapted to each other.

Again, if we view the mind alone, we find an internal adaptation of its faculties to each other, and a mutual dependence among them all, so that each is essential to the perfection and efficient exercise of the whole. If but one faculty were lacking, the others could not discharge their functions. All would run into confusion, imperfection, and debility. The presence of each, the nice balancing of the one with the other, in their relative proportions, the orderly co-operation of the whole, is essential to prevent inaptitude, and secure efficiency in the attainment of the various ends in reference to which the whole mind was constituted.

Complex adaptation.

This adaptation, observable in the mental economy, is evidently twofold; first, between the several faculties among themselves, to secure the discharge of the various functions of the entire mind; and, secondly, between the whole mind,

or the whole man, and other minds similarly LECT. III. constituted; since each is placed amidst a complexity of social relations, and in connexion with an external world, including both matter and mind.

Conscience proves a moral nature.

Here, then, in each human soul, we find a commanding power or faculty, which is denominated Conscience, which imparts the peculiar characteristic of a moral constitution, and out of which are evolved the various phenomena pertaining to the virtuous and vicious affections, justice and injustice, the discharge or neglect of duties and obligations, in all their wide and complicated bearings, as well as in their universal, unalterable, and constant application to human nature.

Phenomena of conscience.

Such being the essential characteristics, the inherent properties of the human soul, irrespective of all theories regarding the metaphysical nature of conscience, and the essence of the soul itself, we may proceed to examine and compare these phenomena, without pausing to consider previous questions, just as we may examine the properties of matter, quite irrespective of the question concerning the *substratum* in which those properties are thought to inhere. The essential nature, both of matter and mind, is a mystery not yet penetrated, perhaps not to be penetrated, by our limited faculties, and by no means necessary to be determined, before we analyse and compare

LECT. III. their respective properties. Here, then, we must endeavour to bring under review the moral condition of human nature, as this is ascertainable by our own consciousness, by the experience, the history, and the tacit confession of all mankind. We wish to place, side by side, the bold, clear statements of revelation, and the undeniable phenomena which appear in our nature.

Peculiarity of scriptural statements.

It is admitted, that the Holy Scriptures develop views of mankind, essentially different from those which have been propagated from other sources. Their very originality exhibiting, as it does, a contrariety to those moral views which men form of themselves, is at least an evidence that the scriptural views were not originated by human reason. Moreover, we think, that when the views presented by the Bible upon this subject, are compared with those which have been entertained by unassisted reason, and when these latter are brought to the proper test of history and consciousness, they must be pronounced inadequate and erroneous, and consequently be discarded; while the statements of the Bible must be allowed to be the only ones which tally, in all respects, with universal experience and consciousness.

This, at least, it will be our endeavour to show, in the argument we now intend to pursue.

We commence, then, with the earliest statements of revelation, respecting

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The Doctrine of a Fall, or Moral Apostasy, compared with the universal Phenomena of our Moral Nature.

Doctrine of a fall.

The Bible represents man as created at first, in a state of moral excellence, enjoying the friendship and favour of God, and being conscious of an undisturbed and delightful harmony among all his powers and emotions. His mind was filled with wisdom and knowledge; he was distinguished by vigour of purpose and rectitude of volition. Moral purity pervaded all the exercises of his soul; it lived in an element of supreme and perfect felicity. Its natural endowment was immortality.

It would be unnecessary to enter here into any further illustration of what the Scriptures intend by the *image of God*, or by man's being *made upright*. It is clearly affirmed in the Bible, and will be conceded as so stated, that he was brought into being, in a state of purity, felicity, and perfection, and that his fall from this state is represented as altogether his own act. The Scripture expresses great lamentation over the deplorable and fatal reverse which so soon followed.

Correspondence of facts.

Let it, then, be conceded to us, that such, in general, are the delineations of our moral condition and history, presented in the sacred word. Our next business will be to consider how far the facts which appear in human nature, and of which

LECT. III. every reflecting mind, sooner or later, becomes conscious, correspond with these and similar statements. If the representations were not true, we may safely presume that there would be sufficient evidences afforded by human nature itself, that it always had been, and still continued, precisely what God originally designed and made it; it would appear, as his numerous other creations do appear, perfectly to answer all its original purposes; to attain all the good of which it is susceptible, for which it appeared designed, and after which it aspires. Such evidences do accompany all other natures, and distinguish all other creatures. Man alone seems to be infected by a deep and incurable taint of evil, and to labour under a malignant spell, which perpetually cheats him of the happiness after which he pants, and repels him from the excellence, the *beau ideal* of which exists in his imagination.

Mankind neither happy nor pure.

It is unquestionable, that the general state of mankind, through all their successive generations, has been any thing but happy and pure; any thing but what the moral philosophers, of all schools admit it ought to be; any thing, and every thing, but what, from the rank of our nature in the scale of creation, its constitution, capabilities, and aspirations, might have been presumed to be its proper destination and highest purpose. There appear in it elements of mischief and disorder, which, by mere reason, we know not how to explain; facts of a punitive and retributive character, which are inseparable from us, universal as our nature, and utterly irreconcilable to our conceptions of divine benevolence and justice, save upon the admission of a general apostasy, and a system of corrective moral discipline.

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Repugnant qualities.

One of the most striking of these facts is this, that with all the natural qualities fitted for giving and receiving pleasure, both individually and socially, there have always been in operation other and repugnant qualities, which have overborne the amiable and benevolent ones, and made human nature, every where, by far the most fatal and pestilent enemy to itself. Its greatest sufferings have always been self-originated. Men have uniformly been the greatest enemies to men; their own, or each other's tormentors. They are still, relatively, the oppressors or the victims; "hateful and hating one another." These are not exaggerations or extreme cases, but perpetual and general characteristics. It is undeniable, that the most extensive, most agonizing, most consuming calamities have been inflicted, either directly by man on man, or by man on himself.

Social sufferings.

First, we might enumerate the social sufferings, which are caused by the various bad passions of the human heart; such as anger, revenge, covetousness, ambition, and selfishness, tending to oppression, extortion, and robbery, breeding secret murder, or the open, wide-spreading, and exterminating calamities of war. To these might be added, as produced by the same causes, the in-

LECT. III. calculable, and all but infinite, evils of tyranny, usurpation, and bad government, terminating in no government, or directly producing riot and rebellion, war and bloodshed.

Self-inflicted evils.

Then come the doings of superstition and idolatry, with their countless hecatombs of human victims, and, above them all, and worse than all, the Protean demon of intolerance, which has, in turn, shouldered the banner of all religions, and perpetrated the bloody work of persecution, in the name of Moloch, Jupiter, or Christ. All ancient history is little more than a recital of the various ways in which these inhuman cruelties have been inflicted or revenged, suffered or resisted, *and all by men themselves.*

Personal.

Next, we might notice the innumerable personal miseries produced by human vices, limiting our view to those that terminate, or, at least, commence their inflictions on the wretched subjects of those vices. And here, indeed, the detail might be extended to all mankind, for wherever there exists a being under the influence of vicious passions, there is one that, sooner or later, proves a self-tormentor, often in an intense degree; and where can we find the mortal that has not borne this character in reference to himself? The keenest stings ever felt are those inflicted by the venomous serpents of evil passions, madly cherished within man's own bosom. Who has not, by his secret sins, often made himself both miserable and despicable, even in his own eyes? He has

trampled his own honour in the dust, and he feels it. Those very passions, which it appeared, at one time, the most desirable to indulge, have, at another, recoiled upon us in the shape of retribution, and proved sources of bodily suffering or mental anguish, or of both, in a high degree. Thus, treachery and falsehood, gluttony and drunkenness, pride and lust, with various other vicious passions, have been always, and are still, preying, like vultures, on the vitals of their innumerable victims. We need not multiply details. We must limit ourselves to general views. LECT. III.

Subjection of the nobler nature.

What a pitiable subjection, then, do we every where behold of the nobler nature to the inferior! Here is, indeed, a sight over which superior intelligences might weep, while they beheld the intellectual degradation, the moral contrarieties, the spiritual pollutions, the voluntary enslavement, the irrational rationality, the gratuitous self-torture, the monstrous, maniac, free agency of man, at once resisting, and yet embracing the corroding fetters of his enthralment to evil. We might advert to the uneasiness and agitation produced in the soul by malignant passions, to the agonizing conflicts between conscience and propensity, to the burning sense of shame produced by evil thoughts of all kinds, to the piercing stings of self-reproach which attend the commission of secret crimes.

Conflicting powers.

Thus, an intestine war of conflicting elements, extending through the whole empire of the soul,

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is constantly maintained within the human bosom. Man finds himself ever at war with himself, a perpetual foe to his own peace. He might enjoy a measure, at least, of felicity and repose, if reason possessed the rule without passion, or passion without reason. But, while he is alternately swayed by each, he lives in perpetual disquiet, and in a state of mysterious and ominous misery. The climax of his wretchedness might be added in the appalling apprehensions of divine vengeance and future retribution, which often mingle with his sufferings. But I purposely omit these, that I may confine myself, at present, to indisputable and general facts, and not even seem to borrow any colouring from revealed religion.

Perversion from original purpose.

There is, surely, a vast difference observable between the ruins of some magnificent edifice and the lowly or tottering huts of the pauper and the peasant. The original nature of the materials, their forms and intentions, would be discernible at a glance, and the indications of a very different design and destination would be visible, even though the noble fragments might be again wrought up into human dwellings. There would be an essential difference between such remnants of grandeur, again erected, and the hovel formed of inferior materials. Now, similar to this would be the condition of human nature, upon the assumption that Scripture is true, and that man was made upright, but has apostatized; whereas, no such traces of disorder

and ruin would be discoverable upon the contrary supposition. All would then appear harmonious, however humble; and complete, however inferior. Now we think there are pertaining to man still, in all situations, and under all circumstances, exactly those traces which indicate that he was once in a far higher and nobler state; that he was destined to other purposes, fitted for other ends than those he now serves, and qualified to fill a far wider sphere than that to which he is now limited. What noble powers of intellect does he still possess; yet to how low and thriftless a use are they mostly turned! When the sublime objects and ends of religion are contemplated, to which he seems naturally disposed, for he has been, not inaptly, defined a religious animal, can we say that he ever attains that exalted consummation at which he aims? Behold him destitute of revelation, and he is no better than a traveller that has lost his way. Suppose that true religion does not occupy his faculties, and they seem, in a great measure, thrown away—bestowed in vain. Then the whole energy of human talent expends itself upon the service of the mortal and animal body, or in planning childish and vain amusement for himself and his companions. How vast his human purpose! how noble are man's conceptions of greatness, but yet how feeble is he found in action! how dissatisfied, even in his utmost and rarest attainments! how thoroughly disappointed and chagrined with the issue of all

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the objects of a temporal nature, which engage his attention!

Dissatisfaction and disappointment in the reality of life.

What opposites of dignity and meanness, grandeur and insignificance, meet in his nature! How are all the sanguine hopes of his early days mocked by the realities of experience! How differently does he deem of life at its different periods; and how regularly, and almost universally, does he reverse his estimates of himself and the things around him, as he advances in knowledge and experience. In what station of life can it be said that he finds satisfaction, and is willing to settle down and encircle himself with his possessions, contented and satisfied, without a fear or a wish? Is there not always a sense of want; an insatiable desire for something unattained, unseen; a mysterious consciousness of miscarriage and of need; a vacancy of happiness, which he is ever endeavouring to fill, but which mocks his ability and his means, and seems to bid defiance to creation itself thoroughly to satiate? What does all this bespeak? No other nature, with which we are acquainted, presents a similar condition. The very meanest, or the very highest, among the animal tribes are not so. They take their fill of pleasure, and seek no more. They taste their proper joys, and occupy their proper stations, and fulfil their proper offices, unconscious of any deficiency or dissatisfaction: yet man's nature never *is*, but always *to be* blest.

Revelation confirmed by these facts.

These facts, I conceive, furnish one item of

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experimental evidence of that fundamental truth, asserted by revelation, that man has departed from his primitive state, has lost the true perception of his own felicity, wandered from the supreme good, become every where an exile from it, and still continues departing further and further from the centre of perfection and bliss, by his ceaseless attempts to find, in artificial substitutes, a compensation for the original loss.

Let us next proceed to notice,

Man's practical Aversion from moral Goodness.

A second evidence in aversion from moral goodness.

The Scriptures represent man as totally alienated in heart from the love of moral goodness, and as going astray from rectitude and truth, even from his infancy; that, left to himself, he proceeds from one degree of immorality and vice to another, until he destroys his own happiness, and inflicts misery on all with whom he stands connected. There is the most ample evidence of these facts running through all ages. What a history, could it but be written, is that of human nature, from the first generations until this day! What enormities of vice have been presented to the omniscient eye of Deity! What horrid and disgraceful acts of injustice have been inflicted by mankind on each other! and what formidable, though frequently unconscious enemies, have they, at the same time, proved to themselves and their own interests! Apart from revelation, what theory can explain or account for these extremes of

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The moral taint becomes natural and universal.

The sacred word, moreover, expressly declares, that this taint of moral evil has become another nature, and is transmitted from the parent stock through all our generations; that it is so universal, that "there is not a just man upon the earth, who liveth and sinneth not;" that there is not a single exception, and never will be found one, amongst all the myriads of the human family; for that all flesh has corrupted its way, and all mankind have together departed from the rule and principle of rectitude and goodness. That word represents our whole nature as spiritually diseased and debilitated; and, further, that this disease is not superficial, but radical, having its seat in the heart, and being utterly incurable by any human means. Now, that this description is, in the main, literally true, the testimony of all ages, and of all writers, in all ages, amply shows. The multiplication of laws to restrain and punish crime, even in the most refined states and nations; the necessity of severe and energetic coercion, even in civilized society, and the maintenance of the profession of arms to protect mankind, not against the beasts of the forest, but against each other; the dreadful and almost constant use made of the various means men possess of mutual annoyance and defence; the fact that scarcely any two contiguous nations in the world can remain, for any length of time, in a state of relative peace and security; and the constant lamentations made both by rulers and ruled, by

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moralists, historians, and poets, over human depravity; all these circumstances sufficiently attest the fact, that man is a depraved and a wretched creature: while his occasional aspirations after a better state, and his consciousness of the evils under which he at present suffers, indicate that his nature was not originally so base, cannot, therefore, be what it was intended to be, nor what he himself feels it ought to be. These things, then, we conceive, strikingly verify the gloomy account the Scriptures contain of his apostasy.

Originality and boldness of the scriptural statement.

But these coincidences may become more convincing and impressive, by considering that the word of God alone has ventured upon the statement, that all this evil originated in the nature of man himself, in the abuse of his free will, and is to be traced to no other origin, and attributed to no other cause. This, you must admit, was a bold assertion, in the first instance, and accompanied, as it was, with the intimation, that the evil was radical and irremediable by human means, and required the intervention of divine power to counteract it, and to restore man to his pristine excellence, merits special observation. Yet the doctrine was openly and fully taught, before there had been much experience upon the subject; before human means of renovation had been tried, and even when men were giving indications of rapid and great improvement in all other respects. It was very early revealed, that "the thoughts of man's heart were evil, and only

evil, and that continually, from his youth up." LECT. III.
"I was born in sin, and shapen in iniquity"—"they go astray, even from the womb, speaking lies"—"man is born like the wild ass's colt," and many similar passages of sacred writ, which, without reserve, declare the fact of universal depravity. Now, these were most bold and adventurous assertions to make public so early, and at once, and were such as no human intelligence could have ventured to make, upon the authority of its own unenlightened judgment. No mortal could be sure, beforehand, that these evils were any thing more than an accidental, or an occasional affliction—a partial misfortune. An epidemic corruption, it might be, but by no means obviously including all, or extending to all time. Yet the *word* makes most decisive and peremptory assertions upon this point, without qualification or reserve.

We come next to notice,

Some speculative Theories of the Philosophers, with various general Objections made to the Biblical Statement.

Depravity supposed to be only partial.

Human authorities, without number, have asserted, that mankind, though depraved, were only partially so; that all the evil was only the effect of bad example; that human nature was born into the world in a perfectly indifferent, or negative state. Some have even maintained, upon these

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Experience confutes this theory: But, unhappily for all these speculators, stern realities and incontestible experience utterly repudiate their assertions. If we go to the east or the west, the north or the south, to remote or recent ages, man is still the same selfish animal, the same degraded intelligence, the same moral anomaly, the same proud and ambitious spirit; glorying in his superiority over all creation, yet deeply conscious of his own mortifying degradation and inferiority; boasting of his moral dignity and immortality, yet unable to sustain the one, and unwilling to secure the other.

And others. The various theories of men, upon their own condition, have, one after another, been proved untenable, and their vague and crude opinions, propagated and defended from time to time, at last subside, and give place to the universal and humbling testimony of the stern and impracticable realities of our condition. The friends of revelation, then, may triumph, that its testimony becomes daily more clearly established and convincing, by the very fact, that all other theories have been tried, age after age, but all equally in vain. They cannot combine with human experience, nor explain the phenomena of our history and consciousness. On the one hand, then, every thing serves to show, that man is a creature of very noble origin; but, on the other, that he

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has undergone a radical and fatal deterioration; that he has fallen from virtue, and equally from happiness; that he is every where a noble nature in ruins, yet evincing, amidst those ruins, striking proofs of his high original, and of the excellence which, though departed, has left significant and indelible traces behind.

Facts comport with the Bible theory alone.

Thus far, then, we find every thing corresponding with the word, and fulfilling, as all human history really does, the testimony which was so early given of the primitive perfection, but subsequent and fatal apostasy of man. If there were no truth in these statements, or if the whole theory were a mistake, a fabrication, then the facts of human experience could not be made to correspond; the general, or, indeed, the universal testimony of our consciousness, would contradict these sweeping assertions, and the Bible could not maintain its ground beyond a single generation. Suppose all this statement of man's moral defection to be founded on the mere invention of Moses, or the result of a partial observation, but altogether without foundation in nature, then it must have received decided refutation from human experience. No such depravity could have appeared, or not approaching to the extent represented; no such addiction to evil would have characterized all mankind; no such general deformity would have been found in their moral nature; no such inward consciousness of insubordination to God and goodness; no such scenes

of conflicting biasses would have every where pervaded and controlled man's heart; but, in the main, at least, all would have been order, purity, and harmony. Man's own feelings would have given the lie to such a statement, and it must, long since, have disappeared, like a dream, for want of that agreement with facts and experience, which alone could verify and establish its statements. Certain it is, that, as to all the observations made by us upon the laws and operations of the human mind, and of external nature, the discovery of general *principles* is a work of much time, and, in most cases, requires many exceptions and saving considerations.

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This early and explicit statement proves perfect knowledge.

But revelation has, in the first instance, laid down its principles, and stated its facts, as to the character of human nature; and it has done so in the most unreserved terms, and with the most comprehensive generality, challenging the most minute and the most extensive scrutiny of the facts, as well as the most rigid comparison with experience. But every thing in the consciousness and history of man is found perfectly to comport with the sacred page. Experience testifies that there is every where a deep-seated depravity, an innate propensity to evil. It is not a partial, it is not an accidental evil. It does not arise, in the first instance, from any social circumstances; and it is not materially affected by the

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savage or the civilized state. It is found to involve a total loss of inward rectitude, and harmony of soul; a confusion among the springs of action; a usurpation of passion over reason, of self-indulgence over duty, and then a re-action of the conscience against the passions, inflicting pain and remorse, under a sense of that subjugation to evil, which, though felt and deplored, is still maintained. "There is not a just man upon the earth, that liveth, and sinneth not;" it is said by Scripture, it is confirmed by experience. The ancients gave it, as the result of their observation, that "no man is born without vices." They were convinced of the fact, but they could not account for it; the fact, however, confirms the authority, which explains how this universal propensity to evil has arisen. It is true always and every where, of each man, under whatever sky, or under whatever system born, he is, by nature, a sinner; he does not attain even to his own ideas of virtue, and is conscious of innumerable violations of what he admits to be just, and right, and good. No nation can trace back to any ancestors purer than themselves. "The fathers have eaten the sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Does not all this prove the Scriptures to be accurate, and substantiate their claim to divine authority and infallible knowledge?

We shall now proceed to notice some other

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Evidences of Moral Contrarieties and Contradictions in Human Nature, and the inconsistent Explanations of Infidels.

Further contrarieties considered.

There is one view of the subject which, though already briefly noticed, seems to require further explanation. If the Scripture account be true, that man is a fallen creature, and not now as made at first, then we should expect, from the peculiar combination and adaptation of faculties included in his mental economy, that there would appear opposition among his moral qualities, powers in a state of hostility, an uneasiness and entire want of harmony, both in and with himself, and in his social relations.

Reason and passion.

Now let us advert to the facts, as gathered from human nature itself. There is the most decisive evidence of two opposite principles. There is an understanding and a conscience, and in all men these are found, to a certain extent, on the side of virtue, moral order, justice, and truth. They give their verdict, generally, to what is right, and maintain correct rules of duty, at least, in speculation. But, in opposition to them, rise up the passions and propensities, both of the flesh and of the spirit, warring against reason and conscience. Is not this a matter of consciousness to all? Is there not something—call it a moral sense, or a moral judgment, it matters not? but it is a power of most mysterious and original potency. It does not fail to approve or condemn

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our thoughts, motives, purposes, passions, and actions. A sort of secret, inherent judge, which passes sentence, in general, a just sentence, according to the light it possesses. But there are other impelling and commanding powers, which are opposed to this, and which make human nature a mass of inconsistency, contrariety, and disorder. "*I see, and I approve the right,*" said an eminent heathen writer, "*but I follow the wrong.*" Here is an enigma, that never has been, and never can be solved, but by the Bible statement. It is obvious, that this must be a verification of what is stated in that book, of man's being made upright, but of his having corrupted his way, and departed from the practice of what he feels to be right. When the principles of virtue are laid before him, and when the reasons of his duty are properly explained, they approve themselves to what he calls his better judgment, but still he goes and violates all those rules and principles, and, in the face of his own convictions and confessions, acts in such a way as to bring the conviction of guilt into his soul, accompanied by the tormenting apprehension of divine displeasure. This is not peculiar to a few cases, nor to religious persons, nor to a single nation, nor to any artificial and unnatural state, produced by peculiar education, or special habits. All acknowledge it. It has been so through all ages; and there has been preserved no description, no record of any human being that has ever been an exception to this rule. He cannot do, or will not do, the thing that he admits he ought. He exclaims, alas, for poor human nature; so frail and unstable is it in all that it knows to be good.

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Sense of duty and inclination.

Man's knowledge and sense of duty, then, surpass his moral will, and his inclination. His judgment and his conscience would impose a rule upon his actions, which his passions refuse, which his heart loathes; and the inferior powers, the rampant corruptions of the flesh, obtain the mastery, and prove too strong for the conviction of the conscience, and decisions of the better judgment.

Explicable only on the Biblical theory.

Now these contrarieties within man are utterly inexplicable, on any other ground, than that stated in Scripture. How such a state of human nature could have arisen, otherwise than by the fall of man from the primitive rule of his constitution, it devolves on those to show, who deny the Biblical statement. No man is entitled to reject that explanation of the moral mysteries of our nature, until he can show how otherwise every human being came into this state of sin, and guilt, and misery. It is clearly absurd to maintain, as some do, that there is no such thing as moral evil in the world; for they constantly contradict themselves, by proceeding to condemn some sort of actions, or some class or other of their fellow-creatures. And to say that all the evil in human nature has arisen from the influence of bad example, bad government, or bad education, exposes them to the obligation, first, of showing

LECT. III. whence *these* fountains of evil originate; for when they assign these things, as producing the deplored evils, they do but carry back the cause a step or two, and attribute it still to human nature; forgetting that there could be no bad government, bad example, or bad education, if human nature were not itself bad; secondly, they impose upon themselves the further necessity of proving, that the correction of these assigned causes would remove the whole evil, and produce a race of men free from the corruptions and imperfections under which all at present labour. But is it not highly probable, that if these pretended causes had been the real ones, mankind, long since, would have been able to remedy the evil? At all events, it would be incumbent on the patrons and advocates of this theory, to carry their scheme into effect, and show us, at least, one specimen of a pure and happy community, or, at least, of one perfectly pure human being, in whose mind there should be no consciousness of evil, and between whose judgment, reason, and affections there should be no conflict; whose nature should be subject to no sense of punishment and guilt, but proceeding, in all its functions, with the same order and efficiency as any of the external arrangements of the universe. Till they can do this, we may treat their theories as idle dreams, which have no foundation in fact; while, on the other hand, we may still insist, that human experience is found in perfect harmony with all

the statements of revelation, upon the several points hitherto brought under review. LECT. III.

Passion for Immortality.

Desire of Immortality without confidence.

But the scriptural view of the subject may be further illustrated, by a reference to the longing of man after immortality. The word of God represents him as endowed with this transcendant gift, and every where treats him, even in his fallen state, as possessed of this quality. It does not, indeed, any where enter into the proof of the doctrine, but it plainly asserts it; "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul, or *person*." The whole scheme of his salvation, developed in the sacred volume, as well as the denunciations of future misery, all proceed upon the assumption of this, as a primitive part of his constitution. The loss of Immortal Felicity appears to have been the forfeiture incurred by sin, not the loss of immortal being; but that which would have made eternal existence a blessing. He still, therefore, retains the *capacity*, the *natural endowment*, the *desire*, in all its intenseness. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The event showed that it was the greater penalty, one far greater than the forfeiture of existence, that was intended. Let us now see how the history of mankind corroborates this statement. What passion is so strong in human nature as this desire after immortality? There is none so soon

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kindled; none with such difficulty extinguished. We all naturally shrink from the thought of annihilation. To drop into the earth as the beasts, and be heard of no more; to give up this sentient, conscious state of being, and become utterly extinct, after this brief day of mortal existence, is most abhorrent to our feelings; and nothing but the most alarming and forbidding dread of future existence, as a state of retribution, can reconcile any to anticipate such a termination of their being: and, even with such a prospect, few can so reason down their minds as to indulge the unnatural illusion. It is too much against the laws of our mental and moral economy, and all the higher propensities of our nature. Even the heathens, with no spark of revealed light to guide them, have displayed the strongest desires after it, though they knew not how to prove its reality, nor how, adequately, to sustain the hope of it: only they found it to be inseparable from their consciousness; and they might as well shake off their being as their persuasion of immortality. It was a conception,—a hope irrepressible in their nature, yet never brought to light, nor proved, nor substantiated by their philosophy.

Anticipation of death produces fear and perplexity.

Man's nature every where is, and has been, the same. He is disconcerted by death, yet death is universal; and with all the oblivion which it brings of man and his works, still he every where believes that he shall live after death, and that for ever. Disappointed, mortified, humbled as

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he is by its supervention, by this terrific, universal reign, still he retains an imperishable desire for immortality, and never can, to any extent, be persuaded that his expectation is false. Resisted, repressed, dreaded by the conscience, it still springs up in man's bosom, and may be said never to quit the human intelligence.

Does not destroy the passion after immortality.

The passion in us for immortality never dies. This has, obviously, led to all those efforts to which men have resorted, for making to themselves a species of artificial immortality; to secure, at least, an immortality for their names and their deeds, in default of a satisfactory hope in a blissful immortality for their persons. But how far distant have they ever been from the reality! What "shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it!" Whether men are to be, or not to be, after death, may be a disputable question, to the speculative reason; but the desire, the anticipation of the human heart, is always in favour of the affirmative. A few, whose minds are sophisticated by error, and harassed by forebodings, may be driven to deny it; but the great body of mankind every where cling to it. The poor African slave dies with it upon his tongue; the savage in the forest expires in the hope of seeing the land beyond the sea. Socrates and Cicero conversed about it with their friends, and expressed their confidence that they should join the company of the wise and good in another state. And all this is just what might be expected from a being who once possessed im-

LECT. III. mortality as his birth-right, who has forfeited his title to it, but yet retains all his longing, all his capabilities; and through life seems striving to attain it, or something that may become its substitute. What a mysterious phenomenon would this state of the human mind present upon any other principles than those of the Bible! How utterly inexplicable, if man were not immortal; how equally so if he were, but had continued in a state of innocence! Yet, on the admission of the Bible statements, all is plain. We have forfeited that by sin, without which we never can feel blessed, and must always feel that our existence is a blank and a mystery. Ask the veriest wretch that breathes, if he does not wish to live for ever, and even if he has no better notion of immortality than the perpetuation of this poor, busy, grovelling existence, even in the present world, he would still eagerly grasp at the hope, and say, 'Why was I made at all, if not to live for ever?' "Were but one immortal, how would others envy; how would worlds adore." But life and immortality are brought to light, restored and confirmed to us, only in the gospel. The shadows disappear which gathered around us, and we are now enabled to say, "O grave! where is thy victory? O death! where is thy sting?"

These facts tally with Scripture doctrine.

These things correspond with Scripture, and are a strict verification, a proper and natural sequel to the account it gives of the first endowment, and subsequent fall of man. These facts of

our nature ought never to be viewed apart, or out of the light of the divine record; for then, and then only, do they receive their proper and full explanation. When the two are taken together, then both appear consistent and rational; the fact receives illustration, and the record is verified by the fact. LECT. III.

Another remarkable feature of our moral state, consequent upon the fall, is to be traced in the

Loss of the Knowledge and Favour of God.

Loss of the knowledge of God.

The Scripture represents man as having, in the first apostasy, lost the divine presence and favour, become an exile and outcast from the bliss of the paradisaical state, and as deprived of that reflection of the divine intelligence upon his mind, which was the source of his wisdom, and the highest glory of his being. We might, upon the supposition of the truth of this, reasonably expect to find some clear traces of its effects in the history of man. These, we think, may be seen in two respects; first, in the loss of his supreme felicity, and, next, in the total obscuration of his intellect, in reference to the being and perfections of God.

Justice of this visitation.

No visitation could be more just, more in character, than that he should be left without that supreme and guiding light, which he had abused and despised; and that, as he had voluntarily withdrawn from God, so God would leave him to

LECT. III. feel the disastrous effects of forsaking the chief good, and the fountain of all his bliss. If there should be found any marked speciality in the disastrous condition into which mankind have fallen, corresponding with the nature of their sin, and the first immediate effects that followed it, then this may be fairly interpreted as another fulfilment of the divine testimony, or a coincidence, contributing, in connexion with other evidence, to establish the authority of Scripture. If man is found every where destitute of the true knowledge of God, his mind a blank, or rather disordered in all its conceptions upon this fundamental and momentous subject, it will be a fact coinciding so exactly with the statements of revelation, as to the nature of his fall, and the immediate visitation that followed it, that we shall be constrained to admit this as illustrative and confirmatory of the sacred testimony in the highest degree.

The universe may present a wide field for his contemplations, the earth a proper theatre for the development of his powers; the laws of nature may be efficient for his support, and all terrestrial things may subserve his gratification; but, if the Scripture statement be true, there will be an evident deficiency of the supreme good. A void will be perceptible in the human mind—a vast void, which nothing created, temporal, or finite can fill; an appetite, which nothing can satisfy; a sense of destitution, which will admit of no

alleviation, though unceasing efforts may be made LECT. III. to find substitutes and palliatives. Now, is this true, or is it not?

Let us put to the test the universal experience of mankind on this point. Is it not one of the most certain, invariable, and universal of truths, that all men seek after endless happiness, aspire after something infinite, something that shall yield an imperishable joy? Are they not always aiming after it, unless, indeed, there be a few who have given up the pursuit in hopeless despair, and have sunk into a gloomy misanthropy, indicating not the absence of this passion, but its morbid excess, and its bitter disappointment. Thus all become witnesses of the truth of that Scripture, "There be many which say, who will show us any good?" The endless diversity of human pursuits, and the nothingness of them all, illustrate the same thing; witness, again, the endless round of pleasures, the weariness and satiety in which they all issue; the changeableness of mankind in their pleasures and gratifications, according to their time of life, their dispositions, their tastes, and their degrees of mental cultivation; but all tending to the same result, and producing, finally, the same sense of dissatisfaction. "All is vanity," saith the preacher, and not the preacher alone. The men and women of the world, say the same themselves, after a little experience. All agree in the same conclusion, sooner or later; but they could not agree in it, and would not confess

Universal search for happiness.

Not attained.

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it, if they had really attained permanent happiness. There would be no uncertainty, if any had really discovered the supreme good. The world would ring with the announcement of the precious discovery. But, instead of this being the case, it is precisely and invariably the reverse. Man is every where the most busy, enterprising, sanguine, restless, and versatile of creatures; and yet he is the most dissatisfied with his accumulations, with the world itself, and his own course in it; and if he does not discover, by the aid of revelation, the way back to the true God, he never attains true happiness, but finds his life altogether a miscarriage, and his whole being an abortion. We may defy the world to show an instance of a truly and permanently happy man, destitute of the truths of revelation, ignorant of God, or at a distance from him by the alienation of his mind from the divine purity and goodness.

Explained by the Bible.

The reason is given in the Bible, but no where else; man has left the fountain of living waters, and endeavoured to hew out to himself "broken cisterns, that can hold no water." He tries all resources, but each alike fails; and he comes to the end of his days, saying, "I have been all my life busy in doing nothing. I have always been in the pursuit of happiness, but it has eluded my grasp. Employment I have found in abundance; amusement, much; sensual gratification, plenty; but happiness, little; permanent happiness, *never*." Then he quits the world,

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saying, "It is too soon; I am not ready; death is cruel, inexorable; I am not happy." Now all this comports with what Scripture records, and is a verification of the fact, that, in his fall, he lost the favour of God, in which alone his supreme felicity consisted; it was not probable that he would find any substitute, or that he would be allowed to pass through life without experimentally feeling the loss he had sustained. The fact is universal, and it minutely corresponds with the record. You may try your senses, the world, the universe, but happiness is found, neither in what you can taste, or hear, or see. You may try your friends, but it is not within the compass of their power to bestow it. You may try business, power, wealth, but happiness is not in the merchant's stores, nor the miser's accumulations, nor the monarch's crown and sceptre. You may try science, literature, poetry, fame, and mental cultivation; but these are only flowers, fair and fragrant for a time, surpassing others, perhaps, yet quite as frail and as full of disappointment. The only flower that blooms for evermore, that remains fragrant in death, and yields the fruit of immortality, is the knowledge and love of God, which the divine hand implants in our hearts, and teaches us to cultivate in this wilderness of sin, and toil, and death.

Cause to be traced in ignorance of God.

But we may confirm these observations, by adverting more particularly to the fact, that ignorance of the true God has universally prevailed.

LECT. III. This affords no inconsiderable verification of the divine word, because it coincides accurately with what, according to the Biblical statements, must have been the result of man's fall. Every nation, of which we have any knowledge, has been utterly destitute of correct views of the Deity. Polytheism has prevailed over all nations, and all ages, not blessed with the light of revelation.

That has been the exclusive source of right notions of God. It has ever taught reason upon this subject what is rational. Men, therefore, prove, in their experience and history, that they are under a visitation of divine displeasure, a privation of essential knowledge, for which we can find and imagine no adequate reason but that stated in the Bible.

Universality of this ignorance a singular fact.

There is something singular, and very remarkable, in the universality of this state of the human mind, which, we believe, will be found to have prevailed without a single exception. As to the fact itself, it is singular that those powers of mind which, in every other department of human pursuit, have made such wonderful discoveries, have been utterly unavailing here; and those very efforts of thought, which have succeeded to so amazing an extent in unveiling the works of nature, have not been able to make the slightest advance towards a just and rational knowledge of God. This is a fact, admitted by the very enemies of revelation themselves.

That the Greeks, and Romans, and Egyptians,

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and all other nations, so famed for their philosophy and learning, for their cultivation of the other sciences, yet, on this subject, have evinced the weakness and ignorance of children, have fallen into the grossest absurdities, and admitted, as true, the most trifling and degrading of fables.

The extent to which this fact applies, is as singular as the fact itself; because, on almost every other subject, what has escaped one nation, has been discovered by another, or what has been hidden from the mass has been familiar to a few. There has been some portion of truth acquired on all subjects, by all nations; and though men have not had all truth in their possession, they have had some in all matters *but this.* What they have acquired on other themes, has been the basis or nucleus of further discoveries; and thus succeeding ages have regularly advanced upon their predecessors. But on this, all have been equally in error, and all equally distant from the truth. All have been sunk in the same profound darkness; all equally destitute of the grand secret of a just, and rational, and comprehensive system of religion and morals. There has never yet been any nation, there has not even been an individual, who, by his own unaided reason, has ever, with all his searching, found out God: and though, in all nations, and through all ages, there have existed vestiges of early traditions on this subject; yet, even with these aids, but without revelation, no people have ever been known to emerge

LECT. III. from polytheism and idolatry, into any thing like a rational theism, or to emancipate their own minds from the degrading thraldom of superstition.

Idolatry universally prevalent.

I am now entitled to consider these following facts as established past dispute; that there has prevailed, from the earliest ages, in all nations where revelation has been unknown, a degrading ignorance of the great first cause, and a system of idolatrous worship, varying, indeed, in its forms, yet every where consisting in a deification of some created, finite, imaginary, or artificial objects, and of these to an indefinite extent.

Different kinds.

First, in point of time, we have Sabaism, or the worship of the heavenly bodies; then this was succeeded by hero-worship, or the apotheosis of distinguished mortals after death; then was added the deification of passions and pleasures, of malignant and beneficent powers, or abstract ideas of good and evil, working in various forms in surrounding objects. Even the very meanest animals and beings in nature, every creeping thing having life, and every vegetable displaying design or skill in its formation, has been worshipped, and is worshipped, together with the creations and fancies of the imagination, in all their absurd and fantastic forms; and hope and fear, suffering and enjoyment, health and sickness, prosperity and adversity, have been elevated into distinct and independent agencies, to which mysterious powers have been ascribed, and have become objects of

LECT. III. idolatrous worship to infatuated and wretched human beings.

Evil attendant on this loss of God's favour.

But, let it be observed, all this evil has naturally followed the loss of the knowledge of God; and these false imaginations have proved the heaviest and greatest curses upon mankind, the source and means of a large portion of their immorality, their enmity to each other, their cruelty, and their degradation. Superstition has proved a dead weight, constantly sinking mankind down in an abyss of crime, cruelty, and wretchedness; deforming human nature more and more; exacerbating all its physical evils, and supplying inexhaustible fuel to all its malignant passions. No tongue can tell the horrid cruelties it has perpetrated, the disgusting actions it has patronized, and the endless abominations to which it has familiarized the human heart. It has debilitated the understanding, seared the conscience, and corrupted the affections; it has made human life wretched, death more formidable, and the grave a deeper and darker abyss; while it has deceived, deluded, and destroyed mankind with a malignity of hatred, and recklessness of power, with a vastness of devastation, and an amount of suffering, which appals one's imagination only to conceive, and which approaches the true idea of what is signified by *infernal*.

Correspondence of the punishment with the sin.

Now, is there not something remarkable in this, that the sin of man, in the first instance, should, according to revelation, be an attempt to become

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as God, to attain an equality with the Eternal and Infinite; and that the punishment inflicted upon him should be a loss of the divine knowledge and favour; and that his sin should herein be visited by so appropriate, so significant a punishment, as might always point to it? The threatening was death, and it has been strikingly exemplified in the loss of every thing which constitutes the true and highest life of a rational and immortal spirit. Disobedience to God, disregard of his commands, and a forfeiture of his favour, could scarcely have been so appropriately, so significantly, and so instructively punished, any other way. Men forsook God, and God forsakes them. By a mysterious operation, he deprives their intellect of that divine light which it derived from the knowledge of his being and nature; and the human race has never since been able to regain any just knowledge of him. Its loss of this knowledge has left it a prey to all the direful consequences of perversion in first principles. They forfeited his friendship, and they have never since, in a single instance, been able to look upon his glory, either mentally or spiritually. They lost his instructions and the communications of his wisdom, and they have never been able to make the slightest approach to the recovery of the divine knowledge; have never caught a single trace or glimpse of his light, to guide them through the mazes of this vain and perplexing life.

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Is not this, then, a verification of the divine word? As the offence of man, in the first instance, was committed against the authority, the perfection, and the being of God, and was evidently considered by God as amounting to such a degree of criminality, as to require and justify the withdrawment of himself; so we see the uniform, the significant, the fatal blank left every where; the total absence of divine knowledge and light, corresponding with, and indicating the nature of the offence, is universally and painfully felt. The temptation presented, and haplessly embraced, was, "YE shall be as GODS, knowing good and evil." The fatal ambition indulged, was to rise above their sphere, to assert some kind of an equality with the Creator, and to gain that knowledge which properly pertained to him alone; and the consequence has been a fall as low, an obscuration of their intellect as intense, as the nature of the sin was presumptuous and aspiring; a loss as great, and *in the same kind*, as their ambition was inordinate; a suffering proportioned to the undutifulness of the anticipated pleasure; a punishment in that very principle in which their sin was peculiar. What coincidence could be more marked and striking? What verification more minute and complete? Their very religion has been their heaviest curse; and their religion was the first matter in which they sinned. By rejecting the fear and the authority of the true God, they have become subject to the fear

This a verification of Scripture.

False religion the heaviest curse.

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of an infinite number of false gods; and refusing the light of true religion, they have been left to all the darkness and delusion of every kind of false religion. Emulating and coveting knowledge, which was not suitable to their finite and dependent nature, they have fallen under the influence of perverting ignorance and destructive error; evils which have never ceased to degrade, torment, and corrupt them.

Here, then, is a marked and minute correspondence between the facts of man's history and present state, and the doctrines of the Bible; a correspondence most clearly marked in the causes that have produced it; most minute and striking in its circumstances, evincing a visitation, the most obvious and palpable, of the Almighty hand upon the moral condition of the offending creature.

Summary of the general argument.

What, then, upon the whole, is the moral condition of human nature? Those who are most extensively and minutely versed in its history know, that it is, in the main, a register of crimes and vices, varied occasionally by follies and sufferings. Every thing seems out of course in this strange mixture of wickedness and ferocity. Here reason and folly alternately rule. Grandeur and meanness, suffering and enjoyment, every where combine in the human character. All sorts of atrocities mingle with all sorts of levities; every degree of wretchedness with every degree of gratification; conscious guilt with daring pre-

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sumption. Men are, by turns, fools and sages, vassals and tyrants, criminals and self-tormentors; at one time sober, at another frantic; now ready to destroy themselves through remorse, anon transported with ecstasies of joy, by the very sins that had awakened their remorse. Extremes of all kinds, extravagances in all things, contradictions unceasing, meet in our disordered nature. Men have, all along, from the first, been tormenting, corrupting, and sacrificing each other, under the malignant anticipation of extracting their own felicity from each other's suffering, their own good from others' ill. "What a chimera, then, is man! "What a surprising novelty! What a confused "chaos! What a subject of contradictions! What "a professed judge of all things, and yet a feeble "worm of the earth; the great depository and "guardian of truth, and yet a huddle of uncer- "tainty; THE GLORY AND THE SCANDAL OF THE "UNIVERSE! If he is too aspiring and lofty, we "can lower and humble him; if too mean and "little, we can raise and swell him. To conclude: "we can bait him with repugnancies and contra- "dictions, till at length he apprehends himself to "be a monster, even beyond apprehension."*

Misery of human nature.

Let it now be remembered, that these tormenting and destructive powers and principles, have all been in operation, at the very time when human nature possessed other principles, and felt other impulses of an entirely opposite character.

* Pascal's Thoughts, p. 162. 8vo.

LECT. III. Yet, with all these innate sources of felicity and well-being, with fountains of innocent and rational, not to say divine, enjoyment, within himself, or within his reach, and with all these capabilities of promoting the happiness of related and dependant beings around, or of the race generally; and, moreover, with reason and conscience always mainly on the side of virtue and truth, the human heart has nevertheless elaborately distilled poison into its own cup, and laboriously fabricated the weapons of self-destruction. In reviewing the scene, upon an extensive scale, emotions the most opposite succeed each other. Indignation and scorn, humiliation and surprise, pity and horror, alternately fill the mind. Most assuredly, then, in the main, man appears little better than an abortion. He by no means attains an end worthy of his noble endowments. His state has been, and still continues to be, any thing and every thing but what a philanthropic spirit of our own, or of any other race, might reasonably anticipate, for a creature thus constituted and gifted, a being so desirous of felicity, and so emulous of distinction, so eager for advancement, so aspirant after immortality. Most unquestionably he has been, and still appears to be, the very reverse of that, which it may be fairly presumed, an infinitely wise and benevolent First Cause originally designed in his creation.

Misery and vice not to be attributed to God.

Surely it ought, on every ground of modesty and reason, to be presumed, that the vice and

misery, which have so extensively prevailed, could not have been the intended result of divine causation. From the innumerable traces of supreme benevolence, visible on every side, as well as from the uniform benignity, which characterizes all the direct and primary exercises of the divine power, we may be content, without entering into any discussion of the origin of natural and moral evil, to take the *facts* of the case just as we find them, and place the evil at that point, beyond which no analysis has been able to trace it; that is, *in the free will of man.* There we see it still, and constantly, and universally generating fresh misery and mischief. LECT. III.

Incessant efforts after social improvement.

It is certain, that incessant attention and effort have been directed, by the very best and ablest of men, in all nations, to the moral improvement and happiness of their species. But the continued trial, and continual failure of human resources, forbid the most sanguine to look any longer to this quarter. Experience has unquestionably shown, that whatever are the energies of man's thought, the creations of his genius, the onward and upward travel of his aspirations, towards social refinement, intellectual greatness, and scientific discovery, yet the cure of his moral delinquency, the completion of his happiness, or the extinction of his misery; the renovation and harmony of his powers, the conformity of his affections to the divine goodness and benevolence, cannot be pre-

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sumed to lie within the possibilities of his achievement, or even of his hope.

Science ineffectual.

After all that science in its maturity, and intellectual power in its utmost effort, has been able to accomplish for him, lo! he still feels as wretched, he still proves as malignant, and still continues as base and foul as ever.

Education, &c.

Education, social laws, civilization, may, in some measure, tame the ferocity of human passions, and assuage the pangs of human suffering; but these have always and signally failed to renew the will and purify the affections. They have never even aspired to establish that sublime theory of morals, which implicates our own happiness with that of others, and both with our moral reconcilement to the divine purity and goodness. The wild animal may be tamed, and made to assume gentler habits, but retains the same nature; he is a beast still. The maniac, though in chains, continues to rave and tear himself. Such is the effect, and such the limit of all self-originated means of human improvement. They are restrictive, rather than renovating; repressive, and corrective, but never transforming.

Law and civilization.

To a great extent, the evils remedied by law and civilization, in one form, break out in another; and if they banish the rougher vices, they afford an occasion, and not unfrequently supply a stimulus, to numerous others, scarcely less, or lighter. If they prevent some sufferings, peculiar

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to a rude and uncultivated state, yet they generate others more subtle, but not less immoral and pernicious. All, then, that can be done, all that ever has been done, by purely human instrumentality, has been to restrain and keep within certain bounds and limits, the ever-flowing current of human depravity and misery, rather than to dam up its tide, or dry up its fountain. Onward, irresistibly onward, the dark current still flows; not now a wild, dashing, desolating, mountain-torrent, bearing all before it, as among savage tribes, or in ancient times; but still the same fearful and deadly stream, though it flows within defined limits, winds through the midst of cultivation, and, for the most part, hides itself in subterranean channels. We appeal, therefore, to all who know what human nature is, both in rude and civilised states, as well in modern as in ancient times, whether any moral renovation is to be anticipated from man himself? It is rather, obviously in vain, that he looks either to internal light, or external circumstances. All his discoveries extend no further than to the detection of his delinquencies and miseries. He cannot, from his own stores, correct his acknowledged mistakes and sins, nor be recovered to happiness, virtue, and truth.

Philosophers have all failed in theories for the promotion of virtue and happiness.

The philosophers who promise every thing from the force of reason and light of natural truth, effect nothing for the cure of their patient. They neither apprehend the true nature and

LECT. III. extent of the disorder, nor possess adequate skill to propound or apply a remedy. The two grand propensities of mankind, which impel continually in opposite directions, and appear in irreconcileable hostility to each other, are, *first*, ambition, which, while it aims to be as God, alienates from him; and, next, animal appetite, which, while it promises real pleasure, always removes us further from it. The one of these propensities aspires upwards, above our nature; the other weighs us down to earth, and assimilates us to the brutes. There is required *a reconciling medium* for these repugnant propensities. This is the great problem.

Two classes of moral physicians.

Two different classes of moral physicians have addressed themselves separately to these contrarieties. Those who have set before man the abstract contemplation of divine excellency, and the attainment of pure wisdom, by the light of nature, as a remedy for human disorders, have but ministered to man's pride, by insinuating that he was possessed of all the requisite qualities for raising himself into a kind of divinity, and that he might attain the proud elevation, by subduing or eradicating his animal propensities. The other class, who perceived the practical absurdity of such notions, fell into an opposite extreme, equally fatal and absurd, by teaching that his nature was but a higher degree of animalism, and that his chief good was to be placed in sensual delights; thus making him no better, and no other, than

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irrational creatures. For the one school perceived, in part at least, what man *ought to be*, but overlooked what he really *is;* while the other was content to let him remain what he is, without teaching, or endeavouring to make him, what he ought to be.

No improvement from them.

It is, therefore, evident that no improvement or consolation is to be expected from such sources as these. The light within is proved to be disturbed or delusive, and the light without, in creatures or in nature, is obscured or eclipsed. The passions and the senses are strong, and constantly aspiring at the mastery over reason. Reason resents the wrong, and strives to recover its lost dominion. The corrupt affections are perpetually driving man to the pursuit of unlawful and injurious gratifications; while his own heart impeaches him as a transgressor, and his conscience inflicts, or threatens, retribution. All things with which he is surrounded, act the part of seducers or tormentors, or both, in due succession; but still they maintain a complete mastery over him, first alluring him by their fascinations, and then vanquishing by their strength.

True theory of the case.

This, then, we conceive, is the true condition of mankind. On the one hand, a primitive dignity of nature still remaining, impels them towards intellectual grandeur, moral liberty, perfect happiness, and immortality; while, on the other hand, they are oppressed by moral blindness,

LECT. III. plunged in misery, and willingly enslaved by concupiscence. These have become a second nature, victorious over the aspirations of the immaterial spirit, and all but destructive of the original moral constitution received from the creative hand. But in all this is to be found a full and perfect verification of the grand principles and doctrines of revelation, which uniformly testify that "man was made upright, but has sought out many inventions."

It would be difficult, we conceive, perhaps we should be warranted in saying, *impossible*, to point out a single feature of man's moral character and condition which does not correspond minutely, and with a kind of exquisite fitting, to the facts and theory laid before us throughout the Bible; while it would be equally impossible to find out any other theory that could so comprehend, and harmonize, and elucidate all the facts of our social history and personal consciousness. The one is the portrait on the canvas, the other the living original. The inference here, then, is obvious and inevitable; the hand that drew the one, is the hand that formed the other in its native perfection, but anticipated all the possible circumstances of its degradation and deformity.

LECTURE IV.

COINCIDENCES BETWEEN THE DOCTRINES OF REVELATION AND THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE DIVINE MORAL GOVERNMENT, AS DEDUCIBLE FROM THE FACTS WHICH APPEAR IN THE CONSTITUTION AND HISTORY OF HUMAN NATURE.

General explanation and limitation of the argument—Moral government explained—Efficiency and universality of its laws—Recognition of the being and perfections of a Supreme Governor—Vice distinguished—attended with suffering—Tendency of virtue to well-being—Doctrine of Providence—Power and universality of Conscience—Instinctive propensity to Prayer—Indelible sense of future Accountableness.

LECT. IV. Limitation of the object of this Lecture.

In entering upon this branch of our subject, it may be desirable to explain, first, what it is intended to attempt, and within what limits we propose to confine our argument. It cannot be expected that I should enter upon the proof, that there is such a thing as a moral government of the world. An argument upon this subject would lead us into too wide a field, and, besides, it may

LECT. IV. be supposed to be fully admittted, even by those who are declared unbelievers in revelation, at least by all such as are not really Atheists. Our object, at present, then, is not to prove that there exists a wise, righteous, and benevolent Governor of mankind, but, supposing that admitted, to advance forward upon these grounds, to the proof that there are evidences sufficient to convince us, that the author of the Bible, as discoverable by the doctrines there taught, is the author of those laws which we find operating within our own consciousness, through all our social relations, and throughout the entire history of our race, as far, at least, as we can review it. It will, moreover, be no part of our endeavour to *vindicate* the moral government of the world, nor to show that it might not be *supposed* to have been better, or that it is really the best. With these questions men can merely speculate, and, after all their reasonings, must admit that they are quite incompetent and unqualified to determine what might or might not have been, or what might have been best; and, for aught they know, all things considered, the present system may be the very best that could have been chosen; and that, seeing it has been chosen by an infinitely wise, benevolent, just, and Almighty Being, there is an overpowering presumption that it is best. After all, abstract reasonings upon these points must give place to absolute facts. Things are so and so, and our reasonings must be limited to what

is, and not influenced by our conjectures of what might have been. LECT. IV.

To compare facts with statements.

Our direct business is to take up the undeniable facts discoverable in our common nature, and having learned what we can from them, by the most cautious exercise of our reason, to judge whether they tally with the sacred word; and then, if in this endeavour we should obtain satisfaction, we may safely proceed to infer, that the primary Author of that word, and of our nature, must be the same. The correspondence, if perfect, will seem to imply the conclusion at which we aim, that there is an identity in the source and nature of the two matters brought into comparison. The probability of this conclusion will be strengthened, also, by the certainty, that no such agreement can be shown between nature, as it is in ourselves, and any other moral system, viewed in theory. After this proposed comparison, there may still appear some things apparently difficult of solution, or absolutely inexplicable on both sides of the comparison, but these will present no difficulty more formidable on the one side than on the other. Those who admit that there is a God, notwithstanding their imperfect comprehension of the whole system of nature, and the impenetrable mystery of some parts of it, cannot, consistently, make parallel difficulties, in the matter of revelation, any objection to its divine authorship. Both must either be received or rejected, for equal reasons. We cannot deny reve-

LECT. IV. lation to be of God, for those reasons which, when applied to his being, as evinced in the works of nature, are rejected as trifling or absolutely worthless.

Moral Government, generally, and Biblical Principles, coincident.

Moral government, what?

There are exhibited, throughout revelation, certain great moral principles, which are there announced as applicable to our nature generally, and under all circumstances. These pertain principally to the mental and moral constitution of man, and their truth, we think, is evinced by their apparent operation as laws pervading our nature; not laws in the sense of those original and primary laws of inanimate and unconscious matter, against which it cannot rebel, or without subjection to which it is never seen; but laws, in the sense of moral principles or rules, admitting the exercise of choice, or what is understood by volition, and free agency, in the observance or violation of them. These only are moral laws. Their existence is fully ascertained by the undeniable fact, that human happiness is promoted by the keeping of them, and by the equally certain fact, that punitive and painful consequences attend their violation. In the words of Bishop Butler, I would maintain, as past dispute, that "God has given us to understand," (by the use of our reason and the facts of our experience, the most clear and palpable of all things,)

LECT. IV. that "he has appointed satisfaction and delight "to be the consequence of our acting in one "manner, and pain and uneasiness the consequence of our acting in another, and of our "not acting at all; that we find the consequences, "which we were beforehand informed of, uniformly to follow."

That man is under it.

Now, from this general observation, obvious to every one, "We may learn that we are at present "actually under his government, in the strictest "and most proper sense; in such a sense as that "he rewards and punishes us for our actions. "An author of nature being supposed, it is not "so much a deduction of reason, as a matter of "experience, that we are thus under his government: under his government, in the same sense, "as we are under the government of civil magistrates. Because the annexing pleasure to some "actions, and pain to others, in our power to do "or to forbear, and giving notice of his appointment beforehand to those whom it concerns, "is the proper formal notion of government. "Whether the pleasure or pain which thus follows "upon our behaviour, be owing to the author "of nature's acting upon us every moment which "we feel it; or to his having at once contrived "and executed his own part in the plan of the "world, makes no alteration as to the matter "before us. For if civil magistrates could make "the sanction of their laws take place, without "interposing at all, after they had passed them

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" without a trial, and the formalities of an execu-
" tion; if they were able to make their laws
" execute themselves, or every offender to exe-
" cute them upon himself; we should be just
" in the same sense under their government then,
" as we are now; but in a much higher degree
" and more perfect manner. There is no possi-
" bility of answering or evading the general thing
" here intended, without denying all final causes.
" For final causes being admitted, the pleasures
" and pains now mentioned must be admitted
" too, as instances of them. And if they are,
" if God annexes delight to some actions and
" uneasiness to others, with an apparent design
" to induce us to act so and so; then he not
" only dispenses happiness and misery, but also
" rewards and punishes actions. If, for example,
" the pain which we feel, upon doing what
" tends to the destruction of our bodies, suppose
" upon too near an approach to fire, or upon
" wounding ourselves, be appointed by the author
" of nature to prevent our doing what thus tends
" to our destruction; this is altogether as much
" an instance of his punishing our actions, and,
" consequently, of our being under his govern-
" ment, as declaring, by a voice from heaven,
" that if we acted so, he would inflict such pain
" upon us, and inflicting it, whether it be greater
" or less. Thus we find that the true notion or
" conception of an author of nature, is that of
" a master or governor, prior to the consideration

" of his moral attributes. The fact of our case, LECT. IV.
" which we find, by experience, is that he actually
" exercises dominion or government over us at
" present, by rewarding and punishing us for our
" actions, in as strict and proper a sense of these
" words, as children, servants, subjects are rewarded
" and punished by those who govern them."

" And thus the whole analogy of nature, the
" whole present course of things, most fully shows
" that there is nothing incredible in the general
" doctrine of religion; that God will reward and
" punish men for their actions hereafter: nothing
" incredible, I mean, arising out of the notion of
" rewarding and punishing. For the whole course
" of nature is a present instance of his exercising
" that government over us, which implies in it
" rewarding and punishing."*

Laws stated by revelation.

Now we proceed to observe, that what these laws or principles are, is stated exclusively by revelation. They are described with precision, and illustrated with much force of evidence, as essential to the human economy. The appeal is constantly made to our own experience and consciousness as to their reality. Upon this ground it appears impossible, in contemplation of that being whom we acknowledge as our moral governor, either to evade the force, or deny the actual operation, of such laws in us and upon us. We are conscious of them; we see them constantly in force upon our fellow-beings. Food

* Butler's Analogy, p. 50.

LECT. IV. does not more certainly nourish the animal system, and poison injure and destroy it, than the observance of these moral laws tends to man's well-being and happiness, or their violation to his misery and that of society.

Efficiency and universality of them.

But the efficiency and universality which attend these laws, as indications of the supreme moral authority of the Creator, serve, in many particulars, to verify the declarations of the sacred volume. In fact, the whole system of moral truth, as laid down in the Scriptures, may be shown to be singularly coincident with all the principles of that moral system under which we find ourselves placed, and which appears to be evolved and recognised, in a most striking degree, even where no guidance, no key-note, so to speak, has been given to the human mind by revelation.

I shall now attempt to illustrate these general observations, in reference to some leading principles of the moral system, as they appear in the *word*, and as they are verified in our nature.

1. *The Being and Perfections of God.*

Being and perfections of God.

We may commence with the fundamental doctrine of all religion; the being and perfections, both natural and moral, of One God. There is a striking coincidence between the dictates of Scripture, and the decisions of our own reason upon this momentous subject. The Scripture affirms that there is one God, and but one. It exhibits his perfections, exercised in the creation

and government of the world. It did so when no other authority proclaimed the same truth. It did so for a very long period, while many other authorities proclaimed and maintained a contrary doctrine. It may be said now to produce, or to command, the ready assent of reason to this truth, wherever it is enlightened and cultivated. LECT. IV.

Polytheism.

It seems impossible for human reason to retain its belief of polytheism after it is made acquainted with the Biblical doctrines upon this subject. The darkness does not more necessarily and naturally recede before the rising of the sun, than idolatry or polytheism before the dawn of revelation. The reason seems to be, in the intuitive perception of the consistency of the one theory, as contrasted with the detected imperfection of the other. The mind perceives its reasonableness, when discovered, just as it might the solution of a difficult problem in numbers, when laid before it, though it seems to have been incompetent to find out the solution for itself. "Verily," says the Scripture, "there is a God that judgeth in the earth." Human nature, every where and always, has virtually asserted and felt something of the same great principle, though it has never, of itself, arrived at the perfect and full conception of it. It has never formally asserted the unity of God; though, when that doctrine is introduced by revelation, reason instantly perceives its congruity, and assents to it as a necessary truth. His eternal power and Godhead are known by the things

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that are made, so that God has never left himself without witness, even in the alienated heart and understanding of man.

Reason discovers partial truth.

Yet we must deny that reason, unassisted, has ever been sufficient for the discovery and maintenance of the entire truth upon this important principle. The proof of this is to be found in the historical fact, admitted by Mr. Hume, that till "about 1,700 years ago, all mankind were "idolaters. The doubtful and sceptical prin-"ciples of a few philosophers, or the theism, and "that too not entirely pure, of one or two nations, "(this is the insidious way in which he passes "by the awkward case of the Jews,) form no "objection worth regarding. Behold, then, the "clear testimony of history. The further we "mount up into antiquity, the more do we find "mankind plunged into idolatry. No marks, no "symptoms, of any more perfect religion. The "most ancient records of the human race still "present us with polytheism, as the popular and "established system. The north, the south, the "east, the west, give their unanimous testimony "to the same facts."*

Object of deistical writers.

The object of Mr. Hume, in this passage, and indeed the sole argument of all deistical writers, is to show that revelation was needless, because reason, by itself, can attain, they say, to the knowledge of the being, unity, and attributes of God. But the disingenuousness of this attempt

* Hume's Essays. Nat. Hist. of Religion, vol. ii. p. 417.

is obvious enough. The very admission, that, till revelation was made public, reason never did discover the great principles in question; but that since christianity has been propagated, a purer system of theism has prevailed, and idolatry has been giving way, completely subverts all the pretensions of Deists to the discovery of the being and unity of God. The modern Deist, then, is placed in this situation: he first enjoys the light of revelation, and then endeavours to turn that light back against itself. Being taught the truth, and finding it perfectly consonant to the dictates of his own reason, he then denies that he was taught it, and affirms that it is a discovery his own reason has made. What can be more disingenuous than this? He has partaken, in common with all who dwell in christianized nations, of the advantages and illumination afforded by revelation; the current of his thoughts and reasonings has been unconsciously set by it; the truth of the existence of only one God has been first impressed upon him by education, early habit, and the absence of all contrary associations; and then he has seen that all things in the system of nature agreed with the notions which he supposed his reason had suggested; and then he started up with the delirious dream, that his reason was the discoverer of this fundamental truth: just as if a youth, after being initiated into the principles of geometry and algebra, and finding them perfectly consonant

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with his reason, should ambitiously and childishly infer that his own sagacity had made, or would have made, the discovery of those principles, without any assistance from a guide or instructor. Thus it is with our modern Deist. He derives all his first principles from revelation, however insensible of the fact, or indifferent to the consequent obligations. He fights his battle with weapons taken from our armoury; he first ascends the hill of Zion, and views the universe by the light of revealed truth, and then ascribes his knowledge to his own penetration.

True method of estimating the efforts of reason.

Now we object altogether to this procedure. No estimate of the capability of reason to make this discovery, can be fair or valid, which is not taken from a period prior to the existence and publication of Christianity, or from some nation in which its influence had never been felt. It is the extreme of unfairness and sophistry to tell us, that reason is sufficient, and revelation unnecessary, because those who reject it, are in the possession of many of its fundamental truths, and that they have ascertained their credibility and accordance with the system of nature by the light of their own philosophy. The objector has here evidently mistaken the *accordance* of reason with revelation, for the anticipation of revelation by reason; the only fact which would maintain his argument. But, if we look carefully at the case, we shall see that the real fact is this; the ivy of reason, having grown up and around the oak of

revelation, has begun to boast of its own erectness, strength, and elevation. No Deist, in the present age, who asserts the sufficiency of reason to attain to a belief in the unity and moral perfections of a Deity, is or can be in a fair situation to determine how much he is indebted to revelation, or how far his reason might have advanced by itself. It is impossible he should ever prove that he has acquired his theism by the aid of reason alone; for he lives in the midst of an element of pure and celestial light, at the very moment when he holds up the taper of his reason, and assures the world, that this is the exclusive source of all the knowledge which himself and others enjoy. Yet the light, which first emanates from the orb of revelation, on which he has turned his back, may be shown to be substantially the light in which he walks, and by the aid of which, alone, he has been led to all his boasted discoveries.

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Double coincidence.

Here, then, we think, there is ground to infer a double coincidence; first, between the general doctrine taught by revelation, on the being and government of God, and the natural dictates of reason upon the same subject, even where revelation is unknown, because some notions of a superior and superintending power, or powers, seem inseparable from our nature, and universally to attend the possession and exercise of reason; and, further, that there is a more complicated harmony discovered, as soon as the precise doctrines of revelation upon this subject are presented to the

LECT. IV. understanding. Here arises a clear and decisive conviction, not on the general fact, in the crude form in which unassisted reason first holds it; but beyond that, in the more precise propositions of the unity, spirituality, and moral perfection, which revelation asserts, and to which reason ultimately brings us, when it has contrasted this system with that of polytheism and idolatry. Thus a double coincidence is established between the authority of revelation, and the natural processes of reason; first, in its unenlightened, and then in its refined and improved state.

Reason has never discovered the great truth.

It appears, then, clearly established, from the whole history of our nature, in reference to the being and government of God, that, notwithstanding the tendencies of the human mind to what is evil, and notwithstanding all its crude speculations, and all its efforts to relieve itself from subjection to the Supreme Being, it has never been able to obliterate the evidence, or neutralize the force of this great truth. It has partially appeared in all the crude systems of idolatry; it is the originating idea of polytheism, which, in all its multifarious forms and complicated machinery, rude or classic, is but the confused and morbid creation of the human fancy, under the influence of this natural and intuitive perception of the reason exercised upon the various proofs of superior agency, both within and without ourselves. Is it not, then, manifest, that there is a constraining law or principle in our nature, counteracting

the spread of Atheism? for the world has never, to any extent, become literally atheistic; nor, indeed, when some few have occasionally fallen into that notion, can they long or consistently maintain it. It seems as if an Atheist were a sort of hibrid. There is a law which prevents the propagation of hibrids, or tends to their speedy extinction. Society could not exist, for any length of time, upon such principles, and hence it appears as impossible (the laws of our nature being taken into account) that there should be a nation of Atheists, as that there should be a nation of idiots. What, then, is this, but a verification, in another view, of the great truth of revelation, and almost a literal fulfilment of its solemn declaration. "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."*

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2. *Vice attended with both Mental and Bodily Suffering.*

Vice productive of suffering.

We proceed, now, to illustrate another point of coincidence, between the doctrine of the sacred word, and the experience of our nature. It is laid down in the Bible, that vice is invariably, universally, and necessarily attended with suffering, frequently in its double kind, both bodily and mental; and that this law serves the purpose of a retributive administration of divine justice, not, indeed perfect, but incipient and preparatory to its perfection hereafter. Vice, as such, is uni-

* Rom. iv. 11.

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for the reward of his hand shall be given him." LECT. IV.
"He that doeth evil, doeth it to his own hurt." We wish to leave out of account, at present, the doctrine of the actual retribution of a future state, and to allude to it, only as the anticipation of it may become, in the present life, one means of enforcing the general law under consideration.

Principles of revelation upon this point clear and decisive.

The principles of revelation upon this subject, are exhibited throughout the whole volume. It is, in fact, altogether based upon the eternal distinctions between right and wrong, good and evil, and upon the capacity of man's nature for perceiving that distinction. It assumes, that God has made such a distinction, and connected with the observance or non-observance of it, certain consequences of pleasure or suffering, necessarily following in the experience of mankind.

Testimony of experience.

Now it is visible to us all, that sin, or moral evil, does generally bring its own reward. Here the universal experience of man corroborates the grand principles laid down in the Bible, and confirms the universal law which is in operation in our nature. It does not invalidate this statement, or at all diminish the force of the coincidence we are endeavouring to establish, that most sins are productive of a present, and some of them even of a thrilling pleasure; for this is admitted, and is represented as forming the great inducement to sin; this is perfectly consistent with the notion of a moral system; but this gratification is obviously in the inferior, or animal part of our

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defection, and what naturally follows from his forfeiture of divine knowledge, and the corruption of his moral affections; but that such a power of moral perception does exist in him, is manifest, in the remorse which follows misconduct, and which could have no existence without the consciousness of such an inward power of moral perception. LECT. IV.

This coincidence striking and important.

Now, the coincidence between the moral system of revelation upon this point, and that of actual experience and human history, is most perfect and striking. Many of the vices to which men are prone, bring a speedy and marked punishment; while others, though less rapid in their sequences, are not less sure, nor less marked. Some sins bear their brand, as it were, on the very face of them; and even while indulged, or immediately after, show that they are against the will and law of God, as that was at first impressed upon our nature. Some are so utterly against the reason and feeling of mankind, that they produce universal disgust and contempt; others are so hostile to the interests of society, that they lead to a loss of character, and to a kind of circumscription from decent and rational association; and others are so opposed to nature, in the individual man himself, that he becomes a monster, or a beast in his own eyes, despicable, dishonoured, alienated, even from himself. Thus he bears within his own breast, or discovers in the sentiments of his fellow-beings towards him,

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or even in the physical and corporeal effects of his conduct, decisive evidence that he has violated the law of his moral and intellectual nature, and transgressed the will of his Creator. This is more especially seen, though not exclusively, in the case of gross crimes, and such as are directly injurious to the interests of others; such as murder, oppression, cruelty, the violation of faith, and the indulgence of a grasping selfishness.

It must be obvious, that this branch of our subject would admit of a large illustration. But I prefer, at present, to enforce attention to general principles, rather than run out into minute and subtle distinctions. It is past dispute, we conceive, that human consciousness and history corroborate the great principles of revelation upon the tendency of vice to suffering.

3. *Tendency of Virtue to Well-being.*

Virtue tends to happiness.

The reverse of this holds good in reference to virtue, benevolence, and goodness. These have evidently the opposite tendency. They clearly promote the well-being of the individual, the peace, good order, prosperity, and happiness of society. "Verily," says God, "there is a reward for the righteous." "Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." All men are constrained to admire virtue. Even the wicked themselves allow, that the virtuous are better, more respected, and more happy, in the main, than themselves.

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The whole scope of the Bible will be readily admitted to bear upon the proof of the general position now laid down; and as to the fact of man's consciousness, and the testimony of experience, there cannot be much room for a diversity of opinion.

If we look the world through, we see that temperance, moderation, virtue, benevolence, in their general tendency, promote the health, long life, reputation, and felicity of men. They not only are unattended by the painful consciousness which accompanies, and the remorse that follows, vice, but they seem to strengthen all the energies of our nature, promote the well-being of society, prove favourable to our highest mental development, administer many and various gratifications, and are ever accompanied with pleasurable reflections and reviews. Who will deny that there is a most striking and important contrast between the emotions with which a vicious and a virtuous life is reviewed?

This law originates in the Supreme will.

Now, the invariable and universal tendency of virtue to human happiness, is a doctrine which, we think, could have been ascertained, in the first instance, by no human intelligence. No one could have ventured to lay it down, as it is laid down in the sacred book, without a divine knowledge of our nature and its laws. Many ancient philosophers disputed the fact, and endeavoured to overturn the principle. Hence they utterly confused virtue and vice. Some moderns have done

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the same. Their attempts, however, only show the *animus* of the men. They cannot destroy the distinction, nor change the laws of our moral nature. Happily, their power is confined to their speculations; and the laws of nature prevail, and, I suppose, will prevail, in spite of those who would deny, confuse, or reverse them. Virtue does exist—does tend to well-being. The streams of water do not more naturally tend to the sea, than does virtue to make men happy, and to promote both individual and collective felicity.

Here, then, is a law corresponding with the doctrine of the Bible; a law working always, secretly, and effectually, because it works in the very interior and centre of our nature, and yet it evidently depends, in the first instance, altogether upon the absolute and sovereign will of the Creator. It could have arisen from no other source, and could have been produced in us by no inferior power. Certain it is, that if men could have influenced the law, if their will could have reached it, if their habits could have changed it, long ago it had been reversed. For they have been endeavouring, from the beginning of time, to confound and thwart it, and will, even now, not be persuaded that it is his law, that it cannot be annulled, and that it is universally and infallibly sure in its operation.

The Bible first announced the law in its universality.

But such is the clear distinction Scripture puts between righteousness and wickedness, and so certain is it, in fact and in history, that men without the Scripture, and who have never heard of it, have observed and recorded this tendency of virtue to happiness, and of vice to the contrary. But the Bible alone founds it upon an eternal and immutable law, originating in the divine will; and the Bible, alone, therefore, is entitled to the credit of this foreseen and predicted fact. Apart from revelation, we know of no reason why it should be so, and we could by no means be certain that it would be uniformly so, through successive generations; or that it might not, by human effort, or habit, or resolution, be ordered just the reverse. For how was it to be foreseen by human reason, that vice was to be always injurious, and virtue always pleasurable and useful, if not at the moment, yet at the making up of the account? For aught we could have determined, the time might come, when vice might be indulged with impunity, and virtue become injurious and painful, and a violence to our nature. Neither the theory of atheism or deism could hold out any security to the contrary, or show any good reason why this change might not take place. Men may talk of the laws of nature, and of the laws of morals, but they should be reminded, that *our* knowledge of such laws is the result of long observation and experience alone, and could not have been possessed by human reason at the beginning of things. The unbeliever is sure of the opposite tendencies in different actions, only upon the ground of history,

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LECT. IV. experience, and consciousness. But long before these were accumulated to a sufficient extent to warrant his conclusion, revelation had anticipated it. Therefore we infer, that his method of discovery could not have been *that* on which revelation determined the principle.

4. *The Doctrine of a Universal Providence.*

Providence. We may observe, again, that the Bible teaches the doctrine of a universal providence, and that this is regulated by infinite wisdom, goodness, and justice. "The Lord preserveth man and beast:" but man is the more especial object of a parental care, of a tender affection, and of a moral discipline. This divine providence may be viewed, first, in its reference to nations and the race at large. For, as Mr. Sharon Turner has justly remarked, "You will find it to be a law of "national providence, repeatedly put into action, "that every prosperous nation, as every inculcated system, however powerful and successful, "and improved during the time of its enlargement and influence, has been checked as soon as "it has deviated into the depravities and errors "which deteriorate human nature, or obstruct its "progress. Each has advanced in triumph, while "it was benefiting mankind; each has fallen when "it has accomplished all its useful purposes; and "a more improving one has been raised up, and "led into predominance in its stead."* It may

In reference to nations.

* Turner's Sacred History, vol. ii. p. 510.

be very difficult and perilous for us to attempt the determination of the laws by which national providence is regulated, perhaps impossible to do so, to any extent, without great mistakes; yet this should by no means be allowed to obscure the general fact, that there are such laws in operation, and that, from all we can discover of them, they appear to harmonize, in the main, with the statements given of them in the sacred volume. There, at least, we find an outline of the divine plan of procedure, and a general expression of the will and purpose of God in reference to mankind at large. As thus, "his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure." "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous." "The way of the wicked shall be turned upside down." "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee, shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." These, and similar scriptures, have been often and signally verified, in so overruling the affairs of nations, as to bring about the divine purposes. He causes the adverse events, as they appear to reason, just as readily to promote his ends, as those that seemed auspicious and favourable. This appears, for instance, in the national history of the two great branches of the descendants of Abraham. It was decreed, that he should be the father of many nations; and, for this reason, his name was changed from Abram to Abraham. (See Genesis xvii. 5. "These "descendants were to be of that worldly conse-

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"quence, that royal government and dignities "were to mark their political greatness, (Gen. "xvii. 6. 16.) Four great streams of nations, "accordantly with this prediction and promise, "have issued from Abraham. The Edomites, or "Idumeans; the red men of the East, who fixed "their name on the Red Sea, descending from "his grandson, Esau; the Jews, from his grand-"son, Jacob; the Arabs, from his son, Ishmael, "by the Egyptian, Hagar; and those tribes and "nations, which arose in the regions east of "Syria, from his last children by Keturah. Two "of these, the Jews and Arabians, we know "to have multiplied into great importance and "celebrity, and to have continued, in even re-"newed and preserved generations, amid all the "waste and vicissitudes of destroying time, from "the days of Abraham to our own time. Still "his Hebrew and Arabian posterity exist in "several millions, though nearly 4,000 years "have elapsed since Isaac and Ishmael were born "to him. To no other ancestor can such a num-"ber of living descendants be now, in any coun-"try, traced. His other branch, from his grand-"son, Esau, were also a copious and an active "people, in the periods which preceded our era."*

In reference to the divine word.

Another instance of the wise and efficient over-ruling of providence, is to be traced in reference to revelation itself. There has been a conspicuous failure of all attempts, through all ages, directed

* Turner, Sac. Hist. vol. ii. p. 518.

against the written word of Scripture. Infidelity has eminently subserved its interests, not intentionally, but by exciting attention, and stimulating inquiry, so as to make men of the most acute minds, and profoundest learning, employ all their resources upon this question. The result has hitherto been the triumph of revealed truth, in the argument, and its consequent extension.

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In reference to human volition.

So, again, we see the omnipotence of the Divine Providence in over-ruling the free will of man, and making it harmonize with God's sovereignty, which is a matter of special averment in the Scriptures. Each individual forms his own independent purpose, and exercises his own liberty, but God works them all up into the web of his own mysterious and perfect counsel. He leaves all his creatures free; yet his will prevails, and harmonizes all. He makes them do his pleasure unconsciously, and even contrary to their intention. Against him no counsel can stand, and none can defeat his wise, and gracious, and eternal purpose. He makes even the wrath of man to praise him. Now all this is foretold in the Bible. It only falls out as he has said. Whether events be viewed in the detail, or in a grand course and enlarged combination and complication, still the supremacy of God's counsel is maintained and made apparent; the page of history corresponds, when it is written fairly and fully, with the page of revelation. Thus all the events of this many-peopled world, at the present moment, are just

LECT. IV. in that state which indicate the near fulfilment of the more glorious descriptions of sacred writ. His word is going forth to all nations. Idolatry is tottering to its base, and even the idolaters themselves presage and expect the overthrow of their various systems. Neither atheism, nor deism, nor any of the speculative theories which confound virtue and vice, can stand against reason and Scripture. They take no root in our nature. What could have produced these impressions, but the divine influence on the minds of men, or the signs of the times, which are nothing but the indications of providence made to men in every age, and which all have been prone to interpret, and cannot avoid interpreting, more or less, right or wrong.

Particular providence.

Then, again, it is to be observed, there is a providence extending to the minute affairs of particular persons; for we cannot maintain the doctrine of a general providence, but upon the basis of a particular providence; or, rather, the general providence is made up of all the items of the particular, which are thus harmonized into a whole, and brought under the general laws of the moral system. Thus, as to individuals, it is certain, that good men are represented, in the sacred volume, as enjoying many special advantages. A peculiar blessing is said to rest upon the lot of the righteous. "Better is a little that a righteous man hath, than the treasures of many wicked." And, from the earliest history

of mankind, this distinction has been marked by visible tokens of the divine favour. Now we may often trace, in temporal and worldly things, the blessing that rests upon the lot of the righteous. This was frequently observed by the ancients, and ascribed to their gods. There may seem to be some exceptions to this law, since many events happen alike to all, and frequently the lot of the wicked seems to be, for a time, more promising and prosperous; yet it turns out, in the end, according to the general rule, the lot of the righteous is, upon the whole, and in the issue, the better, and bears a marked distinction. There is such a blessing, either of a secular or of a mental kind, as makes it appear that God judgeth in the earth. The favour of providence is not, indeed, to be determined by the amount or quantity of earthly good awarded to different persons respectively; but by the amount of real enjoyment, and the inward sense of happiness.

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5. *Conscience, or the Moral Sense.*

Conscience.

Another most material and important part of the moral system is to be found in that faculty or property of our nature, which, by universal consent, is denominated conscience. The question, what is conscience? falls not within our province. The metaphysical nature of conscience is altogether unimportant to our present inquiry. It may be an inherent, distinct, and original faculty, as much so as any other faculty; or it may be

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the entire mind, acting in the particular direction of moral relations; or it may be, as some have thought, an acquired principle or habit of moral reflection. It matters little, since neither its supremacy, its universality, its immutability, or its independence, can be called in question. Suppose it an original, integral, and essential faculty of the soul, as some metaphysicians describe it, a separate sense, and, properly called, a moral sense; then it affords a striking proof of the reality of a system of moral government, and of the wisdom and goodness of the Creator, in qualifying the human soul, directly, and at once, for the recognition of its relations and duties. Suppose it an acquired habit of moral perception and judgment, and it still shows that provision has been made in the constitution of man for the production of a power so essential to the operation and maintenance of a system of moral government. Then, even under this view, our admiration can scarcely be less, of that consummate wisdom and skill, which, in such a contrivance, has produced results so mighty and momentous, by processes at once so simple and so effectual. Let it be, that the sentiments proceeding from conscience, are produced in the same, or a similar way, to that in which other sentiments are acquired; still the uniformity, universality, immutability, and supremacy of these moral sentiments, evince that they proceed from some law, as certain, efficient, and original,

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as that which secures our powers of perception and reflection. Whether we denominate conscience the faculty of perceiving and comprehending moral sentiments, or the habit of the judgment in the single department of morals, still it is obvious, that there is given to conscience, by the author of our nature, a kind of rectoral authority over the original powers of the mind. It is independent of the will, and commands it, and may, therefore, with the strictest propriety, be denominated the highest of human faculties. It sits regent of the soul. "Thus considered," observes Sir J. Mackintosh, "the language of Butler, concerning conscience, that, "'had it strength, as it has right, it would "'govern the world,' which may seem to be "only an effusion of generous feeling, proves to "be a just statement of the nature and action "of the highest of human faculties. The union "of universality, immutability, and independence "(he might have added *supremacy)* with action "on the will, which distinguishes the moral sense "from every other part of our practical nature, "renders it scarcely metaphorical language to "ascribe to it unbounded sovereignty and awful "authority over the whole of the world within; "shows that attributes, well denoted by terms "significant of command and controul, are, in "fact, inseparable from it, or, rather, constitute "its very essence; justifies those ancient mo-"ralists, who represent it as alone securing, if

Sir J. Mackintosh's and Butler's view of conscience.

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" not forming, the moral liberty of man; and, " finally, when religion rises from its roots in " virtuous feeling, it clothes conscience with the " sublime character of representing the divine " purity and majesty in the human soul. Its " title is not impaired by any number of defeats; " for every defeat necessarily disposes the dis- " interested and dispassionate by-stander to wish " that its force were strengthened: and though " it may be doubted whether, consistently with " the present constitution of human nature, it " could be so invigorated as to be the only " motive to action, yet every such by-stander " rejoices at all accessions to its force; and " would own, that man becomes happier, more " excellent, more estimable, more venerable, in " proportion as conscience acquires a power of " banishing malevolent passions, of strongly curb- " ing all the private appetites, of influencing " and guiding the benevolent affections them- " selves."* I have extracted this description of conscience, from the writings of one of the most distinguished modern philosophers, for the purpose of placing it by the side of the scriptural statements upon the same subject, and of thereby showing how precisely the most careful and acute philosophical analysis of the facts of our moral nature coincides with the sacred testimony.

Value of their opinions.

The description here presented by our philosopher is valuable, *first*, because it verifies all that is said in the sacred word concerning the proper station, the authority, the influence of conscience in general, and the essential connexion of it with the moral government of God, and the highest relations of man; and, *secondly*, and pre-eminently, because it recognises, most clearly and fully, the peculiarity of the sacred testimony, as to the imbecility of conscience to enforce, in all cases, the law of right upon the will. It admits the fact, that the moral machinery does not act perfectly and harmoniously, but that the conscience has the ability and authority to command and lay down the law, and evince the reasonableness of it; yet there interposes a disturbing force, which directs the will against the conscience, and makes the man consciously a sinner, a transgressor of the law written in his heart, a violator, a wilful violator, of the very highest and most venerable law of his nature. Well, indeed, did the philosopher observe, " if " conscience had the strength, as it has the right, " it would govern the world." But, though it has the right, it has not the moral strength, even to govern the individual; for if it did, in fact, govern the individual, it would thereby govern the world; for its strength in one, would be its strength universally, and so the world would be governed by the government of each, emanating from within the soul. But this very want of strength in the conscience, or, rather, perhaps,

* Mackintosh's Second Prelim. Disser. on Ethical Phil. p. 347, 4to.

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more philosophically, this want of submission, order, and dependence in the other powers, is the very criterion that affords so convincing a proof of the truth and accuracy of the sacred testimony. It is this very state of the moral powers and sentiments which is presented under the strong terms and metaphors of a *seared conscience*, a *deceitful heart*, the *flesh* and the spirit striving against each other, the law in the members warring against the law of the mind, and to which the inspired author refers, when he says, "the good that I would, I do not, and the evil that I would not, that I do." "The law is holy, and the commandment holy; but I am carnal, sold under sin." The sacred record clearly affirms this rebellion of the passions against the will, makes it a fundamental principle of the system of christianity, and clearly explains how it has supervened upon the original constitution of our nature. Here, then, the sacred doctrine is found fully coincident with that which the most matured philosophy has taught, upon the nature, the condition, and the restricted influence or imbecility of conscience.

The views of these philosophers coincident with the Bible.

It may not be irrelevant, further to observe, that the existence, the supremacy, the independence, and the immutability of conscience, are all recognized and strikingly illustrated throughout the Book of Revelation, even from the beginning; and nothing can be more decisive, and clear, and complete, than the illustration it every where affords,

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of the laws which regulate this part of our nature, and of its intimate and inseparable connexion with the system of moral government. The operation and the power of conscience are shown early in the human history, as in Adam and Eve hiding themselves; in the conduct of Cain after his brother's murder. From which facts it appears, that conscience was endowed with a most commanding and retributive power, a moral sensitiveness to good and evil, duty and obligation, with an instinctive bias to good, and disinclination to evil.

The Bible coincident with fact.

This power is, in all men, limited, not lost. It is weakened, obscured, confounded; but is still guided, in a good degree, by right principles. Its characteristic and prevailing tendency is still to rectitude, though its dictates may be, in too many instances, effectually counteracted by passion and seeming interest. When men do evil, it is almost universally against their inward sense and conviction of what is right. This faculty proves an enemy, more or less formidable, within the breast of the transgressor, faithfully testifying against evil, and loudly foretelling the consequence. When left to itself, and not interfered with, or disturbed in its procedure, it still, in the main, points to what is just and right, especially in matters not relating to the Deity, and that high department of duty, in which it is peculiarly liable to erroneous decisions, through the loss of the right knowledge of God. In what relates to personal virtue, and to the social duties, it is still, to a great degree,

LECT. IV. a faithful witness, and an uncorrupted judge, though its decisions may be disregarded, and its testimony overborne by the perverted will.

Terrors of a guilty conscience.

Let us remember, that it still shows the use for which it was designed, still exhibits the power with which it was originally invested, and still retains its place among the practical powers of our nature, though there has grown up within that nature an antagonist power, which overbears and counteracts what it cannot silence or extinguish. Conscience is still a swift and a sensitive witness, and often makes the sinner feel its scorpion-like power to sting and wound. How little, indeed, do men, in general, know of its energy, of the secret power that it may acquire against them! What instances are upon record, of its consuming and desolating wrath, when once it is roused by the inward sense of divine authority! It burns against the transgressor with an unappeasable fury, it kindles the fire that is never quenched, it quickens the worm that never dies. It is a faculty of most mysterious power and undying energy. It stands forth, in the Almighty's place, an avenger upon those that violate its dictates. No tongue can detail, no pen describe, the anguish it is capable of inflicting, when once its Almighty Lord gives it power to rise against us like an armed man. "How deeply seated "the conscience is in the human soul, is seen "in the effect which sudden calamities produce "on guilty men, even when unaided by any

"determinate notion or fears of punishment after LECT. IV.
"death. The wretched criminal, as one rudely
"awakened from a long sleep, bewildered with
"the new light, and half recollecting, half striv-
"ing to recollect a fearful something, he knows
"not what, but which he will recognize as soon
"as he hears the name, already interprets the
"calamities into *judgments*, executions of a sen-
"tence passed by an *invisible* judge; as if the
"vast pyre of the last judgment were already
"kindled in an unknown distance, and some
"flashes of it, darting forth at intervals beyond
"the rest, were flying and lighting upon the
"face of his soul. The calamity may consist in
"the loss of fortune, or character, or reputation;
"but you hear no regrets from him. Remorse
"extinguishes all regret; and remorse is the
"*implicit* creed of the guilty."* Men may bribe it by false reasons, they may elude it as if fleeing from an avenger, they may offer palliations to blind and delude it into acquiescence or submission; but how frequently does all this prove in vain, even now, and how certainly in vain at last! What an affecting sight is that of a man, one hour all ecstasy in sin, the next, all in flames with the stings of conscience; now stupified with the intoxicating draught of pleasure, but, in a few hours, or days, agonizing with remorse, frantic with guilt, and so tortured, that he is driven headlong on the very extremity he feared,

* Coleridge's Aids to Reflection, p. 120.

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and, trying the last questionable effort at release, he rushes upon suicide, and desperately braves the power of the Eternal to plunge him into a worse state of suffering.

Support of a good conscience.

But, on the other hand, how pre-eminent is the power of conscience to sustain us in a right course of action. "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." What a support does it minister under trouble, what a shield does it present under adversity, and what an antidote to the ills that may attend the fearless prosecution of duty! What a mighty power does it evince, as well in bracing up the mind to suffer evil, as to anticipate and realize the approbation of that good Being, whose eye conscience so vividly recognizes, and in whose presence it so often refreshes and strengthens itself.

The verification of Scripture.

In short, the verification of the sacred testimony upon this subject, by the facts of our history, the emotions of our own consciousness, and the principles laid down by an independent and scrutinizing philosophy, may be pronounced absolutely perfect; and it seems impossible that authority and fact should ever appear in more *satisfactory* and *complete* harmony. The sacred theory is found true in every minute particular. No other theory is. The mystery of those facts which human philosophy fails to elucidate, is clearly illumined by the explanation revelation affords. We read the statements, we feel the emotions; our heart replies, this is no *deceiver*,

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that so accurately depicts our condition, but a *diviner*, possessed of an omniscient and omnipresent power of divination. All this we have experienced, and the mystery of our commanding, accusing, and tormenting conscience yields to this revealing light.

Mystery of our nature explained.

Here, on the one hand, is the enigma of man's confused and inexplicable nature; but here, too, is the solution of the enigma; here is the labyrinth of our inmost thoughts and emotions, our impulses, our inclinations, and our convictions; but here, also, is the clue that guides us out of the labyrinth. The evil conscience and the good conscience alike feel the justness of the divine averments, and answer in corresponding emotions of suffering or joy, terror or confidence. What, then, have we here but a full, and strong, and satisfactory confirmation of all that is recorded in Scripture on this sublime and awful subject?

6. *Innate Propensity to Prayer.*

We trace another coincidence between the statements of revelation and the facts of our nature and history, in the irresistible and instinctive propensity men display, under certain trying circumstances and painful states of mind, to worship the invisible power, and implore the assistance and mercy of the Supreme Being. The fact is, first, to be established or admitted. It undoubtedly is so, and it might be proved, by exhibiting a great variety of particular instances,

LECT. IV. comprising all sorts of persons. Suppose a case of extreme danger at sea. The language of the shipmen to Jonah is natural, and a thing commonly enough witnessed under similar circumstances—"Arise, O sleeper, and call upon thy God." Revert to what is stated of the strong excitement of devotional feeling, or rather its production, where there had been none before, at the time of the great plague of London. The churches were often crowded from morning to night, when there was not a clergyman to be found to lead the devotions of the people. Witness the extraordinary influx of worshippers to all places of worship throughout the kingdom, in that visitation of the cholera, which, a few years since, excited the dread of impending danger. All similar visitations, in all ages and nations, have had a precisely similar effect, often to a far greater extent in heathen than in christian lands. But we need not rest the argument on these instances, because it may be said there was some previous habit or prejudice in favour of religion, and that they are not clear indications of any particular law or principle of our nature.

Now, though I conceive this objection not well founded, yet I would yield to it so far as to consent, that the principle or propensity in question shall be brought to the test of other cases, where there can be no suspicion of any habit or prejudice of education, in favour of prayer. I would appeal, therefore, to the general fact of

such a devout and religious feeling being all LECT. IV.
but universally excited by the near approach of danger, or of death. All strikingly awful and alarming visitations of providence, in all ages and nations, have had a similar effect; often to a far greater extent in heathen nations than in christian. We may even place the fact in a still stronger light; for, whatever have been the previous habits of life, let serious danger impend, and the blasphemer, the sceptic, the infidel, yea, the *Atheist*, becomes devout. I believe the instances will be found to be exceedingly rare, perhaps there is scarcely one to be found, of a total absence of every kind of religious emotion in the crisis we suppose. Man instinctively prays, or deplores, or trembles, when he seriously apprehends that he is firmly held by the grasp of retributive justice, or is on the eve of meeting the eye of his Supreme Governor. The veriest wretch that lives, whose hands are stained deep with the blood of many a midnight murder, whose conscience is seared as with a hot iron, who can have no rational aspiration of hope towards God, and may know nothing of his revealed mercy, yet, as he approaches his awful end, whether by lingering sickness or by the awful hand of human justice, bethinks him of the eternal power; and even, if he joins in no external forms of devotion and supplication, yet says in his heart, 'I am a sinner; God be merciful, and forgive me.' The Atheist himself,

LECT. IV. almost uniformly, as death approaches, feels the force of nature too much for him; he sinks into terror, or melts into penitence, and, in both states, gives the lie to his speculations, abandons the questionable deductions of his oft-sophisticated and sophisticating understanding, and commits himself to the natural impulses of the deeper, surer, law of his heart, which proclaims, by its spontaneous emotions, that his opinions have been factitious, but that nature is true, because it is of God.

What is here stated would admit of extensive confirmation by facts on record.* But my appeal must be made to them in the general. We cannot enter upon particular cases. In these extremities, to which I have alluded, infidels are generally known to pray or fear, though often ashamed to have the real state of their heart discovered.

This fact very general.

I believe the facts stated thus generally are nearly, perhaps, quite, universal; at all events, the very few exceptions, or apparent exceptions, in which there may be really no inward devout

* After the delivery of this Lecture, the particular fact here referred to was confirmed by Mr. W. Hone, formerly a well-known advocate of infidelity. Having heard the Lecture, he requested to speak with the author, and, in an interesting conversation, stated that such had once been his own experience, while in a state of infidelity, suffering under severe affliction, and supposing himself dying, he fell, involuntarily, into the attitude and the language of prayer to the Supreme Being.

recognition of a Supreme Being, but a total blank LECT. IV.
and negation of this class of our natural emotions, are not of any weight in the general estimate: for there are few laws, indeed, of our mental and moral system, to which there are not some real or apparent exceptions. But, if the case be so, as I have represented, then we might ask, whence is this universal propensity to call upon God, to reverence and fear his power, to seek his mercy, and take refuge in his goodness? It appears to exist in our nature, as really where revelation is not, as where it is. Now, could it be universal, if it were not deeply rooted in the constitution of man? How should it survive all the unpropitious influences of a sinful, unbelieving, godless life, and burst forth, at last, mightier than all the artificial restraints laid upon it, by those habits which become a second nature, if it were not founded in a moral law, and if it did not emanate from what we call *nature?* And, then, finally, how should the existence, the appearance, the ultimate confession, and development of this principle, or bias of our nature, be predicted and described, as a triumph of God and truth over a rebellious heart, but by his inspiration, which could alone foresee the effect, under all circumstances, of that mysterious, mental, and moral mechanism, which he at first instituted in rectitude, but whose very aberrations demonstrate the divine authority of the word that foretells them? In all this we can perceive nothing new or strange

LECT. IV. to the divine word. It happens, in human experience, just as the sacred authority says it should happen. "As I live, every knee shall bow to me." Though the fool says, in his heart, "there is no God," yet he is found, at the last, inconsistent with himself.

"Men may live fools; but fools they cannot die."

Scripture foreshows these facts.

So the sacred testimony clearly and boldly avows, that men of all classes and characters, when they come to their troubles and extremities, make him, whom they had contemned and neglected, their last resource, often, indeed, in vain, as to the attainment of any real pacification of the agitated spirit. But, still, the fact itself shows the supreme power the Creator retains over the spirit of man; it demonstrates the truth of his word, which declares, that, sooner or later, for mercy or for judgment, every tongue shall confess that He is righteous. The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmities, but a wounded spirit, who can bear? When they are at their wit's end, then they cry to the Lord in their trouble. What, then, have we, in this fact, but a striking, a most convincing, verification of that word, which, throughout, foresees, and predicts it all, saying, "all flesh shall know that I am God;" and, again, "be sure your sin shall find you out;" and, again, "in the day of their trouble they will say, arise, and save us;" and many similar scriptures.

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7. *Doctrine of a Future Life.*

Future life.

We may find another illustration of the coincidence of revelation with the facts of our spiritual constitution, in reference to moral probation and final accountableness, or the dependence of a future life upon our character and conduct in this.

The doctrine of a future life, and of a state of reward or suffering in it, is clearly laid down in the sacred word. This is one of the fundamental doctrines which it is designed to teach. But, as preparatory to this final consummation, it represents, that men are placed, in the present life, under a system of discipline and trial, calculated to give scope for the exercise of their moral properties and endowments; and that, as there is a connexion between their conduct, as industrious, prudent, and persevering, or the reverse, and their temporal well-being, so there is an inseparable connexion between their good or ill conduct, morally considered, and their enjoyment or suffering here, and their reward or punishment hereafter. It is, moreover, stated to be an essential part of the system, that there should be temptations to evil, trial, and self-denial in the path of virtue, with the strong inducements addressed to a rational and accountable nature, of pleasing the Supreme Moral Governor, and thereby securing his favour and blessing. A great part of the sacred word is occupied with exhibiting the motives which should deter from sinning, and excite our diligence in the cultivation of those

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dispositions, and practice of those duties, which tend to secure, both the approbation of our own consciences, and the promised reward of eternal life. These general principles are copiously illustrated in the lives and struggles, the triumphs and honours, of the righteous. Hence we are taught, that our future felicity is dependent on the exercise of our natural and moral powers in the particular circumstances of temptation and trial, in which all are placed, and that, in fact, if we act in one way, we shall inevitably bring guilt, remorse, and future suffering upon ourselves; and, if we act in another way, we shall as certainly secure peace, self-approval, happiness, and hope here, and immortal honour hereafter.

Analogy of the doctrine.

This system of trial and probation is perfectly analogous to that of which all are conscious, and which all admit to be in operation in reference to temporal concerns. We are quite sure, that a certain line of conduct promotes and secures success and comfort, to such a degree, at least, as is necessary for our temporal welfare; that a contrary course injures our reputation, undermines our health, and brings on want and misery. Hence there is a course of education and discipline, requisite for the formation of proper habits in youth, uniformly enforced by parental government, by the relations of society, and the influence of human laws. This may be called a system of temporal government, founded on the laws and principles of our nature, and having its root in

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self-interest. This, therefore, renders it highly probable, that there should be a parallel system in reference to the higher relations and interests of our souls. The history of mankind every where shows, that they are conscious of such a principle. They evince, more or less, a recognition of it.

Bible asserts a moral government and future life.

The Bible declares, that there is such a system; that the whole life of man here is a state of preparatory trial; that he is exposed to various sufferings, afflictions, temptations, all through life, that he may have his dispositions, moral sentiments, and affections excited and improved, and have, at last, the honour of triumphing over the seductions of evil, and maintaining his integrity, submission, and faith, or suffer the shame and the attendant retribution of an unfaithful, disobedient, and ungrateful son. Now, as to the general exhibition of these principles in the volume of revelation, there can be no material difference of opinion. I have stated them very briefly, and without specific reference, because, to give a complete view of all the important principles there laid down, in reference to these subjects, would require more space than can here be allotted to them. Such is the Biblical system, in the main. Every man is placed under the same moral economy. He is at liberty to act right or wrong. He has a law written upon his heart, or a law written in the book, or he has both; and, when both are compared, they are found minutely to correspond. He is placed in a world where there are various

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inducements, chiefly of sense, to do evil, and of reason and conscience to do right. He is forewarned, that a great disturbance has taken place among his moral powers, and that passion often interposes between conscience and volition, especially in reference to his higher and more sacred duties and relations, and that, because his nature has thus become prone to do wrong, he will find need to reinforce the authority of conscience, by prayer to the Supreme Being, and by availing himself of the very best instructor within his power, as well as by submitting himself to the corrective discipline of providence, as to all his temporal interests and personal feelings, If, then, this is, in brief, the system verbally exhibited in the Book of Revelation, let us inquire whether it is confirmed by the facts of our consciousness and experience. That such is the true system under which we are placed, may be evinced by an appeal to history, and by a reference to our own feelings. If it were not a true and thorough account of the moral nature and circumstances of man, then it would be contradicted by experience. But, instead of this, the more human experience is examined, the more does it confirm the statement. And, although some men have endeavoured to establish opposite views, or to show, that there are facts in human experience which contradict this system of the Bible, yet they have signally failed, and have frequently been constrained, after more mature consideration,

Confirmed by facts.

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to confess that things are precisely as revelation has described them. We are not anxious to deny that there are some unexplained, some mysterious circumstances connected with the Biblical theory, but then we find, that if we set aside this statement, the same inexplicable circumstances remain; no theory can mitigate or remove them. They remain inexplicable in our experience and our philosophy, as well as in our religion. They are placed by revelation to the account of the yet undeveloped part of the scheme of providence, and the imperfection of our knowledge, of which we cannot but have the deep consciousness, in reference to the moral system, when we feel it so powerfully in reference to the natural. If, then, these difficulties remain, whatever theory we adopt, they form no valid objection to the authority of the sacred word, especially since that assures us, they will be all cleared up, or so far, at least, as is necessary for our rational satisfaction, when the consummation of the divine plan is attained; and that, in the mean time, it is no unreasonable demand upon such imperfect beings, conscious, as they must be, of a gradual melioration in their views and sentiments, on subjects incomparably less complicated, that they should await the maturity of their own knowledge, and the full development of the divine plan.

Irrespective, therefore, of these considerations, we are entitled to assume and appropriate every thing which is apparent in human history and

Human consciousness confirms the testimony.

LECT. IV. experience. Now, upon this ground, we appeal to every one's consciousness, that he has experience of inward tendencies, both to good and evil; that he possesses and exercises an independent choice, in reference to actions of both these characters; that he views himself and others with alternate blame or approbation, as actions appear to have been good or ill; that he cannot avoid applauding or condemning, as the case may be; that he perceives himself often allured to actions, which his reason tells him are essentially wrong, and which his conscience assures him will bring pain and harm, after the temporary pleasure which they may now produce; and, on the other hand, that he often feels inducements to good actions, which he is prevented from doing by some selfish or sensual end which interposes; and that, when he overcomes evil inducements, and yields to the dictates of conscience, he attains a satisfaction and a pleasure of the highest and purest kind. Moreover, he is, and must be, sensible, that there is a moral discipline to which he is subject, since he has, in passing through life, found his moral habits gradually improved or deteriorated, and the power of conscience increased or diminished. All this, therefore, shows a nature, in the first place, endowed with such powers as Scripture represents; and, in the next place, adapted altogether to the external circumstances of life and the world, and fitted to form habits and sentiments of a good or evil character, according as

he has been inwardly disposed. In all this, it LECT. IV. is impossible to separate from ourselves and others the idea of virtue and vice, praise and blame, just as it is in reference to any action or habit which relates only to our temporal affairs. We constantly hear men praising or blaming human conduct, in reference both to private and public affairs, bearing on secular and temporal interests, and they may always fairly do so, wherever actions are the results of choice; but this implies a system of free agency and responsibility, which, admitted in one department of our actions, cannot be denied in another; and, applied to temporal interests, which are lower, cannot be excluded from the spiritual, which are higher, and which have a more direct reference to conscience and a future state.

All men conscious of a moral nature.

This analogy being admitted, of necessity, we readily find every thing in our experience corresponding with the system of the sacred word. We are conscious of the influences of temptation and the dictates of conscience; we intuitively feel that there is a distinction between virtue and vice, in most cases, of easy discrimination; we feel a necessary reference to the laws of natural and moral obligation; we perceive that our moral sentiments are subject to habit, and that this is founded in our constitution; we perceive that the good or ill of life has an influence upon our character, makes us better or worse, and, as we improve or degenerate in our moral sentiments

LECT. IV. and feelings, we cannot help praising or blaming ourselves, and doing the same towards others. This, then, is nature, human experience, and consciousness, corroborating, in every respect, the system laid down in the divine word.

General sense of responsibility.

It only remains to observe, that the doctrine of a future life seems to be connected, both by reason and nature, with the general conviction of our responsibility. It is, to say the least, more probable, as an inference from the system to which we have here adverted, than the contrary; and it appears in perfect harmony with that partial and occasional retribution, which all perceive and admit to be going on, by the ordinary laws of our constitution. Where revelation is unknown, this has been the consummation uniformly anticipated, under some form or other, as inseparable from the condition in which men perceive themselves to be placed, and the moral sentiments they find uniformly developed in their experience. To this sublime issue they do always, and, it appears, must always, look, as the only reasonable inference from their consciousness, their endowments, and their circumstances. All attempts to persuade them to the contrary are found ineffectual, because they are against the inward dictates of nature, and consist of appeals to their reason, by doubtful or negative arguments, irrespective of the laws of their constitution, and the facts of their experience. They cannot but believe a future life possible, from what they experience, and can judge, both of the stages they pass through in this life, and from what they witness in the consciences and deaths of others; and they cannot but infer it probable, from what they feel in their own conscience, and from what they perceive of the incompleteness of God's moral system of government without it. Here all nations, and all men, the few only excepted whose judgment is sophisticated by the perplexities of their reason, conceive a future state of reward and punishment to be, at least, highly probable. This uniformity prevails, even where there is no revelation to suggest the notion. What could lead to it so generally, if it were not an original moral instinct of our nature? Reason itself seems to enforce it, as a natural and necessary conception. In this point, then, as well as in all the others before noticed, there is a remarkable agreement between our natural sentiments and the statements of revelation—a coincidence strongly marked.

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8. *Doctrine of Substitution.*

Substitution.

We proceed to point out another particular, in which, we think, a highly interesting and important coincidence appears between the doctrines of revelation and the actual system of the divine moral government, as we experience it in ourselves, and witness it in the world. That is, in the doctrines of mediation, substitution, and imputation. There are, perhaps, no doctrines of

LECT. IV. Scripture which have been subject to more cavil and misrepresentation than these. Some professed Christians have endeavoured to criticise them out of the sacred books, while some infidels have found them so thoroughly interwoven with the whole scheme, as to make them their chief reasons for rejecting revelation altogether. How little ground the Socinian has for denying that these doctrines are in the sacred books, may be inferred from the conduct of the infidel, who rejects the books because he finds these doctrines so prominent in every part of them.

We may leave these parties, however, to settle this matter between themselves, and proceed to admit, at once, that the case is just as the infidel objector supposes. The christian church, at large, agrees, that he may find them there, and that they are too obvious, too prominent, and too much interwoven with the whole theory of the Bible, ever to be extracted or obliterated. This is not the place for exposing the arrogant and presumptuous assertions of those critics, who would expunge them from the christian revelation, by explaining all the allusions to them as mere figures of speech, or unmeaning references to a ceremonial economy that has passed away. It may be sufficient to observe, in reference to the treacherous conduct of such professed advocates of revealed religion, that the only reason which could ever justify the introduction of such doctrines into the ceremonial and typical dispensation, must be their reality; and the only reason that can justify such frequent allusions to them, by the writers of the New Testament, must be that same reality.

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As to the objection of the unbeliever, who rejects revelation because he finds the doctrine of mediation and substitution prominently set forth, as one of its chief inculcations, we have admitted the fact, but now proceed to deny the validity of the objection derived from it. And here we refer him back to nature, his own experience, and the system of moral government, which he admits and observes in operation. Objections.

Now this doctrine, or these doctrines, of mediation, substitution, and imputation, are the things repudiated and condemned, as if they were most unnatural, unreasonable, and unjust; and yet, when they are brought into comparison with the actual system of things and beings around us, when they are analysed, and their true import ascertained, it will appear, that they are neither so peculiar to revelation, nor so incongruous with nature, and the general system of providence, as many would represent. For it is abundantly obvious, that the principle of mediation and vicariousness does obtain in nearly all the relations of social life. We neither come into existence, nor are preserved in life, nor take our places in society, nor form our characters, without mediators. Men are, every where and always, connected with others in such a way, as to be the Reply.

LECT. IV. better or worse for their virtues or vices, their wisdom or folly, their prudence or imprudence. We may every where trace the effects of actions, falling, for good or evil, upon those who were no way concerned in them. Men are also constantly rescued, intentionally, by their fellow-men, from the consequences of their own misconduct, and when they had lost all power of saving themselves from the effects of their own vice or folly. The innocent frequently suffer for the guilty. The children bear the consequences of the parent's vice, imprudence, and extravagance; and, sometimes, the consequences extend through successive generations. Subjects continually suffer in their property, their persons, and their lives, through the ambition, injustice, or profligacy of their rulers. Or, on the other hand, through all these relations, we derive the most precious benefits from the wisdom, or virtue, or generosity of others, who have the power of affecting our condition.

Illustration. For the sake of illustration, we may take a particular case; say, of a man, who has a family around him, and depending on him. He has, by his misconduct, deprived himself of the means of obtaining support. By his vices, he has reduced himself to a state of debility and disease, and his family to wretchedness, which urges them to some vicious courses for their daily bread; or, if they are yet young and innocent, still they suffer with the guilty. Here is clear imputation of the effects of crime, where there was no implication in its guilt. Now, if we suppose no mediator to intervene here, all these unhappy sufferers might perish through the crime of one man. Or, suppose the case of a captain, having numerous lives depending upon his skill and care in guiding the ship; but, through the vice of drunkenness in him alone, the vessel is lost, and the whole crew perishes. Here, again, the innocent suffer with the guilty. Here is substitution. But we will return to the former supposition, for the sake of drawing out the analogy a little further, in a way natural, and, happily, not unusual. In the wretched situation, to which we have imagined a vicious man and his family reduced, we often find mediation. Conceive, that at the critical conjuncture we have represented, some charitable and benevolent observer casts his eye upon him. Compassion moves him, we say, to consider what can be done for the salvation of the family. If he possesses the means, he may at once administer opportune relief. But he may not be able to command the means; or there may be difficulties of a moral kind in the way of effectually and permanently serving the wretched family. If he has not means of his own, yet he can become a mediator, on their behalf, with some others. Suppose he first procures, through his intercession, some kind physician for those that are diseased, and thereby health is restored; next, he solicits and obtains money, to relieve their immediate wants, and save them from the horrors of

LECT. IV. starvation. But the kind mediator does more. By his instruction, and kind advice, he convinces the unhappy father of the folly and wickedness of that course, which has led to such misery. He induces him to resolve upon a change of conduct. But, at this point, he finds that he must carry his mediation still further. The reformed man has no means of turning his talents to any profit, for he has lost his character. No one will employ him, no one will trust him. The benefactor becomes his surety, or intercedes with some one to take him into their employ, or lends him capital to commence business for himself; here is mediation, suretyship, substitution, again. Perhaps, he even becomes a bondsman for him; and thus he saves the man, and all his family, from destruction. Happily, this is not a merely imaginative description. Now, no man would dare to pronounce such facts unnatural, irrational, or inhuman. Nay, on the contrary, nature urges us to act just in this way towards each other. It would, therefore, be more natural than a contrary line of conduct; and that it is not more common, is not owing to any want of force in our natural feelings, but to the fear, that such kindness might, in the main, be abused, and become abortive; could we ensure the happy issue, we should, perhaps, always act thus in similar cases. These happy effects have all arisen out of compassion mediation, substitution. Will any one say, then, that the *principle* of mediation is irrational and

absurd? Will any one say, that the doctrines LECT. IV.
of Scripture, in reference to human redemption, have no foundation in the system of moral government, actually in operation, or that they find no type in our common nature? Will any one venture to say, that suretyship, substitution, and imputation, have not all a place in the temporal part of the providential scheme? and, if not, then, who shall dare to pronounce, that they ought to have no place in the religious and spiritual department of that same scheme? or, that the detection of them, is a valid objection to the scheme of religion in which they appear? Further, will any one say, that the universal prevalence of these doctrines in their principle, through all the systems of religion which men, destitute of revelation, have devised for themselves, is not a proof, that the abstract idea of vicariousness accords with our moral feelings, and with the entire scheme of providence and our social relations? He must, indeed, be a perverse and blind objector, who can make these doctrines a ground of hostility to Scripture, while he sees and applauds them as they appear in his nature, and in every branch of the social economy.

Illustration might be multiplied.

It will be obvious, that we might go on to illustrate the existence and operation of these principles, in a great variety of actual instances. God appears to have implicated them with the whole system of his moral government. The doctrine attaches as really to our mental constitu-

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tion, and the system of society, as to the system of our faith.

Not absolutely necessary to reconcile this doctrine with divine justice.

We are not called upon, here, to reconcile these facts with our conceptions of the supreme goodness and justice, or with the notion of a perfect moral government. It is not necessary that we should be able to do so, in order to render our present argument complete. Suppose it impossible to do so, no valid argument thence arises against the existence of a moral government, because it is a mere argument, from our ignorance of the divine plan. It is quite certain we understand that plan but very imperfectly. It is evidently a scheme, at present, but partially exhibited. Its full development must take place, before we can form a just and comprehensive judgment. Our chief concern in this argument, and what I exclusively aim at, is to show, that revelation has, even in its more peculiar doctrines, substitution, and atonement, and, in the intervention of our Divine Mediator, brought to light, and presented to our faith, nothing that can justly startle our reason, or induce the suspicion of discrepancy between its doctrines, and those laws that appear in our moral constitution, and the general government of the world.

Coincidence with our experience all here required.

Here, then, on the one hand, we find things, in the experience of mankind, are so and so. It cannot be denied: the innocent suffer for the guilty, in every relation of life; the criminal are constantly saved by the goodness of others.

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Substitution meets us every where, in social life, and in providence.

Then, not only does this great doctrine, as found in the sacred word, supply no valid objection to the inspiration of Scripture, but its entire coincidence with what forms a striking and universal feature in the system of providence and our mental economy, proves a strong recommendation, and affords another test of the identity of the authorship, both of nature and the Bible; and such a test, as it may well be believed, from its very complexity, delicacy, and dignity, no imposture could ever afford.

General conclusion of the argument of this Lecture.

Thus, in all the particulars now brought under review, Scripture is verified by the sentiments men spontaneously form, showing, that those laws of our moral constitution, upon which these sentiments uniformly depend, do so minutely correspond with the sentiments inculcated by the sacred volume, that both must have a common author. No other, no contrary theory, does comport with our entire experience and history; and, therefore, all such must be rejected as imperfect and deceptive. The Bible theory corresponds with natural reason and conscience, and that most perfectly, allowance being made for the disordered state of our nature, which, indeed, does not so properly require any allowance, as supply a more complex, intricate, and minute verification, in one most momentous particular, (I mean the actual existence of moral evil,) which no other theory

LECT. IV. can harmonize and explain. That which has proved the wreck of all other systems, and must ever prove so, furnishes an infallible and triumphant criterion of the only true and divine one.

LECTURE V.

THE SCRIPTURAL SCHEME FOR THE UNIVERSAL RECOVERY OF MANKIND TO VIRTUE AND HAPPINESS, TRIED BY ITS ADAPTATION AND ACTUAL SUCCESS.

The Bible proposes the redemption and recovery of mankind—Exhibits the means—Assures the result—The only religion that ever proposed to effect such an object—This purpose grand and worthy of God—The scheme, as exhibited, displays a universal character and adaptation—Perfection of its standard of morals and piety universally admitted—Objections against its divinity—Representations of the Neologists—Divinity of the gospel proved from its character—Corroborated by its practical application and advancing triumphs.

General aspect of revelation remedial.

We conceive that another department of proof, on behalf of the Sacred Scripture, is to be traced in the general aspect of its revelations, on the subject of the recovery of man from his fallen and apostate state, his return to God, his recovery of divine knowledge, his restoration to

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sound morality, inward harmony, social order, and immortal happiness. We design here to show, that the Bible contains a scheme peculiar to itself, the professed object of which is, to supply an effectual antidote to the misery which transgression has introduced, in all its extent, and in all its malignity; and that this scheme, accomplished and brought to bear, does answer its proposed purpose, and that nothing else does; that, therefore, nothing can be wanting but its universal prevalence and reception, to remedy, to the full extent required, all the evils under which human nature has been suffering from the earliest times, and to restore it to all the joys it has forfeited.

The argument stated.

The analysis of the argument here intended to be illustrated, may be thus stated:—The Bible claims the merit of exhibiting, and bringing to perfection, a very peculiar, and, in many respects, a mysterious process, which it introduces as of divine origination and appointment; and that this same authority proposes and provides certain moral means and expedients, to which it attaches the very highest efficiency and importance, and which it alleges will, when used in the way prescribed, become the infallible means of effecting the most desirable, and the most happy of changes upon human nature. Thus, the whole scheme of revelation, upon this subject, presents the gospel as a medicine, or remedy, the value of which is to be subjected to trial, and the virtue

of which is to be tested by experience. If it can be shown that the results fully justify and vindicate the pretensions of Christianity, then the argument will be valid, in favour of its divine origin. The pretensions being inseparably connected with its high source, and its effect, also, being uniformly represented as dependent upon its divinity, these must invariably go together. Our object, at present, therefore, will be to expand and illustrate the general statement.

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It will be admitted, on all hands, that the Bible does propose a scheme of human salvation, signifying, by that term, the moral renovation of the heart, and the attainment of inward moral harmony, external holiness, or virtue, and the final attainment of everlasting life; all of which are represented as forfeited by the first apostasy. The announcement and execution of this plan are to be traced to the very first intimations in which it was seminally contained, and from which, as from its earliest germ, the whole has been gradually and slowly evolved, until the matured fruit has been presented, in all its richness, to mankind. Now, here it will be necessary to present a brief outline of what the Bible scheme of salvation professes to do, allowing that, in the first place, the main object of revelation is the restoration of human nature to the favour of God, to moral rectitude, to happiness, and immortality; and then it will be necessary to meet some objections and representations, which would,

LECT. V. in different ways, tend to invalidate its divine authority.

What the Bible proposes and predicts.

Let it, then, be conceded, that the Bible explicitly proposes, and does even confidently predict, a general and thorough recovery of mankind; does hold forth the most flattering and joyous hopes, and does pledge its own pretensions to divinity, on the result of effecting such a change in human nature: and, what is a still further venture, which we imagine could never have been made by any impostor, and very unlikely to have been seriously made by any simply human and uninspired author, that every individual, who will fairly, frankly, and heartily try its proffered remedies, shall realize, in his own experience, all that is proposed to be effected. Let us, then, examine its character, in reference to the main object at which it aims.

The restoration of our nature.

This agency, which the Bible brings to our notice, promises to supply an antidote to the vices, and, in a great measure, to the miseries of the world. It proposes to restore the violated harmony of our nature, and again to reconcile flesh and spirit, without destroying, without impairing, and without unnaturalizing either.

Sublimity of the design.

This system comes forward with the commanding, the exclusive, pretension to divinity and universality. It cannot be denied, that there is an air of grandeur, a high sublimity of conception, a lofty majesty of purpose, in the project of a universal system of moral improvement and

happiness, surpassing any anticipation, certainly any systematic plan or arrangement, of human wisdom. The gospel is the only religion that ever came forward, so far as we know, with such a purpose professed and pledged; and, in this respect, its design is as bold, as its object is benevolent; while its means are as simple and practicable, as its end is unprecedented and sublime. This, alone, should court inquiry, and inspire candour towards such a purpose. A religion that professed less benevolence, would have wanted a most important guarantee of divinity; and one that should have been adjusted, or, by its essential nature, restricted, to a narrower sphere of operation, would not have harmonized with all the other plans and systems of the Almighty. Limitation is characteristic of a finite nature; universality belongs alone to God. It is a quality which can attach to no plans but those of an infinite mind, and wherever it does properly and fully attach, there we possess no mean demonstration of the same divine authorship, as reveals itself in the whole, and in every separate part, of universal nature.

No human intelligence could have conceived such a scheme.

Is it any presumption to say, that no human intelligence could have devised a system of religion equally adapted to all mankind; one every way worthy of such a designation, when it is notorious, that we have attained to no such system upon any subject. A universal system of philosophy, we have not even sketched, much less

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filled up. A universal system, in any one department, such as medicine, astronomy, chemistry, or mind, we possess not. We are not even near such a perfect analysis on subjects confessedly within the sphere of our observation.

How hopeless, therefore, must it be, on so wide, so deep, so mysterious a subject as religion; comprehending not only our present, but our past condition, and stretching out into all the darkness and infinity of the future; implicating, not only ourselves, in all the variety of our circumstances, and in the most subtle and delicate part of our nature, but the Deity, in his peerless perfections, his sovereign rights, his extensive government, his deep counsels, and his vast designs.

A universal religion.

But here, in the gospel, is professedly presented to the world a universal system of religion; one that risks all its reputation on its fitness to this end; that challenges the most minute and severe scrutiny on its adaptation to man as he is, and on the desirableness of what it proposes to make him; that even stakes its veracity, and pledges all its pretensions on the consummation of ultimately becoming universal.

What such a religion must contain.

Now, although we hold it to be impossible for any human judgment accurately and fully to divine beforehand, what such a religion ought to include, just as it was impossible for us primarily to originate such a religion; yet there are certain qualities which, we might fairly presume, it must possess, and certain rules to be laid down which

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may materially aid us in estimating its pretensions as divine, and its adaptation to our common nature.

Must be adapted to all the varieties of the race.

For instance, the human race presents some considerable varieties. I allude to these for the sake of observing, that the scheme of the gospel is minutely adapted to the universal characteristics of mankind; it is adapted to them, in all the varieties of which they are susceptible, through the whole race. It is not an adaptation in the gross, admitting possible exceptions, as to a general rule, but it is an adaptation in *detail*, perfect alike to each individual, and numerically to the whole. Whether it can be physically proved that black and white, red and brown, copper-colour and yellow, all sprang originally from one pair, or not, of this we are sure, that there never has been found, yet, a human being of any colour, but Christianity was adapted to engage and regulate, to delight and ennoble, all the faculties of his mind.

There is not known any emotion of the rational soul, but the gospel can sustain, or control, or dignify it; there is not a fear that disturbs any human breast, but the gospel is fitted to assuage or subdue it; there is not a hope that throbs in our bosoms, nor an aspiration or desire we entertain, but the gospel either gratifies or corrects it. It has for all the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. What

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a parental aspect does it present towards all men! What a powerful discipline does it establish! What a helping or correcting hand does it extend to each! What a fountain of living waters does it unseal to our thirsty spirits! What a light does it cast over all the past! What an insight does it afford into all the future! There is not a sin that defiles, or degrades, or torments us, but this gospel can effectually correct and pardon. There is not a virtuous emotion of any kind, arising out of any circumstance or relation, common or peculiar to any period of life, but it cherishes, elevates, and perfects. Show us but a human form and nature, in any clime, of any colour, in any state of weal or woe, elevation or depression, and we show you a religion as exquisitely adapted to the whole compass and condition of that being, as light to the organ of the eye, or sound to the ear, or air to the lungs.

Must display perfect knowledge of our moral condition.

It is, moreover, essentially necessary, that any system, pretending to universal adaptation, should display the most comprehensive, penetrating, and perfect knowledge of our nature, in all its various phases and conditions.

This the gospel unquestionably does. It fully apprehends the grandeur and meanness which combine in man; and, what is unspeakably to its honour, it exhibits and explains the cause and theory of both. Christianity alone, of all systems, knows us as the most eager after happiness, yet,

really, the most miserable; ever pursuing after the endless and the infinite, yet always painfully conscious of our distance. LECT. V.

Moreover, Christianity is attempered to all our grades of intellect, and all our stages of improvement; to all our inward biases that are rational, and all our outward occupations and indulgences that are lawful. It is equally fitted to the soaring intellect of the sage, and the dawning intelligence of the child. It humbles the proud, and raises the depressed; it cherishes the good in us that is weak, and expels the evil that is potent.

Must exhibit what rational piety is.

Again, this is the only system that ever placed the essence of piety in love to God, and that ever instructed man to beg of God the power of obeying and loving him. While it teaches most impressively, that there is a God, and what sort of a God the only true God is, at the same time it enforces the unwelcome, indeed, but yet the wholesome truth, that such are the corruptions of man's nature, that he is unworthy, both of the knowledge and favour of God, and incapable of loving and serving him adequately. To live ignorant of the one or the other of these truths, is alike fatal to our peace and renovation. To apprehend God, without the knowledge of our misery and dependence, generates the pride of philosophers; and to know our own misery, but not the merciful author of our salvation, plunges us into the despair of heathens and atheists. Both these conditions are unnatural, irreconcilable with

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our aspirations, and inimical to our true and permanent felicity.

Man is every where, by a deep necessity of nature, a religious being; he must have some sort of religion. In the absence of the true one, he uniformly fabricates one for himself. Nothing short of religion can meet the requirements of his nature. He is all unblest, when blest the most with earthly felicity, if this ingredient is left out of his cup; and if this be but in it, he feels himself supremely happy, whatever else he lacks.

Must comport with all truth, and with all nature.

In brief, we say, the gospel-scheme of renovation comports with all the principles of known and admitted truth, with all nature, all providence; with the intellectual and moral constitution, the entire reason and consciousness of mankind; and, what forms a not less valuable indication of its divine origin, with all the other plans and works of the Almighty. Not one of the known varieties of mankind, not one of the possible circumstances, not any of the diversities of personal character, social relation, or political condition, can be pleaded as a fair exception, or alleged as a case beyond the sphere of its benediction and adaptation.

Its instrumentality must be worthy of the cause, and of the Divine Agent.

Moreover, it is important to observe, that, in a religion aiming at universality, all the means, and motives, and instrumentality it either employs or sanctions, must be suited to the nature for which it is designed, and adapted to the exclusive

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end it proposes; while it must be every way honourable to the supreme authority, on which it professes to take its stand. On these grounds, then, we again aver, that Christianity is worthy of becoming the universal religion. It can pass, and it does pass, most honourably, through this test; and it is the only religion that can pass it; for it is the only one, all whose means and motives are alike rational and pure, adjusted with infinite skill to the nature of man, yet every way worthy the supreme authority to adopt and employ.

Illustrated in various particulars.

Its appeal to man is at once dignified and independent; persuasive, but not cringing; earnest, but not mean; justly severe, yet graciously condescending. God holds the relation of a Father, but, at the same time, that of universal and Supreme Rector. There is not a representation, in the whole of revelation, that does not appear worthy of him in the one or other of these characters. The gospel preserves the dignity, yet fully expresses the benevolence, of the divine nature.

Its paternal character.

It exhibits, indeed, a parent's outraged authority, but combined with all the melting tenderness of a parent. It clothes itself with the unspotted robe of eternal justice, but its voice is the voice of infinite love and everlasting mercy. It excludes no man from its consolations, who desires and seeks them, but it courts none by flattery, none for the mere sake of proselytism, none for its own honour, or the mere object of extension,

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but all for their own improvement, felicity, and salvation.

Pure motives and high authority.

It employs no secular inducements, gives no liberty to the corruptions of the heart, and makes no provision for any of the works of the flesh. It sacrifices no truth, even for the sake of success. Its inflexible purity, its high standard of morals, its stern regard to justice, rather revolts than entices the natural heart, and rather awakens than soothes the prejudices of human nature. And this, surely, is nothing to its discredit, but rather to be construed in favour of its divine authority; since, upon its own assumption, mankind are in a state of alienation and defection from God. If they are in such a state of revolt as the gospel assumes, then it necessarily follows, that their recovery to moral rectitude, submission, and order, implies humiliation and repentance.

Repulsive to lapsed subjects.

The requisite enforcement of the divine authority cannot, at first, be acceptable. If man were not in a state of moral hostility to God, he would need no gospel; and, if he is, then any true gospel must necessarily enforce what is unpalatable to the revolted nature. While, therefore, it assumes the fact, of which we are ourselves conscious, it acts consistently, in presenting itself as the physician, and representing our nature as the patient under its hand. Nothing is more evident, upon the face of the evangelical scheme, than its feature of dignity and sovereign independence, apart from every thing like indifference, and yet accompanied

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with the most comprehensive and condescending pity. Still it neither dreads nor dissembles that repugnance in the human heart, which it distinctly foresees and foretells.

Characters of false theories of religion.

Human fabricators of a religious system would have studied to produce one more lenient to human weakness, more attractive to man, *as he is*, more *politic* in its provisions. They would especially have guarded against every thing like a provocation, or open daring of human hostility. They always have done so; herein they have betrayed the feeble policy of human wisdom; they were constrained to do so. They could do no otherwise, and no less; for human policy and power must always calculate the possibilities of their achievements, by the nature of the materials on which they have to work. The divine wisdom and power are free from such limitations, and can make all materials and natures bend to the supreme purpose.

Christianity contrasted with them.

Hence Christianity nobly asserts its proper dignity and independence. Strong in the confidence of its divine origin, and resting upon the ample evidence of this fact, it has dared, at the outset, to unveil the whole amount of human criminality; to hold up the spotless mirror of truth before its face, and to cite it, as a rebel, before the divine tribunal of its Creator. It boldly affirms more evil, and worse evil, of man, than he is disposed to believe of himself, and pronounces his situation more guilty and desperate

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than he is willing to admit. It demands nothing short of a full admission of the most unwelcome facts, a frank confession of guilt and apostasy, and a cordial reception of the most humbling, but wholesome truths; yet, in effecting its ends, it treats man as altogether an intellectual and spiritual being, and demands nothing of him, but what he should feel to be eminently a reasonable service. In addressing itself constantly to the understanding and the heart, it repudiates consistently, and with divine dignity, all that instrumentality by which human laws are maintained, or by which false religions have been propagated. It attaches no merit, and attributes no virtue, to ritual or mechanical performances. It demands the heart: when that is surrendered, it is content; its object is gained. A divine religion could ask no less; but no human system would have dared to ask, or ever did ask, *so much*. They have been contented with a verbal confession, and an external conformity. Moreover, it should be observed, that Christianity stands aloof from all the elements of worldly dominion. It sanctions no physical coercion, neither does it employ conquest, or political machinery of any sort. If men do not perceive, or will not admit, the evidence by which it proves its divinity, and enforces its requirements, at that point it leaves them, throwing all responsibility upon themselves. It has no other instrumentality to employ. It magnanimously disdains

Reasonableness of its demands.

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all other. Could it command those resources of human policy and power, by which, at once, all nations of the world might be constrained to an external conformity with its creed, without a renewal of the inner man, it would not deign to use them; because its great end, its spiritual consummation, could not thereby be advanced, and because such an agency would be altogether alien from reason, love, and goodness. The standard of moral excellence which it establishes, the principles of religious duty which it inculcates, the patterns it exhibits, the hopes it inspires, the consolations it administers, the doctrines it teaches, and the benedictions it every where pours down upon our suffering and prostrate nature, admit of no improvement, no augmentation, no refinement. We can detect nothing deficient, nothing redundant. Even the most penetrating, sublime, and spiritual imagination, can conceive of nothing surpassing it; I do not say, as a whole, merely, but in every *item* of that whole. What could be added, that would not prove a deformity, or an incumbrance? What could be abstracted, that would not create a defect?

> "'Tis like the Cerulean arch we see,
> Majestic in its own simplicity."

Unrivalled in its general characteristics.

We may defy the world to produce a lovelier picture of what man ought to be; to conceive a fairer model for his imitation; or to supply a more appropriate and efficient agency to impel

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and move in harmony all the springs of his complicated and mysterious nature. Even the most malignant enemy dare not deny that, if every man were a true Christian, according to the evangelical standard, the world would, indeed, be blessed and regenerated. Our nature admits of nothing higher, nothing purer, nothing happier. But that it does admit of this, yea, of all this, innumerable facts testify. Christianity, therefore, is not a *Utopian* scheme, not a *beau ideal*, but a perfectly practicable system, applicable, yea, already applied, to a very considerable and most encouraging extent.

Objections considered.

It may here be deemed proper to notice some objections, which have been put forth against our general proposition, respecting the divine adaptation of the gospel to all mankind. A plausible argument has been drawn, from the comparative limitation of Christianity, against its divinity. It is argued, if it had been of God, it would have made more successful advances towards universality. Moreover, it is alleged, that, in vindication of its own pretensions, it ought to have put forth its divine energy, and attained the consummation which it predicts. Now, supposing nothing could be advanced to neutralize, or in any way extenuate, the admitted fact of comparative limitation, it would still be questionable, whether the inference drawn ought, in fairness, to follow. For the objection is not taken against the internal adaptation of the gospel to

Comparative limitation.

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universality, but against its divinity only, on account of insufficient practical extension. At best, then, this can be viewed and used only as a presumptive argument. It presumes what the Deity ought to have done with this free gift of his own grace. But does not analogy show, that it is perilous, not to say impious, for reason to presume to what extent the divine beneficence ought to be carried? For there is a manifest sovereignty in all the bestowments of the Creator. God has uniformly done with his free gifts, in nature, as in grace, just as it hath pleased him.

This only a presumptive argument.

But, if this objection is intended as a direct and positive argument against the divinity of the gospel, then it is not difficult to show that it is utterly powerless. It assumes that universality is necessary to prove divine authority. If so, it must be simply because Christianity has itself laid this down as such a test, since it could not certainly be deemed an essential proof of divinity. This would involve an absurdity, by requiring an impossibility; since it would assume, that Christianity should have been universal at its first announcement. But, in that case, there would be a superseding of all claim, and all need of rational proof. If it must be universal before it can be proved divine, then these objectors require the effect to precede the cause; and by demanding, that universality shall precede their belief in its divinity, they would require its universal reception to have taken place, before there could

Cannot be direct.

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have been, according to their views, any adequate proof that it was divine. Suppose all mankind to reason in the same way: 'we cannot believe Christianity to be divine, till it becomes universal;' and you exclude the possibility of its ever being received at all; or you expect the miracle of its universal reception, without adequate evidence. Thus all mankind would be reduced to the absurdity of saying, 'we will believe the gospel when it becomes universal; but we know it cannot be universally received, till it is first believed to be divine: so it can thus never become what we require it to become; because we demand, before its reception, what is only to be the result of its reception:'—which is absurd.

The objection may be viewed as modified.

But, supposing the objector to modify his argument, and admit that, at the outset of Christianity, there might be sufficient proof of divinity, without universality; but, that this not being afforded to us, we are justly entitled to demand that its success should *now* avouch its divinity. We should reply, that the same substantial evidence, somewhat varied, indeed, in its form, but, in other respects, augmented, is still afforded, as at first; and that universality, except as a fulfilment of prophecy, could add little or nothing to the proofs of divinity. God has admitted, in reference to all his gifts, the free exercise of human volition, and no objector ought to ask that this should be superseded. Universality alone, therefore, could be no adequate test

of truth; for what has ever been more general or more successful in the world than polytheism? amounting to that very universality which the objector would make an independent and adequate proof of divinity. Yet we see, in this case, to what a fatal error in reasoning it would lead. The fact is, universality, in reference to any system, is, *alone*, no test of truth. The requirement of it must, therefore, be abandoned, and proofs of another kind admitted to avouch its divinity.

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The supposition on which alone the objection would have been unanswerable.

There is only one supposition on which the want of universality could, at present, be alleged as a valid objection: that is, in case of its being predicted to take place within a given period. We allow, that had Christianity fixed a date for its universality, and had that date been clearly passed, without attaining the consummation, then the objection would have been irresistible, and Christianity would have forfeited its claim: but nothing of the kind is done. Christianity may not have attained that extension we might deem desirable, nor that we might have expected, but it has forfeited no proof of divinity; it has violated no pledge; though it has illustrated the fearful sovereignty of the Divine Author of all good, in permitting it thus far to be impeded, whether by the hostility of open enemies, or the treachery of professed friends. The limited spread alleged against it, cannot be shown to have arisen out of any deficiency in the system itself, any want of adaptation to mankind, or any restrictions

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imposed by its author. The fact of its partial dispersion may evidently have been compatible with its divinity, since it may have been permitted, for reasons similar to those which, though inaccessible to us, have suffered the existence of natural and moral evil, a fact which all theories are obliged to admit, as well as the Christian. The fact, therefore, itself, simply as a fact, is analogous to other admitted facts in the system of God's moral government.

The gospel at first universal.

It may be proper, moreover, to observe, that the gospel no where intimates that those, who have enjoyed no opportunities of becoming acquainted with its contents, will incur the responsibility annexed to a wilful and criminal rejection of its announcements. We might also remind all who stumble at its want of universality, that, from the very infancy of the world, it was openly and universally taught. The religion of Adam and Abel was essentially the religion of Jesus Christ; and to the antediluvians the gospel was preached as well as unto us: so that, as a remedy, it began to run parallel with our sins and sufferings, and was as certainly and sufficiently propagated to the first sinners as to ourselves. It has always been a universal boon, offered to the acceptance, and use, and salvation of all, as freely as the light of heaven, though always resisted and contemned.

Often re-published.

I will not detain you by attempting to show, historically, how often it has been re-published;

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how its light has been gradually increased, its evidences augmented, and its commission re-issued; all tending to prove that its author intended it for all men, and that, had his instructions been regarded, and his commands obeyed, it would not have lacked that universality which it has yet to achieve.

Another method of subverting the divine authority of the Bible.

But, before the argument arising from the universal character and adaptation of Christianity can be applied to the subject in hand, it will be incumbent upon us to meet another form of infidelity, by which it is audaciously attempted to disconnect the universal adaptation of Christianity from the other evidences of its divine origin, and to reduce it to the level of a human system.

Neology—what it concedes, and denies.

Now, though this theory neither denies the unrivalled excellence of the gospel, nor disputes its claim to pre-eminence and universality, to the exclusion of all other systems of religion; yet, by denying its divinity, this system greatly deteriorates the claim which the gospel otherwise possesses, and renders the hope of its becoming universal, highly precarious. Certainly it tends to quench, if not utterly to extinguish, the zeal and the faith which would aim to make it so. The modern system of *Anti-supernaturalism* may be described, in brief, as a scheme for harmonizing the undeniable superiority of the gospel with the rational solution of its mysteries, the excision of its miracles, and the flat denial of its divinity. This is the system of half-christianized infidelity,

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which, it is to be feared, prevails to a large extent among the scientific and literary men of all countries; and, what is more to be deplored, it is the *hybrid* kind of Christianity embraced and taught, but too commonly, in the Protestant churches of the Continent.

Contains different degrees of infidelity.

Neology, I admit, does not, in all cases, amount to quite so bold an invalidation of the divine origin of Christianity; but, in many instances, it literally avows what I have stated. It makes the whole affair of the Bible a mere matter of reason, from first to last. In all cases it resembles a foe that has set his face against the citadel, with the determination that it shall be reduced and levelled with the ground, though his forces may be in different degrees of approach against the main object of attack. The attempt, in every form, and in every part of the theory, is to reduce Christianity to mere rationalism, and whether it openly professes at once to make revelation appear altogether an effort of human reason, or whether it more insidiously sets up reason, as the supreme standard and final test of every thing revelation can be supposed to intend, the effect is nearly the same, and the issue, in both cases, is identical. The grand process attempted is, to exclude whatever has the semblance of divine intervention, miracle, or mystery. In the one way, divinity is rationalized; in the other, reason is defied; and, in both, the result is the same; human reason and divine authority are con-

Its result uniformly the same.

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founded or identified. When it has fully worked its way to the *ultimatum* it seeks, it issues in sheer and naked infidelity: for that which, step by step, disclaims every thing supernatural, and denies that any testimony or authority can avouch what is above reason, or beyond the power of natural causes, takes away all the characteristics or peculiarities of divinity, and sinks down into mere rationalism: it becomes, then, a system of human philosophy; and to call such a system, in any sense, divine, were not simply a misuse of terms, but a gross imposition.

An epitome of the whole theory of Neology.

I shall, first, endeavour to present to you an epitome of the general principles of this theory, that you may understand how it has gained its present ascendancy over men of no ordinary talents and attainments. The advocates of this theory would propound its explanation much after the following manner—that Christianity may be rationally accounted for, by supposing that it arose naturally out of the wearying of the human mind, in the Gentile nations, under the frivolous and absurd notions and practices of the ancient idolatry; that there was something of the same feeling arising simultaneously, among the Jews, thoroughly to defecate their system of its toilsome ceremonies, and to produce a less burdensome and more rational theory of religion. Supposing this state of feeling to prevail among the reflecting and philosophic, both of Jews and Gentiles, it would form a crisis highly favourable to the

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Plausibility of some of its assumptions.

This scheme is further made plausible to its advocates, by certain supposed facts, relative to the state of speculative opinion, about the period when Christianity arose. There can be no doubt but a new philosophic theory of deism had been, for some time, circulating through the Macedonian empire. The schools of Athens, Alexandria, and Rome, had mostly embraced the doctrine of a purer theism; whether the elaboration of those schools, or whence originally derived, I pause not now to inquire. It is admitted, that the later Platonists had introduced many and great improvements into their notions of the Deity. Now, supposing that Jesus Christ had derived his inculcations, respecting the nature and attributes of God, from this source, these theorists would go on to show, how readily he might incorporate with these, as a basis, the devotional

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Method of accounting for the origin of the gospel.

They would possibly allege, that he was led to that particular aspect of benevolence which the New Testament bears, by a disposition unusually philanthropic, or by a sagacious perception, that this was the grand deficiency in all former systems, and would be the great secret and master-spring of his own.

They would suppose such a mind, long nursed in private retirement, maturing its materials by deep reflection, mellowed by the influence of universal love and goodness, at length coming forth, well prepared to illustrate the system by happy narratives, and enforce it by strong arguments. It then only remains to be supposed, that the persons who took it up from the original inventor, or those who co-operated with him, added the supernatural parts, by way of augmenting its authority, or accommodating it to the prejudices, in favour of miraculous appearances, common among all nations at that period, and deemed essential to avouch the authority of any new system of religion.

Importance of fully meeting and exploding this theory.

Now, it is highly important, that this plausible method of accounting for the rise and early success of Christianity, should be somewhat fully met, and openly encountered, because it labours

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Facts irreconcilable.

In the first place, it is supposed that Christ was merely a philosopher, who formed his system on previously existing systems. But this supposition is annihilated at once, by facts quite as clear and certain, as that there ever was such a person as Jesus Christ. If he is allowed to be the author of Christianity, it must be upon the uniform and accordant testimony of history. But, then, that very same evidence constrains the belief, that he never was in the circumstances supposed by these theorists. There is ample evidence that, up to the time of commencing his public ministry, he was a person of the most humble condition and connexions, and never heard of in any other character, than that of the carpenter's son of Nazareth. Had he been what the theory supposes, some one would have been able to relieve the perplexity of the Jewish elders, when they asked, "Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty words?" Yet they, and all, admitted, that they knew whence he was, and who were his connexions. Nothing, therefore, can be more inconsistent with the whole narrative, than to suppose Jesus Christ a philosopher,

in the ordinary sense of that term. The next point observable in this theory of suppositions, is, that one so good, so pure, so wise, so disinterested, should lay the foundations of his enterprize, in a blasphemous deception, and should commence his career with an imposture, scarcely to be paralleled in the history of the world. Could so wise, so pure, so moral a philosopher, have been guilty of so outrageous a departure from truth and simplicity? Could he so glaringly have belied all his own teaching, as to give himself out for a special divine messenger, claiming, not so much to reason with men, as to *command* them, *in the name of God*, when he was conscious, at the same time, that he had merely been fabricating a human theory? Then we should have the perfection of moral sentiment, and the excess of moral pravity, both proceeding from the same source; a mind the most pure, just, and good, and yet the most depraved. We have no means of solving so strange a phenomenon as this would present. It would form a difficulty of far more perplexing explanation than any connected with the full admission of his divinity. The cause would then appear in moral repugnance to the effect; there would be darkness generating light; vice producing virtue; and the very perfection of goodness, purity, and truth, emanating from intense wickedness, and crafty delusion.

The theory is also wholly at variance with the point he so constantly enforced upon his disciples.

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"Whom say ye that I am? And Peter said, Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." And this answer it was, that drew from him the memorable benediction, "Blessed art thou, Simon, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, who is in heaven." Nor is the theory, in this point, less at variance with the obvious fact, that all his controversies with the Jews turned upon their denial, and his assertion, of divine authority. It was for inflexibly maintaining this, and not for his doctrines of morality, that he at length suffered death. "For a good work, we stone thee not, but for blasphemy: and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." The concession to them of what is implied in this impeachment, that is, the very point assumed by these theorists, would have saved him from an untimely end, and secured their patronage to his system. Yet he refused to concede what is now presumed to have been a mistake altogether, or a pretence; but, in vindication of which, he was willing to sacrifice himself, and risk all consequences to his system. This supposition, then, as well as the other, is found to be at variance with all the dictates of human wisdom and policy, by which, if a mere philosopher, he must have been influenced.

Presumed favourable crisis.

Again, it is presumed, by these speculators, that there existed a predisposition in Judea, and throughout the Gentile world, favourable to the reception of a new system. But I would ask those

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best acquainted with the history of these times, where they find the evidence of this? Certainly the Jews, instead of being anxious to exchange their system, for a brighter and more rational one, never held their peculiarities with a firmer grasp. Nor is it likely that it should have been otherwise, at that very period, when the expectation of the long-promised Messiah had reached its highest pitch.

As to the Jews.

As to the other branch of the supposition, relating to the heathen nations, we do not hesitate in saying, that no evidence can be produced to show that polytheism had become loathsome. Whatever might be the state of the Esoteric philosophy, the Exoteric, at least, had undergone no change for the better. The philosophers might be wearying, under the abortive results of their speculations; but so they were in the days of Socrates and Cicero. They had, indeed, Platonized, to a considerable extent, but they had, at the same time, incumbered and mystified that system, by puerilities, which its great master never taught; and which tended to deprive it of more than half its plausibility, by depriving it of all its simplicity. They were contending and doating upon these deformities and absurdities, while they overlooked the unity of God—the only grand and important truth their systems contained; and while they thus overlaid it with their own inventions and reasonings, they lost the only advantage it would have afforded, in becoming

As to the Gentile nations.

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a clue to other principles of truth and nature. In fact, their deism was any thing but a guiding light, in their other speculations, and was far enough from placing either the schools, or the people at large, in an advantageous position for the reception of Christianity.

Facts relating to the early reception of the gospel refute the supposition.

The facts of the case, moreover, show any thing rather than a prepared and waiting state of mind. If the supposition of our theorists were true, then the philosophers must have been the first to hail the new light, and welcome this brother philosopher. Then the apostles of Jesus must have found a cordial reception for their new doctrines among the philosophers of Greece and Rome. According to the theory, all were ripe for this new scheme. But was it so? All history shows, that as the wise men of the world were the first to oppose the Gospel, so they were the last to be won. They were not the parties to whom it first applied itself; and, whenever it did, they were the last to meet it with candour and favour.

Examination of the chief assumption.

But we must now examine the grand assumption, on which the whole theory of our modern rationalists is built; that Christianity is a sort of refinement, superinduced, both upon Grecian theism and Judaism, a sort of distillation, concocted from the best properties of the previous systems. It supposes a human mind, signally gifted, it may be, for such an undertaking, but still a human mind, and nothing more, producing such a system as the gospel appears in its own

Supposes the gospel a mere human system.

documents, out of the materials already prepared to its hand. Then the momentous question before us is, could such a process have produced such a result? Innumerable processes, of a similar kind, had, we know, been going on, in all the schools of Grecian, Roman, and Oriental philosophy. But no sublimation of their gross and incoherent materials had yet been attained. Reason brought forth nothing but absurdities and contradictions. Sects of philosophers, of all schools, were sitting in close incubation upon all sorts of speculations; but their broods, whenever hatched, showed little of a soaring tendency, and nothing of a celestial origin. These schools had continued their speculations from generation to generation. They laboured assiduously in their vocation; but they laboured always on the old materials, with the same tools, and with about the same success. The metal they possessed was coined and re-coined over and over again, from Pythagoras down to Philo and Plotinus; but it was a base metal still; and with all superscriptions and images hitherto impressed upon it, still it bore indubitable traces of the mint and mint-masters—they were all of men.

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Results of philosophic speculation.

But here is Christianity, derived from none of the schools, excogitated by none of the sages, recognized by none of the philosophers, displaying no worldly policy, employing no worldly motives, asking no patronage, and accepting no human protection, courting no man's favour, and fearing no man's frown, proceeding neither from the

Contrast of Christianity.

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Capitol of the Cæsars, nor the hill of Mars, nor the Arcadia of the gods, but from an obscure corner, and a more obscure mechanic, of the despised Judea; standing upon the simple authority and personal endowments of this single individual, yet confessedly transcending, in truth, wisdom, and comprehension, in the sublimity of a clear and all-penetrating philosophy, in the characteristics of a minute and universal adaptation to mankind, and, above all, in pure benevolence and exalted goodness, every conception, every imagination, of the most eminent and revered sages the world had ever seen. Here, indeed, we have the pure gold of unalloyed truth. It has triumphantly sustained every test that has hitherto been applied to it, and passed through every furnace undiminished and uninjured. It still retains the clear image and intelligible superscription of the eternal Majesty. We are bold to say, no process will ever efface these. Let the gospel be examined, as it stands, in its own accredited documents; let it be scrutinized by the keenest discernment, and we risk nothing, we exaggerate nothing, in averring, that it stands forth before the eyes of the world, without a single mistake, without a blemish or a puerility, a redundance or a defect. It has not a single weak point; nothing that is out of place, out of order, or out of keeping; nothing that the highest reason has any right to disallow or deny; nothing that is not as useful as it is true, as harmonious to

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the divine perfections as adapted to human exigency.

Improbability of human derivation.

What is less probable, than that such a system should be the result of human invention, or a process of refinement and selection applied to other systems? It possesses peculiarities which they never possessed, and yet a simplicity that they never could attain. Mysteries, indeed, but such as human policy would not have dared to broach to the vulgar, even if human wisdom had conceived them, and yet not one of them without significancy, dignity, and utility. No trace of human derivation can be detected through the whole of it, and yet nothing was ever so adapted to human nature, so consonant with our reason, our emotions, and our aspirations. The very fact, that it was to the Greeks foolishness, is a sufficient proof that human policy had not been consulted in its formation; and that the most consummate wisdom and foresight of man would have shrunk from deliberately announcing its doctrines to the world; while its ultimate success, *among those very Greeks*, demonstrated its superiority, even in the view of mere reason, above every thing else with which they were familiar. But, had reason alone originated the gospel, it would not have presumed to anticipate, even this measure of success, because it must have despaired alike of evincing the truth of the Christian dogmas, by sufficient arguments, or of enforcing them by adequate authority. In fact, looking

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at the system, simply as a system, it appears wholly unlike all others; it bears not the slightest resemblance to any of the works of the philosophers, and could never have been cast in the same mould, nor fabricated of the same materials. It has not even the air or pomp of a system, and appears the most alien possible from the theorizing of mankind. It possesses all the authority of an oracle, without its obscurity; all the majesty of wisdom, without its pedagogy; all the perfection and universality of truth, without its dialectics; all the force of the highest reasoning, combined with the simplicity and promptitude of intuition. All the doctrines and precepts of Christianity come upon us with such an air of originality, such a calm dignity, such a native simplicity, such a majestic and commanding authority, such a resolved distinctness, and displaying such a thorough and all-comprehending insight into human nature, that it is as irrational and unphilosophical to suppose the whole, any thing but what it describes itself to be, as to attribute the animal system, or the mental system, or any of the systems of nature, to a human authorship.

State of opinion among the schools.

Let the state of opinion in the schools, at the time of Christ, be carefully surveyed, and it will sufficiently appear that they had little, in common with him, certainly nothing, that could have suggested the peculiarities of his system. If we concede to these schools the spirituality, unity, omnipresence, and omnipotence of the Deity, with

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some few collateral truths, or rather speculations on his attributes, which they never matured, we concede to them all that they ever taught in common with Jesus Christ. But these very truths were evidently not derived from their own laborious processes of ratiocination; for it is well known that no such process ever reached them; but they were merely traditionary truths, which the schools had been induced to admit, unquestioned, into their system, partly because all the reasoning of antiquity had failed to refine any theory into universal and all-comprehending principles, and partly because they had found that opportune assistance, in the Jewish Scriptures, which, notwithstanding their concealment, or their unconsciousness, of its true character, had helped them to land their speculations on those few final propositions respecting the Deity, which appear, in their systems, like fair islets of coral amidst a boundless waste of waters, or as grains of gold amidst mountains of earth and stones. In short, it must strike every careful observer of the later philosophers, both Grecian and Roman, that these great truths they have been stated to possess, in common with Christianity, were nothing but traditionary aphorisms, or conclusions, adopted from some foreign source; not the home-born progeny of their own thought; not demonstrations wrought out and arrived at by any long and painful effort of reasoning; but literally *dogmas of faith*, which they had acquired else-

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Origin of their most valuable doctrines.

It evinces that these great truths were the very same, in their original source, as those taught by Christianity. Even if it were not well known, that the later philosophers had made themselves familiar with Moses, yet it would be more reasonable to trace the great truths in question to the traditionary sparks of light, first emanating from revelation, but scattered by various means through the Gentile world, than to suppose them the genuine discoveries of the philosophers. Had these precious and conspicuous principles formed the culmination of a purely rational superstructure,—the golden summit placed on the proud Babel of Gentile philosophy, by its own hands, presenting the apotheosis, so to speak, of concatenated reasoning—it might have proved a resting-place, in the way of a prophetic or prospective argument, that the human mind alone, by dint of effort and length of time, might work out for itself a rational system of religion: it would have shown, that one philosopher might improve upon the thoughts of another, and that a final result might possibly come forth, adapted to the universal illumination and emancipation of the human mind, and

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altogether indicating an advanced meridian of speculation. But nothing of this sort is discoverable. The truths in question have come down from the philosophers, without any traces of such a gradual advancement. They stand in the systems of ancient philosophy without either antecedents or consequents. Many, we know, point to them as rare and towering achievements of human science; but, when fairly examined, they will appear as alien to the fabrics on which they shine, as pinnacles of gold on hovels of mud and straw. None can show that human reason is entitled to the honour of their discovery, or can claim them as the legitimate rewards of its effort and toil. They are truths of too gigantic a stature, of too royal a mien, to have the same parentage as the dwarfish and ignoble rabble with which they are associated in the writings of the philosophers. There they stand, indeed, without a genealogy. Let them be compared with all the other truths of the same philosophy, and it will appear, that there is no bond of association between them, but that of juxta-position; and that they are as much out of place as the *regalia* of the kingdom would be in the humble cottage of a peasant, or on the person of a squalid pauper.

Christ's teaching not confined to these doctrines.

But it is obvious, further, that Christ's teaching did not terminate in these few truths, which the deism of the schools had selected and sanctioned. Christianity outstripped them, as far as they had

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surpassed all the proper doctrines of mere reason. These were but fragments of truth, which the philosophers had broken off from the main body of the system, as majestic columns or porticos, transported from some magnificent ruin to grace the museums of the curious. But Jesus Christ presented them in their restored harmony. He gave forth the whole theory of moral and religious truth complete at once, and that, not as a discovery at which he had arrived by laborious thinking, but as perfect revelations, full grown and universal truths, or as splendid emanations of moral light, bursting at once from a celestial orb upon the darkness of the world. All his announcements came forth, not as conclusions at which he had arrived by the aid of demonstrative power, or by the slow and cautious process of human thought, but as the majestic decisions of an oracle, with all the external and internal evidences which could, by any possibility, be conceived necessary to avouch real revelations.

Peculiarities of the gospel-scheme startling to speculatists.

The force of this kind of evidence is, I am aware, liable to be counteracted, in some minds, by the peculiarities of the Christian scheme, which startle speculatists, and create difficulties, in admitting doctrines so completely *sui generis*, and which they find so embarrassing to harmonize with the theories of the ancient, or even of the modern philosophers.

Yet harmonious with our nature.

But may it not be alleged, in extenuation of this difficulty, that when the truths and doctrines

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of Christianity, peculiar though they be, are thoroughly examined, when they are placed side by side with the essential characteristics, the individual experience, the personal and universal emotions of human nature, when that aspect of strangeness has passed away, and when they are applied as a key to unlock the mysteries of the human breast, or as a balm for its wounds, or as a sphere for its aspirations, then we find the most surprising agreement, the most delicate *fitting*, which could have proceeded only from the same hand which formed and endowed man at first. Then it is perceived, that Jesus Christ has laid down no principle, in reference to God and his actions, or man in his entire constitution and conduct, but what finds its verification and its counterpart in the actual system and government of the world. Thus, for example, the mediatory system, and the redemptive process, exhibited by Christianity, have been unanswerably shown to comport with the principles of a universal moral system, and to harmonize alike with all the facts of our nature, and of the whole constitution of things with which we are connected. Hence it will be found to follow, upon a minute and careful examination, that the mental, moral, physical, and christian economies, severally and unitedly, point out the one common Author of them all.

Ancient ethical philosophy compared with Christianity.

Were it practicable, within moderate limits, to enter upon another view of this subject, we might lay before you, first, the propositions of the ethical

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philosophy of antiquity, and having placed beside them the scriptural announcements, upon the same subject, we might show, by the yawning gulfs between them, that there had been no vaulting from the one to the other; and that he who gave forth the latter, with all their precision, force, and harmony, has accomplished something vastly more original and sublime, than those persons seem to imagine, who would represent Christianity as a mere refinement upon the pre-existing elements of thought and reason. In fact, it might be readily made apparent, that he could have derived no help whatever, in the construction of the christian system, from those incoherent materials, which have been so lavishly, but undeservedly, honoured, under the denomination of systems of moral philosophy.

Jesus Christ exhibits the perfection of moral wisdom.

Is it not an astounding fact that Jesus Christ should, at a single step, have ascended to the very pinnacle of moral truth and wisdom; that he should have placed us at once upon ultimate facts, beyond which no analysis is found to avail us; that he should have poured upon our minds as much of the effulgence of eternal wisdom as we are able to bear; that he should have made us familiar with every thing, but that which is too vast or too subtle for our limited faculties; that he should have left nothing veiled, but that which cannot be unveiled; and told us every thing, but that which is ineffable! We have reached, we can reach, we can hope to reach,

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nothing higher, nothing simpler, nothing purer, nothing more sublime. He has borne us to an intellectual summit, from which we can behold as much of the majesty and glory of the infinite and eternal Mind, as can, by any possibility, come within the sphere of finite comprehension, in the present state. No advance has been made, since his day, beyond these confines of our knowledge which he has laid down; no improvement, no extension of view, has ever been gained by the philosophers, since Christianity was published. It stands as the *ne plus ultra* of ethics and religion. Would not this have been a singular phenomenon indeed, that he should have exhausted subjects so intricate, so profound, and, through all antiquity, so utterly chaotic, and yet he himself be nothing more than a philosopher, a mere mortal man; that he, improving by so immeasurable a stride, upon all that preceded him, should yet have defied all that follow, to improve upon his system? This very anomaly alone would preclude the belief, either that himself, or his system, were of man. This very *aloofness* of Christianity from all the systems of man's contrivance, this divine elevation, as of the heavens above the earth, and like those heavens unsusceptible of refinement or improvement, supplies an argument of the divine origin of Christianity, that never can be successfully gainsayed.

This irreconcilable with the theory of Neology.

Conclusion of this comparison.

The gospel to be further tested by its effects.

But this argument, as hitherto pursued, may be said to be, in the main, abstract, and founded

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on the alleged superiority of the system, apart from its effects.

The question now comes to be considered, does it verify itself, as of God, by the peculiar character of its results. Effects, it will be said, are the best test of causes. We admit this, and will proceed to illustrate, by facts, the verification of the principles laid down; for we are not left to bare abstract reasoning on the nature and professed design of the gospel. We can confidently appeal to its doings. The experiment of its capabilities has been made. Its beginnings of reformation and benediction are before the world. There is surely enough in its past history and triumphs, enough in the experiment of its power already witnessed, enough in every individual case in which it has been cordially embraced, and allowed full and free operation, to satisfy every fair inquirer, that it is capable of effecting the most joyous of changes, the most complete and extensive of reformations. We can point to the reality, the felicity, and the permanence of its results, even upon a tolerably large scale, and ask its very enemies if they could rationally demand more, or whether they could virtuously be satisfied with less, in a religion designed for all mankind? Supposing the verification to have actually taken place, even in a single case, it would, I submit, be, so far, a proof of the efficiency of the scheme. If only a solitary human spirit had experienced the result, which the Scripture scheme of sal-

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vation proposes, supposing it to be bound to no specific degree of extension, so peculiar, so stupendous, so infinitely beyond all human resources, is this moral renovation, this recovery of immortality, that it would prove the religion and the agency that could effect it, to be unequivocally divine; and, therefore, worthy of universal confidence and acceptance.

Multiplied instances.

But when the supposed case comes to be multiplied to an indefinite extent, and when these cases are continued through successive ages, and when it is further known, that they are daily and almost hourly repeated, and under circumstances of contrast and variation, as to the opposite states of the individuals, and the facts of conversion, which give them almost a romantic effect, then, I think, we are entitled to say, that we possess a demonstration of the divinity of the gospel, which may well defy all opposition, and warrant the conclusion, that he who does not cheerfully submit his mind and heart to its influence, and embrace it as God's exclusive method of salvation, deserves to remain in his state of alienation from life, light, and immortality.

Method of operation.

Here, then, is the grand test of the divinity of the Christian scheme. It brings forward the word of God to act upon the moral nature of man, and by that word it confronts the conscience. It represents the authority, the justice, the power, and the sentence of God. It charges the guilt of sin home upon the sinner, and it

then calls upon him to repent, to believe in the divine mercy through the Mediator, and accept his atonement as the medium of reconciliation. It further declares, that whosoever thus repents and believes the gospel, shall find an inward renovation of his moral nature, love to God, delight in his commands, peace of conscience, joy surpassing all the joys of earth, comfort under all the difficulties and afflictions of time, with victory over death, under whatever form it may approach. It further represents the introduction of the soul to the experience of divine grace, not as an entire or perfect change of nature, but as the origination of a new principle in the heart, by which the soul is progressively strengthened in its war against evil. This new principle is called faith, and it consists in a firm credence and practical application of the word believed to be inspired; and, under the influence of this principle, believers are represented as continuing a moral warfare, until, at last, they obtain a complete victory over the evils of their depraved condition, and attain a happy and rational anticipation of final acceptance and eternal happiness.

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The Bible pledges the result.

The Bible represents this peculiar moral instrumentality as effectual to recover mankind from sin to holiness, from misery and disappointment, in worldly pursuits and projects, to true satisfaction and solid joy; and from the gloomy fear of death and judgment, to an entire victory

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over all their terrors, so that they can mostly say, "O grave! where is thy victory? O death! where is thy sting?" All this the Bible represents as the effect of its remedy for man's transgression; and if the attainments of professors of Christianity do not, in all cases, reach this standard, it is their own fault; but if they do not attain to the main part of this—the subtantial moral improvement of their nature—they are branded as hypocrites, and altogether disclaimed as its disciples. All this is represented as resulting from the belief of "the truth as it is in Jesus," and the effect is, in innumerable instances, seen to follow.

Peculiarities of this method of renovation.

There is something peculiar in this method of human renovation, because, in the first place, it is simple, perfectly in accordance with the principles and faculties of our nature, and, in all its parts, consistent with reason, though, in some of its doctrines, as might have been expected, above reason. It is, in its system, analogous to what we always meet with in cases of recovery from disobedience, and what human reason and experience suggest to be the very best means of restoring rebellious children, and of correcting their evil propensities.

Contrasted with human schemes of renovation.

It is, in some respects, strikingly contrasted with all human methods proposed for the promotion of our moral improvement, or the attainment of immortal life. All of these have attached the utmost importance to certain mechanical performances, as in all systems of heathen idolatry, where the whole stress is laid on the punctual observance of the most trifling and absurd ceremonies, and to them the saving virtue is attributed; or, as in the theories of philosophers, where the proposed means of such improvement are the unassisted and spontaneous efforts of the human mind, striving, by the ambitious aspirations of its own vigour, to recover itself to virtue and immortality, while its utter failure and conspicuous imbecility loudly and continually proclaim its hopeless distance from the chief good.

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Two-fold bearings of the gospel scheme.

Let the gospel scheme be viewed in its two principal bearings, first, in reference to the glory of the Supreme Being, and then as it affects the condition of mankind, whose benefit it proposes to seek. As it regards the honour of all the perfections of the Godhead, it seems impossible to conceive of any scheme which so wonderfully and perfectly mingles justice and mercy, and sets the Deity before us in so venerable, and yet in so amiable and engaging a light. It vindicates all his rights, as the Supreme and Universal Governor, respects all the interests of his boundless dominion, and yet presents the mild and benevolent aspect of a Father "whose tender mercies are over all his works." Then, as it regards mankind, the gospel possesses this peculiar feature, that it is particularly adapted to every human being, and adjusts itself to man in every age, and under all the circumstances of his delinquency

LECT. V. and suffering. It possesses a universal character, and addresses a universal language to the heart and conscience. It is readily understood, it is at once felt by all to be minutely fitted to the experience, the wishes, and the inward consciousness of men.

A supposed case of the Bible being unexpectedly discovered.

Now let us suppose this gospel scheme presented to us in its present perfected state, nothing being known of its operation, or no trial having, as yet, been made of its *efficiency*. Imagine the book that contains the gospel discovered accidentally, or brought to us by some stranger or angel, nothing being known concerning it, but what itself testifies. Suppose it to be announced, as yet, only in a single nation, and that some treat it with contempt and indifference, believe nothing concerning it, because they cannot be persuaded to examine it; but at once declare, that the whole is a fable or a fabrication, for the purposes of imposture and delusion. Their opinion, it is evident, would be entitled to no consideration in determining the value or the authority of the volume. But suppose there are certain others, and these no inconsiderable number, who resolve to read, to weigh carefully, the whole document; to compare one part with another, to make themselves masters of its contents, and, as far as possible, to examine the evidence which may be attainable, that it did really originate in divine inspiration; and then, having done all this, they rise from the investigation with the full

belief of its divine authority. They then begin, LECT. V. faithfully and devoutly, to put in practice its directions. They reflect upon their own past history and experience, and find the assertions and charges brought against them all true; they are heart-stricken on account of their delinquencies; they become filled with shame for sin; they apprehend the purity of God, and their own aberrations, and are filled with fear; they lose all relish for their former evil practices, while they become conscious of the justness of that sentence of the supposed divine law, which is represented as being against them. They then follow the directions of the book, in making confession and supplication to God through the appointed Mediator. They are encouraged, by the directions of the same book, to believe firmly in the merit of Christ's atonement, and they are assured that, if they make him their confidence, his merit their plea with God, and believe that he satisfied the law and made it honourable, they shall find peace with God. They do so believe in it; they plead it in all their addresses to God; they find their minds calmed, and, in a most ineffable manner, drawn forth in love, desire, and confidence toward the great Creator; they feel a devout admiration of his purity and perfections, and a strong ambition to be holy as God is holy; to see him, that they may be like him, and to be for ever with him, that they may enjoy his favour and proclaim his glory. This is followed

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by an increased sensitiveness to evil, a tenderness of conscience, an expansion of benevolence towards their fellow-men, which displays itself in every relation of life. Their characters derive, altogether, an elevation and refinement, a dignity and purity, a felicity and hopefulness, from this change, which makes them the objects of envy to the rest of their fellow-mortals, who cannot understand the mysterious facts which appear to be connected with the reception of this extraordinary book. Now, supposing these persons, who have made the experiment, to live thus in purity, felicity, and hope, to the end of their lives, maintaining a consistent, holy course, and endeavouring, by every possible means, to benefit their fellow-creatures, both for time and eternity, by example, by precept, and by self-devotement, and then to die, exulting in the hope that this book inspired, and declaring that they feel even their dying-bed to be a bed of roses, as soft and light as a fleecy cloud, on which they were ascending to their everlasting abode, confident in the merit and ability of the Saviour; showing the inward witness of his Spirit, as they said; proving the spiritual change they had undergone; demonstrating, that they were born of a new principle, above nature; and that they enjoyed a peculiar sense of divine favour; and were, even then, on the very verge of immortal felicity.

Non-experience no counter evidence.

Would not this be such a practical verification of the contents of this book, as could not, in the

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slightest degree, be invalidated by the non-experience of those who had at the outset rejected and despised it, or continued utterly inattentive and unconcerned in the great process or experiment going on before their eyes? Could those persons have any right to be heard against the efficacy of the scheme propounded by the book, who had never submitted their hearts and minds to the test of the experiment? Just as reasonably might those who had never tried a certain remedy, in a specific disease, expect to be admitted as evidence against the remedy, whose efficacy a multitude of others appeared ready to attest from their own personal experience. Cavils might be raised, and questions of all kinds started, as to the discovery of such a remedy, as to its mode of operation, and many might refuse to believe in its efficacy on these alleged grounds; and till the patronizers of the new discovery could fully satisfy these objectors, by a philosophical explanation of their experiences, they might refuse to credit the fact of any such cure having been wrought; but these objections could possess little weight, and be entitled to no consideration whatever, against the direct and positive experience of the others; but the fact would, and must, remain, and whatever mystery might attach, in the view of these objectors, to the production of the result, yet that result, once produced, must, according to all fair principles of reasoning, continue to be a testimony to the efficacy of the means used, how-

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ever incapable it might prove of philosophical solution.

Christian experience indisputable, and philosophically explicable.

We do not, however, intend hereby to admit, that the efficacy of the gospel, in its operations, is thus incapable of a philosophical explanation; for it may be shown to bear a perfectly clear and valid analogy to the exercise of the divine power in all the departments, both of material and spiritual nature. If the Bible were a human fabrication, it would be followed by none of this kind of verification from human experience, which it now possesses in so abundant a degree; for, let any one consider, on the one hand, what has been the entire failure of all human remedies for the woes and vices of mankind; and, on the other hand, what has been the result of this gospel in an endless multitude of cases, and what is daily resulting, and he will perceive, that all we have described has taken place, and that, too, under the most peculiar and striking circumstances. As, at its first publication, the gospel produced these effects, in the fullest degree, under the greatest conceivable disadvantages, upon the most obstinate habits of both Jews and Gentiles, presenting the most striking varieties of which human nature is susceptible, so it still continues to prove its divine efficacy, wherever it is brought into contact with the various characters, opinions, and habits of men. It then wrought its glorious work, where superstition had long maintained a supreme and

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undisputed sway; and where it had attained no result, but the deeper degradation and depravation of its wretched victims. It has now on its side a mighty accumulation of experiment, which nothing can shake, which no sophistry can invalidate, and no scepticism deny. Other methods than the obvious one may be resorted to, for the solution of these facts, but they all fail when brought to the test. No natural principle, no human agency, can account for the effects which Christianity produces; or else the same effects might be shown to follow in other cases, and from other causes. If enthusiasm, fanaticism, faith in a human system, supposed to be divine, and the mere natural power of moral suasion, or the efficacy of eloquence, power of example, education, and such like causes, be alleged, still these have all operated in conjunction with systems of man's devising, and yet the same results have not followed; and simply for the reason, that the systems in which men believed, with as strong a faith as ever prophet or apostle believed in the Bible, were not divine; whereas, the gospel proves itself to be so by the efficacy which the belief of it exerts over human nature. There is a divine virtue, not in the effort of human thought, called *faith*, but in *that* which faith apprehends.

Disbelief of infidels no disproof.

What infidels allege, then, against Christianity, all amounts to nothing, while we can bring forward positive, undeniable, and all but infinite effects to attest its sovereign virtue, and to prove

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that it does accomplish, daily and hourly, all that it professes to accomplish, under every possible variety of human nature; and that very result which our nature admits to be most necessary to its renovation and felicitation. On all classes of characters, all the different degrees of natural talent and genius, all the different ages, all the varieties of previous experience and disposition, Christianity has shown its transforming power. We can point to the joyous changes, both internal and radical of which they are conscious, and which they exemplify, and can describe; but especially to those that are external and visible to the world, and which are attributed, by the subjects of them, exclusively to the influence of the Bible upon their minds, as undeniable proofs that there is a divine virtue in the truth, and that it is of God, because it has an effect upon human nature, which nothing else was ever known to have, or even to approach.

Great variety in the personal character and state of its subjects.

If, besides the amazing variety of persons, on whom Christianity is producing, not merely some beneficial moral effects, (for that it does unconsciously on its very enemies,) you consider its saving effects, its happy fruits of holiness, and peace, and heavenly hope, there will then, I think, appear a mass of evidence, of the inductive kind, in its favour, which ought, not merely to silence all opposition, but constrain acquiescence in it as indubitably preferable, and by immeasurable degrees, not only to all the other systems of

religion, but to all the theories of the philosophers, and to all the dogmas of infidelity. The learned and the rude, the young and the old, the comparatively innocent and unsophisticated child of nature, and the man hackneyed in the ways of the world, the humble peasant, and the son of genius, the king on his throne, the prisoner in his cell, the statesman in his cabinet, the philosopher in his studies, the merchant in his enterprizes, the miser amidst his hoards, the persecutor in the paroxysm of his rage and cruelty, the hermit in his solitude, and the fashionable votary in the dizzy whirl of pleasure; all these, yea, mankind, under a greater variety of circumstances than I can find words to describe, have felt the transforming power of Christianity, and stand forth, as living witnesses of the efficacy of this system of instrumentality and agency, to effect all that it proposes, for the well-being of the human race.

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Great variety in the means.

Moreover, these effects are produced in an endless variety of ways, and may be called forth at any time, and in connexion with any of the events of human life; so that they are, in fact, sometimes produced by a given instrumentality, sometimes without any human agency, but by the direct operation of divine influence upon the mind; always, however, through the word of God, either as the external instrument, or as the agency to which the mind is inwardly bowed, in order to be brought under its influence. Some-

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times the word is first brought into contact with the mind, and sometimes the mind is thrown into a state of strange excitement, and is sent in search of salvation.

Yet all exhibit a common character.

But the instances of its success, however numerous and various, all exhibit a common character, and show a common origin, a source from which they all flow, not to be mistaken, just as the drops of rain, or dew, though coming in a different order and way, yet are one in kind; or, like the human face and form, endlessly varied, yet always possessing the same general features, and all constituting but one common nature. We attach much importance to the identity of the result in such an endless variety of cases; because it is a proof of the *sameness* of the principle, and of the omnipresence of the same power, working all in all. For as, in each, the result is the same, so the cause that produces that result may be fairly inferred to be the same.

The argument must rest on a general estimate of Christian character.

We might take individual instances, but our space would not allow an extended appeal to separate facts, and selection would be difficult, and scarcely answer our purpose. The argument must rest upon the general character of the Christian public, or, at least, upon the undoubted and sincere portion of it.

Experience of martyrs.

Something might be said of the testimony of confessors and martyrs, and the accomplishment of the word of God, in the experience which has uniformly led them to expect, that when called

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to suffer for conscience sake, they should receive a special measure of consolation, and be able to account the cup of persecution even a blessed cup put into their hand, by the counsels of an all-wise God. "They that suffer with him shall also reign with him." "My brethren, count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations" or trials. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." No tongue can describe the ineffable delight such sufferers have experienced in those seasons of trial; or how they have been made insensible to pain, while retaining their full consciousness, under the utmost tortures of the flesh. They have been known to sing in dungeons, and even to rejoice at the stake. The stream of life ebbed not so rapidly under the torturing of their inhuman foes, as the pure river of divine joy flowed in from its celestial source upon their beatified spirits, even to the most ecstatic ravishment, so that they could say, "Whether in the body, or out of the body, we cannot tell."

Here, then, is again a correspondence between man's experience and the testimony of the sacred word, truly minute and astonishing; an agreement that could not be fortuitous, or casual, but proceeding from a cause which necessarily implies a special virtue in that cause, an influence which nothing finite, nothing human, even possessed, or ever aspired to.

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General conclusion.

Thus the effects of Christianity on the minds of men, and the universal result which follows its acceptance, show it to be of God, and attest the truth of its pretensions. This universality of its influence may not unfitly be compared to the sun in the firmament, which shines in common on all climates, countries, and nations; an influence which can no more be commanded or imitated, or controlled by man, than it can be resisted or withheld. Every where it calls forth vegetation, and in each different climate has, indeed, its appropriate productions, but yet all identified together, as the effects of the same general principle, or genial power. In one region there are larger trees, and richer fruits, and fairer flowers than in another, but in all there are the general species and genera; there is corn and grass, that feed man and beast, fruits to gratify man's taste, and flowers to regale his sense, and trees to adorn the landscape: though all these may be endlessly varied. Thus it is with the Sun of Righteousness, which shines in common over and through the whole intellectual world of believing Christians, differing, as they do, upon some points of dogmatic theology, or as to some matters of Christian duty and ritual observance, or as to the details of Christian experience; yet all identified in the oneness of the great principle of faith and life in an incarnate Saviour. They show and illustrate a spiritual identity. All are under, and all admit, a common regimen; all are carrying

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on the same moral warfare against sin, and all are looking for the fruition of the same blessed and glorious hopes.

These observations, protracted, I fear, to a length that has painfully taxed your patience, have yet, I trust, in some measure, vindicated and illustrated our proposed theme—the adaptation of the gospel to man's character and condition, and the practical efficiency of the scheme, as realized by our nature throughout the vast christian community. The conclusion seems to be inevitable, that the religion which accomplishes so unparalleled, so difficult, and, at the same time, so desirable a result, fully establishes its pretensions to a divine origin, and must be pronounced, by impartial judges, "*worthy of all acceptation.*"

LECTURE VI.

THE ORIGIN, PERPETUITY, AND HISTORY OF A SPECIAL SOCIETY, DISTINCT FROM THE WORLD, UNIFORMLY CHARACTERIZED BY CERTAIN PECULIARITIES OF PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICE, AND DENOMINATED THE PEOPLE, OR CHURCH OF GOD.

A church now exists—Traceable to the times of the Cæsars—The succession of Christian believers unbroken—Origin of the Christian profession in Judea—This country long the seat of the Jewish Church—Credibility of their Church History—Origin of this section of the church—Connexion with the Patriarchal—Religious and moral principles identical—What these were—Their transmission from Noah—Embodied and enlarged in the law—Identity of revelation through all its periods—A distinct society commenced in Abraham's family—Predictions respecting it—Jewish history indisputable—No conflicting evidence—Continuity of the church through all its periods—General observations on this succession—Identity of faith—Great events connected with this history—Preservation of the church a continued miracle—An objection considered—Transition from Judaism to Christianity—Evidence of inspiration—

Vicissitudes enhance the proof—Adversities and corruptions—Often near extinction—Christian church-history—Infidel explanations—Their failure—Combination of worldly powers—The church still invincible—Severe discipline—Opposition foretold and over-ruled—Internal causes of decay counteracted—Its whole history implies supernatural influence—Triumph of divine principles in the heart—Contrasted in the case of infidels—Both facts foreseen—Summary of the argument—Its connexion with the next Lecture.

A church now existing.

NONE will dispute the fact, that there exists, at the present moment, a numerous body of persons in the world, distinguished, by their principles and practices, from all the rest of mankind; and that they consider themselves the people of God, Christians, or the church. They are separated from the rest of the world by their belief in the Christian revelation.

Traceable to the times of the Cæsars.

It cannot be doubted, that this fraternity can trace its succession back to the days of the Roman Cæsars, even without referring to the Christian records. The history of this particular body of persons is so intimately connected with the history of the Roman Empire, both in its paternal seat, and all its affiliated colonies, that it would be just as easy to disprove the existence of that empire, as to disprove the existence of a Christian community in it, at the time specified. It is equally impossible to dispute, that this community has existed, uninterruptedly, from that time down

LECT. VI. to the present. It has preserved its continuity from the times of the Cæsars to the present moment; and every body knows, that it is still in existence, and flourishing. By its continuity, I intend, that the Christian profession, consisting in the belief of revelation, and in an external and visible conformity to its requirements, has been successively transmitted from generation to generation, ever since the time of Jesus Christ and his disciples.

The succession of Christians indisputable.

No one, who reflects upon this statement, and is, at the same time, sufficiently informed upon the history of these successive ages, to be qualified to judge of the truth of our proposition, can entertain the slightest degree of hesitation concerning it. He could no more doubt, that there had been an uninterrupted succession of Christian believers, and that these have existed under some visible form of religious association, than that there had been a succession of human generations, without any break or interval, through all the ages we are contemplating. He could no more question the continuity of the Christian church, than the continuity of the human race. The profession of Christianity has been transmitted down from the times specified, as uninterruptedly as human nature from father to son. The proofs of the one fact are just as clear as the proofs of the other; and the very documents, antiquities, and remains of various kinds, which prove the one thing, prove the other. I am not aware, that

any well-informed infidels have ever disputed it, LECT. VI. and I am quite sure that most of them have, either tacitly or expressly, allowed it.

Origin of the Christian church in Judea.

The continuance of the Christian profession, from the time of Christ to the present day, being then admitted, our next step will be settled with almost equal facility. That is, the origin of this particular form and profession of revealed religion in the land of Judea. There is no fact of history more clear, or less disputed, than this. All ancient historians, who refer to the subject, agree, that Christianity first arose in the land, and among the people of the Jews. I shall only refer to the words of Tacitus, as quoted by Gibbon. "They" *(the Christians)* "derived their name "and origin from Christ, who, in the reign of "Tiberius, had suffered death by the sentence "of the Procurator, Pontius Pilate. For awhile, "this dire superstition was checked, but it again "burst forth, and not only spread itself over "Judea, the first seat of this mischievous sect, "but was even introduced into Rome."* Thus, in ascending through distant ages, we very readily identify the Christian church in its origin with the religious system of the Jews. Their existence, therefore, at the time when Christianity arose, and their peculiar opinions, as embodied in the sacred doctrines of their religion, must be conceded, as the basis of the facts already admitted.

Judea long the seat of the Jewish church.

Further, the residence of the Jews in the land

* Tacit. Annal. lib. xv. 44.

LECT. VI. of Judea, through many ages preceding the origin of Christianity, and the special features of their religious system, as essentially different from all the other forms of religious opinion then in the world, are facts as clearly ascertained by history, as those we have already noticed; and are all of them either admitted or stated in the classic authors of Greece and Rome. Allusions are frequently made to the nation of the Jews, their peculiarities, more or less, pointed out, their temple, their worship, and their history, so far noticed by the ancient classic writers, as to leave no doubt upon any of the general facts hitherto mentioned.

Collateral evidence of this fact.

Respecting the circumstances which, through a long succession of ages, brought them, as a nation, into that particular moral and religious condition, in which they were, when first noticed by the Greek and Roman authors, we find no testimony discordant with their own; and whatever facts can be collected from other sources, or have been preserved among the records of any other nation, fully corroborate their own. In the absence, therefore, of all conflicting testimony, their own account of their origin, history, and religion, deserves to be received as credible; especially when its facts and principles can be subjected to so many different kinds of tests as we have in the former Lectures already applied, and with results so uniformly favourable to their authority.

Credibility of the Jewish church-history.

From the point at which we have now arrived, we must proceed to try the credibility of the

Mosaic statement, concerning the history of the Jewish church, by the entire reasonableness of the account itself, its perfect consistency with the profession of being founded in revelation, its harmony with the Christian dispensation, which arose out of it, and which we know to have existed above eighteen hundred years: and further, by the opposite test of the unreasonableness and incredibility of any other hypothesis concerning the Jewish church; I might even say, the impossibility of maintaining any other theory, because it is impossible to substantiate any other facts concerning the religion and nation of the Jews, than those their own records contain. LECT. VI.

To form a just conception of the credibility of the scriptural history, it will be necessary to take a somewhat comprehensive survey of its leading facts, and bear in mind, as we proceed, the question applicable to the whole series; namely, how far do these statements appear to afford a reasonable and credible explanation of the events that followed in succession, and how far do the causes stated appear to account for the effects that attended them? There will also here be afforded us an opportunity for inquiring, whether the events stated, many of them very surprising, but, in some instances, susceptible of proof, as facts from other authority, besides that of the Bible, could have been produced, by any other causes than those to which they are ascribed?

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Origin of this section of the church.

The Mosaic narrative is brief in every thing but what related to the selection, separation, and establishment of the Jewish church and nation. It traces up the principles of their faith to the earliest times, connecting them harmoniously with the faith of the first man, and showing how they arose, gradually, and became incorporated with the moral and religious principles, which had been transmitted from Noah and his sons, and by them derived directly from Adam. According to the statement, which Moses gives of these very early times between Adam and Noah, it is apparent, that they enjoyed what may, with the strictest propriety, be denominated both a moral and a religious system. The purity, simplicity, and excellence of this may easily be made apparent; while its harmony with the more elaborate, moral, and religious code of Moses, and its ultimate completion and perfection in the religion of Christ, will, if we can make it appear, identify the characteristics of revelation, through the history of the people of God or the church, from Adam to the Christian believers of the present day. This will complete the whole chain.

The first great portion of the ascending series is, as we have already shown, perfect and unquestionable. The history of the Jewish section of the church we have seen, is scarcely less clear and certain; and the third portion, or that which was earliest in the order of time, we shall now

endeavour to show, was characterized by the same great principles of faith and morals. LECT. VI.

Connexion with the patriarchal church.

It is to be certainly inferred, that the particulars related by Moses, respecting the intercourse between Adam and his Creator, do not include every thing that transpired; because the fact of conversing or communing together is mentioned, without recording any thing of the object or matter of their intercourse. It is further certain, that, after the fall and the sentence denounced upon the man, woman, and serpent, respectively, and after the intimation respecting the bruising of the heel of the promised seed, and of the serpent's head, by the seed of the woman,—that Adam taught his sons to worship God, as, without doubt, himself and his wife had done, prior to their fall. It seems manifest, that they had been taught to respect the *seventh* day, which was evidently, from the first, the day of their worship.

Religious principles identical.

From the history of Cain, Abel, and Enoch, it clearly appears, that they understood and regarded the purport of the first command of the Mosaic law, as to the *fear and love of God.* It is further certain, that they enjoyed some standard of social morals, or law of appeal; otherwise there could have been no propriety in the words attributed to God in his address to Cain—"Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest *well*, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest *not well*, *sin* lieth at the door." Gen. iv. 6, 7. This is, unquestionably, an appeal

LECT. VI. to Cain's knowledge of some revealed precepts, by which he ought to have been guided, and the observance or non-observance of which, was to meet a corresponding treatment, on the part of the Creator. It is only on the supposition, that Cain and Abel both knew the principles by which their conduct was to be regulated, that we can discern the righteousness of God in his conduct towards each respectively. No one can suppose, for a moment, that the procedure of each was left, without rule, to his own option. This would be to make the divine treatment of them arbitrary. It is of little moment here to inquire, whether the knowledge we suppose them previously to have possessed, was derived from any revelation made directly to themselves, or from the instructions of their father, or even from their own reflection and conscience. It is quite certain they must have enjoyed such knowledge, or the means of acquiring it; otherwise the conduct of God would appear capricious, and unjust, in a high degree. There must have existed, then, some laws or commands of the Almighty, as clear and intelligible to them as any laws of God have since been made to us; or we should have heard nothing of *sin*, which is now, and always has been, a *transgression* of the divine law.

Again, we have a reference to some rule of human duty in the short account given of Enoch; Gen. v. 22, 24. "And Enoch *walked with God* three hundred years; and he was not, for God

took him." The proper sense of this *walking with* LECT. VI. *God*, seems to be that given by the Targum of Onkelos—*he walked in the way of God's precepts*, and, because he had so long and so eminently kept the divine commands, he was translated to heaven. After this period we have, in the history of Noah, whose father, Lamech, and grandfather, Methuselah, must both have known Adam, a distinct recognition of some moral and religious standard, because Noah was a preacher of the *law of righteousness;* and, on account of his conformity to it, was singled out to be saved, with his family; and, besides, it was testified, that "the earth was filled with violence:" "and God saw that the *wickedness* of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only *evil* continually." Gen. vi. 5 and 13. If we look to a somewhat later period, we find that there was an express reference to a rule of human conduct in the case of Abraham. "I know him, (Abraham,) that he will *command* his children and his household after him, and they shall keep *the way of the Lord*, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." Gen. xviii. 19.

These traditionary from Adam.

Now we have no intimation of any new revelation of moral or religious regulations or precepts from the time of Adam. But though new promises are made to Noah, after the flood, and to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, still we find no new commands of a moral or religious kind, en-

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joining any new principles of conduct. We may, therefore, safely infer that, as, through the whole period from Cain to Abraham, there are references to sin and wickedness, piety and impiety, righteousness and unrighteousness, there must have been great laws of morality and religion; and every argument of reason and probability must induce the belief, that these originated with God, otherwise they could scarcely have been so early and so generally recognized; or have been transmitted so sacredly and uninterruptedly from Adam to his sons, and have continued immutable, as it is clear they did, in the esteem of the righteous from generation to generation. For it is abundantly evident, notwithstanding the prevalence of sin and impiety, that the succession of just and upright men was maintained from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham; with whom properly commences the middle period of the church, when he and his family were adopted into a peculiar relation to the Supreme Being, and separated as a distinct society or church in the world.

What the moral principles of that age were.

But, before we proceed to examine the peculiar features which are to be viewed as tests of the inspiration of the divine word, in reference to the church, we may, in brief, state what appear to have been the chief principles, both of the moral and religious code of the people of God, from Adam to Moses, when a new and more precise law was delivered to them. The learned Selden

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has embodied the *moral* principles in the following six particulars:

I. To abstain from idolatry.

II. To bless the name of God, or, as some express it, to abstain from blasphemy or malediction of the divine name.

III. To abstain from murder.

IV. To abstain from adultery, or from the pollution of impure mixtures.

V. To abstain from theft.

VI. To appoint judges to be the guardians of these precepts, and to preserve public justice.

These do, in fact, contain a principal part of the decalogue, as delivered by Moses. It is highly probable, that the regular worship of God, and the observance of the seventh day, were also added. Though we have no specific mention of the latter after its first sanctification by the rest of God from his works, and his blessing it, yet it can scarcely be doubted that these were observed as positive institutions.

What the religious.

A summary of the *religious* principles of the age we are reviewing, may be thus stated.

I. The agency of the Holy Spirit of God, in an ordinary way, upon the minds of men: Gen. vi. 3. "My Spirit shall not always strive with man."

II. The influence of Satan. This must have been a truth, handed down from the first man and woman, along with the account of the fall, and the sentence denounced against the serpent.

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III. The belief of the fall of man must also have been transmitted. There is a passage, in the Book of Job, which seems to imply, that this was well known before the law of Moses was given. Job xxxi. 33. "If I cover my transgression, as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom." The same Book of Job makes it evident, in many places, that the doctrine of human depravity was another article of very early belief, arising out of the well known fact of Adam's apostasy.

IV. The doctrine of a future world, and the immortality of the soul, certainly appear in the translation of Enoch, and in various places in the Book of Job, as well as in the hope of the promised seed, which could have been a hope to the first sinners only upon their expectation of a future life.

V. There is the clearest evidence, that the doctrine of atonement, by animal sacrifice, for the forgiveness of sins, was regularly and constantly transmitted from the days of Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Job. Mr. Clarkson observes, in his "*Patriarchal Researches*," that "There is reason "to believe, from what has been said, that God "gave to Adam and Eve, after their creation,* "certain precepts for the moral guidance of themselves and their posterity; and that certain doctrines or religious notions may also be distinctly "traced from the earliest times; which precepts "and doctrines combined, constituted the body "of divinity to the church of Adam; and that "the same precepts and doctrines constituted "afterwards the body of divinity of the church "of Noah; hence they must have been in operation as such, in the plain of Shinar, when "Noah and all his descendants were living there, "speaking one language, and dwelling together "as one people. For it is impossible to suppose, "that such a distinguished servant of God as "Noah, one who had been miraculously saved "from destruction in the ark, one who, immediately on landing from it, built an altar unto "the Lord, and one who is called in the Scriptures a preacher of righteousness, would have "neglected to keep up among the different families, all of which had sprung from his own "loins, that knowledge of God and religion which "he had brought with him from the old world. "Hence, I conclude, that all the families, when "there living together in Shinar, knew what "their duty was, both to God and man, as far "as it had then been revealed. Hence, I conclude, again, that when the different families,

* This expression, I think, needs to be qualified; for it seems questionable, whether any other law was given in Eden, than the prohibition of the tree. All besides might be supposed left to intuition, while man was yet in a state of rectitude. Several of the precepts of the law afterwards recognized, and finally established in the *ten words*, would not have been suitable, probably not intelligible, till the effects of sin began to be felt. This remark relates merely to the phrase, "*after their creation.*"

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"just alluded to, separated from each other, and "wandered about and formed separate commu- "nities in new lands, they carried with them, in "their wanderings, the head of each family on "the tablet of his memory, all the religious pre- "cepts and doctrines which they then professed; "and hence it is easy to see how men in the "succeeding patriarchal ages, such as Job and "others, acquired that religious information which "we have seen, and fragments of which would be "found afterwards in different parts of the world.

The transmission of them easy and secure.

"Nor have we any reason to suppose that their "religious information, or that any traditions of "importance, would have suffered materially, in "point of truth, by being passed from one gene- "ration to another, when we consider, that in "consequence of the longevity of men in those "days, three persons only would have been "needed to hand down any striking occurrence "from the creation to the time of Abraham. "Methuselah, for instance, lived at the same "time, both with Adam and Noah. He could, "therefore, have told Noah whatever he might "have received or heard as having come from "Adam, or whatever he himself had known of "the history of the antediluvian world; and, "certainly, no man could have done this better "than Methuselah; for we cannot but believe, "that such a man as Enoch, his father, would "have taken great care to acquaint his son with "all that had passed relative to religion, laws,

"and doctrine from the beginning. Noah, then, LECT. VI.
"having been thus instructed, would have had Delivered by Noah to his sons.
"numberless opportunities of communicating
"what he had then heard, and also what he had
"himself seen, to his sons. Now Shem is said
"to have lived five hundred years after the
"deluge, and so far into patriarchal times, as
"to have been contemporary with Abraham.
"Indeed, Shem is supposed by many to have
"been Melchizedek, the venerable king of Salem,
"and priest of the Most High God, who blessed
"Abraham after the battle in which he rescued
"Lot, and to whom Abraham gave a tenth
"of all his spoil on that occasion."* From these general views of the earliest principles, both of morals and religion, among the antediluvians, and to the times of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, there appears an identity with both the Mosaic and the Christian doctrine.

Embodied and enlarged in the law at Sinai.

The law given at Sinai did but embody and enlarge the simpler law brought down from the days of Adam; and the ceremonial, or religious law of Moses, did but expand and illustrate more fully and typically the doctrine of sacrificial oblations, which had been taught by the first man to his sons, and which, having never ceased from the beginning, exemplifies that saying in the Book of the Revelation, "The lamb slain from the foundation of the world,"† virtually identifying

* Clarkson's Researches, pp. 67, 70.

† Chap. xiii. ver. 8.

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Identity of the system of revelation through these periods.

But from these observations on the identity of the Biblical system of morals and religion, through all the dispensations or gradations of revealed truth, I proceed to consider the testimony to the truth and authority of revelation, which arises from the history of the church and people of God, as they have been distinguished by the

Its profession.

profession of this religion, and the observance of the divine precepts, through the different ages of the world. The doctrines or principles, as they have been held by men in the three great stages of advancement, have been dependent for their influence, their propagation, and their transmission, upon a succession of persons, called the people of God, the righteous, or the church. Perhaps the term *church* does not strictly apply, while there was no community or association for religious worship; and, until the time of Moses, there seems to have been no such association beyond the individual household. Each father, during the whole of the patriarchal age, appears to have had a domestic church, and to have been the only priest; and beyond this, I think, we have no positive evidence of the association of men in acts of religious worship.* This form of the

* Dr. Boothroyd, in a note on Gen. iv. 26, says, "It is "not probable that good men *began* then, *first*, to call on "the name of the Lord." His version, and he is supported in it by many eminent authorities, is, "then began

church appears to have been well adapted to the LECT. VI. simplicity of the pastoral life, which then generally prevailed, before large bodies dwelt together in cities and towns. Of the continuity, both of religious sentiment, and of the religious body, from the days of Adam to those of Abraham, there can be, as we have shown, little doubt, since one link connected Adam and Noah, and another single link, as Arphaxad, or Selah, connected Noah with Abraham, and secured the ready and uncorrupted transmission of Noah's religion to Abraham, and, by three more links, even to Moses.*

A distinct society commences in Abraham's family.

But in Abraham commences what is, with more strict propriety, denominated the church

"men to be called by the name of the Lord." This might seem to imply some church-state distinct from, and beyond that of *patriarchal government*. It is, however, well known, that patriarchal families frequently included several generations. The distinction, therefore, expressed in the proposed version, is perfectly compatible with our view of patriarchal religion. But if any prefer the notion of a wider religious association, our general views will not be affected by the admission, that there was, thus early, some kind of regular association for the worship of the true God, beyond that of families or households.

* Abraham died when Jacob was about fifteen, and from the death of Jacob to the birth of Moses was only one hundred and seventeen years. Joseph's life occupied fifty-four of these after Jacob's death; so that from Joseph to Moses we have only sixty-three. Thus one individual (Jacob) connects Abraham and Joseph, and one more might connect Joseph and Moses:—then, from Abraham to Moses,

LECT. VI. of God, because he received an express command to set apart his seed, and to enjoin upon them an imitation of his own example, in perpetuating a badge of their descent, which was to serve the purpose of their separation from all nations of the world, to be a peculiar people, with the view of transmitting that new current of prophecy which was about to disclose, more precisely than had yet been done, the divine purposes for the recovery of mankind. To Abraham, therefore, was granted the promise, that his seed should be greatly multiplied; and that from them should come the great deliverer, whom all nations should bless, and in whom all nations should be blessed. Further, to Abraham was given this promise, when he had no child; and, moreover, the prediction that his descendants should possess that particular land of Canaan. Here, then, we have a distinct incorporation of a body of persons as a visible church, identified in their moral and religious principles with all the righteous that went before; but, for the special purpose of transmitting the ampler developments of prophecy, constituted a peculiar people, a nation separated from all the rest, and kept so in the most perfect and remarkable manner, till the time arrived for

only three or four persons intervene. The transmission, therefore, of patriarchal religion, was easy, and facts show that it was unbroken and complete from Adam to Moses. Every link in this chain of successive believers, may be said to be clearly traceable, without a single break or gap.

the consummation of the promises and prophecies LECT. VI. which had commenced with Adam, and been accumulating through the lapse of so many ages, till the coming of the great Messiah, who, in his history, character, and principles, is found most minutely to correspond with every item of the whole body of prophecy, preserved and transmitted through those remote ages.

Three predictions respecting it.

Here, then, in the very founding of the church, in the person of Abraham, we have three distinct predictions: *first*, that his descendants were to be the church and people of God, and to preserve the doctrine and worship of the one true God through their generations, while all the other families of the earth, descended equally with themselves from the righteous Noah, fell into idolatry. This fact, which is attested, as well by profane as by sacred history, is a remarkable proof of the inspiration of holy Scripture; but we cannot dwell upon it here. We observe, therefore, *secondly*, there was also a prophecy of the particular locality these descendants of Abraham were to possess, when there was no probability, nor for several hundreds of years afterwards, of their ever being able to conquer it: and, *thirdly*, there was a renewal of the very ancient prediction of the seed promised to Adam, with the additional explanation, which might, indeed, be considered as involved in the very first sentence, of *bruising the head of the serpent*, or tempter; viz. that he should bless all nations, and all nations call him blessed.

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The history of the Jewish church undeniable.

From this period, then, there has existed, as we may fairly presume all will allow, who are acquainted with the history of nations, a numerous body of persons universally admitted to be the descendants of Abraham. Whatever may be thought of the circumstances of their residence in Egypt, the mode of their deliverance, their journey through the wilderness, and their entrance into the land of Canaan, there cannot be any doubt of the existence of Moses, or of the fact that he was their legislator and general; and it can as little admit of doubt, that, after the death of Moses, Joshua was the captain who expelled the Canaanitish nations, and led the Israelites into the possession of that country. These facts are, in the main, attested by all the authorities that can be found.

No conflicting evidence.

It is, further, to be observed, that there is no conflicting testimony to this, no evidence whatever, that the Jewish nation came into Canaan at any other date, or in any other way, than that stated in the sacred record. We are, therefore, entitled here to assume thus much as indisputable, that the people of the Jews did possess this land from the time stated, and did observe, while in it, the peculiar form of religion ascribed to them by the sacred penmen, and by all other ancient writers who have alluded to the subject. It has already been shown, that Christianity arose among this people, at the time, and under the circumstances stated by the sacred books.

The continuity of the church through all its periods.

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The chain of persons is, therefore, now shown to be complete. From Adam to Abraham there was an unbroken succession of righteous men, distinguished by certain moral and religious principles, who never lost the knowledge of those principles, and never abandoned the worship of the one true God. From Abraham to Christ the general fact is equally clear, that there existed a numerous nation, possessing the principles, and following the practices of their fathers, and occupying a distinct place in the earth, till the time of Jesus Christ, when this nation was overthrown and dispersed; and that, thenceforward, to the present time, there has been another church which sprang out of their nation, but which has been all along identified with the Israelites and their ancestors, the patriarchs, in all the essentials of the primitive religion.

General observations on the succession.

Upon the church, then, as thus shown to have been a continuous body, existing, indeed, under different forms, but still identified in its character and principles, we shall now proceed to make some general observations, designed to show, from its history, the verification of the sacred word.

Its perpetuity.

We observe, *first*, there is something extraordinary in its unbroken continuity and preservation through so many ages, as a society peculiar in its principles and practices, from all the rest of the world. It has presented an uninterrupted succession of devoted worshippers of the one true

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God, through all generations. These have been, at different times, connected with various nations, from whose histories and ancient monuments many facts might be collected, identifying the church in its fluctuations, and verifying, at different points, the accuracy of the sacred historian. Sometimes it has consisted of individuals from a great variety of nations, but yet preserving its social and religious unity; and while the different kingdoms of the world have had their rise and fall, and have passed away in succession, and been lost one after another, yet the kingdom or church of God has remained through all time, and is still perpetuated.

Identity of faith.

Under all the different forms in which it has existed, and through its several transition states, it has preserved an unquestionable identity. There has been an entire unity of faith and hope, and the grand features of its members have been the same, constituting a sort of moral resemblance, running through all the members of the same family. Believers, whether under the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, or the Christian economy, have been essentially the same; have displayed the same virtues and imperfections, and have been all united in the same great principles of faith and practice. Take, for instance, Abel, who sacrificed of the firstlings of his flock, in faith of the promised conqueror of the tempter, who was to be the Saviour of the world. Take Enoch, who walked in the ways of God, or devoutly persevered for

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three hundred years in obeying the divine precepts. Take Noah, the preacher of righteousness, or Abraham and Lot, the steadfast believers of the same great promise made to the faith of their fathers, and renewed to them, and who, amidst all the vicissitudes of their lives, maintained the integrity of their faith in revelation, and their conformity to the divine precepts of moral and religious obligation.

Great events connected with it.

How often, too, in the history of the church, and especially in the ancient portion of it, do we see the fate of nations and rulers hanging upon *its* destiny. One nation overturned, because it resisted some movement of providence in relation to the people of God; another conquered and given to other rulers, to prepare the way for restoring, reforming, or re-establishing the church. It seems as impossible to doubt, that God has had a peculiar people in the world, and preserved them from the beginning of time, as that there has been a regular succession of nights and days, of seasons of the year, and productions of the earth.

Preservation of the church a continued miracle.

But, amidst the vice and idolatry, which have so long and so generally prevailed, it must be admitted to be a phenomenon, not explicable by merely natural causes, that those who, in every age, have been witnesses for God, have not been carried away by the prevailing ignorance and wickedness. For such is the evidence before us, that it is clear the church has always been in

LECT. VI. the furnace, yet has never been consumed. Now, in its preserved existence from Adam to Christ, from Christ to the present age, there is a strict accomplishment of many particular predictions relating to its indestructibility, and there is a general verification of the whole body of sacred Scripture, as designed to subserve its preservation, and as altogether presupposing its continued existence; otherwise a large portion of the sacred book would be a nullity, a thing without a use; and, secondly, a falsehood, as presuming upon the existence of that which was not. So that, when the whole scope and intention of the Scripture is examined, and compared with the undoubted fact of the continuous existence of such a body of persons, as we have denominated the church, there appears a grand and lengthened coincidence between the written word and the history.

An objection considered.

It might be objected here, that the very existence of the written word has been the cause of the fact alleged as its verification. It may be said the word has created the church, and been the means of perpetuating it from age to age; and it may, therefore, be thought, by some, a very natural thing that this result should follow. But, we think, it can be shown, that the production and perpetuity of the church could not have followed, humanly or naturally, from the mere existence of the written word of Scripture; because, had that word not been of God, there are causes in human nature, and in the relative

circumstances in which the professed people of LECT. VI. God have been placed, which would have infallibly led to their extermination, or even have prevented men from ever embracing the sacred testimony; for, in the face of these difficulties and obstacles, nothing could have induced any portion of mankind to submit to it, except the overpowering conviction of its divine authority.

But it is evident, that through one principal period, and that the earliest, the preservation of the divine commands depended altogether upon the succession of believers. The divine promises and precepts were transmitted, traditionally, from one believer to another, or from father to son, so that, had there been no succession of believers, there could have been no preservation of the important matters of early revelation from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, or even to Moses. Should we admit that the existence of revelation was the cause of the existence of the church, yet it is clear that the word of God must have become extinct, but for the continuity of believers from age to age. The admission of some traditionary revelation, therefore, through that long period, necessarily implies a regular succession of persons, by whom it was transmitted.

It is, moreover, evident, that the Israelitish race were retained in subjection to Moses, and to the severe discipline of a forty years pilgrimage in the wilderness, by no principles or motives

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involved in the ordinary actions of men. Nothing but a commanding conviction of divine authority can account for their submission to a ruler whom they did not choose, and who had no natural resources for the maintenance of his command; nothing but their conviction that he was invested with divine authority, and was as able to punish those among them who rebelled against him, as to overthrow their enemies who impeded their march. The unbeliever, who thinks that there never was sufficient ground for believing in any divine revelation, must esteem it a no less wonderful fact than we do; indeed, to him, and upon his principles, it ought to appear utterly inexplicable, that such a body of persons should have been brought into such a state of submission, and so long retained in it. He may have his own way of explaining the fact, but the fact itself he cannot set aside; and, we think, the more closely and deeply he reflects upon it, the less credible will any solution appear but that which we allege as the true one; namely, their belief in the divine appointment and qualification of Moses.

Existence and peculiarities of the Jewish church admitted.

But we are not concerned, at present, to press this point; we pass on, therefore, to the general and indisputable fact of the long continuance of the Israelites in the possession of Canaan, under the character of the church of God. Other historians, beside their own, refer to them at different periods, but always as a very peculiar people, both in their polity and their religion.

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Indeed, there is scarcely an ancient writer of any extent, whose works have come down to our own times, but attests, either directly, or by implication, both the existence of the Jews and their existence as a nation in Palestine. It is also equally clear, that they had a social constitution peculiar to themselves, and a religion distinguished from all others, by the fact that it taught the existence of only one God; that it was sharply opposed to idolatry, and kept its people isolated from all other nations, by special regulations as to marriage and various other matters.

Always considered itself the church of God.

It is a fact, equally undeniable, that this nation considered itself the peculiar people of God, and adhered, in the main, most rigidly to the rites and ceremonies of his worship; and that, whenever they deviated from their prescribed laws, or debased their worship by idolatrous and superstitious intermixtures, they suffered severe national calamities. Now, their history down to the time of their subjugation by the Romans, and their expulsion from their own land, is a matter perfectly notorious.

Overthrow of the Jews not the extermination of the church.

But here arises an interesting and important question. Did the existence of the church of God terminate with their exclusion from Judea, or did the same religious fraternity continue, or the same incorporation perpetuate itself, though in some other form? The Bible represents the favour of God as removing from the nation of the Jews, and attaching itself to that portion of

LECT. VI. them who became the followers of Jesus Christ, and this fact was proved by the entire cessation of the civil and ecclesiastical economy of Judaism. This was the subject of specific prophecy long before, as were also the circumstances under which it was to take place, and both the period and the manner of these important transactions. These events, we know, did take place at the destruction of Jerusalem, and, about that time, a new system was introduced, founded upon the principles of the old one. Under the superintendence, and with the authority of Jesus Christ, his apostles were commissioned to go forth, and form their adherents into an entirely new society, yet deriving the authority and confirming the foundations of their new brotherhood from the doctrines of the former church; and though not involving any change in the essential principles of the worship, or of the personal acceptance of the worshipper, yet certainly introducing a most important change in the extent and comprehension of the system; the one being strictly national and peculiar, the other universal in its aspect, and yet requiring a more strict and spiritual character in its members. Instead of lineal descent from Abraham, there was now to be a full and free admission and acceptance into the sacred fellowship, of all that sincerely believed in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of men.

The change matter of prophecy.

All this was matter of arrangement and specific regulation by Christ himself; and the commission for carrying these regulations into effect was issued by him before his departure from his disciples; and, according to these instructions, they gradually relaxed the bonds of the ancient law, and introduced into their own societies the new doctrines and institutes of their Master.

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He had foretold, that their endeavours should be successful; that they should raise up a new church upon those new principles, which should become permanent, and proceed, with various fortune, encountering much opposition and adversity; but, in the main, advancing through all ages and nations, triumphantly surmounting all difficulties, until it should at length become the only religion of the world, and comprise, within its amiable and holy brotherhood, all nations.

Fulfilment of the predictions.

Now, these being the general terms and predictions respecting the church under its new form, we are all competent to decide how far they are fulfilled in the actual history of the Christian Church. Has there existed, from the time of Jesus Christ, down to the present, such a society, considering itself a continuation of the ancient church, possessing its determinate and characteristic features, but adopting a different form of worship, and with many additional principles, but the object of which, as a distinct society, has been the same, as well as its witness for God and its treatment by the world?

Assuredly, there can be no doubt upon these

LECT. VI. points. There has been a constant incorporation of Christian believers; that is, a church united together, on the strictest terms of brotherhood, under a common and supreme authority, recognized alike by all, professing a common faith, meeting for acts of religious worship, and making a common cause, while they have been all along distinguished from the rest of the world by the peculiar character of their religion, by the specific form of their faith, and by the high and sublime hopes they have professed to ground upon their faith.

The church continued in another form.

Such a church does exist, at the present time. It is widely extended. In some respects it is diversified, and characterized by sectional differences; but it is identical in all its leading principles and doctrines, and in every thing that concerns this argument. Its history answers most accurately to the descriptions and prophecies going before concerning it, in the sacred volume.

Evidence of inspiration.

Could any authority, but a divine one, have ventured to foretel the existence, and character, and perpetuity of such a body, its constitution, its unity of principle and spirit, its relative position in reference to mankind at large, its progressive advancement, its fluctuations and corruptions, its indestructible vitality, and its propagation among all nations, if there had not existed a divine foresight of its history, and both a divine promise and a divine power to sustain and preserve it! It is a marvellous fact, that there should have been a church at all, when we consider, that the truths and principles which constituted it, do not arise, and never did arise, spontaneously in the human heart. If its origin, in the first instance, could be traced to natural reason, why did not similar churches arise, where reason was left wholly to itself? Why does not the history of the various nations present similar instances of the origination and perpetuation of the same principles, and the same succession of persons prepared to defend and maintain them? No such cases occur in the history of other nations, unblessed by revelation. No such great and undeniable principles of morals and religion appear elsewhere; which, viewed simply as a fact, we think, clearly proves, that reason and nature did not originate such a profession, and did not, in the first instance, lead to the separation of such a particular body of professors, as appears in the history of the Antediluvian, the Mosaic, and the Christian churches. Its origination can be ascribed to no cause but the influence of revelation, and its perpetuation can be accounted nothing less than a continued miracle, performed against the course of corrupt and depraved nature. For all the nations of mankind, with the solitary exception of the church, which held the traditionary, or the written law of revelation, fell early into idolatry, and lost entirely the knowledge of the true God. All the earth, except the single nation of the Jews,

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presented nothing but superstition and darkness; and though the Jews were often invaded, and overrun by their idolatrous neighbours, yet they were never altogether overcome by the tide of desolation; but their partial defections were always visited by such temporal judgments and such reforming measures, as effectually led to the restoration of the purer principles and worship of their ancestors.

Thus we may say, looking through the whole period of the church's existence, which runs parallel with time itself, it has outlived all its enemies, the greatest and mightiest of whom has always found a grave in the quarrel. The miserable confession of Julian, "O, Galilean, thou hast conquered me," is applicable to all its adversaries.

The fact verifies the prediction.

Let it be supposed, what the whole current of revelation shows, both directly and indirectly, that the continued, unbroken existence of the church was foretold or presumed, (one or the other must be granted,) and, in either case, the only question we have to answer, in order to verify the general truth of revelation, is, does the fact, as attested by all history, answer to the express or implied prediction? Has the church ever been extinct? Assuredly it has not. It has been a real phœnix, arising frequently from its own ashes. It has been, we confess, reduced to many straits, but never utterly cut off. Its enemies have often made preparations to celebrate

its final obsequies, and sing its *requiem*. But it has started into newness of life, risen, and come forth, even from its grave, to the confusion and dismay of all its foes. It still lives, and proves more beautiful and vigorous than ever. LECT. VI.

Vicissitudes enhance the proof.

The church has experienced various changes, and witnessed fearful scenes of trial, but survived them all. Her sun has been often beclouded, but has never gone down. Her lamp has burnt dim, and sometimes in a sepulchre, but it has never expired. Her interests have resembled the tide, which, while it recedes from one shore, rises upon another. It has often been near extinction, but yet has never suffered it.

When Noah and his family were shut up in the ark, all the piety of the earth, the promises of God, and the hopes of the church, were identified with a single family. Again, when Abraham was commanded to take Isaac, his only son, and when he lifted his hand, at the bidding of God, to slay the seed, in whom, alone, the promise could be fulfilled, the succession of believers, and of the church, was all but suspended. In the land of Egypt, when the decree of the king went forth to slay all the male children, and there was but a step between the Israelites and utter extermination, and no probable or human means appeared of preventing the decree from taking effect to its utmost extent, then the hour of deliverance approached. Not less memorable was the crisis, when the whole body of the chosen

LECT. VI. people lay between the army of Pharaoh pursuing, and the impassable Red Sea before them, shut in by apparent destruction, both before and behind; then their preservation demonstrated the immutability of the divine word, the inviolability of the church of God.

Again, we behold the singular accomplishment of Scripture, when they were enslaved in the Babylonish captivity. We further trace the critical situation of the church, when Haman, and the king at Shushan, had determined upon the destruction of all the Jews, had fixed the day, and prepared the commission to all the governors throughout the provinces. But this only proved another occasion for the deliverance of the people of God, and the signal overthrow of their enemies.

We would put it to every unbeliever, in the first place, to account, upon any human principles, for the existence of a distinct and united fraternity, from the very earliest times, down to the present; existing, too, in a state of suffering, self-denial, and alienation from the world and its ways; and then we might further call upon him to account for the coincidence of the facts regarding the history of this society, with the book which authorizes its incorporation, and professes to foretel its existence, and even its minute history, through all the amazing lapse of time during which it has been preserved in the world. Evidently the Scripture has been constantly fulfilling, in the

most remarkable manner, in this society, and is so at the present time, both in its continued existence, its troubles from within and from without, its conflicts and triumphs, its corruptions and reformations, its decline and advancement. But I pass on now to notice, LECT. VI.

Secondly: The sacred word presents its enlarged picture of the church under different lights. There is this feature running through the whole of its descriptions and predictions;—it is represented as exposed to severe suffering and external hostility, whether under its national form of Judaism, or under Christianity. It is to be hated, persecuted, oppressed, and, I might even say, slain perpetually, by the world. Was it not singular, that this should be foreseen, and that an institution, so peaceful in its nature, so strictly spiritual in all its ends, should excite this enmity, and rouse all the malignity and power of the world to destroy it? Peculiar circumstances of the church.

It is, moreover, represented, that its enemies should, to a certain extent, be successful; should prevail, sometimes almost to its extinction, but never be allowed entirely to crush it; for that, when brought to its lowest ebb, it should revive, and proceed on its course, undismayed by all the terror and might of its foes, yea, braving all their malignity, and evincing an irrepressible virtue, a mysterious renovating efficiency, arising, as if from the dead, again to maintain the principles of the true religion with increasing success, Adversities and corruptions.

LECT. VI. till they should triumph over all opposition, and subjugate all mankind to their sway.

These foreseen.

Now, have not these particulars been verified, in a manner truly astonishing? Have not the causes to which all the corruptions and declensions, and most of the sufferings of the church, were attributed in prophecy, actually appeared in history? There were times, under the Jewish form of the church, when the nation, to a great extent, revolted or apostatized from the principles and spirit of the ancient faith; or when they incorporated idolatrous and human forms with the divine religion of Moses, and thereby brought exemplary visitations upon themselves. But there were always a few that retained their integrity, and became witnesses for God and for the truth; so that the pure system was never lost, and never entirely forsaken.

Church often near extinction.

There were periods, when both these events seemed impending, if not actually come; but, when times of reformation dawned, then the sacred books were brought forth by those few faithful believers, who had concealed them as hidden treasures, and though each had thought that he alone was left, Abdiel like,

> "faithful found
> Among the faithless; faithful only he
> Among innumerable false;"

yet, when the days of prosperity arrived, many appeared openly as witnesses for God and his truth, who had never diverged from the pre-

scribed form of worship, nor bowed the knee to a false or strange god, nor abandoned the promises and hopes of their fathers. LECT. VI.

Christian church—its history.

Has not the actual history of the church been strikingly similar under the christian constitution? I need not enlarge upon those particular views, which are familiar to all, but I will allude to the general fact, so fully ascertained in the history of the civilized world, since the time of Jesus Christ, that there has been a Christian church, that it has been severely oppressed by heathen and worldly princes, corrupted by many professed friends, retarded by many human additions, inventions, and incumbrances; but yet it has continued unto this day, it has withstood all oppression, it has revived and reformed itself without the intervention of any new revelation, and its present state affords a most striking confirmation of the sacred writings.

Infidel attempts to explain its success.

Many infidels have taken upon them to show, that there was nothing very extraordinary in the spread of Christianity. Gibbon says, "it grew "up in silence and obscurity;" and yet adds, what involves a decided contradiction of his own statement, that "it derived new vigour from "opposition, and finally erected the triumphant "banners of the cross upon the ruins of the "Capitol."* It is, indeed, a hard task to account for the progress of Christianity upon the principles of infidelity. Instead of *silence and obscu-*

* Decline and Fall, chap. xv.

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rity, it was always open and public; it met with as severe opposition in its earliest infancy as at any subsequent period. There was no *obscurity* when the decree of Herod went forth to slay all the male children under two years of age. There was no *silence* or *obscurity* when Jesus Christ appeared in the temple, traversed the land, and proclaimed his doctrine on the mountain-tops. There was just as little when the disciples, after his death, boldly declared to the national council, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard;" and surely the commission they received from their Master, "Preach the gospel to every creature," and "teach all nations, beginning at Jerusalem," savoured as little of *secrecy* and *silence* as can well be imagined.

Their entire failure.

But so fruitless and absurd are all the attempts of unbelievers to account for the early progress and splendid triumphs of the Christian church! The task has outmatched all their sophistry, and baffled all their learning. But, supposing their statement true, as to the manner and the means, yet there is this fact that can neither be explained nor denied; the rise and progress of Christianity exhibited, the unquestionable fulfilment of promises and prophecies. If the fact itself, of the perpetuation of the Christian church, were ever so simple and natural, yet it becomes a proof of divine inspiration, when it can be shown, that it was foretold long before, both by Christ and by the ancient prophets. The Old

Testament, kept by the enemies of the new doctrine and new church, and deposited at the library of Alexandria, several centuries before Christianity arose, foretold the introduction of the Gentiles to the service of the true God, and described that as the special age of glory and extension to the church. Nothing but divine power can be supposed adequate to have produced and maintained, under such a succession, such a fluctuation of circumstances, in so many different and dissimilar nations, the identity of the Christian faith, and the observance of its ordinary duties. This Christian fraternity has been assailed in every possible way, and has been reduced within a little of extermination; but it never has been extinct; and are we not, then, on this ground, warranted to infer, that the Spirit of the Almighty is in it? May we not challenge the world to produce an instance of a religion that has been preserved so long, and under circumstances so unpropitious, or of a fraternity so identical in its principles, its practices, and its hopes, through all generations? No parallel can be produced; none even approaching to it.

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Are we not, then, entitled to the inference, that these particulars of the church's history, all foretold in the sacred books, in their precise order, and verified by actual experience, furnish an undeniable proof of the veracity and divinity of that word which represents the church as a bush burning with fire, yet never consumed?

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Combination of worldly power against the church.

Thirdly. In connexion with these views we are entitled to reinforce our general argument, by observing, that the sacred word expressly speaks of the extensive combination of human wisdom, power, and skill against the church of God. And it is a notorious fact, with which all are acquainted, that, generally, the greatest men in the world have been opposed to the church; men of the greatest learning, talent, and genius. The men of power and authority, and in the greatest multitudes, have been its decided and implacable enemies. That it should be able to exist under such a combination of all that is great and mighty in human nature arrayed against it, while its friends have often been inconsiderable, weak, and few, is a moral miracle on a large scale, and a miracle continued and prolonged, before the eyes of the world, from age to age.

Unreasonableness of opposition.

In one respect it is strange, that the church of God should have enemies at all; especially when we consider what it is, and why it is. Can there be any thing to justify the enmity of the world against pure morality and enlightened piety? And then, when it is remembered with what malignity this conflict has been prosecuted, and that there is no personal reason why wicked men should hate the righteous and religious, and that there never was any personal or national quarrel carried on with such deep-seated and implacable enmity; and, again, when it is observed, that this warfare should be carried on through

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all the successive generations of the church of God, commencing with Cain, and running parallel with the duration of the church; that not all the blood shed in the quarrel should in the least degree mitigate the world's enmity; that not all the efforts of peace-makers; that not all the considerations which reason and fear, or the threatenings of Scripture can supply, could ever subdue the enmity or unite the parties; and, further, that, in this contention, there has been manifested a consciousness that the world was all the time on the ill-fated side, to which defeat and disaster must inevitably cleave, so that these enemies, all along, have appeared to betray a consciousness of the impossibility of success, and have been more *afraid* of the church of Christ than able to destroy it. Surely, in this, there are evidences enough of fatuity and wilful malignity on the side of its foes. For it has long since been manifest, that opposition was unavailing, and yet, ever and anon, the world has renewed the warfare, and rushed upon destruction and disgrace. But, in all this, prophecy has received a clear fulfilment. For it is said, even by opponents, "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, and no divination against Israel: for, from this time, it shall be said, What hath God wrought? No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that riseth up against thee, in judgment, thou shalt condemn."

Its failure foretold.

We might refer to the memorable instances,

LECT. VI. recorded in the Old Testament, of the oppressions of the Israelites, when God said, "I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people, that are in Egypt;" and to which reference was again made, when it was said, "I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee." We might show how the army of Sennacherib was destroyed for the sake of delivering the church; we might refer to the history of the proud monarch of Babylon, and detail the circumstances of his overthrow by Cyrus, and show how this stranger was made a deliverer of the oppressed, and an instrument of restoring and reviving the decayed church, though he knew not the God of Israel. We might further show, how the curse of God evidently cleaves to those that oppose his cause; how it sometimes consumes secretly, like a concealed pestilence, and sometimes openly, like the thunderbolt and the earthquake; how it scathes, in an instant, the power that resists, as by the omnipotence of an invisible avenger, and sweeps away, with resistless desolation, the armies of the adversaries. There was Herod, that vexed the church in the apostles' days; he was eaten alive of worms that bred in his own flesh. There was Judas, who betrayed the innocent blood of his holy Master. There was the earthquake at Philippi, when the apostles were imprisoned; and there was the persecuting Saul of Tarsus, smitten to the ground and afflicted with blindness. The Jews, too, in the infatuation of their rage, when they resisted

the claims of the Messiah, said, "His blood be upon us and upon our children;" and how fearfully has the imprecation been realized in their heavy and unparalleled sufferings from that very age to the present! LECT. VI.

These predictions verified by history.

The predictions, before noticed, referred partly to the church in its ancient, and partly in its new form. Have they been all verified? Have no combinations of men availed against the Christian church? Have no counsels formed against it prospered and been consummated? Have no kings been able, with their armies, or their laws, or dreadful penalties, to exclude Christianity, and exterminate the Christians? Certainly not! all has been unavailing.

The church has been like the sun in the midst of the firmament, often defaced by clouds and storms, but nothing has been able permanently to quench its light, or impede its course. There we may now see it, shining more brightly, rising more gloriously, and extending its beams more widely than ever. It now bids defiance to all its enemies, and is going forth in the most glorious and benignant triumph, secure from all opposition. It is an oft-repeated prediction, that all the combined counsel, power, and wisdom of men to destroy it should fail. Has it not been so? And has is not been so without any counsel, or wisdom, or power, on the part of the church itself? May we not say, that nothing could be more weak or exposed, than the whole body of the

LECT. VI. people of God, especially under the gospel dispensation? For there has been no general concert or combination of the friends of Christianity against their enemies, in the way of counter-scheming, or of combined effort. There have been some large sections of the Christian body, in which it has been deemed necessary and proper to employ human power against human power, human policy against human policy; but wherever this has been the case, it has conspicuously failed; and it has thus always appeared to be the wisdom of the church to commit its cause entirely to the hands of its divine Lord and head, and leave him to confound all the machinations of its enemies. The counsels of the wicked against it, and the power of all its foes, are, as the elements of nature, wholly under his divine control.

What has been more conspicuous in history than the utter failure of all attempts made against revealed religion, or against those who sincerely profess it? I do not deny that, in some cases, and to some local extent, the opposition has been successful; that is, in so far as the sword, when used recklessly, destroys those that are exposed to it. But there has been this extraordinary mystery in the annals of the church, that its times of severest persecution have been times of the greatest spiritual prosperity and success. In those seasons, though the sword has availed against the persons of believers, the *cause* of those believers has always been advanced by their

sufferings. The force of the truth has been thus evinced; its fragrance has been more extensively diffused by the temporal sufferings of its advocates. LECT. VI.

The church invincible.

I am entitled here, then, again to ask, can any thing be more convincing and satisfactory than the results of the long-tried opposition against the church of God? does it not appear that it cannot be suppressed; and that, because God is in it of a truth? It possesses a vitality that makes it independent of man, and secure of all human hostility. And, if so, then how demonstrably divine the foundation on which it rests! How sure that word of Scripture, which has had so large, so wonderful, so minute an accomplishment in this whole history!

Severe discipline foretold.

Fourthly. It is further to be observed, that much is said in Scripture concerning the discipline which God would exercise upon his church; as, in the general, that its state should be one of sharp trial and corrective chastisement. You might expect, perhaps, that this was to be all confined to the old economy. But even in reference to the *new*, we read—"in the world ye shall have tribulation;" "he that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;" "if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you."

Opposition still continued.

Now all this has been, and is still fulfilling. Even in this age, when so much of external oppo-

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sition against the cause of Christianity has ceased, and a large proportion of the world is made nominally of the church, yet it is still true, the spiritually minded are despised, contemned, and ridiculed in every possible way by the mere formalists, and by that large class of professed believers, but real and practical infidels, who have crept into the church of Christ, and long worn the livery of Christians for the sake of worldly ends.

Internal causes of decay counteracted.

This leads me further to notice the fact, that Scripture frequently mentions the divisions and disasters, dissentions and strifes, which should exist within the church itself, through the weakness and sinfulness of its members, a source of evil which must, in reference to any other institution, but one divinely founded, have proved its utter ruin and extinction, but which has always been over-ruled for the most important benefits and advantages. This evil appears, to human intelligence, more serious and alarming than all the external opposition of declared enemies. Yet has it been made the means, both of preserving the integrity of the written word, of exciting the vigilance of the church over its moral principles, and the practices of its members, and of supplying an evidence to the world of the incorruptness and perfection of the sacred document, which could not have been given by the church alone, nor afforded, if it had always

remained in a state of entire agreement within itself. LECT. VI.

These clearly foreseen.

It is abundantly manifest, that all the great corruptions and apostasies of the nation of the Jews, while they continued the sole church, were subjects of clear prediction. To this all their prophets are witness. The sufferings of many of them, on account of these predictions, and especially for their fearless denunciations of divine judgments on the princes and heads of the nation, sufficiently attest the reality of such predictions, and confirm the argument we are now handling. And, as to the Christian church, it is not less certain, that the frequent divisions and disasters were all foreseen; that many apostasies have been predicted; and that some very great and general defection and depravation of the gospel-church was foretold, as about to take place, even in those times immediately succeeding the apostolic age. None can read the Epistles of Paul, and of the other apostles, without being convinced of the fact, that great desolations and divisions were predicted, and the punishment of them as clearly marked out, while the perpetuity of the church, under and through them all, with its subsequent reformation and final universality, are as decidedly foreshown.

Yet its continuance foretold.

There are particular instances that might be named, such as the prophecy of Paul, concerning the mystery of iniquity, which, he says, "does already work," &c. Another instance you have,

LECT. VI. in the Apocalyptic Epistles to the Seven Churches of Asia. Yet the continuance of the church is clearly predicted, and even corruption and apostasy, perfidy and persecution, in all their degrees, and forms, and deadly fruits, are represented as altogether powerless against the church, and against the honour of its founder. What other society, placed under such circumstances, could have existed and preserved its constitution, all its laws, all its moral features and principles, unchanged? Even its professed friends have often proved its greatest foes, and laboured to undermine and overthrow it. The gates of hell or of death shall not, however, prevail against it.

Its history verifies the written word.

Are we not, then, entitled to say, that its internal, its own peculiar history, as recording its trials, corruptions, and conflicts, does but attest the truth of that sacred word, in which all these evils, and the effects of them, are clearly and faithfully pourtrayed? It is quite impossible, that any human author could have written these descriptions from merely speculating upon the casualties of the future. It is, therefore, manifest, from all this, that infinite wisdom and infinite power have alike been presiding over, and regulating the affairs of the church of God.

Its preservation implies supernatural influence.

Fifthly. It is further to be observed, that this society has been maintained on principles involving, in human nature, the exercise of a high degree of self-denial, or in direct contravention and violation of the selfishness of mankind, and

the first law of our nature, that of self-preservation. Notwithstanding all that has been described, in the word, of the state of those persons composing the church, as subject to severe trial and suffering, yet it is clearly represented, that they should be distinguished by the preference they would uniformly give to their principles and practices, on the conviction of their divine authority, though involving, frequently, a great sacrifice and cost of worldly and personal interests. And though, in general, they were to pass a life of suffering and conflict, both external and internal, designated, generally, by the militant state, while the people of the world should be rejoicing, yet it is no less clearly signified, that they should consider themselves the only blessed and happy people, and should be perfectly satisfied with their choice; so that, whether right or wrong, wise or foolish, such should be the fact, that they would, like Moses, esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. Such, it is foreshown, should be their attachment to their religion, to their Saviour, and their God, that they would deny themselves, and take up their cross, and follow Jesus; that they should "not fear them that could kill the body," and whose power could extend no further; but should "account it all joy, when they fell into divers kinds of trials, knowing that the trial of their faith was much more precious than that of gold."

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Triumph of divine principles in the heart.

It is, moreover represented, that, under and after all these trials, their end should be satisfaction and peace, joy and triumph. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." "The righteous hath hope in his death." "My people shall never be ashamed," and many similar scriptures. Now, assuming that this is the current language of scripture upon these subjects, I would appeal to those who are least disposed to favour Christianity and its professors, whether the usual end of believers, who have proved themselves consistent and sincere, is not, *pre-eminently*, joy, and peace, and cheerful hope? The gloom of the death-bed scene is irradiated by a light shining on the spirit, and reflected on all around. There may be trivial exceptions to be accounted for, in perfect harmony with the general principles of the Bible, and with the argument here pursued. We ask those who disbelieve, is not the end of this people peace and joy? Do they not depart from this life in the fullest confidence of a better, and uniformly advise those that surround them in that solemn moment, to follow faithfully in the same path? Does not this display a deep and complacent consciousness of the superiority of their choice, and the excellency of their portion? For after the amplest experience, and the most serious balancing of interests, they give their decided preference to the religion of the gospel, to the hopes of immortality it inspires, with all the

drawbacks it may involve as to this life; and they admonish those dearest to their hearts to make choice of the same portion. LECT. VI.

Contrast in the case of unbelievers.

Can the same be said of those who reject Christianity? Far from it. On the other hand, they often advise those they most love, not to embrace their principles, nor imitate their conduct. The uniform darkness, or sometimes misery and despair, frequently the conscious shame they experience in their end, forms altogether a fulfilment of another class of scriptures, as well as a striking contrast to the happy experience of the people of God. Whether the hopes of believers be well or ill founded, does in no way alter the fact; the peace and joy are theirs, the fear and shame are the unbeliever's portion; and, if there is nothing to come after death, the Christian has still the advantage; but, if there is, then how immense is that advantage!

Both classes of facts foreshown.

We may bring these observations to this clear and simple result. The Bible foretels the peaceful end of the righteous, and says, they shall have peace and hope; it does, at the same time, and generally, describe the unhappy and gloomy termination of a sinful life, and exhibits unbelievers and the wicked, as leaving this world under alarming apprehensions of futurity. These things are realized in fact. The observations, which all may have made on death-bed scenes, confirm this statement. It is not to be denied. I am satisfied the general facts cannot be in-

LECT. VI. validated in any material degree. It never has been attempted, so far as I am aware, to deny them. Although they have been the subject of profane ridicule, yet I know not that it has ever been argued by infidels, that their principles afford as much, or indeed any, comfort and consolation in death. They could not sustain the argument for a moment, if they were to attempt it; because facts, on both sides, are strongly and uniformly opposed to them. The whole case is, indeed, emphatically described in one short sentence of the Bible, against which they can advance neither fact nor reasoning; "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death."

Summary of the argument.

The various views of the church of God, which we have now endeavoured to group together, have been designed to show that there has been, from the earliest date of time, such a recognition of the true God, and love to him, as is still extensively maintained. That the unbroken continuity, and unquestionable identity of this religious profession, through all ages and nations, implies a divine revelation, especially when the peculiar circumstances under which the church has existed, are brought into account; and, further, that church history, as it may be written by what we term profane historians, coincides with church history, as it was previously written by the pen of inspiration; and that, therefore, in these coincidences, singular as they are, and stretching out through

all time, we possess a most satisfactory proof of LECT. VI. the divine inspiration of the Scriptures.

Its connexion with the next Lecture.

The general subject is closely connected with the history of the *rejected people*, which, as it bears upon the Christian evidence, must be treated more at length than could be done in the present Lecture. The validity of this whole argument, relating to the church of God, cannot be fully estimated till we shall have considered the case of the Jews, in and since their rejection. It will be found a most important appendix to the remarks already laid before you.

This branch of the general subject I purpose to consider in our next Lecture; and, till that is delivered, allow me to request, that you will suspend your opinion of the whole argument relating to the existence and perpetuity of the church.

LECTURE VII.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES CONCERNING THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS FROM THEIR HIGH AND HONOURABLE STATION AS THE CHURCH OF GOD, COMPARED WITH THEIR SUBSEQUENT HISTORY AND PRESENT STATE.

Revelation refers to the excision of the Jews and their subsequent state—The Founder of Christianity predicted the fall of his nation—The predictions specified—Certainty that these were known before the event—General view of their accomplishment—Specific facts—Preservation of the race, notwithstanding their calamities—Attempts to preserve the temple frustrated—Total expulsion—Attempts at restoration—Ever since a fallen people—Judgment always following them—Marvellously preserved—Singular retention of their nationality—Arch of Titus—Protraction of the exile—Discontinuance of sacrifice—Isolation from other nations, though mixed with them—Fulfilment of prophecies by Jeremiah and Amos—Their numbers appear undiminished—Great vicissitudes of the nations where they have dwelt—No parallel case—Complete separation from Gentiles—Argument for the inspiration of prophecy—Excision of the Jews coincident with the origin of the Christian Church—Foresight of the transition and the peculiar circumstances of it, implies inspiration—The fact of the transition very singular—The history and prophecy viewed together—Conclusion.

LECT. VII.

Connexion with the preceding Lecture.

THE subject of the present Lecture stands intimately connected with that of the last, and may be properly considered as a continuation or completion of the remarks we designed to offer upon the general history of the church or people of God.

Revelation refers to the excision of the Jews, and their subsequent state.

Though it is certain that, from the institution of Christianity, the divine authority of Judaism ceased, yet the references of the sacred word to the people of the Jews, not being limited to the date of their ecclesiastical and national excision, their subsequent state and history will supply some important and interesting verifications of the Scripture, and may, therefore, be viewed as a necessary appendix to the history of the church.

Method of the present argument.

There can be no dispute concerning the first principles on which we propose to conduct the present portion of our argument. We shall, therefore, merely state them in brief;—that Christianity did, unquestionably, originate in the land of the Jews, and from one of their own countrymen; that it increased rapidly, and extended itself, in a comparatively short space, into almost every part of the civilized world; that its extension was mainly effected by publishing abroad the

LECT. VII. history, and repeating the memorable sayings of its founder. The next step is equally clear;—that it was on account of publishing abroad these narratives, and recounting these sayings of Jesus Christ, his disciples became generally objects of intense hatred to their own countrymen, and of scorn and contempt among the Gentile nations.

Founder of Christianity predicted the fall of his nation.

It is further undeniable, that the founder of the Christian sect did utter certain speeches and sayings, openly, before friends and enemies, which were intended to be understood, and were understood by all, as predictions of the fate of his native country: and it is still further clear, that partly on account of these sayings, charged against him, and neither denied nor refuted, he was publicly condemned to an ignominious end, and did actually suffer crucifixion. These open sayings or predictions of his, seemed to them to undermine the authority of the national religion, by foretelling its destruction, the overthrow of their temple, and the subjection of the people at large to fearful calamities. That Christ did deliver such predictions, before their supposed accomplishment, is proved by the fact of their having been made, in part, the ground of his impeachment and condemnation, as well as the reasons of that renewed hostility which the preaching of his disciples excited after his death. The argument to be pursued in the present Lecture will be founded on these undeniable facts.

The predictions specified.

I shall now proceed to notice, more particularly, what these predictions were, as preparatory to the argument to be derived from the subsequent history of those events, which are deemed clear and palpable verifications or fulfilments of them.

Let it be supposed, that Jesus Christ was well known as a public teacher and professed prophet, of more than thirty years of age, when he delivered the following discourse: Mark xiii. 1—10, "And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! and Jesus answering said unto him, seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled? And Jesus answering them began to say, take heed lest any man deceive you: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled, for such things must needs be, but the end shall not be yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows. But take heed to yourselves; for they shall de-

LECT. VII. liver you up to the councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten; and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. And the gospel must first be published among all nations." (Ver. 14—20,) "But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains: and let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house: and let him that is in the field not turn back for to take up his garment.—And pray that your flight be not in the winter. For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation, which God created, unto this time, neither shall be." The discourse is continued to the end of the chapter, and embraces many other particulars.

Objection. To meet an objection which may here be started, that these were only private communications, and that we cannot be sure that they were delivered before the events transpired; I would observe, that they refer to other sayings and discourses delivered openly in the courts of the temple; that they formed one principal reason of the general enmity excited against Christ, and cannot, therefore, be considered private communications; and that, though they contain a fuller prediction than was delivered on other occasions,

LECT. VII. of the destruction coming upon the city and state of the Jews, yet they differ only in explicitness, and in some special directions addressed to his immediate disciples. There were other discourses delivered to large bodies of the people, and in the presence of the priests, which are of the same general character. For we find Christ speaking thus, in Matt. xxiii. 29—39, "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous. And say, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of those that killed the prophets. Fill ye up the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes. And some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barrachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. *Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation.* O! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are

Other and more public predictions.

LECT. VII. sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; for I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Some time before this, when he was making a public, and for him a very unusual, entry into the city of Jerusalem, and when a great multitude were in the height of exultation, it is recorded, (Luke, chap. xix. 41—44,) "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

Again, after his trial and condemnation, which were founded partly on a confused and perverted statement, gathered out of his various predictions, concerning his own resurrection, and the destruction of the temple, as they were leading him away to crucifixion, Luke says, chap. xxiii. 27—31, "And there followed him a great company of

LECT. VII. people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him: but Jesus, turning unto them, said, daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, fall on us, and to the hills, cover us." There are also numerous allusions to the calamities coming upon the Jewish nation in other parts of our Lord's history. Several of the parables were expressly designed to predict and represent the same things; and, by the anger and exasperation which they excited in the Scribes and Pharisees, who listened to them, appear to have been so understood. It would, I conceive, be needless to enter further into citations upon these points. It is abundantly evident, that Christ did speak openly, upon many occasions, and with singular emphasis and explicitness, concerning the impending national calamities; and it is not less certain, that these sayings were the occasion of much of the enmity against him; and further, that, if he spake at all, it must have been long prior to any appearance or probability of the events foretold.

Other allusions to the impending calamities.

It might also be shown here, that three out of the four gospels were written, and had obtained a wide circulation, before the great catastrophe

Certainty that the predictions were known before the event.

LECT. VII. befel the city of Jerusalem;* that the existence and belief of these predictions formed the very reason which had induced the Christian believers to quit the city; and also explain the otherwise inexplicable fact, that they alone should have escaped the calamities of the siege. So that, had the predictions been introduced into those gospels subsequently, it could not have escaped detection; nor is it easy to conceive, that such interpolations could have been in any way practicable after the books were in general use.

General view of their accomplishment.

But it is not my intention to enter into any minute and lengthened examination of these predictions, and their accomplishment. We may proceed, at once, to observe, that about thirty years after the death of Christ, a war commenced against the Jews, during the reign of the emperor Nero. This war was prosecuted, first, by Vespasian, and afterwards by Titus, his son, and lasted, altogether, four years and four months. After it had been continued about two years, Vespasian was called to the imperial throne, and his son had charge of continuing and completing the siege. He finally took Jerusalem, after it had endured unparalleled horrors, about the seventieth year of Christ, or nearly thirty-eight after his death, and in direct conformity with his words,

* The evidence of this publicity was so clear, that the first enemies of the gospel, such as Julian, Porphyry, and Celsus, never attempted to call it in question.

"This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled." LECT. VII.

Specific facts.

There are many other distinct items, and special particulars contained in the various prophecies of the event, which would admit an extended illustration. For the verification of these, the reader is referred to works on the express subject of prophecy, particularly to Dr. Keith's "Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion, derived from the literal Fulfilment of Prophecy," chap. iii. p. 50. A few of the particular facts, included in the general delineation, may be mentioned; such as "the abomination of desolation, standing in the holy place," or the idolatrous figures on the Roman standards, planted on the holy ground, as the emblems of this triumph of the heathen over the once beloved, but now discarded people of God; the extensive preaching and success of the gospel of Jesus prior to the calamities; the severe persecution of the Christians; the declensions of many; the famines and the pestilences; the wars and rumours of wars; the false prophets and false Messiahs, in various parts of Judea; all these were circumstances described in the predictions, and, therefore, offered as so many complicated tests of its inspiration. Ample witness is borne to most of these points by Josephus, who wrote the history of this war, and whose work, though written to compliment and flatter the court of the Roman emperor, is, in fact, a striking comment upon the predictions

LECT. VII. of Jesus Christ relative to the same subject.* Wherein Josephus is deficient, the Roman writers themselves furnish abundant and unexceptionable materials to illustrate and confirm every particular of these extraordinary discourses of Jesus Christ. Upon these minor verifications I cannot enlarge, however tempting the occasion, as I design to present a general survey of the fate and condition of the Jewish race, subsequently to their great national catastrophe.

Preservation of the Jews.

Besides the argument for the inspiration of the prophecies delivered by Christ on this subject, arising out of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, it is to be borne in mind, that we can furnish an important and convincing appendix in the preservation of the Jews since their fall; in their peculiarly distressed and suffering state, in the mysterious spell which has all along bound them to an expatriation, and which still exhibits

* "Josephus was one of the most distinguished generals "in the commencement of the Jewish war; he was an eye-"witness of the facts which he records; he appeals to Ves-"pasian and to Titus for the truth of his history; *it received* "*the singular attestation of the subscription of the latter* "*to its accuracy;* it was published while the facts were "recent and notorious; and the extreme carefulness with "which he avoids the mention of the name of Christ, in the "history of the Jewish war, is not less remarkable, than "*the great precision with which he describes the events* "*which verify his predictions.* Not a few of the trans-"actions are also related by Tacitus, Philostratus, and "Dion Cassius." Dr. Keith, on Prophecy, p. 56.

them flourishing in numbers, and generally in worldly enterprize, and yet domesticated in no country since they lost their own; powerful in wealth everywhere, but powerful in arms nowhere; marked in their history by many striking facts, and in their character by many imperishable features, which identify them as the very people, doomed by their own prophecies to a long night of affliction and disaster. These things will inevitably arrest attention, as the mind glances over the eventful history of the Jews, since the fall of Jerusalem. They have never been hidden in a corner, nor forgotten in the earth. The finger of providence has never ceased to point them out as a people, whose fate shows, that the "curse causeless" has not come.

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Attempt to save the temple.

After their city was taken, the Roman general had fondly cherished the intention of saving their beautiful and holy temple, and had taken every precaution to carry his intention into effect. Had he succeeded, it might have remained to future ages, to confront and confound the predictions of Jesus Christ. But it was accidentally (as we say) and irretrievably devoted to the flames. No exertions could save it. Three centuries it remained a mass of ruins, to confirm the sacred word; and then, when Julian, the infidel emperor, made attempts to re-plant the Jews in their fathers' land, and to re-build their temple, for the express purpose of falsifying the alleged predictions of Christ, by restoring the worship and

LECT. VII. the sacrifices, every effort proved unavailing, every scheme was baffled, and the thwarted but scoffing emperor was made the unwilling instrument of verifying and fulfilling that divine sentence which had been recorded, and which he designedly sought to falsify. The temple was destroyed within the predicted age, destroyed contrary to human purposes, and has never been re-built, though the imperial resources were, at one period, all directed to this designed confutation of the prophecy.*

The nation never restored.

Sufferings of the people.

But let us now revert to the people of the Jews themselves. After the siege was ended, and every thing surrendered to the invincible arms of the conqueror, the sufferings of the nation were only at their commencement. The desolation that had wasted the city of David, and exulted over God's holy mountain, now spread itself, like a torrent of consuming lava, over the whole land. The heaving and convulsion of the earthquake, which had hitherto only been felt in a few places, where the people said, "our mountain stands strong, and we shall never be moved," now be-

* Whether we adhere to Gregory Nazianzen's statement, published the same year, (363,) of the miraculous manner in which Julian's attempt was effectually defeated, supported, as that statement confessedly is, by what Gibbon allows to be the unexceptionable testimony of Ammianus Marcellinus, or coincide with Lardner, and others, who question the evidence of miraculous agency, still the fact remains unimpeachable.

came universal, and spread confusion and de- LECT. VII.
struction through all their borders. The whole people were utterly reduced to slavery; all their possessions were confiscated; nothing was spared. Myriads were driven, like cattle, to be sold in distant markets. Still the affection of the people clave inseparably to the land of their fathers. They preferred to famish in their dens, and amidst the fastnesses of their mountains, rather than to suffer exile and slavery. They agonized and perished in their deserts and their caves. Their lingering affection for Zion, the place of their solemn assemblies, and the pride of all their glory, made them ambitious of falling with their devoted country. They suffered by hundreds and by thousands, rather than be forced into exile. Scarce could they be restrained, by their conquerors, from perishing as one man by voluntary martyrdom. Many of their bravest warriors fell by their own sword, or sacrificed each other by mutual compact. Contrary to the usual clemency of the Romans, attempts were made, from time to time, to dislodge them utterly from the seat of their forefathers. The task was exceedingly difficult, and was repeatedly foiled, by that constancy and patience in suffering, which preferred the hardest fate, and the most abject wretchedness in Judea, to an abandonment of their beloved country. But all was unavailing. The decree was at length accomplished, and the people driven forth from all their hiding-places, and forbidden, upon

Total expulsion.

LECT. VII. pain of death, to set foot again within the borders of their native country. Such a visitation had never before come upon them. The last tie was severed: not a Jew was left behind. Strangers everywhere possessed their holy things; and the inheritance, conceded to them by the most sacred covenant of their God, was utterly wrested from them, and not a vestige of Judaism was spared.

Ever since a fallen people.

I cannot profess to go over, in detail, their subsequent vicissitudes, or to describe the peculiarities of their fortune. They have been ever since, and still remain, substantially, the same fallen people. The convulsions of Rome and of Europe, through eighteen centuries, have never thrown them back into their own land, nor afforded them the faintest glimmering of hope that the time of their deliverance was come. From the days of the siege, they have been, in the main, utterly deprived of their country. They have had no temple, no sacrifice, no king, no prophet, no lawgiver, no Messiah. The Christ they expected to be the glory of their latter temple, and whom they do still expect, though they have no temple in which he could be manifested, no city in which he could reign, has never appeared to them; and they have, as they well know, and poignantly feel, passed an unprecedented, unexpected exile of eighteen centuries, a period of suffering far exceeding any that had previously befallen them, through all the ages of their history, from Abraham downwards.

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Judgment has always followed them.

It is also to be noted, that, through this protracted period of expatriation, they have been hated of all nations; judgment has every where followed them; they have not risen, as in former periods of their captivity, to stations of influence and command. Almost every people, whether Christian, Mahommedan, or Pagan, has made them a mockery or a prey, and sometimes both at once. And yet they have, for the most part, been left free and independent. Without wearing the badges of slavery, they have had to endure the fate of slaves, to suffer oppression, to toil for others, to become the perpetual victims of cruelty. The history of their sufferings, throughout Europe alone, presents an accumulation of horrors, at which the heart sickens with disgust. They have been like a Cain among mankind, and might adopt his words, "Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and it shall come to pass, that he that findeth me shall slay me."

Yet marvellously preserved.

And yet their race is marvellously preserved and prolonged. No hand has been allowed to cut them off. No lapse of time, or mutation of human affairs, has, in the slightest degree, endangered their perpetuity. No national policy has advanced their amalgamation to other tribes of men; or loosened their partialities; or mitigated their prejudices; or obliterated, or even *altered*, their characteristics. They may be found in every country under heaven, born natives under every sky, but aliens in every nation where they are

LECT. VII. born. Talking of and loving a country as foreign to them as it is to us, yet calling it *theirs;* yet dreaming of the great Prince, that they believe will restore them to their pristine greatness, and settle them again in the land of their affections.

Retain their nationality.

They carry with them, wherever they go, the same marks of nationality, and of a most ancient descent, without mixture, and without material alteration. They afford a living testimony to the antiquity and veracity of the Old Testament writings; but, above all, they prove, by their temporal condition, and their inextinguishable devotion to their own race, that they are reserved, by the hand of providence, for some important part allotted to them in the yet future destinies of the world. They, moreover, confirm the truth and inspiration of the New Testament, as well by their unaltered and unalterable character, as by their history. Their experience exhibits, indeed, the fulfilment of prophecy to the very letter, while their character is, at this day, the very *fac simile* of that presented throughout the gospels. They retain to this moment all the peculiarities of the age of Christ. The men that live now, might, in their own proper and natural character, personate those that lived and acted then; and we are sure, at least as far as human judgment can ever be trusted, that there is not another nation under heaven which could so characteristically fit the gospel narratives, or so naturally participate in the scenes of Christ's history. The men we

The facts verify Scripture.

look upon, and converse with, are the very men LECT. VII. that we become acquainted with in the sacred record. *There* are to be found their genuine prototypes; and the progeny we behold are neither degenerated nor improved since the days of their fathers. These living Jews are the very men who could, without the slightest incongruity of character, or violation of propriety, re-enact all the scenes in which their ancestors took so conspicuous a part. The sight of a Jew instantly carries us back to the times of the evangelists, and we think of the controversies Christ had with them, and of the scenes that attended the crucifixion; we glance in thought, onward, to the fall of their city, and desolation of their temple. Here, then, we identify the character, as well as the race; we behold the verisimilitude of the evangelical narrations; and we assent, at once, to the proposition, that, so far as the Jews are concerned, all is in character and in keeping. In them, the present and the past seem singularly united, while both point to the yet coming and hopeful future.

Arch of Titus.

There is, at Rome, a remarkable and splendid monument of antiquity, called the Arch of Titus. It was erected as a triumphal memorial, to celebrate and perpetuate the fame of his victories; providence has spared it, amidst the vicissitudes of Rome heathen, and Rome christian; but there it remains, a genuine antiquity of the age we speak of, exhibiting, on its sculptured face, the representation

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of Roman soldiers, bearing the Jewish table and golden candlestick, and perpetuating the memory of their overthrow. Imagine with what feelings a Jew must contemplate this humbling trophy of his conquered country. Such is, at once, the pride and sensibility of the exiled race, that no considerations can prevail upon them to pass under this arch; and a small passage was accordingly made at one side, to enable them to avoid the mortification they must otherwise have felt in passing it. To this hour they refuse to walk under this symbol of their humiliation; and scarcely any sight can be so instructive, so confirmatory of the truth of Christianity, as to behold, at once, this monument of transactions long since passed, but all previously foretold by Jesus Christ; and the living Jew, verifying its record, by stealing through its side passage, and personifying, at once, in his pride and his degradation, the people whose fall it testifies, whose fate it embitters, and to whose ancient history it imparts an affecting and instructive reality. How is it possible to behold such objects, with the pages of the New Testament in our hands, and doubt the truth of its records, and the inspiration of its prophecies? These are but the palpable testimonies, the surviving witnesses, to those predictions which pointed out the ruin of their temple, and the dispersion of their race.

Protraction of their exile.

It may not be unsuitable here to notice, that the protraction of their exile was equally matter of

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prophecy. Jesus Christ described, in a few words, what should be the condition of their temple, and of themselves, from the hour of its spoliation, and of their excision, to the present. "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," Luke xxi. 24—28; or, as Paul expresses it, "till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in," Rom. xi. 25. The import of these New Testament predictions, is strikingly illustrated and confirmed, by the language of the ancient prophets, and both classes of prophecies are, at this moment, fulfilling before the eyes of the world. The prophet Hosea had said, "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, *(or altar,)* and without an ephod, *(or priest to wear the ephod,)* and without teraphim, *(or divine manifestation:*)* afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days."†

Restriction of sacrifice to the temple.

By the express law of Moses, their most sacred feasts and solemn sacrifices are restricted to one certain place; and that has been now, for many ages, in the hands of strangers and aliens, who

* See Calmet, on *Teraphim*.

† Hosea, iii. 4, 5.

LECT. VII. will not suffer them to approach it. It is also to be carefully observed, that the prophet Daniel had marked out the time of the Messiah's coming, by the cessation of the great sin-offering; "he shall make an end of sin-offering;" and again, to the same import, "he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease."* These rites of their religion were observed, punctually, up to the time of Christ, and their national fall; but from that age, down to the present, they have been prevented by the mighty, though invisible hand of God, from renewing those services of the temple, whose termination was to be alike the sign of the Messiah's advent, and the result of his one great offering for sin.

Consequent cessation.

Their separation still maintained.

But one of the most singular and striking facts connected with this remarkable people is, that they still remain a separate race. Every where they are as distinct from those by whom they are surrounded, and among whom they have dwelt for ages, as if they had recently migrated from the other side of the globe. Wherever they dwell, under the whole circumference of the heavens, they still retain the same indomitable and undecaying attachment to Moses and Abraham; the same imperishable hope of a future deliverer; the same unconquerable antipathy to any amalgamation with Gentile nations. Their preservation so long and under such circumstances, contrary to all analogies of nations placed in a similar state

* Daniel ix. 26, 27.

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of expatriation, affords a striking evidence of the truth of those prophecies which have been accomplished, and a strong presumption of the inspiration of those which are understood to refer to their future destination.

A fulfilment of Scripture.

But this preservation is, in this argument, to be mainly regarded as presenting a singular fulfilment of those predictions which foretold, in connexion with the overthrow and dispersion of the race, their distinct preservation—a preservation of them as a people—during the whole of their long exile, in a state of complete isolation from other nations, among whom they are mingled. This affords another striking proof of the inspiration of the sacred records. It does so, not simply as a natural or common fact, which might have been specifically predicted, and limited to a certain age, but as a fact completely contrary to what was to have been naturally expected, and standing out in the face of the world, and in the history of mankind, as inexplicable by any, or all, of those laws which influence human nature under similar circumstances.

Jeremiah and Amos foretold it.

The prophet Jeremiah had said, in the name of their God "I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee:"* and, again, the prophet Amos says, "For, lo! I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall

* Jer. xlvi. 28.

LECT. VII. not the least grain fall upon the earth."* Now the fact is, they are scattered abroad among all nations, yet they are combined with none. "They "abound in Poland, in Holland, in Russia, and "in Turkey. In Germany, Spain, Italy, France, "and Britain, they are more thinly scattered. In "Persia, China, and India, on the east and on "the west of the Ganges, they are *few in number* "*among the heathen.* They have trodden the "snows of Siberia, and the sands of the burning "desert; and the European traveller hears of "their existence in regions which he cannot "reach, even in the very interior of Africa, "south of Timbuctoo. From Moscow to Lisbon, "from Japan to Britain, from Borneo to Arch-"angel, from Hindostan to Honduras, no inha-"bitant of any nation upon the earth would be "known in all the intervening regions, but a "Jew alone."† They cannot live according to their own laws, nor obey their own rulers, nor enjoy the full exercise of their religion; and yet they continue as compact and separate from others, and as closely allied to one another, as if they enjoyed the full advantages of their own government, both in church and state.

Their numbers appear undiminished.

And what is a fact not less remakable, their numbers seem to remain, as far as we can judge, undiminished.‡ In different periods of their exile

* Amos ix. 9.

† Keith, on Prophecy, p. 76.

‡ They are stated, by some writers, at about six millions.

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they have been subjected, in almost all countries, to the most cruel and desolating massacres, such as, in ordinary cases, would have sufficed to exterminate any other people. Every project of hope and fear has been employed to obliterate the distinction of their race, and no means has been omitted, which the ingenuity of fanatic zeal or malignant revenge could devise, in order to abolish their Judaism, and incorporate them with Gentile nations: but all alike in vain; there is no perceptible inroad.

Great vicissitudes in all the Gentile nations among whom they have dwelt.

During the period of *their* sojourn in strange lands, the northern nations have migrated in vast bodies all over the more southern parts of Europe; but where could any of these now be traced? The Gauls went forth in large masses, to make reprisals upon other nations, for the conquests achieved by the Romans over themselves; but where are the traces of their dispersion, or the descendants of those high-minded barbarians, who abandoned all rather than bow to the Roman yoke?

In France, for instance, among the various races of men who have, from time to time, poured into it, like streams coming in various directions into a grand reservoir of waters, who shall pretend to separate them, or even to trace in the midst of them, the race of ancient Gauls! In Spain and Portugal there has been a mingling of races widely distinguished from each other. The Goths and Moors have been incorporated with the

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ancient inhabitants; and the peculiarities of all have been lost, while a character and a race have resulted from the commixture, different from each.

In England we have a people descended partly from the Aborigines, from Romans, Saxons, Danes, and Normans. But, confessedly, all are commingled, and there has been no preservation of any distinct race. I am treating now of cases where a particular people, or a part of them, is *dispersed* among another nation. If, indeed, a race possess a particular district of country, which either excludes strangers by its laws, or by its nature, as inaccessible to foreign power, or as beneath the jealousy of neighbouring states, or the aggrandizing views of conquerors, then they may retain, through an indefinite series of ages, an uncorrupted and primitive race. This is, no doubt, the case with the Chinese, partly so with the Ancient Britons, and some others, whose character, habits, religion, and race have remained unaltered, just in proportion as they have been secluded in situation, or exempt from foreign influences.

No parallel case to the Jews.

But there is not a single instance, in the history of human nature, of a people, dislodged from their native country, and dispersed through various other nations, retaining, for any considerable length of time, either their religion, their habits, or the characteristics of their native stock. The Jews, however, are the solitary, I might

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even add, the *miraculous* instance of such a case; a case, be it observed, all the stronger for the extent of the dispersion, for the smallness of the infusion of Jewish people in each nation, and for the uniformity of the fact, as it regards all the nations among which they are scattered. Had they, for instance, been dispersed only through one nation, their isolation, in that particular case, might have admitted a specific and satisfactory solution. Again, had they been in any nation very numerous, their continued separation might have been a probable case, and various reasons might have been found or invented to explain the fact; but in proportion as the number scattered in any place was few, so was the strength of the probability increased, that they would be absorbed and lost in the general mass of the surrounding population. Then, again, the precise uniformity of this case of the Jews, in all the world, is a most striking fact. That they should have remained a distinct people in some one, two, or three of the nations, among whom they were mixed up, would not have excited so much surprise; perhaps would hardly have deserved attention, especially if, in other instances, they had been ultimately commingled and lost among the people. Then it would only have shown, that, while in one nation there were causes which repelled them from union, in others there were opposite causes, which had wrought upon their minds to obliterate distinctions, and make them

LECT. VII. coalesce with the people among whom they had been born and naturalized. Allowing, therefore, in the first instance, for the peculiar habits and feelings of the Jews, when their dispersion began, we should have expected, that a very different result would have followed, at least in some of the nations of the earth; and that, however distinct they might remain here or there, for so long a period as eighteen centuries, yet, that at least, in some other instances, where they did not encounter so much enmity, nor find so much repugnance between their own character and that of the people of the place, that there at least would be seen a gradual obliteration of differences, terminating, at last, in a complete amalgamation and consequent extinction of the race.

No incorporation with Gentiles.

But no: not in a single nation under heaven are the Jews incorporated with the natives. Even where there have been the nearest approaches, where distinctions have been abolished for their sakes, special immunities bestowed, and their manners and opinions in part adopted and imitated, still, even there, the line of demarcation has been as broad and perfect, as in nations which have shrunk from their approach, or rejoiced to hold them as a mark for persecution, or a prize for cupidity. In fact, no separation of man from man can be more entire and complete than that which takes place, I do not say between Jews and Christians, but between Jews and all other men. They feel, every where, as if they

were not a part of the great mass of mankind; and all mankind feel towards them as if they were the outcast of the family, the speckled sheep of the flock, the Ishmael of the world, whose hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him. And since this alienation is strong as it is complete and certain, since it is uniform in every part of the world, and has continued for so many centuries, and is as intense at this day as at its commencement, and since all this was matter of prophecy prior to the dispersion, and both Testaments foreshow its commencement, its occasion, and its attendant circumstances, we cannot withhold our acknowledgment of the truth and inspiration of these prophecies. It is quite impossible that they should have been forgeries, or that that gospel which is attested by them should be other than a divine revelation.

Strength of this case.

There is enough in this case of the Jews alone, if Christianity possessed no other argument, to strike infidelity for ever dumb. All it can allege on the score of difficulties, obscurities, mysteries, and discrepancies in the pages of revelation, will prove but dust in the balance, while the living testimony, even of a whole nation of unbelievers, is made to propagate itself from age to age, rendering their nationality and their unbelief an imperishable monument of the inspiration of prophecy, and presenting an occasion for the fulfilment, and a pledge of the truth of those

LECT. VII. predictions which foretel their recovery and restoration.

Unanswerable as an argument for inspiration.

The whole case is, then, deeply interesting as a fact, and unanswerable as an argument. What eye but that which penetrates into the mysteries of the future could have descried this series of facts, so far off in the distance, and so implicated with perpetual vicissitudes and endless contingencies? And what hand but that of Omnipotence could thus have chastened, but not consumed them; thus afflicted, but yet preserved them; thus have made them, like the burning bush, a miracle and a witness before all nations? Thus, while their lot is to be cast down to the lowest state of degradation and suffering, for their own sakes, yet they are placed on a pinnacle of light for the verification of the gospel, and for a divine presage of those auspicious destinies to which both themselves and the world are yet reserved.

An unexceptionable evidence of prophecy.

Let those who are inclined to dispute, or to doubt all other evidences of the gospel-inspiration, turn their serious attention to the case I have now stated. If they doubt the reality of those miracles which were wrought by the founder of the gospel, if they imagine they can discredit those which were wrought by the apostles of Christ, and for the propagation of the gospel, in the first ages, by raking together fabulous or exaggerated accounts of supposed or of counterfeit miracles; if they pretend that the import of

prophecy is, in all other cases, either obscure or of doubtful application, or has been written after the events took place, yet impossible as it is to admit, because impossible to substantiate, any of these averments, yet, I say, let them at least acknowledge, that here is a series of prophecies minutely descriptive, and literally fulfilled, concerning these facts, obvious to their own senses, of which it cannot be alleged, either that they are obscure, or indefinite, or that they were forged after the facts transpired. LECT. VII.

On the fulfilment of these prophecies, revelation itself is silent, because it was closed before the events took place, and because profane history and avowed enemies are left to supply, however unwillingly and unwittingly, all the requisite information. Here is a complete and undeniable case, to which there is no parallel in universal history, and which stands forth as a palpable fulfilment of predictions, which have appeared upon record for many centuries, and concerning the sense and application of which there can be no hesitation, and no doubt.

An objection considered.

It may be said, by some objectors, but the Jews believe themselves the favourites of heaven still, and this tends to foster their nationality, and to make them cling to their paternal religion, and to the hope of a yet future deliverer. But this, though a fact, will in no degree explain the other fact of their long-during separation from their country: indeed, that very

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belief, indelibly impressed upon them, is a part of the miracle of their case. They have derived no advantages from this belief; it has been the badge of their exile, the spell of their fate; it has been attended with no glory and no gain; it has saved them from no misfortune, and conferred upon them no solace. They have believed without cordiality, and without authority. Indeed, their faith is a cold and fruitless habit; a faith hereditary, and not begotten by any divine principle.

Obstinate faith of the Jews.

In short, they present the strange enigma of the most blind and implicit belief, combined with a species of scoffing and profligate infidelity. They entertain a faith which rests upon no rational principle, and is attended with no spiritual advantage; while they indulge an infidelity that annihilates all the more delicate and refined distinctions of morality; which scoffs at the hopes of a future world, and thus reduces them to a state of practical, if not theoretical, Atheism.

Excision of the Jewish church simultaneous with the commencement of the Christian.

Before I quit this branch of the subject it seems important to observe, that the history of the Jews, since the time of their overthrow, has its counterpart, which it is essential to consider in connexion with that history. For the propagation of the Christian church runs parallel with the excision and abeyance of the Jewish, exhibits the most striking contrast to it, and may be considered as essential to a right understanding of those prophecies, in which the fate of Judaism

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was implicated. The oracle which poured its maledictions on the head of the one, and doomed it to so long and so deep a fall, blessed the other, and set it up above all the kingdoms of the world; destined it to an unexampled course of moral and spiritual glory, and to a sway that should become universal and perpetual. Yet, when that oracle spoke, Judaism was in the possession of a flourishing empire, and had been established, amidst a numerous and powerful people, for many ages, whose rights and privileges, and religious usages, were guaranteed by the power and authority of the Roman arms; whereas Christianity then stood simply on the words and deeds of Jesus Christ, an obscure mechanic, whose sole authority wrought for it a speedy triumph; made it, in less than three centuries from its first promulgation, the acknowledged religion of the whole Roman empire; has given it, ever since, an undisturbed pre-eminence over every other system in the world; and, in short, has effected by it the greatest revolution that was ever witnessed in the condition of mankind. It is this change, foretold in the very minutest circumstances of it so long before, a change in the members, in the constitution, and in the government of the church of God, which affords abundant verification of the sacred testimony. None but the Divine Being himself could have foreseen such a change. It could not

LECT. VII. have taken place in the ordinary course of human affairs.

Foresight of the transition implies inspiration.

Supposing a particular nation, existing under the peculiar circumstances in which the Jews were, at the time of Christ's advent, it might be supposable that some one, judging from their long antecedent continuance in that particular profession of religion, their strength as a people, their local situation, and other circumstances, might have pretended to foretel their continuance for an interminable, or very long succession of ages in that same religion; though it would have been a very unusual thing for one, only pretending to prophecy, to have looked so far forward, and described events at so great a distance; and it would, indeed, have been a singular, though not an impossible thing, for such a prediction to come true. It might have proved a happy guess, because it was far more probable, all things considered, than the contrary. But it is inconceivable, that any one would have foretold the rejection of that nation, and the reception of others in their place, with the adoption of all their moral and religious principles, and acceptance to all their privileges. It is highly improbable, that any *Jew* should have done this, pre-eminently national and prejudiced as we know they were. Besides it was, again, altogether an unlikely thing, that they should ever have admitted such supposed surreptitious predictions into their sacred Scriptures, as fore-

showed their own overthrow and rejection, and LECT. VII. the introduction of the Gentile into their place. Yet such predictions were *there*, ages before the coming of Jesus Christ, as we have formerly shown. Nothing but the most overpowering conviction of the inspiration of those ancient prophets, who foretold their desolation, could have induced the heads of the nation to admit these writings into the canon of their Scriptures, and preserve them as of equal authority with the law of Moses. Some one might have assumed the authority of inspiration, and pretended to foretel that they would, as a nation, be overthrown, come to an end, and be lost in some other nation; because this has been sometimes the lot of ancient nations. But this would not be the whole case of prophecy in reference to them. The particulars, as we have shown, are strange, and very striking. Who, except the Divine Being, could have foreseen, that they should have been, at the same time, rejected as a church, overthrown as a nation, utterly annihilated as a state, and as to political power, yet that these events, while they should not leave God without a church, should yet leave the rejected church as distinct as ever; a people, "scattered and peeled," as it is said; "a proverb, a bye-word, a curse, and a shaking of the head among all nations;" a people still united in name, and by the strongest ties of fraternity, and of religion too; a sort of living, moving, and ubiquious incrustation upon the ancient revelation of

Particulars in the prophecy.

LECT. VII. God, to vindicate and embalm it before the eyes of all the world. That they should, moreover, cease to enjoy those favourable manifestations of the divine providence, which consoled them in their previous captivities, and from being a flourishing, become, for so long a period, a suffering, oppressed, and degraded people; that they should themselves be conscious of the loss of the divine favour, and be constrained to remain without a king, or a high-priest, or a sacrifice, or a temple, or the voice of prophets, or of judges; that the divine influences they had enjoyed through many centuries, and under all the vicissitudes of their history, should be transferred to those among the Gentile nations, who should profess a sincere faith in the ancient covenant, and become the followers of that peculiar sect of Israelites, called the Nazarenes.

The fact of the transition apart from the prophecy very singular.

Now, this foretold and accomplished transition of the church of God from Jews to Gentiles, accompanied, as it has been, by indications of a wise and designing providence, over which neither party has exercised any influence in bringing it about, is clearly the work of a divine power. It could never have been effected without the intervention of divine providence. Viewed in connexion with the preservation of the Jews, as a distinct people among all others, it becomes a still more astonishing fact;—I might, without presumption, say, it was designed to exhibit every where the ruins of the ancient spiritual edifice

to all nations, just as the remains of the flood LECT. VII. are every where preserved throughout the globe, to certify to man the truth of the divine record, and designed to preserve and present to all ages, an incontestible and obvious evidence of the great event. So it is with the Jews at this day; they are a living witness to facts which they most reluctantly and constrainedly attest. There is not a civilized, nor a half-civilized nation under heaven, but there they are to be found, and frequently in considerable numbers; yet, politically, they are every where powerless, because they are nowhere united under any civil head. Still they present the skeleton of the former church, evidently preserved to attest that they have been a church; and that, as such, they formed the foundation of the Christian church; and are preserved, even in their unbelieving state, exhibiting and proving still the existence and prevalence among them, of that very sin for which their fathers were rejected from the favour of God, and for which they have been made an example to all nations.

The history and the prophecy, viewed together, prove inspiration.

But these facts, in connexion with the calling in of the Gentiles, the subjection of many of their nations to what may, with a just explanation, be not improperly denominated the Jews' religion, (for the whole of it is absorbed into Christianity,) form one material branch of the argument for the truth of that revelation which has distinctly foreshown all these events in the

LECT. VII. order in which they have transpired. Here you may put your finger on express predictions; such as those of Christ, of Hosea, Daniel, and Jeremiah, concerning the destruction of the Jewish state, the preservation and long affliction of the ancient people; while, on the other hand, you may see the Jews preserved on the face of the whole earth, to attest the condition of degradation and rejection in which they are still kept by the decree of heaven. Here they still are in the world, and among ourselves. You may converse with them daily; and wherever you encounter them, you may trace the moral features of the very time of Christ, as clearly as if they were all cast from the models of the days of Herod. The more we look into the details of these coincidences, the more forcible and striking do they appear.

"The prophecies are as clear as a narrative "of the events. They are ancient as the oldest "records in existence; and it has never been "denied, that they were all delivered before the "accomplishment of one of them. They were "so unimaginable by human wisdom, that the "whole compass of nature has never exhibited "a parallel to the events. And the facts are "visible and present, and applicable even to a "hair's breadth. Could Moses, as an uninspired "mortal, have described the history, the fate, "the dispersion, the treatment, the dispositions "of the Israelites to the present day, or for three "thousand two hundred years, seeing that he

"was astonished and amazed, on his descent from LECT. VII.
"Sinai, at the change in their sentiment, and in
"their conduct, in the space of forty days? Could
"various persons have testified, in different ages,
"of the self-same and of similar facts, as wonderful
"as they have proved true? Could they have
"divulged so many secrets of futurity, when of
"necessity they were utterly ignorant of them
"all? The probabilities were infinite against
"them. For the mind of man often fluctuates
"in uncertainty over the nearest events, and the
"most probable results; but, in regard to remote
"ages, when thousands of years shall have
"elapsed—and to facts respecting them, contrary
"to all previous knowledge, experience, analogy,
"or conception,—it feels that they are dark as
"death to mortal ken. And, viewing only the
"dispersion of the Jews, and some of its attendant
"circumstances, how their city was laid desolate;
"their temple, which formed the constant place
"of their resort before, levelled with the ground,
"and ploughed over like a field; their country
"ravaged, and themselves murdered in mass,
"falling before the sword, the famine, and the
"pestilence; how a remnant was left, but de-
"spoiled, persecuted, and slain, and led into cap-
"tivity; driven from their own land, not to a
"mountainous retreat, where they might subsist
"with safety, but dispersed among all nations,
"and left to the mercy of a world that every
"where hated and oppressed them; shattered in

LECT. VII. " pieces, like the wreck of a vessel, in a mighty " storm; scattered over the earth, like fragments " on the waters; and, instead of disappearing, or " mingling with the nations, remaining a per- " fectly distinct people, in every kingdom the " same, retaining similar habits, and customs, and " creeds, and manners in every part of the globe, " though without ephod, teraphim, or sacrifice; " meeting every where the same insult, and " mockery, and oppression; finding no resting- " place without an enemy soon to dispossess " them; multiplying amidst all their miseries; " surviving their enemies; beholding, unchanged, " the extinction of many nations, and the con- " vulsions of all; robbed of their silver and of " their gold, though cleaving to the love of them " still, as the stumbling-block of their iniquity; " often bereaved of their very children; disjoined " and disorganized, but uniform and unaltered; " ever bruised, but never broken; weak, fearful, " sorrowful, and afflicted; often driven to madness " at the spectacle of their own misery; taken " up in the lips of talkers; the taunt, and hissing, " and infamy of all people, and continuing even, " what they are to this day, the sole proverb " common to the whole world; how did every " fact, from its very nature, defy all conjecture, " and how could mortal man, overlooking a " hundred successive generations, have foretold " any one of these wonders that are now conspi- " cuous in these latter times? Who but the

" Father of Spirits, possessed of perfect prescience, LECT. VII.
" even of the knowledge of the will, and of the
" actions of free, intelligent, and moral agents,
" could have revealed their unbounded, and yet
" unceasing wanderings, unveiled all their destiny,
" and unmasked the minds of the Jews, and of
" their enemies, in every age and in every clime?
" The creation of a world might as well be the
" work of chance, as the revelation of these things.
" It is a visible display of the power and of the
" prescience of God, an accumulation of many
" miracles. And, although it forms but a part of
" a small portion of the christian evidence, it
" lays not only a stone of stumbling, such as
" infidels would try to cast in a christian's path,
" but it fixes an insurmountable barrier at the
" very threshold of infidelity, immoveable by
" all human device, and impervious to every
" attack."*

Every thing in the history, both of Jews and Gentiles, since the time of the introduction of Christianity, has minutely answered to the prediction; and the truth of the divine word is thereby incontestibly established.

Conclusion of the argument.

You are now, I trust, in a situation to judge, how far the argument we have attempted is valid, how far the facts of the church's history, extending through all time, implicated with grand events in the history of the world, characterized by strange vicissitudes, and involving throughout

* Keith on Prophecy, p. 91.

LECT. VII. a constant trial of righteous principle struggling against human propensity and worldly interests, and exhibiting, at least, one grand and extraordinary transition of deepest interest, forms a valuable and satisfactory test of the inspiration of that professedly divine volume, which has foreshown this long and chequered course of suffering, and yet of triumph; of change, and yet of progression; which poured out upon the head of this holy brotherhood, the church, even from its infancy, the selectest benedictions of heaven, imparting to it a divine and an imperishable vitality, and which has suspended, upon its yet future universality and unity, the blessedness of the whole human family, and the everlasting glory of the Great God and Father of all. If the argument is sound and convincing, let inspiration wear the honour of your cordial faith, and its Author receive the glory due unto his name.

LECTURE VIII.

ON THE KINGDOM OF THE MESSIAH, AS REPRESENTED IN THE ANCIENT SCRIPTURES, COMPARED WITH ITS HISTORY AND PRESENT PROSPECTS.

The Kingdom of the Messiah—Exhibited in a typical form, in the sacred books and religion of the Jews—Prevalent opinions founded on them—Proved from various sources—These predictions and expectations verified in the character of Jesus Christ—The improbability of such a character being fabulous—Credibility of the Evangelists—Probable effect of such a real character—Facts correspond—And thereby attest its reality—Opposite suppositions as to Christ's character—All proved untenable—The establishment and success of the Christian cause—Representations of contemporary enemies—Weakness of Christianity at its rise—What it effected—Testimonies to its progress—Jewish and heathen—Character of its triumphs—Indubitable proofs of their reality—Means by which they were wrought—Explanations of infidels wholly untenable—Means of detecting imposture then possessed—Inspiration and miracle obvious—As clear after as during Christ's life—Facts otherwise inexplicable—Supposition of pretended mi-

racles — Disproved — Magic alleged to explain the facts — Never proved — The miracles never rivalled — Confirmation of Apostolic claims — Coincidence of the document and the facts — Bearing of the argument on the inspiration of the Scriptures — Conclusion.

LECT. VIII. Kingdom of Messiah.

IN pursuing our general views of scriptural verifications, we come now to those which we conceive the sacred word has received, in reference to that moral and religious system which is denominated the KINGDOM OF THE MESSIAH.

Scheme of the argument.

There are three branches of this inquiry, which we shall pursue in the following order.

I. The Messiah's Kingdom appears to be set forth, both typically and prophetically, in the sacred books and religion of the Jews.

II. We possess a remarkable verification and fulfilment of these anticipative descriptions of the Messiah, in the personal character and history of Jesus Christ.

III. The establishment and subsequent successes of the Christian cause, further and fully verify the descriptions and anticipations which preceded it.

I. A Messiah foreshown by Jewish prophets.

I. We propose to show, that such a religious system, as we understand by the gospel, was foreshown, and its introduction into the world ascribed by the Jewish prophets to some extraordinary person, denominated the Messiah, to whom general attention had long been directed. It is obvious, that all the testimonies of the New Testament, respecting the person and the system of

a Messiah, depend upon the Old Testament, as foreshowing that such a person should appear, and such a system be established in the earth. Before we can examine the New Testament upon this point, and especially before we can cite it in this argument, as exhibiting a fulfilment of ancient predictions, it will be incumbent upon us to show, that the views and interpretations we have been accustomed to fix upon the prophecies of the Old Testament, are not fanciful and arbitrary; that they have not been superinduced since Christ appeared; but that they are substantially the very views actually and extensively prevailing long before the period of his birth. LECT. VIII.

Opinions founded on them.

If we can make this evident, it will materially contribute to establish the credibility, not of the evangelists alone, but of the two Testaments. For suppose the case, as to the subject of prophecy, to be as we now presume, that such and such prophetic writings did exist, and were publicly known and read, so long before the date of the christian religion; but yet that no such views had been entertained concerning the coming of a Messiah, his character, deeds, or dominion, as christian writers represent to be the prevailing theme, the key-note of all prophecy and of all type; then there would be a strong presumptive evidence, that Christians had given a false and unauthorized gloss to the supposed prophecies of the Jews; had forced a sense upon them only to serve their own purpose; or had, in fact, read

LECT. VIII. them only under the light which Christianity had cast upon them.

Bearing on our argument.

Thus, for instance, we allege that the coming of the great Messiah was the subject of numerous predictions, long antecedent to the time of his birth. But if, prior to that event, no one had ever entertained such an expectation, there would be a strong presumption that our interpretation was arbitrary, and, consequently, that the proof of his coming having been predicted, had not been made out. On the other hand, however, if we can show, that long prior to the alleged fulfilment of prophecy, the very fact had been anxiously expected; and that, by a common consent, the voices of the Jewish prophets had so far been accounted distinct and intelligible; that the time, the personal character, and history of the Messiah had all been clearly anticipated by means of these prophecies, then we shall be in a position to infer, that the facts of the christian history have a double accordance; first, with the alleged prophecies, and, secondly, with the expectations to which they gave rise, between the time of their utterance and of their supposed fulfilment; and, consequently, that these facts of the christian history exhibit the genuine accomplishment of divine oracles. Thus we shall not only have the argument arising from the ascertained correspondence, and mutual support of prediction and fulfilment, but we shall have that argument reinforced and fortified by the contemporaneous

opinion to which the prophecy gave rise, and by every particular of the form which the expectations of men assumed, while their judgments were guided exclusively by the words of the supposed oracle. Observe— LECT. VIII.

The expectation long preceded Messiah's coming.

(1.) That the expectation of a Messiah occupied the minds of the Jewish nation long previous to the period of Christ's birth. It was no novel opinion. We might carry the application of this remark far back in their history, but shall confine our attention to the state of public opinion in the interval between the cessation of prophecy and the birth of Christ.

Now this period, say of about four hundred years, is not only an interval during which the Jews admit they had no true and faithful prophet, but it forms altogether a chasm in their sacred history, which can be filled up only by uninspired writings. We shall, therefore, attempt to show, generally, of this period, that it retained the full and vivid expectation of the Messiah, and rested that expectation upon the authenticated prophecies of past ages, and not upon any granted to themselves. Those writings which are called the Apocrypha, though clearly not inspired, and never admitted into the Jewish canon of the Old Testament, are yet adequate proofs of the opinions which prevailed in those ages.

Apocryphal writings allude to it.

It is abundantly manifest, from these writings, that the great rallying point of national feeling and hope, through the age of the Maccabees,

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was the expectation of the Messiah. In the First Book of Maccabees, iv. 46, speaking of the altar which Antiochus had profaned, it is said, "It was resolved to lay by the stones in the mountain of the temple, till a prophet should come to determine concerning them." This was the prophet to whom it is well known they were looking to resolve all their questions. *Judas*, in those days, was a great and honourable instrument in restoring their worship. His brother Simon also became so distinguished, as a leader in war, and governor in peace, that, by a national decree, agreed to by the people, he and his posterity were appointed to be their governors and high priests, "until there should arise a (or rather *the)* faithful prophet." 1 Mac. xiv. 41. Now this very limitation upon his power and priesthood, shows that the whole nation were anxiously expecting the appearance of this faithful prophet, before whom, they seem to admit, that the descendants of their favourite prince and priest must relinquish their pretensions, in deference to the higher claims and superior glory of him who was to come. We cannot desire better evidence of what was the prevailing sentiment of the nation, of what expectations they entertained, than this public decree, which was inscribed in tables of brass, and set up in a conspicuous place of the temple, as may be seen in the same chapter of the Maccabees, which I have already quoted.

Maccabees.

Ecclesiasticus.

The Book of Ecclesiasticus was undoubtedly

written above a century, perhaps nearly two, before Christ. It contains ample evidence of the expectation of the people in that age. In the thirty-sixth chapter, it is said, in a prayer put up on behalf of the nation, "Show new signs, and make other strange wonders: glorify thy hand and thy right arm, that they may set forth thy wondrous works." "Fill Zion with thy unspeakable oracles, and thy people with thy glory. Give testimony to those that thou hast possessed from the beginning, and raise up prophets that have been in thy name." "Reward them that wait for thee; and let thy prophets be found faithful." "O Lord, hear the prayer of thy servants, according to the blessing of Aaron over thy people, that all they which dwell upon the earth may know that thou art the Lord, the eternal God." Again, in the forty-seventh chapter of the same book, it is said, speaking of David, "The Lord took away his sins, and exalted his horn for ever: he gave him a covenant of kings, and a throne of glory in Israel. But the Lord will never leave off his mercy, neither shall any of his works perish, neither will he abolish the posterity of his elect, and the seed of him that loveth him he will not take away: wherefore he gave a remnant unto Jacob, and out of him *a root unto David.*"

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The age in which they expected these things to be accomplished, was after the coming of Elias, according to the same author, who was to

LECT. VIII. turn the heart of the father to the son, and restore (or preach up the restoring) of the tribes of Jacob, whose gathering had before been prayed for. In the end of the book, the same writer names some of the prophets, whom he prays may be found faithful. "Isaiah," he says, "saw, by an excellent spirit, what should come to pass at the last; and he comforted them that mourned in Zion. He showed what should come to pass for ever, and secret things or ever they came." Again, in the forty-ninth chapter, tenth verse, "Of the twelve prophets, let the memorial be blessed, for they comforted Jacob, and delivered them by assured hope." Of Zerobabel, and the days of Josedec, he says, "They set up a holy temple to the Lord, which was prepared for everlasting glory." Now, this comfort in the twelve prophets, and this assured hope, could be no other than the Messiah, whose coming and glory were pourtrayed by all their prophets. It is clear, that the author of these passages could not understand these twelve prophets as writing of the restoration from the Babylonish captivity, because three of them prophesied after that event. They spake of it as a hope and a glory yet future. In the days of Simon, the Jews prayed for it; and the writer of Ecclesiasticus renews the same petition, and prays, that God would *make the time short.* Many more instances may be cited out of those Apocryphal books, the precise age of which,

though it cannot be accurately determined, certainly preceded, by a considerable period, the time of Christ. LECT. VIII.

Tobit. The book, entitled Tobit, was written for the encouragement of the Israelites dispersed abroad; and in this book we read frequently of the hope of Israel. Thus, in the fourteenth chapter of this book, it is written, after speaking of the restored glory of Jerusalem, "And all nations shall turn and fear the Lord God truly, and shall bury their idols; so shall all nations praise the Lord, and his people shall confess God, and the Lord shall exalt his people." This writer enumerates four great events to come, viz. the end of the Jewish age, or state, and a long captivity of his nation, which he joins with it. This clearly befel them under Titus. 2. A general return from that captivity. 3. A re-building of the city and temple, "with a glorious building, as the prophets have spoken thereof;" and, 4. A general conversion of all the Gentile nations from idolatry. If it is asked, what has this to do with the expectation of a Messiah? The answer is obvious and decisive. In the prophets, from which Tobit quotes them, they are connected with the restoration of the fallen kingdom of David, and the happy condition of Judea, both of which expressions, since the days of David, had become characteristic expressions among them, for the times of the Messiah, and are so to this day.

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Baruch.

Again, in Baruch, fourth chapter, it is written, "My hope is in the Everlasting, that he will save you: joy is come to me from the Holy One, because of the mercy which shall soon come to you from the Everlasting, our Saviour. Like as the neighbours of Sion have seen your captivity, so shall they shortly see your salvation from our God, which shall come with great glory and brightness of the Everlasting. Put off, O Jerusalem, the garments of thy mourning; put on the comeliness of thy glory, that cometh from God for ever. God will show thy brightness unto every country under heaven. Thy name shall be called of God, for ever. The peace of righteousness, and the glory of God's worship. Arise, O Jerusalem, and stand on high, and look about towards the east: and behold thy children, gathered from the west unto the east, by the word of the Holy One, rejoicing in the remembrance of God. For God hath appointed, that every high hill, and the banks of long continuance, should be cast down, and the valleys filled up, to make even the ground, that Israel may go safely in the glory of God: even the woods, and every sweet-smelling tree, shall overshadow Israel, by the commandment of God. For God shall teach Israel with joy in the light of his glory, with the mercy and righteousness that cometh from him." This writer frequently mentions this deliverance as eminently God's deliverance. "This is our God," he says, "and none

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other shall be accounted of in comparison of him." "He hath found out all the ways of knowledge, and hath given it to Jacob, his servant, and to Israel, his beloved. *Afterwards did he show himself upon earth, and conversed with men.*"* This was to be at the time when Israel was to be saved, when the *deliverer* was to come to Zion.

Proper use of these citations.

I have exhibited these passages out of the Apocrypha, not because they possess the slightest authority in themselves, or are entitled to any respect, further than as they show what were the opinions of eminent men among the Jews, during the interval from Malachi to Christ; while as yet they had no light to guide them, but that which shone from the pages of prophecy. These passages are, in fact, a fair index to the expectations indulged during this period. They prove, that the prospect of an age of glory, of a general restoration of miracles and prophecy, with the subjection of all the Gentiles to their religion, and the service of their God, were the inspiring themes that animated and cheered them under all their national sufferings, and amidst the various conflicts and wars which they maintained so heroically for their country and their religion. Hence we are entitled to infer, that the coming, the kingdom, and the deeds of the Messiah, were not after-thoughts, or arbitrary glosses, imposed upon the Jewish writers by the advocates of

* Chap. iii. 36, 37.

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State of expectation near the birth of Christ.

(2.) We come, however, now directly to the time of Christ, and propose to show, by indubitable witnesses, that, at this period, the whole people of the Jews were in full expectation of the appearance of this long-expected personage. That this age should have been more pregnant with the expectation than any that preceded it, is just the natural order of things, and what every reasonable student of prophecy would anticipate.

Let us, then, examine into the state of opinion, matured and ripened as it was into a full conviction that the time was come, and that their Prince and Saviour would appear just about the time of Augustus Cæsar.

False Messiahs.

First, it is a very important fact, not sufficiently attended to, as a proof of the state of public opinion at this period, that while no false Messiahs are heard of before those days, and comparatively few after them, yet about the time of Christ's appearance, and for some years after, many deceivers rose up, and proclaimed themselves the predicted deliverers of Israel. Josephus expressly states, that before the destruction of Jerusalem, there were multitudes of false Messiahs, who endeavoured to delude both the Jews and Samaritans. Gamaliel, also, one of the Jewish

doctors, witnesses, "Before those days there rose LECT. VIII.
"up Judas, of Galilee, in the days of the taxing." Then, again, the sect of the Herodians was formed, upon the application of the prophecies concerning the Messiah to Herod. Because he had repaired and beautified the temple, they were ready to catch even at this fact, as a fulfilment of those splendid prophecies, which they reckoned must be now accomplished, or utterly fail. Fearful, therefore, lest their expectations should prove abortive, and their prophets be found false, they would have attributed to such a wretch as Herod the sublime and glowing prophecies which had foretold their Messiah. Josephus mentions another impostor, who led a multitude into the wilderness, all of whom were destroyed by Festus.

Expectations at the time of Christ's birth.

We may now approach to the time of Christ's birth, and to the incidental circumstances which then occurred, and which prove still further the point under consideration. When the Magi came to Jerusalem, asking, "where is he that is born king of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him?" "Then Herod was filled with consternation, and all they that were with him. And he called together all the chief of the Jews, and inquired of them where Christ should be born;" and they agreed in one opinion, that the place was Bethlehem. Then he sent his soldiers, and killed all the male children, from two years old, and under. But why all

LECT. VIII. this consternation and this bloody policy, except from the prevalence of the opinion, that the set time was indeed come, and that his own throne was in danger? and whence this unanimous decision of the birth-place of the promised Messiah, but upon the previous study and anticipation of the fact derived from the prophecies which they had so long held in reverence? If, at the time of Christ's birth, they had indulged no such expectations, they could not, as a people, have been deluded by the pretended fulfilment of hopes which they had never entertained; and Herod and his party would have felt none of that inward consternation, which seemed to indicate that they already felt their power beginning to totter. Their fear suggested the cruel provision against the infant Messiah, which only proved how abortive are human efforts, when directed against divine counsel. Neither Herod, nor they that were with him, started any doubt as to the previous question, whether any such king or prince should be born, whether the nation looked for a Messiah, or whether the prophets had foretold any such event; this is never once doubted. The learned doctors are not questioned, whether there should be any Messiah or not. All such debates were completely superseded by the universality of the expectation, and not a query is proposed, but about the place of his birth; and the doctors replied immediately, without hesitation, and without disagreement, and adduced the place of the prophecy in support of their opinion.

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Opinion of the chief men.

Now these were the opinions, not of the pious few, who looked, like Simeon and Anna, for the spiritual consolation, and waited in hope of the Lord's appearance, resting on the parting words of Malachi, "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple;" but these were the opinions of the heads of the tribes who represented the whole nation.

Opinions concerning John.

Some years after, when John the Baptist entered upon his ministry, and public opinion began to demand that attention should be paid to his growing popularity, a deputation of priests and levites was sent to ask him who he was, and whether he professed to be the Messiah. The Evangelist, Luke, says of John Baptist, "the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not." Now John had made no such claim, but he pointed to one, whose forerunner he said he was. Then the fears of the rulers were again excited, and all were on the tiptoe of expectation. A similar deputation was sent to Jesus Christ, and he pointed to the signs which accompanied his preaching. On several other occasions, with a restless anxiety, which sufficiently indicated the state of public opinion, the same question was put, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" The high-priest also said, "I conjure thee to tell us if thou be the Christ."

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Opinion of the Samaritans.

The Samaritans, it is abundantly evident, participated in the same expectation; as is manifest, from the saying of the woman of Samaria, before she knew who Jesus was, "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ, when he is come, he will tell us all things:" and after that, when the men of the city had seen Christ, and heard his words, they agreed with one voice, saying, this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world. The Samaritans, to this day, residing at Naplous, entertain the expectation of a Messiah, under the name of *Hathab*, or the Convertor. Some Samaritan poems also, published a few years ago, from manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, at Oxford, confirm and illustrate the reality of this expectation among that people.

Opinions of early opponents.

Another important testimony to the prevalence of this expectation among the Jews, is to be derived from Celsus, an early and malignant enemy of the gospel. Assuming the character of a Jew, for the sake of objecting against Christianity, he says, "How could we, *who had told* "*all men* that there should come one from "God, who should punish the wicked, despise "him when he came? The prophets say, that "he who is to come is great, and a prince, and "Lord of all the earth, and of all nations and "armies." Again, in the same character, he says, "My prophet said, formerly, at Jerusalem, that "the Son of God will come, a judge of good

"men, and a punisher of the wicked." Again, LECT. VIII.
"The contentions between the Jews and Chris-
"tians are very silly, both sides believing that
"it had been foretold by the Spirit of God, that
"a Saviour of mankind is to come."*

Traces of this opinion among the heathen.

(3.) But let us now advance to another general observation. If such were the interpretations put by the whole nation of the Jews on their prophecies, and such the expectation prevalent, both among them and the Samaritans, especially just about the period of Christ's birth, it will be reasonable to anticipate, that some traces of this expectation should be found in heathen authors, and that the splendid prospects, so long held before the eyes of the Jews, should have excited ome curiosity among their neighbours.

Sibylline books.

The fact will be found answerable to such a supposition. The animating hope of Israel had impregnated the imaginations of heathen poets, and been recorded in the pages of historians, as an expected event, to which all the civilized world were looking forward, and which, as they themselves attested, their own Sibylline oracles, as well as the prophets of Judea, attributed unequivocally and universally to the east. There were preserved at Rome, from a very early period, certain ancient writings, called Sibylline Oracles, or the Books of the Sibyls. These were always kept very

Destroyed.

* The various passages in Celsus, admitting the Jewish expectation of a Messiah, may be found in Lardner's works, vol. vii. p. 212. Octavo edit. 1827.

LECT. VIII. secret by the governors of the Roman state. About one hundred years before the Christian era, these books were destroyed by a fire in the Capitol.

Their restoration.

But after this loss of the first Sibylline Oracles, the Roman senate thought the possession of oracles of such importance, that they made a new collection from different parts of Asia, Africa, and Sicily. The persons employed in making this collection, brought together about a thousand verses in the Greek language, and of course this collection, although never properly made public, was partially in the hands of private individuals. It was made death, by the Roman law, to possess it. When Augustus assumed the high priesthood, he revived this law, and, in consequence,

Their contents.

many volumes are said to have been surrendered up. There is ample evidence that this new collection contained some predictions concerning the appearance of a great and all-conquering king; for Julius Cæsar, having attained to the height of his military power, became ambitious of the title of king. To incline the senate to the proposal, an adherent of the Cæsars produced, from the Sibylline books, a prediction of a king, whose appearance was determined to that age. It was then stated, that his monarchy was to be universal, and that his kingdom would be essential to the happiness of the world. Cicero opposed the proposition, but brought no charge of falsification against the alleged quotation from the Sibyl's books;

LECT. VIII. although, from the nature of his office, it is certain he had access to those writings. But, though he admitted their existence, he at once denied their authority as prophecies. There cannot be any doubt that these Sibylline verses contained many fragments of Jewish prophecy; the field in which they had been gleaned sufficiently indicates this. But we have no doubt, and there is, indeed, room for none, that the contents of the Jewish scriptures were no secrets to the Roman rulers and philosophers. Let it be remembered, that Judea was under Roman governors, many of them learned and scientific men; that there had long been a friendly intercourse, and sometimes inter-marriages; and that, not only were Romans abundant in Judea, but distinguished and influential Jews were resident at Rome; further, that the Jewish scriptures had been, ever since the return from Babylon, publicly read in all their synagogues, and were, in the Greek tongue, accessible at least to all learned Romans. That their scriptures had attracted the attention of many Roman philosophers, poets, and statesmen, might be abundantly proved. But I shall confine my direct proofs to the knowledge they evince of the great primæval prediction of a Messiah.

References by other writers.

Tacitus.

Tacitus has these words, " There has been, in " many persons, a persuasion, that it is contained " in the ancient books of the priests, that at that " very time it would come to pass, that the East

LECT. VIII. "should prevail, and that those coming out of "Judea should obtain the government of human "affairs. Which doubtful sayings predicted Titus "and Vespasian, (doubtless because they achieved "their great victories in the east.) But the vul- "gar, after the manner of human cupidity, in- "terpreted this greatness of themselves, nor were "they, by their sufferings, turned to a true "understanding;"* meaning, that the Jews, by all their adverse fortunes, could not be induced to see that these predictions related to Titus and Vespasian.

Suetonius. Again, Suetonius says, "In all the east there "was an ancient and constant opinion spread "abroad, that persons coming out of Judea "should obtain, by the decree of the fates, the "empire of the world. This prediction, re- "lating, as the event abundantly proved, to the "Roman empire, the Jews applied to them- "selves, and, in consequence, rebelled against the "Romans."†

Remarks of Josephus. In connexion with these two eminent heathen historians, I will first place before you the remarks

* "Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum "literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut Valesceret "Oriens, profectique Judeâ rerum potirentur. Quæ "ambages Vespasianum ac Titum prædixerant. Sed "Vulgus, more humanæ cupidinis, sibi tantum fatorum "magnitudinem interpretati, ne adversis quidem ad vera "mutabantur." Tacit. Hist. lib. v. cap. 13.

† Life of Vespasian. See these and other testimonies in Lardner's works, vol. vi. p. 596.

of Josephus, the Jewish historian, and then offer a few observations upon the three testimonies. LECT. VIII.

In his work upon the Jewish war, he says, "That which chiefly excited them (the Jews) to "war, was an ambiguous prophecy, which was "also found in the sacred books, that at that "time, some one within their country should "arise, that should obtain the empire of the "whole world. For this they had received by "tradition, that it was spoken of one of their "nation; and many wise men were deceived by "this interpretation. But, indeed, Vespasian's "empire was designed in this prophecy, who "was created emperor in Judea."

His sycophancy to the Roman court. The turn which Josephus here gives to the prophecy, as intending Vespasian, is assuredly nothing to his credit, after having himself fought and suffered heroically in the cause of his country, and in the hope of the promised deliverer; but now, after the Romans had effectually conquered them, and it was to the interest of the writer to court the favour of that people, he can abandon the hope of a Messiah *at that time and according to* those prophecies, and find nothing in them but an intimation of Vespasian's empire. But let us pass this over, and observe, generally, on all these historians: they agree that it was a universally received opinion, that a great king was to come out of Judea; they all agree that this opinion had its rise in the prophets, or ancient

LECT. VIII. Sibyls, the sacred books, or the fates; they all agree that it was expected at that time, which intimates, that the Jews considered the appointed period elapsed; and Josephus could not have erred so grossly, in applying the prophecies to Vespasian, had he not felt confounded by the fact, as it appeared to him, that the date was run out, and no Messiah manifested, (at least, none whom the nation would acknowledge;) and finding no excuse for protracting the period, and, at the same time, no semblance, as he thought, of a fulfilment in one of his own nation, he adroitly turns the whole point of the prophecy towards the Roman emperor, and fixes upon him the honour of being divinely designated to universal empire, thereby virtually abandoning the hope of his fathers.

It is manifest, from these authorities, that the Jewish prophecies were the source of the prevalent opinion. All had agreed, that they marked out the country of Judea, and that particular age, for the coming of this universal Prince.

Sallust and Virgil.

Other heathen and classic writers might be quoted at considerable length, to attest the same point. Thus Sallust states, that by this expectation Lentulus was first induced to engage in Catiline's conspiracy, and that he boasted the Cornelian family would give birth to this predicted monarch. Virgil, the poet, has, however, made the most remarkable and interesting appli-

cation, both of the prophecy itself, and of the imagery employed by the Jewish prophets.* In his Æneid, but especially in his Fourth Eclogue, he anticipates the birth and the times of this approaching Prince. The celebrated Fourth Eclogue, which is dedicated to Pollio, was written during his consulship, and was designed to signalize the birth of a son to the consul. The poet not only flatters his friend with the hopes of a son, but even ventures to apply to him the prevailing and sanguine expectation which the Jewish prophets had originated. LECT. VIII.

Before I proceed to quote some passages from this exquisite poem, it may be observed, that the poet proved himself a better courtier than prophet; for the child born to Pollio, in anticipation of whom the poem was written, proved to be a daughter instead of a son. The points, however, which you have principally to observe, are the facts of a predicted prince, a happy age for the world, and a universal empire.

The poem commences, by saying, that the Cumæan prophecy is come, or is accomplished; the great order of ages again commences:

* I feel that some apology is due to my more learned readers, for the introduction of these well-known passages. But it did not appear that this outline of evidence would be complete without them; and it seemed probable, that some, especially of my younger and less excursive readers, might never have seen them in their application to the present argument.

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" The last great age foretold by sacred rhymes
" Renews its finished course: Saturnian times
" Roll round again; and mighty years, begun
" From their first orb, in radiant circles run.
" The base degenerate iron offspring ends:
" A golden progeny from heaven descends:
" O, chaste Lucina, speed the mother's pains,
" And haste the glorious birth."

He then describes the child to be born as an offspring of the gods. He was to have full command of the globe, and to introduce universal peace. Violence and injustice were to be abolished, and man's life to be restored to primitive innocence and bliss. He was to destroy the race of *serpents*, and under him the earth was to be blessed in all its productions. The nature of the most savage animals was to be changed, so that the herds might feed secure from lions and beasts of prey. Thus it proceeds:

" Thy very cradle with fresh flowers shall spring;
" *The serpent, too, shall die:* the baneful herbs
" Of noxious poison wither and decay,
" And Syrian spices bloom o'er all the world.
. . . . . .
" Ripe yellow harvests on the fields shall wave,
" The thorny brambles blush with pendant grapes,
" And honey, from hard oaks, like dew distil.
. . . . . .
. . . " All lands shall all things bear;
" No glebe shall feel the harrow's tooth; no vine
" The pruning-hook. The sturdy hind
" Shall then release the oxen from the yoke.
. . . . . .

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" The sisters, by the unmoved decree of fate,
" Concordant, bade these ages smoothly run.
" Advance to mighty honours, O, advance!

It is not necessary that I should here quote, at length, the expressions of Isaiah, of David, of Hosea, of Zechariah, and others, to show that a large portion of this language is but borrowed from the sacred writers, and heathenized in Virgil's hand. *They* tell us, that "instead of the thorn, shall come up the fir-tree; instead of the brier, the myrtle-tree; that the wilderness shall blossom like the rose; that no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast come up thereon; that the cow and the bear shall feed, and their young ones lie down together; they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, &c. and dust shall be the serpent's meat. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Thus this poem proves the general prevalence of those anticipations which had been excited by the sacred predictions. It may be described as a heathen edition of some of Isaiah's most beautiful and fervid prophecies. Virgil could scarcely have been ignorant of those ancient writings. Whoever will compare the 2d, 9th, 11th, and 65th chapters of Isaiah with this poem, will, I think, be constrained to confess, that the application of the very same imagery to the very same subject, and in a similar way, by both writers, could not have been an unde-

LECT. VIII. signed coincidence of thought, but that the one must have been derived from the other.

Virgil closes his poem with expressing his hope, that he should see the day when this son of Pollio should be born. He did see the day, but, as I have before intimated, Scribonia, Pollio's wife, gave birth to a daughter; and, as it regarded Virgil's application of the prophetic picture, it ended in utter disappointment. But, in less than forty years after, Christ was born in the east country, and has fulfilled, in a far higher sense than Virgil anticipated, the vision which this celebrated poet had indulged. There is another passage in Virgil's writings,* in which he again alludes to the great king that was to come and acquire universal dominion. Endeavouring to reconcile the Roman people to the recent subversion of their republic, by the establishment of the throne of the Cæsars, in the person of Augustus, and intimating to them, in his alluring strains, that the establishment of such an empire was the fulfilment of the ancient prediction *(tibi quem promitti sæpius audis;)* he says,

"Turn, turn thine eyes: see here the race divine.
"Behold thy own imperial Roman line;
"Cæsars with all the Julian name survey:
"See where the glorious ranks ascend to day.
"This, this is he—the chief so long foretold,
"To bless the land where Saturn ruled of old,
"And give the Latian lands a second age of gold.
"This mighty chief his empire shall extend
"O'er Indian realms, to earth's remotest end."

* Æneid, lib. vi. 788.

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It is of little moment to our present argument, that both Jews and Gentiles had given a secular gloss to the predictions of the sacred word, by interpreting the language literally. This is precisely what might have been expected of men under the influence of those false notions of religion, which then so extensively prevailed. This is still the great stumbling-stone of many professed interpreters of prophecy. But the points of chief importance to the authentication of the prophecy, and of the argument we are now pursuing, are, that the time, the set time, designed to be marked out, was at length come; that the prophets had excited an expectation, now universally prevalent, that a distinguished deliverer should appear; and that the signs of his coming should be peace, righteousness, and universal empire.

Perversions of no moment.

These points have, I hope, been sufficiently made out, as all included in the public opinions, both of Jews and Gentiles; and it only remains for me now to offer some vindication of the christian method of interpreting and applying these predictions, in all the detail and minuteness with which they appear in the prophetical books, to Him whom we consider the only person to whom they can point, or in whom they have met, or are ever likely to meet, an adequate fulfilment.

Christian interpretations vindicated.

Jesus Christ was born at the period of all this excitement and expectation. He was descended from the royal house of David, whose son it had

Applied to Christ.

LECT. VIII. frequently been foretold he was to be, at the period when the temporal kingdom had departed from Judah. Now he was born, not merely within the land of Israel, but at Bethlehem, as the wise men of Herod's day explained the prophecy. He was born under circumstances of poverty and humiliation, as the prophets had also described.

His life and character.

Taking, for a moment, a glance at his wonderful life, his perfect character, and unparalleled doctrine; a life marked by the most extraordinary impression upon his contemporaries; a character that left malignity itself at fault for causes of crimination; and a doctrine that seemed to embody all wisdom and goodness—can any doubt remain, that such a Prince of Peace, and Truth, and Grace was eminently fitted to the work of enlightening, saving, and blessing mankind? Or can we hesitate to prefer such an interpretation of these prophecies as shall point out a spiritual prince, before such an interpretation as should merely give us a temporal, though a dignified and triumphant monarch, of some earthly kingdom; merely a superior, but of the same kind, as the princes of the world; a sort of master-spirit among the royal order? It could hardly be deemed an object worthy the intervention of the supreme wisdom and power, to have created and sustained so vast an apparatus, to have constituted so long a line of prophetic delineations, merely to set up before the world a magnificent temporal

prince; or merely to have subjected all nations LECT. VIII.
to the rule of one such individual, however wise and just. The preparation was too magnificent for such an issue; too divine for so earthly an object; too spiritual for a consummation so low and secular.

What mankind needed.

If we look into the moral condition of human nature; if we examine the state of all nations, as degraded by vice and superstition, we shall there find an object worthy the attention of the promised Messiah; we shall see that it was true religion, true morality, mankind deeply needed, not worldly aggrandizement; wisdom, not riches; peace with God and their own consciences; not voluptuous enjoyment, nor a paradise of earthly rest, but a moral renovation of the heart, and a hope full of immortality. Let any one look to the first consequences of man's defection, and to the first professed expression of the divine mercy; let him trace these alleged divine expressions through all the prophets, and then let these conjointly determine what ought to be expected in the divine, the universal panacea for the world; what the higher nature of man needed in order to restore it; and what a Creator, who had formed and endowed that nature, and witnessed its unhappy defection, might be supposed willing and able to do for its recovery to himself: and then let it be determined, whether a mighty temporal prince, extending his sceptre over all nations, or a divine almighty conqueror of sin, and death,

LECT. VIII. and hell; whether a wide secular dominion, affording only temporal prosperity, or a peaceful reign of truth and love in the heart; a kingdom of righteousness within us, rather than a kingdom of wealth and glory without us, is the thing most needed; whether a school for wisdom, a fountain for sin and uncleanness, and a transforming spirit of life and grace, or an influx of corn and wine, and oil and riches, be the more worthy reality for a suffering world to seek, and a benevolent God to bestow, as the fruit of that pregnant and long labouring prediction, to whose birth-hour angels and men had been looking, through the long night of four thousand years.

Had the prevailing Jewish notion of what the Messiah was to be, proved the true one, and all the magnificence and sublimity of ancient prediction issued only in the acquisition of the temporal sovereignty of the earth, and in the very best blessings which it is in the power of the most benignant secular government to bestow, still we might reasonably have objected, that this would have been as much below the ultimate ends of the Supreme Being, as the earth is below the heavens: and surely it will be admitted, that nothing short of an entire inward renovation of man's nature, in that moral image of God which he had lost, could have answered to the divine purpose, or proved worthy of his character, his counsels, and his promises. Now that Jesus Christ, in the whole of his character, answers to

the spiritual import, and to the entire body of the predictions; that, in his dominion over human hearts, we have the substantial fulfilment of all that was previously foretold of his kingdom, we hope to be able to show, in the remaining portion of this argument. LECT. VIII.

II. These predictions verified in Christ.

II. We come, therefore, now to show, that we possess, in the personal character of Jesus Christ, a singular verification and fulfilment of all that the Jewish prophets had attributed to their Messiah, and of those general apprehensions of a great benefactor and teacher of mankind, which tradition had scattered through the heathen world.

All who admit the general fact, that some such great personage was expected, will also allow that it was upon the supposition of his extraordinary excellency, and the commanding influence of his character, that those flattering hopes were entertained respecting the future renovation of the world. I need not enter into any recital of the particular virtues and excellencies ascribed to him. It may be sufficient here to observe, that he was to teach all wisdom, practice all virtue, and promote all the highest interests of mankind. None can have read the particular prophecies relating to these subjects, without observing that language itself is exhausted in his praises; and that he is spoken of as at once the favourite of heaven and the joy of the earth, the ambassador of God to man, the intercessor for man with God; as zealous for the glory of the Creator, as devoted

LECT. VIII. to the improvement and felicity of his creatures. Now, without regarding, at present, the circumstances of the early history of Christ, let us take a brief review of his character, from the period when he commenced, what may be called, his public life.

Examination of his character.

We are, at once, struck with the extraordinary dignity, combined with humility; the mental superiority, united with the most singular simplicity and innocence, in every action and every sentence. We cannot travel with him, in imagination, for a single day, without feeling impressed with the conviction, that we are in the company of some most extraordinary personage. His wisdom astonishes alike the learned and the rude. His discourses are the most penetrating and the most touching, the most instructive and the most gracious, that ever fell from human lips, or ever saluted human ears. All men who stood in his presence, were either transported with admiration, or smitten with amazement, or covered with shame. His friends were delighted by the sweetness of his manner, the excellence of his doctrine, and the glad tidings of consolation which he preached; while those who ventured to encounter him in argument, from malice or contention, found all their weapons unavailing, their motives instantly penetrated and exposed, or themselves entangled in the very snare they had designed against him. All his public controversies were marked by a skill surpassing that of the most

Wisdom.

practised and crafty debater, while the simplicity and artlessness of his reasoning and replies imparted an air of dignity to his triumphs, and of superiority to his whole demeanor, which demonstrated the command of an all-penetrating and all-comprehending wisdom. LECT. VIII.

But the chief character in all his conduct, was *benevolence*. He went about doing good. It was his business and his element. His beneficence was confined to no class, and limited to no one department of blessings. All were alike within the compass of his power and the goodness of his heart. With equal grace he could heal a poor cripple by the road side, or instruct a proud ruler in his mansion; reprove the abandoned with a voice that effectually reached their conscience and transformed their heart, or console the wretched, the poor, and the penitent. Benevolence.

His philanthropy was the most perfect, the most comprehensive, and the most discriminating; a wonderful adjustment of wisdom with love, of justice with mercy. At different times we behold him, in a great variety of circumstances, among friends and enemies, in the crowded city, in the solitude of mountains and deserts, in the temple among the scribes and priests, or in the lanes and markets among the publicans and sinners; yet what purity, what dignity, what wisdom, what perfect propriety of conduct and of speech do we every where behold! What frankness, what fearlessness! What freedom from Philanthropy.

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Frankness.

trickery, sophistry, or stratagem! Who could ever say that Jesus Christ displayed the slightest approximation to any of the characteristics of an impostor? No hidden or sinister purpose ever appeared, no selfish ends, no incongruity between his professions and his actions. Who ever detected him in a word, a deed, or an emotion inconsistent with the high character and divine office he professed? Only *truth* is uniform, always simple and natural. Insincerity is full of expedients; falsehood is crafty and jealous; imposture is boastful and impatient of scrutiny.

In trying situations.

Advert to the many trying situations in which Jesus Christ was placed. His enemies were no strangers to his pretensions. Had there been any possibility of impeaching his veracity or consistency, had they detected any flaw in his character, there was no want of inclination to use it to his prejudice. He had knowingly and voluntarily admitted a constant spy upon his conduct, into the select company of the apostles; one that was perfectly familiar with all their counsels and movements; yet even he failed to discover a plausible pretext for delivering his Master to the Jews, though he had long sought a fair occasion, and was constrained, at last, to make it a mere matter of gain. But the conduct of Jesus Christ always

Transparent motives.

challenged the strictest scrutiny. One supreme, commanding, and universal motive appeared in all he did, and said, and suffered. The glory of God, in the moral, spiritual, and eternal good of

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mankind, absorbed him wholly. He refused no suffering, shrunk from no labour, that might tend to exalt the divine glory in the dominion of the supreme law, the claims of eternal justice, and the plenitude of the divine goodness. In his history there appears, indeed, a wonderful union of gladness and grief, of suffering and benediction, of dignity and degradation. Who could so harmonize all these opposites as Jesus Christ did? Who could have sustained all these conditions equally well? What human head could so have worn the crown of glory and the crown of thorns? It is signally worthy of observation, that he continually derived his consolation and support from the connexion between his sufferings and the honour of the Eternal Majesty. He saw of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied. The supreme desire of his heart was to become the captain of salvation; hence he braved and bore all the perils and the agonies of a moral strife with the wicked of the world, with sin in its violence, and Satan in his malignity. There was not an action or a word, a pang or a privation, through his whole life, that did not obviously subserve the dominion of the truth, the exaltation of the divine righteousness, and the enthronement of grace and love in the hearts of men. Single-handed, and alone, he stood forward before the world to elevate and sustain, by the energy of his own wisdom, by the purity of his own life, a standard for dishonoured virtue and outraged truth, and forsaken

Combination of excellencies.

LECT. VIII. godliness; while he himself presented the living image and perfect model of all he enforced upon others.

What Messiah was to be and do.

Let it be assumed, from the uniform testimony of the prophets, that the Messiah was to be the great instructor of mankind in all that concerns their duty to God and to each other; that he was to exemplify in himself every virtue that can adorn the human character; that he was to bring in and offer a perfect righteousness, and to afford such blessings to the world as should unite all tribes of the earth in the bonds of a common fraternity; and then judge, from the simple and unvarnished narratives contained in the gospel, whether the character of Jesus Christ does not, in all respects, fully answer to these requirements; or whether it is possible to conceive of one that can more completely embody the sublime conceptions contained in the poetic and prophetic delineations of ancient times.

Contrasted with other great characters.

We read, indeed, of great characters in history, but they were great only in some one department, as philosophers, as heroes, philanthropists, kings, or commanders. None are found without weaknesses, errors, and defects. None are great in all qualities. But how trivial and insignificant does all their wisdom, or magnanimity, or generosity, or heroism appear, when compared with Jesus Christ! How immeasurably does his character surpass, for its wisdom, every sage; for its purity, every anchorite; for its superiority to suffering,

every stoic; for its fortitude, every martyr; for its benignity, every philanthropist! Even the pages of fiction have not dared to present a parallel or an imitation; and, in fact, have never reached the conception of a character like that of Jesus Christ. The world knows nothing, practically, of excellencies such as these. They were infinitely above its standard, above its sympathies, above its imagination; therefore we find the counterpart nowhere, the conception of it never. It is the unique, the unmatched, the highest work of God. Let any one read the life of Jesus Christ through, with candour, and it will, I think, be as impossible to doubt that it is a true account, as that it presents a peerless model of perfect humanity.

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Improbability of such a character being fictitious.

Such, altogether, is the originality, the perfection of this character, that we may pronounce, at once, upon the improbability of its being a fabrication; while the perfect harmony of all its descriptions, the unity of the several portraits, as drawn by the pens of the several Evangelists, the total absence of all colouring, exaggeration, or management, compels us to believe that it must be truth. Infinitely as those simple narratives outstrip all that we can imagine as attainable by human nature, in its very choicest and rarest specimens, yet we instantly admit the perfect propriety, nature, and truth of the delineation; yea, the indispensable necessity for its possessing those very peculiarities, upon the alleged mystery of his

LECT. VIII. double nature, as both the Son of God and the Son of Man. Let it but be admitted, that the prophecies described him as Immanuel, *God with us*, and then the narratives of the Evangelists, filled as they are with the recital of his wonderful works, and bright as they are with the lustre of his perfections, and, above all, effulgent with the glory of his grace, will seem a perfectly fair, consistent, and credible account of what, under the given circumstances of the case, might have been expected, so far, at least, as our reason and imagination could go in pre-conceiving what would be the manifestations of the God-man.*

* The following testimony to the character of Jesus Christ, from the pen of Rousseau, is worthy the perusal of those who have not already seen it. As the frank acknowledgment of an infidel, it seals the inconsistency of the man, and the absurdity of the system to which, after all, he adhered.

"This divine book, (the gospel,) the only one necessary "for a Christian, and the most useful of all to every one, "even though not a Christian, needs only to be considered "to fill the soul with a love for its author, and a desire of "fulfilling its precepts. Never virtue spake in such sweet "language. Never was the most profound wisdom ex- "pressed with such energy and simplicity. We never "leave off reading it without perceiving ourselves better "than before."

"The majesty of the Scriptures astonishes me; the holi- "ness of the gospel speaks to my heart. Examine the "works of the philosophers, with all their pomp; how "insignificant are they when compared with this! Can a "book, at once so sublime and wise, be the work of man? "Can the person, whose history it relates, be himself a

I will only call upon you to observe one additional feature more, before I proceed to show the bearing of what has been advanced upon the LECT. VIII. Special feature of piety towards God.

"man? Does it contain the language of an enthusiast, or an "ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his "manners! What affecting goodness in his instructions! "What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom "in his discourses! What presence of mind; what inge- "nuity and justness in his replies! What government of "his passions! Where is the man, or philosopher, who "knows how to act, suffer, and die, without weakness or "ostentation? When Plato describes his imaginary good "man, with all the ignominy of guilt, and worthy of every "reward of virtue, he paints, feature for feature, Jesus "Christ. The resemblance is so striking, that all "the fathers have taken notice of it; and that it is not "possible to be deceived therein. How prejudiced, how "blind must we be, to dare to compare the son of Sophro- "nisca with the son of Mary! How far distant from each "other! Socrates, dying without pain, without ignominy, "sustains easily his character to the end. And, if this "easy death had not honoured his life, we might doubt "whether Socrates, with all his genius, was other than a "sophister. We are told he invented morality; others "before him had practised it; he only declared what they "had done; and reduced into precepts their examples. "Aristides had been just, before Socrates told us what "justice was. Leonidas had died for his country before "Socrates had made the love of our country a duty. "Sparta was free from luxury, before Socrates praised "temperance, before he recommended virtue. Greece "abounded with virtuous men. But where could Jesus "have taken, among his countrymen, this elevated and "pure morality, of which he alone has given the pre- "cept and the example? From the bosom of the most

LECT. VIII. general argument before us. It is the profound and universal reverence Jesus Christ manifested towards the Eternal Father, whose messenger to

"furious bigotry, the most exalted wisdom is heard; and "the simplicity of the most heroic virtues honours the "vilest of the people. The death of Socrates, philoso- "phising undisturbedly with his friends, is the most easy "that can be desired. That of Jesus, expiring amidst "torments, railed at, vilified and cursed by every one, "is the most dreadful that can be apprehended. Socrates, "taking the poisoned cup, blesses him who presents it, and "weeps for him. Jesus, in the midst of the most frightful "torments, prays for his merciless butchers. Yes, if "the life and death of Socrates are those of a philosopher, "the life and death of Jesus Christ are those of a God. "Should we suppose the gospel was a story, invented to "please? It is not in this manner that we forge tales; for "the actions of Socrates, of which no person has the least "doubt, are less satisfactorily attested than those of Jesus "Christ. In short, when all is done, it is only evading "the difficulty, without destroying it. It would be more "inconceivable to suppose, that several persons in concert "composed this book, than that one person only furnished "the subject thereof. Never did the Jewish authors "discover such language or morality; and the gospel "has such striking marks of truth, and so perfectly inimi- "table, that the invention thereof would be more astonish- "ing than the hero of the subject.

"The precepts of Plato are often very sublime, but he "sometimes is in error; and how far do not those errors "extend? As to Cicero, can it be reasonably supposed, "that this rhetorician had composed his *Offices* without "Plato? The gospel alone is, with respect to morality, "ever certain, ever true, ever uniform and consistent "with itself." *Rousseau's Thoughts.*

man he alleged himself to be. Upon the assump- LECT. VIII. tion of the Messiahship, was there not the greatest need to manifest such an absorbing passion; was it not well placed, as the very basis of the Messiah's character? And was it not most suitably and harmoniously exhibited, as the very feature which, under the given circumstances, should appear the first, the highest, the most commanding, and the most elevating principle of his entire office and character? How sweetly, then, yea, how perfectly, does his reverent devotion towards God harmonize with the most active, the most tender, the most comprehensive philanthropy! How were these two master-springs of his character, like widely distant and apparently discordant notes in music, brought into a melting harmony in all his actions? While, in his death, they seemed combined into a most unearthly sweetness, as pleasing to God as it was exhilarating and joyous to mankind. Great as was his love to man, visible through all his words and deeds, yet its richest, its greatest donative was in the offering up of himself to God, a sacrifice for the sins of the world. Though, in one sense, incapable of fear, through any conscious defect, or any surprise from his enemies, yet the fear of God took such hold of his human nature, that it made him dread, more than death, the wrath of his Eternal Father. His soul was troubled, his flesh was agonized, and even his pure and sinless mind became sore amazed. Such was his lowly reverence, his profound devotion to

LECT. VIII. the glory of God, that he sunk under the burden of his Spirit, when he bare the guilt of our transgressions. Never was the Eternal Jehovah so honoured and exalted in our apostate nature. It was needful that both angels and men should see a perfect example of what fear, what reverence is due to the Supreme Creator. There had been defection among the angels, apostasy of our whole race. Was it not, then, suitable that there should be a just and full exaltation of the righteousness and sovereignty of God? A due reverencing and a worthy adoring of him who is over all, God blessed for evermore? That which seemed to be impossible was accomplished by Jesus Christ. All reverences, all adorations, all submissions, all devotions of angels and of men, seemed to be melted down into his one act. All are collected into his human soul, and made one complete and fragrant offering unto God. As if all odours of sweetest incense had been compounded into one ineffable fragrance; as if all lines of natural beauty had been united in one face, and all moral beauty into one heart; as if all dignified, ennobling, and melting passions, all holy ardours, and all seraphic impulses, had been collected into one bosom: like them all, above them all; infinitely transcending every conception of ours, was that heart which Jesus Christ presented *as an offering for mankind* to the Eternal Father.

Credibility of the Evangelists.

But we must now advert to the certainty which attaches to this account of Christ's character, as

derived from the four Evangelists, and answering to the character of the expected Messiah. We must, then, endeavour to show the bearing of this upon the general illustration and fulfilment of the ancient Scriptures. LECT. VIII.

Such a character must have produced a great sensation.

It will be readily conceived, that if there ever was in this world so extraordinary a person as the Jesus Christ we have described, he could not have appeared in any country without producing an unusual excitement. So celestial a light could not be hidden or overlooked. The fact, indeed, will be found precisely to answer to what might have been presumed. His character did produce an extraordinary commotion. It did exert such an attraction as had never before been felt. It did leave behind unparalleled effects, and such as no time has availed to obliterate. There is the utmost certainty of this, because the results produced by his life and character, altogether, can be proved, by undeniable facts and documents, to have been authenticated, known, and talked of every where, long before the evangelists had recorded, or sent forth a single word of their several narratives. The name, and deeds, and history of Christ, were well known, and had produced myriads of adherents to his cause, before any christian church was in possession of any written account of him.

The fact corresponds.

So that we are sure, in the first place, that such an impression had been produced most extensively by the person himself, as, from the

LECT. VIII. character in the narrative, was to have been expected: and, moreover, it was produced at the very time when he is said to have lived; and there were consequences and events following, which could not be accounted for, but upon the supposition of his having been just what he is described, and of his having made just that kind of impression which is attributed to him.

No such effect could have followed a different character.

Had there been no such person, or had his character been materially different from what is stated, the falsehood of the account would have met with the most easy refutation; in fact, it never could have gained any credit. But not merely so; no such effects, as we know did result, could have been produced by any ordinary character. Our argument, therefore, is this; unless the character of Christ be admitted to have been precisely as described, his gospel could never have been established; his disciples could never have shown such devotion, such heroism, such confidence, such fearlessness in his cause, as the heathen writers ascribe to them. Unless there had been all this lustre, and all this fragrancy about his name and his memory, his cause could never have been preserved from decay, nor made triumphant, both over Judaism and heathenism. Again, unless there had been such a real person, and a distinct recognition of his character remaining in the memories of the people throughout the land of Israel, at the time when the gospels were first written, it would have been utterly impossible

for them to have gained credit with any one, LECT. VIII. and much less among the Jewish people, and within the generation among whom he was stated to have lived. But though the gospels were not written till twenty or thirty years after his death, yet so fully were they recognized and corroborated by myriads of living witnesses, and so abundantly were they borne out, by all the facts that had followed the life, ministry, and death of Jesus, that they were universally accepted and assented to, as a genuine and fair account of that extraordinary person.

Two suppositions.

An objector, it appears to me, can entertain here only two suppositions, by which he may attempt to undermine the force of this evidence. He may allege, *first*, that the narrative of Christ's life is altogether a fabrication, the result of a most crafty and skilful combination of very extraordinary talents in the four writers; or he may suppose, *secondly*, that there was once, and at the time stated, such a person, but that the evangelists' accounts of him are grossly overcharged, and made, indeed, mere fictions, by the heat, or the weakness, or wickedness of their imaginations.

Now, without referring to the apparent absurdity of such suppositions, as evinced by the undeniable internal evidence of truth, nature, and simplicity in the whole narrative, an argument well glanced at by Rousseau, in the note lately given, I will endeavour to show the inconsistency

LECT. VIII. of each of these suppositions, by an appeal to the undoubted facts of the case.

First,—the character fabulous.

Take the first supposition, that the accounts were wholly fabulous; then what is to become of all the antecedent facts? The gospels were indisputably not the beginnings of Christ's fame, nor the commencements of his cause. He had gained thousands and tens of thousands of friends, and made many enemies too; he had originated a new religion, he had suffered by the perfidy of a traitor, and his religion been severely persecuted, his disciples martyred, through many years, before any one heard of the gospels. His doctrine had penetrated every part of the Roman empire in the East; his confessors abounded in every city of Judea, and of Greece, as is testified by Jewish and heathen authorities, long before; and the gospel was advancing rapidly, in a career of triumph and glory, without the aid of these supposed fictitious lives; so that the allegation of these narratives being a mere fabrication, then, for the first time, proclaiming these wonders concerning Jesus, becomes an absurdity, and is utterly annihilated. The writings, indeed, might be a novelty, but the subject of which they treated could be none; else what shall we do with the facts which had so long preceded them? Hence all the testimonies of indubitable history hang like a dead weight about the neck of this supposition, and sink it effectually and for ever.

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The second supposition—a real but exaggerated character.

But let us try the second supposition of infidels. Imagine, if you will, that there had been, at the time and place specified, some such a person as Jesus Christ, but that the narratives of his character, given us by the evangelists, are greatly exaggerated, and substantially false. Reduce the magnificent portrait to an every day character; take away from it, if you will, every feature of divinity, every line that distinguishes it from other men; or reduce its glowing radiance, its inimitable beauty, its originality and sweetness, down to the wildness of an enthusiast, or the dark subtlety of the impostor; or save it from this degradation, by stopping half-way in the character of some sage, philosopher, or prophet; then, on every one of these hapless expedients, hangs, again, the mill-stone of fatal, indomitable facts. The impression that had been produced; the powerful attractions that had been felt; the moral transformations that had been experienced by thousands; the light that had been seen, and communicated, and rendered permanent; the martyrs that had suffered; the convulsions that had shaken Judaism to its very foundations; the breaches that had been effected by the unarmed, unprotected, despised fishermen of Galilee, in the strong holds of heathen superstition and idolatry; the rapid advances of Christianity every where, *maugre* all the formidable array of civil, religious, and philosophical authority against it;

LECT. VIII. these are unquestionable facts, utterly irreconcilable with any inferiority, any tame mediocrity, or any simply human excellency of character. They can be explained only on the ground of the peculiar, unprecedented superiority of the Messiah's character. It is just as absurd to believe, that being an ordinary, or a great man, or a bad man, he could have wrought such prodigious effects by his teaching and character, as to believe that he never existed at all.

Both untenable.

Thus, I think, it has been made evident, that no supposition is consonant with all the undeniable facts of this case: none, certainly, that can adequately explain them, but that which proceeds upon the clear and simple statements of the evangelists; that the character of Jesus Christ was such, throughout, as they have described it, and such as had been attributed by all the prophets to the long-expected Messiah.

III. The success of the christian cause verifies the anticipation.

III. We now proceed, *thirdly*, to show, according to the particulars laid down at the beginning of this argument, that the establishment and subsequent successes of the christian cause, further and fully verify all the descriptions and anticipations that preceded it. Both Judaism and Gentilism were to yield before it. Our inquiry, therefore, now is, how far has its success evinced that divine authority and power, attributed to it by the united testimony of all the prophets, and by the general expectation of the Jewish

people, and the other nations, who looked more obscurely, yet not the less certainly and generally, for a deliverer and restorer of mankind? LECT. VIII.

When success is a guarantee of truth.

It would be rash to assume, that success is a criterion of truth. Neither can disaster and failure be laid down as infallible proofs of fraud and injustice. In fact, no general rule can be founded upon the bare matter of success or failure. Other considerations must be weighed, before any rule can be established. Every case must be tried by its own merits. A just estimate of results can only be formed after a deliberate examination of all the circumstances under which success or failure may have occurred. In some cases, the success or failure may have been what we term purely accidental, and then its causes will usually be sufficiently apparent; in others, success may have been so improbable, so totally precluded, upon any human calculation, and so contrary to all historical analogies, as to thrust upon us the conclusion, that there was something extraordinary, or even miraculous, in the result; or that the peculiar nature and extent of the success, all circumstances considered, imply something miraculous and divine in the causes from which it proceeded. But assuredly no wise and experienced judge would propose success or failure, as absolute tests in any great question, irrespective of other circumstances. They may be so under certain conditions to be laid down. They may prove very satisfactory tests, when

LECT. VIII. applied carefully, and after an examination of the way in which they have occurred.

An argument, therefore, from the success or failure of any cause, is not to be crudely stated, or rashly enforced. I do not here intend to argue, that because Christianity was successful very early, and to a very great extent, therefore it must be divine: for then Mahommedanism might claim the benefit of the same bold and sweeping conclusion. But I do mean to affirm, that because Christianity was successful, under all the circumstances of its own peculiar case, it must be divine; and because Mahommedanism was successful only under its own peculiar circumstances, it cannot be divine.

Circumstances must determine.

The force and bearing of the distinction here intended, will probably be better perceived, when the principal circumstances are brought under our review. Infidels are ready to suggest, that other religions, besides Christianity, have been extensively successful, have endured long, and sustained great opposition; and, therefore, that the success of Christianity can be no proof of its divine authority. Now we admit, that if Christianity had achieved its success under similar circumstances, and by the same means as those other religions, it would, on this ground, have no priority of claim. But we totally deny, that any other system was ever successful under circumstances at all parallel. The circumstances are every thing to the validity of this argument,

which way soever it turns. Other systems may have been successful, and yet their success may contain no guarantee of their truth; this may have been successful under such circumstances as may contain the most elaborate and invincible proofs of its divinity. We must, therefore, refer to those general considerations, which may hereafter be advanced in proof of the proposition, that success, in this case, is an evidence of inspiration, on account of the very peculiar circumstances attending it. LECT. VIII.

Whether acceptable, or the contrary.

It is of the utmost importance to the right understanding of this argument, that we should regard particularly, both the principles of Christianity, as to their acceptableness or repulsiveness to mankind, and also the precise circumstances under which this religion was left, at the period of its founder's death, and when it was first fairly launched upon its professed career of converting the world. It was then pre-eminently a religion of peace and love. It allowed no violence; it enjoined patient endurance; and it forbad all unhallowed means, all corrupt, all fraudulent practices, in its defence, or for its propagation.

Position of Christianity at first.

At the time when Christ suffered death, it had comparatively few friends, especially among the great, the rich, and powerful. But, on the contrary, all seemed combined in a league of inextinguishable hostility against it. Its founder was treated with the bitterest scorn and keenest cruelty, while the few poor persons who professed

LECT. VIII. attachment to him were of the very lowest orders of the people. The success of Christianity can scarcely be said to have commenced till after the death of its author.

What the number and resources of its friends.

Now this general view of the simple facts of the case, as it then stood, is not dependent upon the Christian records alone. It is the uniform account transmitted to us, both by Jewish and heathen testimonies. So that it is not to be alleged, that we designedly depreciate the numbers and the resources of the first Christians; or that we diminish its commencement for the sake of augmenting the wonder of its triumphs, and giving effect to the insignificance of its human means. Its enemies themselves represent its beginnings as far more weak and despicable than do its own professed historians.

Representations of contemporary enemies.

I will lay before you a specimen or two of the descriptions of its founders and early promoters, given by its enemies. In a Jewish book, named Miriam, or Mary, it is said, "Miriam brought "forth a son, whom she called Joshua (or Jesus.) "The elders of the Sanhedrim proclaimed him "unfit to be of the congregation, and styled him "Jeschu, as a sign that his name and memory "ought to perish. Jeschu, finding himself thus "marked, retired to upper Galilee. Jeschu "passed to Bethlehem, the place of his birth, and "said to the inhabitants, it is of me that the "prophet Isaiah spake, when he said, 'A virgin,' "&c. To the people of Jerusalem, he said, 'I

"'am he of whom the prophet Zechariah said, LECT. VIII.
"'behold your king, &c. It is I whom David,
"'my forefather, had in view, when he wrote,
"'the Lord said unto me, thou art my son,' &c.
"After relating that he was bound, scourged,
"crowned with thorns, &c. This book adds, 'that
"'he declared, that my blood must expiate the
"'sins of men,' &c. After speaking of the death
"of Jesus, one of the ancients is represented as ad-
"dressing the Nazarenes in these terms, 'You
"'ought to know, that this person, who has been
"'hung, was the enemy of the Jews, and their
"'law.'"* Several other books of the Jews speak of Jesus in the most degrading and contemptuous terms.

Some of the early Christian fathers have also preserved similar descriptions of Jesus, taken from Jewish writings, which are now lost. With respect to the character and condition of the first disciples, it is said, in a Jewish work, still extant, "His disciples, and the wicked throng, were "attached to him. When the report of his works "reached Jerusalem, the worthless rejoiced greatly "in them; but the elders, the devout, and the "multitude of the wise men, wept bitterly." The Toldoth of Huldric terms the disciples, "vain "and futile men;" and the apostles, "those worth-"less persons." It is said, in another Jewish book, "then many low persons of our nation attached

* Sheppard's Div. Orig. of Christianity, vol. i. p. 80, where many similar testimonies may be found.

LECT. VIII. " themselves to Jesus." Celsus also says, " that " Jesus, taking to himself ten or eleven abjects, " vile publicans and sailors, went about with " them." And, in another place, that " he took " only ten abandoned mariners and publicans, " and persuaded not even all of them." Another opponent in those early times, specially reviled Paul and Peter, and the rest of the disciples, as propagators of imposture, whom he declares to have been " rude and illiterate, and that some of " them gained their subsistence by fishing." Porphyry, another objector, styles the apostles rustic and indigent men. Julian also writes thus, " Jesus having persuaded a few among you, and " those the worst," &c. And again, " if there " appear any one recorded (as a Christian) of " the persons of note or eminence, at that day, " under Tiberius and Claudius, when these things " happened, judge me, on every subject, a de- " ceiver." The Pagans called the Christians, in derision, " pupils of the illiterate, and the fishermen." These references will sufficiently show in what light Jesus and his followers were regarded by those who lived at the time, when Christianity was first published.

Weakness of Christianity at its origin.

Now, under these circumstances, Christianity began its career. Weak and despicable enough, humanly speaking, it undoubtedly was, at least, according to the opinion of its enemies. The only wonder is, that, according to their own views, they should use such severe methods for its suppression. It was, truly, a root out of a dry ground. There was not one element in its whole system, that could bring it into coalition with the feelings or prejudices of any existing party, either among Jews or heathens. Not a single feature that could invite to it the regards of the great or the worldly-minded. Nothing to give it success; nothing to render success, in any degree, probable, but rather the reverse. Its author neither employed power, nor possessed civil authority, nor commanded wealth, nor promised greatness, nor affected philosophy, nor courted popularity. After his death his cause numbered, in Jerusalem, only about one hundred and twenty attached disciples, and of these many appear to have been women; and the twelve, who were looked upon as the leaders, were pretty nearly, as their enemies have described them in the foregoing extracts, illiterate fishermen, and altogether of the poorest and most inconsiderable of the people. In this, all accounts exactly tally with their own descriptions of themselves.

What it effected.

But let us now inquire what this weak, ignoble, and contemptible handful of men accomplished. They began their labours, first, in the city of Jerusalem, where Christ had been crucified, and where they openly published his resurrection. A most unpromising field, all will admit, and, for an imposture on such a subject, the very worst that could have been chosen. The most distinguishing feature of their early announcements was the fact of the resurrection, and this in the

LECT. VIII. most explicit manner, before the very parties who had been the chief agents in procuring his death. These open averments were made immediately. The christian records state the success which accompanied these efforts, in more express terms, or more precisely and fully, than other testimonies, but not more clearly. It was quite natural that it should be so. But since the authority of these records is the point under discussion, we will not, at present, draw any of our proofs from them. There is, happily, no necessity to do so, because we can show, from other sources, the very same thing.

Testimony of adversaries.

" The Jewish memoirs fully admit the rapid " growth of Christianity at its commencement, " and up to the period of the siege of Jerusalem, " both among their own nation within Judea, " and wherever scattered through other countries.

Jewish.

" The Toldoth of Wagenseil, after recording the " hatred and separation of the Jews and Nazarenes, immmediately on the death of Jesus, " adds, 'and this calamity went on to advance, " 'and spread itself, for thirty years, and the Na- " 'zarenes, assembling by thousands and myriads, " 'prevented Israel from going up to the feast; " 'and the calamity was great in Israel, like the " 'day when the calf was made, and there were " 'none who knew what to do *(against it)*. For " 'their faith (that is, of the Christians) strengthened itself and advanced; and there went forth " 'twelve wicked men, sons of robbers, and went

" 'through twelve kingdoms, and prophecied LECT. VIII.
" 'among their assemblies, prophecies of false-
" 'hood. And Israel went astray after them, *for*
" '*they were men of renown*, and they confirmed
" 'the faith of Jesus; for they said that they were
" 'apostles of the suspended; and a great multi-
" 'tude of the Israelites followed them.'

" The Toldoth of Huldric, after mentioning that " Herod waged war against the Christians at Ai, " adds, 'but he could not conquer them, for even " '*in Jerusalem itself*, the number of these most " 'wicked people multiplied before the king.' "*

Heathen.

Celsus, who represents the Jews as a party of Egyptians, who revolted against the laws of their country, compares the secession of the Christians from the Jewish nation, to that ancient event. He speaks in these words—" they afterwards " suffered the same kind of injury which they " had then committed, part of their own body " having attached themselves to Jesus, and be- " lieved on him as Christ!" A comparison which implies, that the defection from the Jewish nation to Christianity, in that first age, was very considerable and public, and even surpassing what the sacred records themselves state.

Tacitus, the Roman historian, fully confirms this, when he says, of Christianity, " though " checked for a while (that is, by the death of its " founder) it broke out again, not only through " *Judea, the source* of the evil, but through the

* Sheppard, vol. i. p. 344.

LECT. VIII. "city," that is, Rome. Celsus, personating a Jew, asks those Jews who had become Christians, "what ailed you, O citizens, that ye left your "country's law, and being seduced by him of "whom we have spoken, were quite laughably "deluded, and became deserters from us to "another name, and to another life?" Again, he says, "yesterday, and some time since, and "when we punished him who led you as a "herd, ye apostatized from your country's law."* This passage refers to the conversion of Jews, from the time of Christ, through the whole apostolic age, to the period of Adrian, or Marcus Aurelius, when Celsus lived.

Success among Jews.

Thus this religion, so weak and contemptible in its beginnings, as we lately heard, had, during the lifetime of the apostles alone, risen to such a pitch, that the power of the state could not affect it. The preaching of it had caused such a secession from Judaism, that it was compared to the coming out of the whole nation from Egypt. In fact, in Judea itself, Christianity, upon the clear admission of opponents, had set at defiance the authority of the established religion; had triumphed in the field of public controversy; had braved the learning, and the ridicule, and the prejudices of the most prejudiced of nations; had glutted the sword till it was wearied and satiated with slaughter; and had, with nothing on its side but its proofs and its arguments, led so vast a

* Sheppard's Div. Orig. vol. i. p. 344.

multitude of the people captive to its peaceful triumphs, as to make persecution itself confess, that the attempt to exterminate the evil had only increased and multiplied it, till it was become altogether uncontrollable. LECT. VIII.

Success among heathens.

But, hitherto, we have viewed the advancement of Christianity exclusively in the country of Judea and among the Jewish nation, by far the most circumscribed sphere of its operations. We will now endeavour to give you some notions of its success among the Gentile nations. We will here, also, not appeal to the sacred records, because proofs from profane authors are less open to objection or doubt. The very genius of Christianity, as well as the commission its author left behind, impelled its first advocates to publish it among the nations. They professed it to be a religion for all mankind, and though all of them were Jews, religiously attached to Moses, even to a fault, long after their adoption of Christianity, yet, after their national difficulties and conscientious scruples were removed, they threw aside all their prejudices, and openly declared, upon the authority of the gospel, the equality of all men in the sight of God; and proceeded to discharge their evangelical mission without respect of persons. This is evident from the numbers of those who undertook missions to Gentile cities, as well as from the extensive and almost uniform success which attended those efforts. Some notion of the amount of this success, you will be able to

LECT. VIII. form, when I have further laid before you a few extracts from heathen authors, who can be suspected of no partiality to the cause of the gospel, and of no disposition to exaggerate its triumphs. Tacitus informs us, that in the tenth year of Nero (A. D. 65) a great multitude of Christians were convicted at Rome; and it appears that they perished. Whatever he intended by the word *convicted*, it is utterly improbable that they were all the Christians of the city; for though we cannot ascribe either prudence or humanity to Nero, yet we need not, without stronger evidence, attribute to him an indiscriminate massacre and extirpation of the sect.

This statement, at all events, does not include the Christians of the provinces. With respect to these latter, we have the authority of Julian, for stating their large numbers and wide dispersion, during the lifetime of the apostle John. For he writes thus, "a great multitude, in many of the "Greek and Italian cities, were seized with *this* "*distemper*," &c. Pliny, in a letter to Trajan, after describing his treatment of the Christians, adds, "the matter appears to me, that I should "ask your counsel; above all things on account "of the *numbers* who are in danger of suffering. "For many, of all ages, *of every order*, and of "both sexes, are brought, and will be brought, "in danger. Because the contagion of this su-"perstition has diffused itself, not in the cities "only, but in the open country. Yet it seems

"that it may be stayed and corrected. It is LECT. VIII.
"certain that the temples, which were almost
"deserted, have again begun to be honoured, and
"the sacred solemnities, which had long been in-
"termitted, to be renewed, and victims to be every
"where bought, of which heretofore there was
"very rarely found a purchaser." "Comparing," says Mr. Sheppard, "with this his previous "statement, that some of those he had examined "professed to have ceased to be Christians, some "for above three years, some for more, and one "or more for above twenty years, we cannot "doubt that the profession of the gospel must "have been very prevalent in those provinces in "the reign of Domitian; *i. e.* within fifty years "after it was first preached to the heathen. It "should be observed, also, that (lest any should "imagine that only Jews, or proselytes, or ju-"daizing Gentiles, were converted in the first "age) that this early and rapid conquest was "manifestly over *heathenism*, and also that it ap-"pears to have been, locally, at that particular "time, almost complete; for how else can we "understand the *desolate temples*, and *the very* "*rare purchase of victims?*" "Either," says Moshiem, "you must suppose that Pliny told his "sovereign an untruth, or else you must take it "as certain, that the province of Pontus had "more Christians, in his time, than idolaters; "or, at least, that the greater part inclined to "renounce the religion of their forefathers."

LECT. VIII. " Pliny wrote officially. He could have no mo-
" tive to colour or exaggerate, nor could it be
" safe for him to do so. His temptations must
" have laid on the other side."—" Dr. Moshiem's
" view of this statement appears below what is
" warranted, understanding it retrospectively of
" the state of Pontus, under Domitian and Nerva,
" since which time it seems Christianity had lo-
" cally sustained a partial check."—" Although
" the success of the christian missionaries had
" been, perhaps, greater in Asia Minor than in
" other parts of the empire, yet there are heathen
" testimonies for the more general extension of the
" religion, at as early a period. We have seen
" those of Tacitus and Julian, concerning the
" multitudes of Christians at Rome, and in many
" cities, both of Italy and Greece; we may add
" that of a jocular, satirical, and obscure letter
" from the emperor Adrian to Servianus, de-
" scribing the state of Egypt, which is preserved
" in the Augustan history. It mentions the
" Christians three times, and says, ' even the
" ' patriarch, if he should come to Egypt, would
" ' be required by some to worship Serapis, by
" ' others Christ.' " " From a work of Lucian
" we learn that an impostor, named Alexander,
" in the reign of Marcus Antoninus, complained
" that the province of Pontus was full of *Atheists*
" (meaning deniers of the heathen gods) and
" Christians. Pliny had been governor fifty
" years before, both of Pontus and Bithynia. It

" does not seem, therefore, that the contagion of LECT. VIII.
" which he speaks, in the extracts lately given,
" had been materially *stayed and corrected*,"
although full liberty to persecute had been given by the Roman emperors. Celsus also admits the wide propagation of Christianity, and its reception by great numbers. He says, " at the beginning
" they were few, and were of one mind, but now,
" being spread as a multitude, they divide again
" and again." Elsewhere, he says, that " no wise
" man will be persuaded by the doctrine, being
" deterred or distracted by the multitude of those
" that accede to it."

I will quote, further, one, and only one, passage from a distinguished writer. Justin Martyr, who took up the defence of Christianity, in an apology to the Roman emperor, says, " there is
" not any where a race of men, whether of bar-
" barians or Greeks, or by whatever name they
" may be called, whether erratic and houseless
" tribes, or herdsmen dwelling in tents, among
" whom are not offered, in the name of the
" crucified Jesus, prayers and thanksgivings to
" the Father and Maker of all."

Should it be thought that there is something of exaggeration in this, yet it is evidently such exaggeration as could not have been used, unless the spread of Christianity had been most astonishingly rapid and extensive. The same author, in his first apology, addresses the emperor, senate, and people, adverting to their conquest of Judea,

LECT. VIII. thus; "what has been said, (of Messiah) 'in his "'name shall the nations trust,' indicated, that "from all the nations they shall look for him, "as again about to come; which thing you can "perceive with your own eyes, and be persuaded "by the fact; for out of all races of men, there "are those who look for him who was crucified "in Judea; shortly after which that country was "surrendered to your arms."

Character of these triumphs.

It is certain, these triumphs of Christianity were of the most difficult character, and had been achieved over the most formidable obstacles; such as the aversion of the Greeks and Romans to the Jews; for they uniformly accounted the Christians only a sect of Jews. There were the celebrated schools of philosophy; the great learning and eloquence of the chief men among these heathens; the arts of magic, and the reverence felt for the oracles; the deep-rooted attachment of the people to the religion of their country, which had endured so many ages, and been adorned and fortified by so much art and skill. Then there was the repulsive aspect of Christianity to selfish, sensual, and luxurious nations; its origination with a despised, ignoble, and crucified founder; the meanness, illiteracy, and alleged barbarism of its promoters. Still all this array of obstacles could not arrest its progress. When the vast numbers that adhered to it had brought the religion of the state into danger of being every where forsaken and despised, then the governors

of the provinces appeal to the emperors. Public LECT. VIII. rescripts, or orders, were issued by these emperors, for its suppression, and the flaming brand of persecution was raised throughout the empire. Thousands and tens of thousands are butchered, but it is all of no avail. The indomitable spirit of apostasy from superstition still prevails. The name of the despised and crucified Nazarene confounds the oracles, and outrivals all the attractions of the temples, and all the influence of the priests and magistrates. Other counsels are at length adopted. Through fear, edicts of a more tolerant character are tried. This method, however, is just as unsuccessful as the former. Nothing can induce the people to worship the idols, or frequent the temples. Christianity marches forward, with rapid strides, in every direction. It invades the forum, the army, the palace, the schools; till at length, without sword or power, or patronage or wealth, and with no name to recommend it but that of the despised Nazarene, it has fairly won a majority of the population to the faith, and all hope of its suppression finally expires before the irresistible advances of its peaceful banner.

Indubitable proofs of these facts.

That it had so rapidly and extensively advanced, is demonstrated by these unquestionable facts, the various decrees of the successive emperors alternately prohibiting or tolerating it; the vast multitudes, of all orders, who perished for the confession of it; the number of able, learned, and eloquent advocates, who wrote in its defence; and

LECT. VIII. lastly, the fact, which of itself speaks volumes, that when Maxentius and Constantine were rivals for the imperial throne, they both thought it of essential importance to their success to gain the Christians on their side. "Of these candidates "for worldly empire, one actually favoured and "flattered them, and the other is suspected of "having joined himself to them, partly from con-"siderations of interest." The great men found the current of public opinion too strong for them, and when they thought it would serve their purpose, they cast themselves and their fortunes upon it, as upon a tide which they hoped would bear them triumphantly to the consummation of their wishes. Thus, finally, the cause of Christianity overcame every obstacle. It drew the mass of the population from the temples; it silenced opposition, and convinced persecution itself of the impolicy of its deeds. The rulers followed the people, and the sword and sceptre were laid upon the altar of Christianity, while emperors vied with each other in offering to it the protection of their arms, and the succour of their wealth. The too easy, or too corrupt, or too sanguine leaders of the Christian cause, whose predecessors had been proof against the thunder of Roman edicts, were overcome by the syren voice of flattery, and the attractions of worldly greatness; and so the religion of the crucified Nazarene, and the fishermen of Galilee, became the law of the empire; and, in consequence,

dignities of all sorts, and names of various degrees, and power and wealth unbounded, were heaped upon it. I speak not now of the unadvisedness and perilous consequences of such a step. Our business is, at present, simply with the fact itself, that, within three centuries, Christianity should have made such sure progress, such steady advances, under the most inauspicious circumstances, as to undermine the whole citadel of heathen idolatry: to ascend the imperial throne, turn the weapons of its enemies against themselves, and decree the inheritance of the Cæsars a Christian empire. LECT. VIII.

Means by which they were wrought.

Our argument now requires us to notice the means by which such mighty, such extraordinary, effects were produced. We affirm, in the first place, on behalf of Christianity, that such results, brought about by such inadequate means, and altogether under such circumstances, necessitate the admission of miracles, and that it is utterly impossible to account for such facts as we have shown did take place in the early history of the gospel, on any known principles of human nature.

Suppositions of infidels untenable.

The production of these results, upon the supposition of no supernatural resources in the apostles, has been found utterly to surpass the most ingenious and laboured explanations which have been attempted. We are quite willing that opponents or doubters should try the case, in reference to any of the celebrated cities of Greece and Rome: let them suppose an apostle, or Christian missionary,

LECT. VIII. to go to such a place, and begin his narrative. Is it reasonable, that the people of any such place should receive at once a doctrine which contained nothing compatible with their views, or feelings, or prejudices? and that they should become the followers of this itinerant declaimer, at the certain risk of the loss of all things, and the endurance of the most relentless persecution? That they would cheerfully brave the loss of all that men count most dear to them in this life; and that this should occur, not in solitary cases, but in hundreds and thousands, when they possessed no other warrant for their new faith, but the simple *ipse dixit* of this strange preacher? This result would be contrary to all we know of human nature. It is clear, that the cause of Christianity could not have survived a single generation, much less have gained immediately numerous proselytes, unless it had brought with it, wherever it came, either the indisputable evidence of miracles, or offered to the inquirers ample means of satisfying themselves, that miracles had been wrought for its vindication, in the place of its first announcement. Thus, in all parts of Greece and Rome, the preachers pointed out Jerusalem as the scene of the principal miracle, the resurrection of Christ. Jerusalem was not so distant, but that some might readily go thither, and ascertain the truth of the statements; and it is more than probable, that many did this before they yielded their full assent to a doctrine that required them

to relinquish all their old opinions, and venture their lives upon a novelty. LECT. VIII.

Means of detecting imposture.

On the other hand, suppose, as the infidel does, that Christianity was a crafty invention, and that it was announced, as all must admit it was, in innumerable places among the Gentiles, before that generation was extinct, who had seen Christ, witnessed his deeds and known his history: then surely there must have been some who, during that period, would either have come from Jerusalem, or gone to it, for the express purpose of exploding the imposture; and, supposing them to have had in their possession the power of doing so, they would have been most valuable agents of the Roman governors, and would have enjoyed every facility for undeceiving the people, and staying, by their proofs and arguments, the evil against which all the authority of the empire was directed in vain. But nothing of this kind occurs. No such counter-evidence is produced. No hosts of Jewish witnesses, or inhabitants of Jerusalem, are brought forward to confront the apostles; no, not a solitary individual. Time and further inquiry, which usually dissipate delusion, and explode errors, only served to deepen public conviction, to confirm the statements of the Christian advocates, and to give general efficiency and success to their labours.

I can certainly conceive it possible, that, humbling and repulsive as the Christian doctrine is to human nature, and highly suspicious as the

LECT. VIII. narrative of Christ crucified and risen from the dead, must have sounded, at first, in the ears of disputatious Greeks and ambitious Romans, I can readily conceive, that a fanatic here and there might have admitted the whole, without scruple or inquiry; but when such a supposition is strained to the utmost pitch, it stands in ridiculous contrast to the thousands, and hundreds of thousands, who finally yielded to the claims of Christianity, and fell into the ranks of its followers; and cannot, at last, be any way reconciled with the slow and cautious procedure of the wise men, and rulers, and philosophers. How shall we account for their accession? They, at least, must have possessed something more than common report; they were not to be easily caught by an imposture. They would not, certainly, have been induced to believe what was so obviously prejudicial to their temporal interests, which they had so many powerful inducements to decline; if the conviction of the entire truth of Christianity had not been forced upon them by a light and a power which disarmed opposition, and triumphantly placed it at once upon the throne of the understanding, and gave it the command of the conscience and the heart.

Supposing the narrative of the apostles false, nothing could have been easier, in that age, than to prove it so. Its detection and exposure would have saved myriads from martyrdom, and myriads more from the supposed delusion. Such a public

service would have been rewarded by honours and wealth. Had there been no miracles, or only false and pretended miracles, surely it could not have been difficult to check the progress of the imposture. Counter-statements, or counter-impostures, or even authority and punishment, would soon have brought the whole of any mere delusion, and especially such an one as, upon the supposition, this must have been, to an end. LECT. VIII.

For instance, if so shrewd and philosophic a man as Pliny, instead of writing to the emperor for counsel, had but reflected—the only instrumentality these men employ is a delusive magic; and we have magicians; or, they affirm every thing on their own unsupported authority—he might at once have brought a superior degree, both of authority and of art, to bear against them. His own authority would surely have outweighed that of the apostles, and must, upon the supposition of no miracles, or false ones, have appeared to possess far greater weight with all sober-minded and reasonable persons. But it was because these apostles and ministers brought forward proofs, with which neither he, nor all the senate, with the emperor at their head, could grapple; it was evidently because, in some way or other, they stood on far higher ground than the mightiest of their opponents and persecutors, that no power could compete with them, and no counter-statements or counter-miracles could prevent the people from believing their testimony.

LECT. VIII. Had they gone forth to their labours, simply as men, then men mightier than they would have overcome them, and men wiser than they would have confounded them. And had they gone forth to their labour, in the consciousness of imposture, then where was the imposition that might not have been matched, and why was not so clumsy and vulgar a cheat detected; and, if detected, destroyed by some, at least, of the many sages and philosophers before whom they told their tale? Abuse enough they continually encountered; prejudice enough, from Greek and Jew; but exposure, never; defeat, nowhere. The foe used every species of attack and antidote but the right one; the only one that the nature of the case admitted, viz. counter-evidence; but this was never and nowhere to be found. Ample and satisfactory contradiction, once offered, would have spread with the rapidity of lightning, and blasted and withered all the fruits of the apostolic zeal and cunning; yet it never could be obtained. But the general facts were notorious enough; all that went into Judea heard of them, and returned, if not convinced, yet silenced. The Roman governors that were there, and had been there, before the rise of Christianity, were in frequent communication with the emperors and the seat of government in the capital. To them an appeal would readily have procured all the satisfactory information respecting Christ and his history; had the apostolic narratives been false, had there

been any possibility of procuring counter-evidence. LECT. VIII. But none could be procured. The apostles and Christian missionaries went on, and none could gainsay. The Jews raved; the Romans smote with the edge of the sword, and gave them to the wild beasts, or burnt them, to cheer the darkness of the night; but all failed. The men suffered, but the cause triumphed; the adversary reviled, but Christianity smiled, and went on.

Inspiration and miracle obvious.

There was undoubted miracle in all this. If we had not been informed, by the sacred record, that Jesus Christ had promised to accompany the word of his servants with signs following, we should yet have inferred that he must have done so, from the unparalleled triumphs of his cause, both by such instrumentality and under such formidable opposition.

Why else, we might ask, was the conversion of the heathens then so easy a work, compared with what it is now, when we have every facility and advantage of learning, experience, and antiquity, all on our side? Miracle alone can explain it. But when we look into the fact of the success of Christianity in Jerusalem, after the death of Christ, there appears a still more signal and miraculous, a still more hard-earned testimony than that which was gained among the Gentiles. Because it appears that the Jews were then what they are now, a most prejudiced and immoveable race; any thing but credulous, except of their own rabbinical traditions: yet, after

LECT. VIII. having held out against all the miracles of Christ's life, we find thousands and tens of thousands yielding to the evidence of his resurrection, and crying out, when they heard the apostles, "what shall we do to be saved?" And if they had so long resisted under the evidence, be it good or bad, which Christ himself afforded, is it to be believed that they would afterwards have been persuaded, under the less attractive, and less convincing advocacy of his apostles?—that is, supposing there had been no true miracles wrought either by him or them. Certainly this were altogether incredible. Their late and reluctant submission cannot be reasonably explained, but upon the admission of miracles, and of the increasing number and force of those miracles. What is it that makes it so difficult now to convince a Jew of the truth of Christianity, when we know that the apostles of Jesus Christ convinced so great a number of them? Had they possessed no other resources, and wielded no other weapons than we possess, they would, like ourselves, have preached to them, for the most part, altogether in vain.

As clear after as during the life of Christ.

The continuance, the progress, the triumph of Christianity, therefore, after the withdrawment of Christ, and by such feeble instruments as the twelve apostles and their coadjutors, was a miracle of the most astonishing character, proving the intervention of a divine power. And when we glance our eye further along its triumphant

course, and trace the victories it daily and hourly won over the most inveterate and prejudiced foes, in all directions, we must ascribe to it a divine virtue, and believe that a power more than human triumphantly speeded it on its wondrous way. Miracles, indeed, were essential to every step of its progress. It could not have surmounted any of the formidable difficulties that lay in its course, much less all, without them. LECT. VIII.

The facts otherwise inexplicable.

If any think that such a victory, over all the powers of the world, could have been won by a few poor and ignorant fishermen, on behalf of so novel, so objectionable a cause, and in the name of so disgraced and contemned a founder, then it is incumbent upon them to show, that those uniform results, which followed the gospel in every country, and among every people, did not surpass mere human powers, and did not transcend the qualifications which these men possessed; or they are bound to produce a parallel case, which they know to be impossible. The fact is plainly this, either the intervention of miracles must be admitted, as stated by the evangelical writers, or else these men must be admitted to have produced results, by their preaching, which will be found far more inexplicable, if they are attributed to human, than if they are attributed to divine, power. It is, indeed, upon every view of the subject, quite incredible that Christianity should have taken such deep root, and spread its branches so far,

LECT. VIII. and matured such sweet fruits, had it not been nourished and sustained by an inward principle of life, a virtue strictly divine, a power imperishable, and independent even of the eminent and holy men whom it employed as its agents. Opposition, as we have seen, proved one of the very best means of eliciting and demonstrating its divine virtue. Without it we should not have known half the strength and beauty of our cause. Christianity proved itself, so often and so much, mightier than the mightiest of all its foes; yea, mightier than the whole of them combined, that it is impossible, rationally, to deny, that it has won all its victories by its own inherent authority and strength, and that it is the only religion in the world that has ever fought so many battles, and won so many triumphs, by the simple energy of truth; and proved itself, on every occasion, a system worthy of God to reveal, and of man to receive.

Infidelity supposes pretended miracle.

But it is possible that, after all, infidelity may attempt to parry the argument we have employed, by saying, it is very true, Christianity never could have prevailed as it did, without, at least, the *pretence* of miracles. We admit that the simple statement of the doctrine and history of Christ could not have proved long or extensively successful, unless it had been accompanied with professions of supernatural power. But then we consider all these to have been delusions. The people must have been deceived by the semblance

of miracles; and when once the cheat was fairly established, it was found impossible to eradicate it from the minds of men, or check its onward progress! Nothing is more common than for infidels to offer such an explanation of the success of Christianity; nothing is so cheap as this kind of declamation, and nothing more easy than to persuade themselves that they can get rid of the whole question after this manner. Yet this is only a theory, or supposition, suggested for the purposes of explaining facts; an expedient, devised to meet an exigency in argument. Let such a supposition be brought into contact with the facts of the case, and it will soon be seen how utterly inadequate it is to meet and reconcile them. LECT. VIII.

This supposition examined.

In the first place, we challenge the objector to show, that the apostles were, or could possibly be, under the influence of any of those motives which induce men to practice imposture. They had nothing to gain by it. They aimed at nothing, after they had set up their imposture, which can be imagined to supply any adequate temptation; and then they ran the most desperate risks of detection, and exposure, and persecution, for no assignable end. Men do not broach pretended miracles and open impostures, under the risk of detection and punishment, unless some object is to be gained worthy of the difficulty and the peril. Let any one judge what that gain could possibly have been in prospect, when the apostles began their mission; or what other mo-

No sufficient motive.

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tives could have influenced them, if not those they professed. After such a reflection, let him read, in any histories, sacred or profane, Jewish or heathen, or Christian, we care not which, what the portion of these apostles actually proved to be, after they had carried their project into execution; and, I think, he must admit, that they reaped nothing, as to this world, but suffering and poverty, and yet, that in it all they rejoiced and triumphed every where, as men who had gained their ends, and were satisfied. It is, in fact, as impossible to impeach their motives, as to question the purity and uprightness of their conduct, or the severity and length of the hardships they endured. Their sincerity, at least, then, is not to be questioned.

The apostles unsuitable men to answer to such a supposition.

But, in the next place, it may be shown, that it was highly improbable that men, situated as the apostles were, should make any attempt of the kind supposed. They were not of the class to invent and promulgate so magnificent an imposition. They were not of the order of minds to have formed so ambitious a project. They were not under the protection of either official authority or popular favour. It is no great wonder if an imposture succeeds when the state patronizes it, as was the case with the alleged miracles of heathen priests or emperors; nor when both state and people favour them, as was the case with popish miracles; nor when the sword is drawn to compel assent and subjection, as was the case with Mahommedanism; but how difficult, yea, impossible, for an imposture to succeed, when both state and people are not only opposed, not only resolutely incredulous, but employ all their united energies to suppress the pretender, all can judge. Here, then, is the difficulty of maintaining the supposition of pretended miracle in the present case. It is incredible that, with universal opposition before them, and no adequate motive prompting them, the apostles of Jesus Christ should have set up the pretension to miracles at all, which, once detected or betrayed, only by a single false brother, would instantly have exploded the whole cause, and brought condign punishment on its advocates.

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Impossibility of escaping detection.

In the *third* place, here we must notice the extreme improbability, I might almost say impossibility, of escaping detection. And this I ground partly on the ignorance and unskilfulness of the apostles themselves, and partly on the ample resources of skill, wisdom, art, and knowledge, of all kinds, possessed by their opponents. They were no magicians. They had never learned the curious arts of deception, which others practised. But all agree that they were untaught and unskilful men, utterly destitute of human science. They were every where completely surrounded by the most vigilant, the most accomplished opponents. Jews, Greeks, and Romans, all were interested in the detection of the cheat. Was it magic? There were numbers of magicians

Magic alleged.

LECT. VIII. in all those nations. Why were not rival magicians brought forward against them? Why did not the Sanhedrim employ a few skilful magicians to counteract them? Why did not Pliny engage magic and mock-miracle against them? Why did not the Roman emperors send forth such miracle-mongers, or command the prætors and governors of provinces to encourage such curious arts? and then, if they could have competed with the apostles, and especially if they could have surpassed them, the cheat would soon have been at an end. "In short," observes Mr. Sheppard, "the magic, as they called it, of the apostolic "age was wrought against and among the most "powerful enemies, and most skilful magicians. "Yet we cannot collect, whether from decrees, "or memoirs, or controversialists, or any more "indirect source, that it was either once exploded "by detection, or once controlled by competition; "therefore the apostolic magic was of a kind "altogether new. Wonders, which could neither "be unravelled nor equalled, were confessedly "attempted and performed, by men whom all "their opponents reviled as mean, rustic, and "untaught."* Supposing their rashness and temerity not unaccountable, which assuredly it would be, still it would remain inexplicable, that amidst such a variety, and multitude, and protracted display of pretended miracles, and by such a number of persons, in such different and distant

* Sheppard's Div. Orig. vol. ii. p. 181.

places, and before such an array of skilful enemies, detection, or treachery, or rivalry should never once have occurred. LECT. VIII.

This is the last fact to which I shall refer. All authors of that age, all historians, governors, and emperors, leave the facts just where the evangelical historians place them; and though some have alleged imposture and magic, they have never once pretended to explain how the imposture was carried on; when, or how, or by whom it was discovered; or why, being discovered, the discovery made no impression whatever upon the cause of Christianity. No detection.

The only conclusion, therefore, to which a candid inquirer can come, the only one consistent with all the facts of the case, is, that in their professions these persons were conscious that they possessed divine support, and could verify their commission by signs which could not be disputed; while their opponents were equally conscious, every where, and all along, that *they* possessed no means of counteracting these pretensions, or of exposing those wonderful signs which they, indeed, ascribed to magic, but which no practisers of that dark and deceptive art had been found able to rival, or could ever be induced to confront. Apostolic pretensions confirmed.

We are, therefore, fully entitled, we conceive, to conclude that the miracles of the apostles were really divine works, wrought "in all simplicity and in open day;" multiplied, varied, and indis- Inference.

LECT. VIII. putable; the constant and universal accompaniments and vouchers, in that age, of this benignant religion, whose divinity was thereby fully, clearly, and every where attested.

Coincidences between the document and all the facts.

Looking, then, at its actual history and condition, when it began its career, and at the means and nature of its subsequent progress, we trace a most striking agreement between its predictions and its documents. Even in its corruptions and perversions, its abuses and its disasters, as traced in another Lecture, we can find nothing but corroborations of the sacred testimony, and striking verifications of all that had been foretold, both of the nature, the instrumentality, the extension, and the perpetuity of the Messiah's kingdom. The anticipations of its founder and his friends, the continued but fruitless opposition of its enemies, even the very darkest pages of its history, and the partial success attained by brute force against it, all correspond with the mysterious developments made at its outset.

Scripture thereby fulfilled.

Is there not, then, I ask, the most complete, the most remarkable fulfilment of the writings, denominated the Holy Scriptures, in the personal history of Jesus Christ, and that of the cause he established? Who dare deny, that both he and his disciples foretold that this cause should live and be triumphant over all opposition? And it has been so. Who can deny, that both he and they foretold that it should be bitterly opposed, yet that it should be spread abroad to all nations; and that, finally, all nations should embrace it, and consider themselves abundantly, yea, divinely blessed, in the possession of it? And it is so, to a great and daily increasing extent. Who can deny, that Jesus Christ gave an express commission to his apostles, to preach the gospel to every creature, beginning at Jerusalem, which he foretold should be swept away, because it would reject them as it had rejected him? And it has been so. Who can deny, that Jesus Christ, at the present day, has a wider sway over the world than at any former period, and that his cause is evidently advancing in a most marvellous, self-moved, and triumphant manner, none appearing effectually to resist its march, and no other system daring to compete with it for the sovereignty of the world.

Is it possible to believe all this of a forgery? of a lie? or of any human fabrication, concealing its fraud through so many ages, and to such an extent, while resting exclusively on human resources? Assuredly, to believe this, requires a stretch of faith incomparably beyond that which is involved in the belief of miracles, and the cordial acceptance of Christianity as a divine religion. And he must be far more credulous of wonders, who attributes all we have been considering, to imposture and to man, than he who ascribes the whole to God.

Conclusion of this argument.

There has been, then, such a verification of the great and comprehensive, the particular and

LECT. VIII. minute assertions and statements of the sacred books, respecting the person, the doctrine, the character, and the kingdom of the Messiah, in the history of the Christian cause, from the first to the present day, as ought, we conceive, to produce conviction. Not one jot or tittle of the divine word has failed, either in reference to the Jews or Gentiles, friends or enemies, individuals, nations, or the world. The entire series of facts that has transpired, presents a complete and full counterpart to the prophecies and delineations, which none can deny were in existence, and in the keeping of the Jews long before the appearance of Christ, which they have carefully preserved ever since, and to the authenticity of which they still bear witness.

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ON THE DOCTRINE OF A DIVINE AND SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE, AS REVEALED IN THE SCRIPTURES, AND AS REALIZED IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY AND THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRISTIANS.

All effects traceable to spiritual or immaterial causes—Mental power the source of voluntary action in ourselves—How we are led to ascribe the invisible and mighty agency, operating through all material causes and effects, to a Divine and Infinite Spirit—Probability that the Divine Spirit exercises the same influence over human minds—Analogies which render such agency probable—The direct testimony of revelation as to its reality—Facts verifying this testimony—In the first propagation of the gospel—In its continuance and success in the world—In the formation of the christian character, considered individually—Abuses to which the doctrine is liable—Connexion with an appointed instrumentality—General Conclusion of the course.

LECT. IX. In commencing this part of our subject, we may, perhaps, be allowed to assume, that no consistent and complete view of the whole system of the

Divine agency in nature.

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universe can be maintained, without admitting the doctrine of a divine and almighty agency operating in each object, sustaining the harmony, and presiding over the tendencies and issues of the whole. It may be, that a first and hasty glance at the system of nature, suggests to the mind the notion of a vast multitude of independent and self-sufficient causes, all operating by their own spontaneous agency. But, on closer observation and analysis, we find that none of these visible and secondary causes are any thing more than separate links in a chain; that, though to those which follow they bear the relation of causes, yet they are themselves but effects dependent on preceding causes, which may again be successively traced backward to others, till we arrive at that which is invisible and spiritual. For, as we advance upwards in every analysis, we not only find something still antecedent, but, when we have found that something, it proves, alone, inadequate to account for the mysterious results which follow it, and we are compelled to confess, that the power and efficiency of an Almighty Creator and Governor can alone supply an adequate explanation of that endless series of stupendous and wondrous operations which pass under our observation. After all our inquiries, we cannot persuade ourselves that the causes we can detect, by any physical analysis, are the exclusive agents of all that is before us. However long the series through which we may trace the

A final cause inferred.

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succession, still we come, ultimately, to that cause of which we can form no other conception, than that it is a power invisible, inscrutable, and spiritual.

In many instances we arrive at an invisible agency of a physical kind, before we terminate our investigations, and of which we can give no explanation, except that it is itself the effect of some other mighty, perhaps divine and infinite, agency. We see effects produced which originate in no cause appreciable by our senses, yet we infer that they must have a cause. As, for instance, in the production of motion or of mechanical power. When we see a mill erected, and put into operation, we can trace the succession of cause and effect up to the water, the flow of which turns the first wheel; but the flow of the water, from a higher to a lower level, we readily resolve into the power of gravitation, which we find is a universal principle or quality attaching to matter, every where recognized, but nowhere explained, and resolvable alone, and directly, as far as we can determine, into the almighty power of the Creator. The wind is also an invisible power, employed for navigation and machinery, and affords a similar illustration. We detect it only by its effects. Yet we infer its existence, though it is a power altogether invisible. A steam-engine is another example of the same thing. We can trace the whole series of results up to the steam, and that again to heat;

Invisible power.

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but the heat is as invisible an agency as the wind or gravitation. Here, then, we arrive at the boundary or connexion between material and immaterial, physical and final. We may talk, philosophically, about laws of nature, but all law imposed, whether upon matter or mind, implies a previous intelligence, an adequate authority, and a superior power. The cause of the gravitation, of the heat, or of the chemical change which produces it, or of the wind, and the atmospheric changes causing the motion of the wind, lead us at once to the agency of the Creator. Or, if they do not, but should be traced to some other cause, still material, yet beyond that we cannot go, without pausing, at last, in an infinitely wise and powerful Agent, on whom the whole depends. In that Infinite First Cause, all, at last, terminates, and to that every philosophical analysis leads us. That alone can account for the ultimate facts or causes to which we have traced up the succession, from whatever point we may commence it.

Inference of a final cause reasonable.

From a fair and just analogy, therefore, reason teaches us to describe this ultimate or primary agency as spiritual; and because its effects are so stupendous, so illimitable, so glorious, so uniform, and harmonious, so far beyond all we know of finite power, we style it divine. We are naturally led to these conclusions, from our own experience and consciousness. Thus, for instance, we lift a hammer, and smite some material with repeated blows. Every one can readily account

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for the blows, by saying, the arm lifts the hammer and lets it fall again. But this explanation does not trace up the effect to its primary cause. It stops short in an intermediate one. The arm itself is not power. It may remain, and its power be destroyed. The muscles and the nerves move the arm. But the nerves are subject to the will; and to that point we are compelled to trace up the blows given by the hammer. Without the determination of the will, the final effect would not have been produced. "But we can readily "grant, also, that it is as easy for Him (the "Deity), and as sufficient, to say the word, or "to will all these motions of materials, known "to Him and present to Him, as it is for the "human spirit to will the motions of the mate-"rials placed in its power, through the intro-"duction of muscular force, which is but an "intermedium between the will and those effects; "as, between that human will and muscular "action, there is an unknown chasm. Rather, "to speak with more physiological accuracy, this "chasm takes place between spirit and the ma-"terial, if unknown, nervous power: yet it is an "equal one, since it is that action of mind on "matter, through will, which remains, and ever "will remain, the inexplicable mystery of crea-"tion. There is no greater difficulty, then, diffi-"cult as all is, in conceiving that the Divine "Will can, and does, move all the materials of

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"the universe, by a simple and direct action; "since this is but to do, universally, and at the "same time, in a shorter way, what He has "empowered man to do, to a narrower extent, "and by a more circuitous road."* It is only necessary to allow that the human spirit is one of these materials, under the control of the Divine Will, as it is one of the objects of creating power; and the doctrine of divine influence, which we are attempting to illustrate, will appear in perfect harmony, both with the influence of the human will upon its proper objects and in its limited sphere, and with all we perceive of the Creator's power throughout the unlimited sphere of the universe.

Analogy in our own minds.

Here, then, by such analogies as these, we arrive, not only at an invisible, but a spiritual cause; and, upon a fair inference, derived from our own consciousness, we ascribe the wondrous, invisible, and boundless agency, operating through or in all causes, and sustaining all the powers of nature, to a Spirit whom we call God, whom we rationally apprehend to be the first Author, the ever present controller of all causes and all effects. In this mode of reasoning, concerning the divine influence, we only proceed upon the same ground as we find necessary to assume in accounting for our own actions. We ascribe, in a larger

* Dr. Macculloch's "Proofs and Illustrations of the Attributes of God," &c. vol. ii. p. 8.

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sense, to God that identical power, which we feel and believe we possess, within ourselves, over the proper objects and materials of our own agency.

Influence of mind on mind.

But the reasonableness and strong probability of a divine influence may be further argued, from the facts which are observable in the social intercourse of minds, and, indeed, from their whole economy. If matter is so constituted as to act on matter, and mind so endowed as to control matter, under given conditions, there can be nothing incredible in the general doctrine of mind acting on mind; and, consequently, nothing improbable in the notion, that the Supreme Mind acts upon such as are created and finite. It may, therefore, not be out of place to illustrate, a little further, the phenomena connected with the general influence of one finite mind on another.

Provision made for it.

There is clearly, in the human system, provision made, both for the exercise, on the one hand, and the perception, on the other, of what is properly termed spiritual influence. Results the most momentous and extensive, both for good and evil, are perpetually flowing from it. There may be some differences between the laws that regulate this kind of spiritual influence, and that which the Divine Being exerts. The mediums may be different, and these, in the latter case, less explicable by us than in the former, or they may be even wholly concealed from us; but what wonder if it should be so? Or how can this affect the force of the analogy, or render it

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reasonable to admit the reality of spiritual influence in the one case, and unreasonable to admit a corresponding influence in the other? Surely he who believes, because he feels, that his fellowmen exercise a spiritual influence over him, cannot, with any show of reason, deny that the Supreme Spirit possesses a similar power, and can employ it, at his pleasure, on all the human spirits he has created, and without such mediums as may be necessary to finite beings. This is, at least, far more probable from analogy than the reverse. There is evidently an influence similar to that which the Divine Being is supposed to exercise, constantly passing between man and man. The eye is singularly adapted to convey it. Who has not felt the fascinating magic of this organ under peculiar circumstances? It has imparted, at a glance, a spiritual influence, which has left an indelible impression upon the recipient spirit. It has told the deep mysteries of the heart, and exerted a power which has transformed the character, controlled the conduct, and determined the future destiny of the individual. It can convey sentiments and emotions from mind to mind, as forcibly and fully as if they were clothed in language, and impressed by all the eloquence of the most gifted tongue. Yet the eye itself is nothing but the channel of a spiritual influence.

The eye conveys it.

Books convey it.

We might further illustrate the reality of such influences, by a reference to the effects which are

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continually produced by authors on their readers. This class of influences affects both the sentiments and feelings, and through them the whole economy of man, and, as we continually witness, proceeds to an incalculable extent. Silently and imperceptibly it pervades the whole social body. It operates, and is propagated purely by mental contact. It is a spiritual electricity, felt, for good or evil, by the whole circle of minds, connected only by the medium of *the book* with the first mind, which originated the propitious or unpropitious impulse. We can as clearly distinguish between the medium, and the influence of which we are conscious, which is strictly spiritual, as between the electricity and the conductor.

Variety of spiritual influence conveyed by them.

One book, as to form, typography, and appearance, may present little or no difference from another book; but the influence it exerts over us may be strikingly contrasted, infinitely greater, and exclusively, because the *Spirit* which produced the one, sways a more potent sceptre than the Spirit that produced the other. But in either case, the influence we feel is of a spiritual kind, though it comes to us through the ordinary mediums of visible objects, which are merely the arbitrary and conventional symbols of ideas. In the character and history of Voltaire, for instance, nothing can be more evident than the pernicious spiritual influence which he exercised, for a long period, over innumerable minds, and, through them, on the lives, and conduct, and destinies

Voltaire.

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of large bodies of men throughout all Europe. It was no less a spiritual influence, because it was of a disastrous and polluting kind, tending to turn into ridicule the most sacred principles of religion, and to sap the foundations of all morality and social virtue. Had he possessed a pure spirit, and employed his great talents in the cause of virtue and happiness, and been as extensively useful in rousing mankind to the pursuit and practice of goodness, as he was mischievous in nearly all the impulses he gave to human thought and feeling, he would not more obviously have exerted a spiritual influence, though it would have been in a different direction. The effect of his extraordinary mental powers was to be traced, like a pestilence, or a tempest, in the amount of desolation it left behind. Mischief was his sport. His writings related, not to mere matters of dry speculation, but to the moral sentiments and natural emotions of the heart, which he debased and brutalized at their very source. The influence reached all classes, for it was suited to the animalism of our nature, always struggling for the mastery over reason and principle. Even myriads, who never read a page of his writings, nor, perhaps, ever heard of his name, felt the spiritual touch, and were paralysed, or perverted, or maddened by the potent influence of his malignant spell. Other speculators have exercised a mighty power over the opinions and theories of men, in matters of

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mere intellect and thought. The writings of Aristotle for instance; and then, again, the works of the reformers, which produced, throughout Europe, a convulsion in men's opinions, sudden and mighty, like the shock of an earthquake. Kant, also, in the department of metaphysical philosophy, long ruled minds of a high and peculiar order, with a sway not less regal and complete; but surely no human spirit ever produced a greater, or a more directly practical effect on other human spirits, than the philosophical libertine of Ferney. There we contemplate him, disguised, indeed, under the affectation of a moralizing recluse, but really surveying the desolation he had spread, like a malignant dæmon, that had retired to an eminence to enjoy the scene, after having laid waste an empire; while the malicious smile upon his countenance seemed to say, *what a proof have I given of my intellectual prowess!* and then his ominous words, which he uttered when he returned to France, serve to complete the awful tragedy, "*I am come to Paris to find glory, and a tomb.*" In the same class of disastrous spiritual influences may be placed that effect which we have witnessed in our own country, from the poetical writings of the late Lord Byron. His influence was more directly aimed at the passions, without attempting to prepare the poison so skilfully as to secure the assent of the understanding, or the concurrence of the moral sentiments. The

Aristotle.

The reformers.

Kant.

Byron.

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ultimate object of both, seems to have been the *heart;* to profane it, and lay it waste as a common: and both authors accomplished their purpose to a fearful extent. The English nobleman alighted at once upon the citadel; but the Frenchman took a more circuitous route, and made a more formal approach; thus he spread a wider desolation, and left behind him a longer and more dreary track of ruin and wretchedness.

Bacon.

If I might be allowed to refer to another illustration, it should be in the case of a more strictly intellectual influence, and of one altogether benign. Lord Bacon unquestionably exercised a spiritual power, perhaps quite as extensive as that of Aristotle, and far more salutary. His theory of philosophizing applies essentially to the objects and the procedure of the understanding, and appears, at the present moment, the master-spring of all scientific spirits; the light from within, which is guiding them in all their researches; the intellectual key to all their discoveries: it is a spiritual influence yet unspent.

Spiritual influence produces moral good and evil without limit.

But the power of one human spirit upon another, exercised without limit and without end, is not to be doubted. Its extent varies in different cases, and its products are moral good or evil, according to the character of the energy exerted in the first instance. The influence may be subtle and secret, but the effects become apparent in the understanding, the moral sentiments, the passions, the social relations, the whole practice, for the

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exterior man is always the creation of the interior spirit; and even influences which are purely sensitive return upon the life and actions only through the effect they produce upon the soul of man. All human power centres there, and all extraneous agencies must there commence their operations, or at least traverse up to that point, before they can begin to work efficiently, even upon the exterior man.

Another illustration in friendship.

But there is another illustration of spiritual influence, exerted by one human mind upon another, differing, in some respects, from those already noticed, and, as I cannot but think, approximating still more nearly to the nature of those divine influences, the reality of which I am anxious to make evident. I refer now to the influence of *friendship.* Surely this may be denominated, apart from religion, one of the most sacred and powerful impulses to which either our understandings or our hearts are subject. It is of little moment by what name it is defined; a principle, an emotion, or both; a moral or a social sentiment; the fact is all we are concerned with at present. This, then, is a susceptibility of our rational nature to a spiritual influence from our fellow-creatures. It is, both in itself, and in its cause, purely and essentially spiritual. That is, in so far as it is a true and genuine friendship. For in what is its proper root? Not in any bodily quality; not in any perceived beauty; but

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in mental or spiritual properties; courage, magnanimity, generosity, genius, goodness, purity, or piety. It may arise from a perception of our own mental likeness, or a discovery of those very qualities in which we feel ourselves deficient, but admire and wish to possess; yet, whether it be contrast or resemblance which gives rise to the spiritual emotion or sentiment of genuine friendship, still it is a principle which draws heart to heart, excites the most exquisite sympathy of souls, and produces its results as well and as vividly, by reflection and memory, without any direct medium of communication, as in the presence of the endeared individual. The imagination of what *he* feels, or suffers, or enjoys, shall place our soul in his soul's stead, and awaken sentiments and feelings which shall have as real an effect, and almost to as great an extent, as if we actually witnessed the facts we have only imagined.

Its power and purity.

Again, such is the influence of this sentiment in our nature, that it shall annihilate selfishness, prompt to acts of the most generous self-devotement, and our life, in short shall seem identified with our friend's, both in joy and sorrow. All this, and far more than I dare here venture to describe, shall grow out of no physical or material cause, be inspired by no personal attractions, but shall be the pure and evident result of the attraction which one human spirit has for another; a mysterious, and, in a great

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measure, an inexplicable influence, which one mind exerts on a second, but which no third mind may ever be fitted to participate. Love, indeed, may show as great results, but it is, perhaps, never so unmixed, never so entirely a spiritual influence. It most usually arises from something that moves the senses, or excites the animal passions; sometimes, indeed, in connexion with the mind, but frequently quite irrespective of all intellectual qualities. Genuine friendship, however, is produced from purer and more ethereal elements, and is altogether a sentiment or emotion of the *soul*, properly and exclusively an effect of a spiritual character. It is, at once, the union and communion of minds. It is, as Jeremy Taylor observes, "The greatest bond in the world; for "it is all the bond that this world hath; and there "is no society, and there is no relationship that "is worthy, but it is made so by the communi- "cations of friendship, and by partaking some of "its excellencies. For friendship is a transcen- "dant, and signifies as much as unity can mean, "and every content, and every pleasure, and "every benefit, and every society, is the mother "or the daughter of friendship. Some friend- "ships are made by nature, some by contract, "some by interest, and some by SOULS."

Survives death.

Friendship, we may finally observe, attests itself a purely spiritual effect, by the fact, that it is as strong in death as in life, and even defies the power of the universal conqueror. After

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death it lives as faithful to the memory, which is the spirit's reality, as to the living enshrinement. Its influence can hardly be said to be weakened by death, any more than by local separation while alive. A purely spiritual influence remains, and still operates, and can never die in souls immortal.

Value of these analogies.

The application of these analogies to the case in hand is, I trust, obvious. Their value in the argument is to show, that the human spirit is naturally so constituted as to be exquisitely susceptible of spiritual influences; that it is constantly receiving them, and acting under their impulse. That when we further consider the weakness of the human soul in all good purposes and holy affections, its propensity to evil, both of itself and under the influence of external excitements, it cannot but appear highly reasonable and probable, that the Supreme Spirit, who is, without doubt, infinitely good and benevolent, should exercise, through proper mediums, or, it may be, without any medium, an influence of a spiritual kind over our minds. This is both reasonable and probable, as an inference from the extensive facts which we observe, and is in perfect analogy with the whole system of things around us, and within us.

They coincide with the direct evidences.

Taken in connexion with the direct testimony borne to such influence in the history of Christianity, and in the consciousness of Christians, yet, to be examined, it will surely supply sufficient

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evidence for the belief of the fact; and, indeed, all the evidence that can be reasonably required in a case so confessedly mysterious, and so essentially remote from all the objects and operations of the senses. Nothing, then, it appears, can be more probable, than that there is a divine agency employed through the whole spiritual economy, since we are constrained to admit it, in the origination and superintendence of the material and intellectual system.

Doctrine of a divine influence harmonious with all nature.

If we see, first, in nature, that all motion, all power, originates with spiritual and invisible agency, and if we are thence led to infer, that the primitive and original cause of all things is a Supreme, Eternal, and Infinite Spirit; if, further, we all experience the influence of mind on mind, we may fairly and safely infer, that it is far more probable than otherwise, that our own spirits, the nobler part of our nature, and that which allies us most nearly to the great Father of Spirits, are not exempted from his omnipotent agency.

Its mode may fairly be inexplicable.

It is of no moment, that the mode of this influence is subtle, and perhaps beyond the reach of any analysis which we can employ. It is with the fact, mainly, that we have to do, and to the reality of that fact there are, we think, veritable and innumerable testimonies, though it may not be a matter of universal consciousness. In this particular, it is placed in no worse predicament than a thousand other intellectual phenomena,

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which are never disputed. The non-experience of one man is no refutation of the experience of another. Moreover, matters of fact are as certain as demonstrations, provided only they be safely ascertained, or properly testified: yea, most of our demonstrations can never be evinced in any other way, or by any clearer evidence, than that of our senses, or our consciousness. They depend upon the very same foundations. Without resting upon the medium either of sense or consciousness, we can prove nothing.

The doctrine itself necessary.

These observations have, I trust, made it evident, that there is a divine influence exerted throughout nature; and further, that the doctrine of a spiritual influence, exerted for the maintenance of moral and religious principles in the hearts of men, is in accordance with the whole system of influences in the midst of which we are placed. The belief of this doctrine seems necessary, to account for effects which can be traced to no other cause, and can never be adequately explained, without the admission of this.

Reason must retreat upon divine influence.

We can satisfactorily account for nothing in the peculiar department of spiritual beings, in the province of morals and religion, without the admission of a divine and spiritual agency. Just in proportion as our knowledge of the ways of providence in this particular sphere enlarges, so our views of our own agency and efficiency shrink into littleness. In every thing we are constrained

finally to retreat upon the divine influence, or stop short of accounting for the effects which are witnessed. LECT. IX.

Essential to religion.

It is in theology, as in physics; in moral, as in material causes and effects; the final one, to which we are constrained to trace up all others, is spiritual and divine. So that if there be any such thing as religion at all, whether natural or revealed, theoretic or experimental, it must virtually and essentially exhibit the divine influence, operating mediately or immediately, or both, in and upon the human soul.

A fundamental principle of revelation.

The whole of revelation professedly proceeds upon this as a fundamental principle. It clearly and uniformly teaches, that divine influence is essential to the production of those results at which it aims; and that the mind and heart of man can never exhibit the genuine and vital emotions of a true piety towards God, without a divine *afflatus*. It prescribes and sanctions a system of means, such as we are accustomed to denominate *moral suasion*, but, at the same time, it protests, that the mind of man can no more become what the inspired religion requires it to become, without a spiritual and divine influence, than any part or object of nature can be sustained in its functions, and produce its proper results, without the pervading efficiency of the Almighty Creator.

The doctrine to be verified.

It will be our endeavour, in what follows, to verify, as far as we can, on so complicated and difficult a subject, the general testimony of reve-

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By fact and consciousness.

We conceive there has been, from the very introduction of revelation, and more distinctly and palpably since Christianity was established, a clear accordance between facts and the record, between human consciousness and the doctrine, as theoretically and dogmatically taught in the Scriptures.

1. In the early history of Christianity.

1. We may clearly trace such a verification of the sacred word in the facts which attended the early introduction and promulgation of Christianity. It was represented by many of the prophets, that the days of Messiah's kingdom were to be characterized by special gifts and influences of the Spirit of God. These were to consist, partly, in extraordinary signs wrought by inspired men, and partly in such moral and spiritual endowments as should clearly evince the presence and operation of a divine power. The promises and predictions are scattered throughout the books of all the prophets, and are usually connected with the coming and the times of the Messiah. One, in particular, is quoted by Peter, in his address on the day of Pentecost, from the prophet Joel. But the prediction of Jesus Christ himself, prior to his departure from his disciples, may be noticed as a summary, and, at the same time, a confirmation of the whole; "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." In attestation of the narrative which records the fact, that such a divine influence was afforded to them, we may appeal to the effects which presently followed their labours, and to the manifest and otherwise inexplicable change which took place in the men themselves. There appeared, in the mental endowments, in the moral feelings, and in the whole character of the apostles of Jesus Christ, a most extraordinary improvement, a vast stride in all the qualifications requisite for the public advocacy and advancement of the gospel after this period. To say nothing of the gift of languages, and of other miraculous endowments, if we look at the men, simply as teachers of the doctrine of Jesus, we find an enlightenment, a wisdom, an energy, and unction of speech, and of reasoning, which distanced all competition; a self-devotement, and a degree of moral courage, which altogether evinced a sudden and most extraordinary change, eminently fitting them for all the scenes and transactions in which they were called to bear so conspicuous a part. They were no longer the poor, illiterate, prejudiced, wavering, and timid fishermen of Galilee. All the facts of the case show that they possessed a power and a wisdom which none of their adversaries, not even the most learned and the most subtle, could gainsay or resist. The manner in which they acquitted themselves appears the more extraordinary, not only because they were previously unqualified and incompetent, but because they were

Promises of its bestowment.

Fulfilled.

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expressly forbidden to premeditate what they should answer, or what they should say. Their Master had assured them, that it should be given them *at the hour* what they ought to say.

Effects proved it.

But lest any should object that these facts are taken wholly from their own statements, we may observe, that the results which followed, and which profane history records, fully corroborate the statements given in the book of the Acts. The gospel had an immediate and most extensive spread after the day of Pentecost. The advantage gained to Christianity was answerable to the divine and mighty cause assigned for it. The impression of its truth produced the permanent effects that followed, and all the growing series of vast and stupendous consequences that arose out of the extraordinary scene which signalized the commencement of the apostolic ministry, were precisely such as might have been anticipated from so mighty a cause, and such as never have been, and never can be, rationally explained upon any other theory.

Ministry of the apostles.

The poor, despised, unarmed fishermen of Galilee went forth to execute the commission of their Master, with no worldly wisdom, no carnal weapons, yet their warfare proved mighty to pull down the strong holds of sin and Satan. Their strength consisted in the consciousness that they were endued with power from on high, and all the results, as fully appears from the admission of their adversaries, answered to their expecta-

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tions, and to the predictions and promises of their Master. *They*, indeed, swayed not the power which controls human hearts, yet they appealed continually to the signs and wonders which that power wrought, and which never failed to accompany their words, and, in consequence, thousands were convinced and brought under the influence of that gospel, who, but for the extraordinary gifts bestowed on the apostles, would never have understood a single word that they uttered. Among those who were thus led in triumph to the early preaching of Christianity, were many who had long held out against its founder himself, and who had appeared among the most violent and resolute opposers; but who were, at last, overpowered by the augmented lustre and energy of those new gifts and signs, which seemed to be multiplied as the cause advanced. To what, then, I would ask, but the divine influence, can we attribute the immediate dissemination of the gospel, at a crisis when, from the ignominious death of its author, there was every rational probability of its suppression, and a dissemination to an extent which otherwise many years would not have sufficed to accomplish.

Success of new systems slow and difficult.

New systems, whether of religion or philosophy, simply left to work their way by an appeal to the understandings of men, never make such rapid strides, never win such splendid triumphs over habit, prejudice, and power. Their ordinary progress is slow and difficult. But the gospel, testi-

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fied by these humble apostles of Jesus, made its way, in an incredibly short space of time, first to the hearts of the immediate audiences to whom it was addressed during the period of the Pentecostal feast, and then by them to the most remote parts of the civilized world; for at once a host of preachers was raised up and qualified, if not in all respects, yet adequately to convey the glad tidings to their own nations and homes, and thus to excite attention and prepare the way for the visits of some more competent teacher.

Every probability against the success of the gospel.

Now we argue that this system, proclaiming, as it did, the name of a crucified Saviour, requiring faith in his divinity, though he appeared not to their bodily senses, destitute as it was of all adventitious recommendations, not only unaided but opposed by all human and secular power, could not have survived for a single year, scarcely for a day, had not the power of God been so in it as to make it invincible to finite resources, and, at the pleasure of its author, to transform enemies into friends, persecutors into advocates, and to confound and overrule to its advancement all the counsels which were directed to its extermination. Its chief promoters were constantly taken from among the humblest and most powerless of the people, frequently from the ranks of its foremost opponents, and thus it created for itself, wherever it came, a succession of friends and disciples, a heroic band ready to fill up the places of those who fell by the reckless hand of persecution, and

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prepared to brave all extremities in its cause. Even its enemies were appalled by the evidences of divine energy with which it was constantly accompanied. They often fell paralysed and speechless before it, or were smitten by a spirit of dismay and despondency.

Failure of all kinds of opposition.

They found, by experience, that the disciples of Jesus could neither be confounded by argument, nor swayed by interest, nor deterred by the terrors of martyrdom. There was felt to be a mysterious energy, an invincible power, attending this gospel, which neutralized all the force of persecution, and annihilated the opposition of men. The tide might as soon be resisted, the sun stayed in its course, or the winds controlled. Thus, when Paul, as a prisoner, stood before Agrippa and Felix, the one confessed his convictions, the other trembled on the judgment-seat. Infidelity cannot account for these effects, while yet it cannot deny them. Every attempt to evade this evidence has signally failed. The facts stand forth confessed by all antiquity, proved by the consequences which have extended to our own times, preserved in the ancient monuments, which may still be inspected, and implicated, inseparably and for ever, with the history of the civilized world.

Not the power of the men.

It was, clearly, nothing in the men who advocated the cause, no power of fascination which they possessed, no sophistry to entangle the understanding, no baits to draw the hearts of the

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worldly and sensual. The men, in all respects, as men, were utterly powerless and inefficient against the formidable opposition of an unbelieving, idolatrous, or philosophic world. Yet they achieved the predicted results; they wrought effects equally wonderful to themselves and to those who were the subjects of them. How else, then, we ask, could this have been accomplished, and all in fulfilment of prophecy, but by the power of God? For if they had gone forth confiding in any human resources of wisdom, art, or magic, or pretended miracle, there was not a single article or instrument they could have employed, in which they were not sure to be outmatched by their enemies. But they continually disclaimed all reliance upon human powers, and affirmed that their sufficiency was of God, who had made them able ministers, by his Spirit which dwelt in them and girded them for their warfare. And is there not every reason to credit their statements, and convince us, that their own explanation of their success, is the only true one? No other can account for all the circumstances, no other can be rationally sustained.

Their own testimony.

"Human suasion," says Mr. Hall, "can ope-
"rate only on principles which already exist.
"When Demosthenes, by his powerful eloquence,
"excited the Athenians to combat, he only called
"into action, by a skilful grouping of motives,
"and an appropriate exercise of genius, principles
"already existing, but which had lain dormant.

"He created nothing new; he transformed them LECT. IX.
"not into new creatures; but only roused and
"stimulated those principles which had animated
"the bosoms of nations, in resisting tyranny, in
"every age. But when the apostles went forth
"to preach faith in Christ, they assumed and
"demanded, if I may so say, a state of things of
"which there had been no instance; they pro-
"posed to make a change in the mind and heart
"of man, to which there was no natural ten-
"dency; they required a creature dead in 'tres-
"passes and sins,' to awake to Christ; they
"proposed to convert him into a devoted servant,
"a subject most loyal, most affectionate, most
"ardent; and how was it possible that any mere
"human art or force could effect such changes
"as these."*

Ascribed their success to God.

The Apostles ascribed their success to the almighty power of God. Thus, in Ephesians chap. i. ver. 18, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know—what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe." Again, chap. ii. ver. 10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus." James i. 18, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." 1 Pet. i. 23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever;" and many similar scriptures,

* Hall's Works, vol. vi. p. 226.

LECT. IX. all attributing the success to that same power, which, at the first, made the light to shine out of darkness, and produced all the beauty and perfection of the natural world out of the confusion of chaos.

A power similar to creating energy.

It would be, as our Lord suggests, a singular and astounding sight, to see some of the stones of the ground rise up, and become both men and children of Abraham, at the utterance of certain words. Yet, similar to this, was the efficiency of the word, which, by the apostles, was preached unto men; and which made of those stones and clods, men and women worthy of being denominated the children of God, new creatures, living epistles of Christ, at once the wonder and the blessing of the age in which they lived.

Unparalleled effects.

But to turn the Pagan world to become Christian, is obviously no work of human power. Yet this did the preaching of the cross of Christ effect. "What a throwing down of temples, and "breaking of altars, and burning of images, and "cutting down of groves, and forsaking of "oracles was there,"* when the gospel did but come to the heart, by the ministry of these ignoble and despised apostles. These were triumphs which reason had never won; achievements which philosophy had never attempted; results which no human instrumentality could ever have accomplished. We behold idolatries of the longest standing, superstitions having the strongest and

* Fleming's Fulfilling of the Script. p. 261, fol.

deepest roots, customs and opinions venerable for age, and buttressed up by the most sacred forms of government and religion, protected by every known sanction, and every possible degree of authority which men could devise, intertwined with all the social relations, engraven upon the memory from infancy, and brought close to the heart, by being connected with all that is dear to man, as well as associated with all that is majestic, awful, and mysterious in the Deity, linked even with the skies, and emblazoned with the hope of immortality. Yet they all vanished like a dream, disappeared as at the magic touch of an enchanter, or crumbled into dust, or consumed as stubble before the lightning, and by nothing but the preaching of the gospel, accompanied by that divine influence to which these christian advocates appealed. We are constrained to infer, that this mighty transformation was effected by an unseen, sovereign power, a mighty influence which at once reached the heart, and inspired an instant hatred of all those forms of error and of evil which were once held most dear and sacred. That a single generation should witness such a transformation, and experience such clear and illustrious improvements, is indeed wonderful.

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Monuments of the facts remain.

Let it be observed, moreover, that no distance of time can bring these facts into question. The memorials remain in the writings of the heathen world, in the monuments of the nations subdued by the gospel, and in the pantheons which the

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gospel has overturned, but which are yet preserved in the classic page, as in a museum that can never perish, and where alone they now exist. It were irrational and unphilosophical to attribute such unparalleled effects to any thing but divine influence, co-operating with those simple, and, as they were deemed, foolish and contemptible means. It was evidently God that wrought by the word of his grace, and made it mighty, to pull down the strong holds of sin and Satan.

Only one doctrine produced these effects.

Moreover, it was only one identical doctrine that ever had this power. The doctrine of the cross of Christ exclusively effected these wondrous changes. Thus, it is evident, the kingdom of God came not in word, but in power. We see that this word, when it is applied to the heart by the energy of the Divine Spirit, has a self-evidencing light, a penetrating lustre that none can withstand, and which none can either withhold or impart. An invisible agency impressed the word upon their souls, as with a piercing and triumphant sunbeam. No human art, or skill, or power, could ever imitate or parallel the mighty, splendid, and unique effects of the gospel. A painter's art may imitate a flower, but its vitality, its fragrance, are only of God, the Sovereign Creator.

2. Divine influence essential to the continuance of Christianity.

2. But it is assumed in the gospel, that the supernatural means employed at the beginning of Christianity, would be necessary for its continuance and success in the world in every age, and that it would not be able to make a single

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convert without the distinct intervention of the divine aid. Moreover, that it would have, in its continued progress, to contend with the most formidable opposition, and yet that all would be vain; because it was intended for universal victory, and because the divine influence was pledged to attend it in all its course, and in every individual case.

Its continuance promised.

"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world," was the parting and significant assurance of its ascending Author; and "I will send unto you another Comforter, who shall abide with you for ever. When he is come he shall convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." Christ hereby promised his divine influence, the operation of his Spirit to the end of time, and to be always in and with his church, working by the truth, and with his ministers, to the conviction and renovation of the most inveterate enemies.

Does the history correspond?

We may, therefore, inquire, has there been any thing answerable to this in the subsequent history of the gospel? Surely this can hardly be doubted. There can be shown to have been a continued divine influence exerted on behalf of Christianity, manifested in its preservation and perpetual triumph. But the continuance of the effect argues the continuance of the cause. No other could account for the position which Christianity has attained at the present day. I do not mean simply in reference to external events, and the defeat of those schemes and efforts,

LECT. IX. directed towards its overthrow and extermination, which have been neither few nor small; nor do I refer chiefly to the manifest and remarkable over-ruling of all those schemes and efforts to its greater honour and success in the world. But I refer to that which constitutes the genuine success of Christianity; its only adequate result; the renovation of those who become its subjects; the production of its peculiar and genuine fruits, in the conversion of men from sin, and ignorance, and secularity, and their entire subjection to the love of God, and the power of a pure morality. And of these, assuredly, there has been a continued succession, an uninterrupted series, from generation to generation, down to the present time, in which they are, perhaps, as abundant, as striking and splendid, as in any former period. As the succession of human nature has been unbroken from the first date of its creation, so there has been a holy seed preserved to God, who have always been as the lights of the world, and salt of the earth; for, without this agency, we may readily conclude, that the race of believers must have become extinct, because the influence of the divine Spirit ceasing, or being withdrawn, the race must have expired. Yet no Christian, without the divine blessing, can make another man a Christian. It is not in human power to convert a sinner from the error of his ways; and of this there is ample and humbling proof, in the utter failure of all human means, in those cases

in which all have been employed in vain, as well LECT. IX.
as in the disappointment continually experienced in those cases in which we are most anxious to realize the consummation of our hopes and wishes. Would not every christian parent, if he were able, make his children real believers? But the constant disappointment of all our endeavours, in this respect, abundantly shows, that the happy result depends not altogether upon our power. Man cannot regenerate the soul. Nothing but divine influence is sufficient to accomplish this; for after we have used our utmost efforts for the attainment of this end, we see those who have enjoyed the best means continuing strangers to the operation of a divine power upon the heart, and destitute of those characteristics which it is the great end of the gospel to impress. But notwithstanding our experience of this humiliating fact, God does still preserve, and has preserved from the times of Christ and his apostles, a succession of true believers. He has divinely wrought their characters to a general and marked conformity to the divine standard. He has made them, in their day, the lights of the world, and blessings to their fellows, witnesses for God and truth in their generation, a holy, consecrated, and spiritually-minded people. There exists, at the present moment, a numerous body of such persons identified in faith, character and aim. Separate and scattered as they are through most countries, yet there is this peculiarity; they all recognize the grand general

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Testimony of experience.

Now either they are right in ascribing this moral change to divine influence, or the whole body, age after age, must be under a gross delusion; and all that they attribute to divine power must be the effect of human means, and capable of clear and full explanation, without the intervention of any agency, except that of man. But we conceive no objector to Christianity can prove this; or that, if he supposes he could, he would yet deny that it must be much for the benefit of mankind, if they could all be brought under the same agency, whatever it may be; and that if it is a delusion, it would be a most joyous thing to see all the world so deluded.

Opposed only by ignorance and inexperience.

But which are most likely to be wrong, those persons who have been the subjects of the change, who have had ample experience of the fact, and are fully conscious of all that has passed in their own hearts; or those opponents who have never undergone any such change, who evince a nature

altogether estranged from God and spiritual subjects, and who are utterly disqualified to form an accurate judgment in the case? Their ignorance and inexperience constitute no proof against the alleged facts, and deserve no consideration. Suppose two men witnessed an event at a given place; their testimony is positive. Though a thousand, who were not there, and did not see it, should stand forth, their testimony is nugatory, not contrary. It is no evidence at all. LECT. IX.

Illustration.

Suppose the fact of a beautiful garden, fully stored with every variety of plants, fruits, and flowers, suddenly produced in a place which all knew to be a desert, which had been often or long subjected to culture, but in which all human efforts had been unavailing to produce either verdure or fruitfulness. Would not the supposed effect, and its suddenness, under such circumstances, satisfy all that this could not be the work of a power less than that of an almighty Creator, to whom nothing is impossible? And if we really had the opportunity of seeing those productions, of tasting those fruits, and of subjecting them, in various ways, to the test of our senses, so that there could be no doubt concerning the reality of the effect, then we should have sufficient and convincing proof of the intervention of a power, at least, far transcending that of any human being. But not more so than we have frequently, in the changes which the gospel produces in the characters and hearts of men, and in the striking

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The same effects on various characters.

It is material to observe here, that Christianity is not restricted in its operations to the ignorant and the poor; it exhibits the same transforming efficiency among the wise; it wins its trophies proportionably among the philosophic, among the infidels, among those full of the confidence of learning and of human wisdom. All these classes frequently feel the renovating, subduing, and ennobling influence of the gospel, and are led in triumph by the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Yet there is nothing in human agency adequate to produce such effects. There is no such magic in mere human persuasion, mighty as it is; reason and philosophy cannot exhibit such transformations; and eloquence, with all its charms, cannot exorcise the demon of sin from the human breast. These agencies all fail and prove powerless against human depravity. Yet the effects of which we speak are of frequent occurrence, and by an instrumentality, so far as man is concerned, often the most weak and contemptible, and never such as to make it in any degree doubtful whether the honour of the result belongs most to man or to God.

3 Divine influence in individual cases.

3. The verification may be made, perhaps, more satisfactory, as it is made more minute and particular. We will, therefore, now proceed to offer some observations on individual cases. The sacred record affirms the necessity of such spiritual influence to render the truths of revelation effectual

to the production and maintenance, the maturity and conservation of the christian character, in every particular instance. The whole tenor of the book so represents the case. No man can be made a true Christian without this divine operation on the mind and heart; so that whatever may be said of the rational evidence of Christianity, and of the reasonableness, excellency, and purity of its truths and precepts, still the spiritual effect, in the character and heart of man, is represented as never produced without an agency of another and a higher kind. "Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God," and "ye must be born again," will suffice as specimens of the uniform testimony of revelation on this point. LECT. IX.

I am not now endeavouring to explain the doctrine, or to show its harmony with other doctrines, or with the general scheme of providence, or with human liberty. These are subjects closely related, but by no means necessary to be considered in the present argument. We are not treating of the philosophy of such mental phenomena, but of their reality. Our business is, first with the obvious testimony of the written word, and then with the fact, as a mere matter of human experience and consciousness.

Strength of the conviction.

Now, we think, every real Christian becomes sensible of a great change, more gradually or suddenly effected, which is strikingly contrasted with his natural or sinful state. His conscious-

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ness of life, of reason, of the former supremacy of evil over him, is not clearer or stronger than his present consciousness of a new and right principle of action. The power to act is the property of a living being, and the disposition to act sinfully is the characteristic of a fallen being; but the power and the disposition to act in all things wisely, righteously, and conscientiously, or in accordance with the will of God, revealed in his word, is the effect of a new, a supernatural, and a divine influence. This, at least, every real Christian feels and acknowledges. The very first, and most essential evidence of such a new and divine principle, is supreme love to God. This is the vital germ of a new life, and both its support and its development, in all the fruits of the Spirit, are felt to be as dependent upon the divine influence, in its production or first communication. Its operation is represented by terms and images, which imply, or express, its sovereignty and royalty. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure;" and, again, "the wind bloweth where it listeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The experience of those who are thus born, the experience of those who minister the gospel for the production of such results, and the consciousness of those who have heard and read the gospel, but never inwardly felt the renovating influence, all conspire to establish the statement.

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Evidence positive and negative.

There may be said to be evidence, both positive and negative, that the formation of the full christian character depends upon the promised divine agency. Those are frequently as fully convinced of this, who are utterly destitute of that influence, as those who have received it. They will confess the disinclination of their heart, and the resistance of their will; and that they feel as if no power in the universe could turn them, but that of their Creator. All this is further confirmed by the experience of those who have sustained the office of teachers of the gospel. They bear witness to the inefficiency of means alone, and to the success of them when the divine influence opens the heart, and accompanies the testimony. Without this power men may listen to the sound of the gospel, most faithfully preached, but their hearts will remain obdurate, their affections worldly, and their understandings entirely uninfluenced by the commanding realities of the christian system. A degree of theoretical knowledge, and some moral virtues, may be acquired by a religious education, or by a subjection to those good habits which Christianity enforces upon all; but this is found continually to exist without any commanding affection for the great Author of Christianity, or any conscious enjoyment of the spiritual blessings his religion confers. The heart may yet be dead to God and the interests of eternity; for nothing is more common than to see the forms of godliness separated from the

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power, and where the power is practically denied. Even the morality of the gospel may, in great measure, be disjoined from its spiritual enjoyments and privileges. We maintain, therefore, that all the peculiarity, all the distinctive qualities of the christian character and life, are hereby shown to depend on divine influence, and we think it ought to be inferred, that no such character can be produced, or ever is produced, without such influence; or even where there does not exist a full recognition of the actual operation of such an influence for the production of those peculiar qualities which constitute the genuine christian character.

Christianity apart from this influence powerless.

It is triumphantly asked by revelation, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye who are evil learn to do well." God clearly asserts to himself the exclusive power of renovating our nature, and the facts which still attend the history of the gospel seem fully to confirm its testimony upon this point, that, without the divine influence, Christianity itself, as a system of truth, is either powerless, or only partially and externally advantageous. It improves the manners and the habits, but it does not produce the spirit of love and of adoption, of self-dedication and sacrifice to the glory of God.

With it, effectual.

But where the new principle of spiritual life is imparted, there a change follows, which, for its peculiarity of character and completeness, is

denominated "a new creation." "Old things pass away; all things become new." There is a revelation made to the heart, which resembles the bestowment of a new faculty of sight or feeling, by which a new world seems to be opened to our perceptions. Every object is presented in a new light: feelings are awakened, the most deep and commanding, to which, before, the soul was a stranger; and yet these feelings, when they are awakened, appear the most reasonable and proper; in all respects congruous with the condition of mankind. Now these changes, varying, indeed, in their circumstances, but all most exactly identified in their results, take place, as before observed, upon all classes of persons. There is produced a certain agreement and harmony of character, which makes the individuals brought under this influence recognize each other as the subjects of a divine change, and causes them to sympathize together in all the peculiar emotions and exercises of the new state. Thus it is that they have an interchange of friendship peculiar to themselves, but possessing the same general characters through all ages, countries, and ranks; to a great degree, we admit, inexplicable and unintelligible to those who have had no such experience.

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Sovereignty of this influence.

It is, moreover, unquestionable, that these effects follow no particular kind of instrumentality, and cannot be infallibly secured, in any given case, whatever be the character of the

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means. Human foresight and human wishes can never ensure the result upon others; it is mysteriously connected with the sovereignty of God, and the free agency of the individual, in whose case it is either given or withheld. So that where man may most desire these influences, and most devoutly labour to call them down, they are yet sometimes withheld; and where least expected, they are often copiously bestowed. Even where, at first, appearances are hopeful and promising, a disappointment frequently ensues; and, in cases where there seemed to be no human probability of a propitious issue to our exertions, there is frequently witnessed, in the most ample and palpable degrees, the mighty and benignant workings of the gracious Spirit.

Revelation asserts it.

The sacred record every where ascribes this great change to a divine influence, and it is manifest, in fact, that it is so: for we find persons constantly falling under the power of God's word whom we never expected to see so subdued, and concerning whom we could have augured nothing so desirable and felicitous; while others, who have had ample opportunities, and the selectest means, remain in a state of impiety, obduracy, and vice; and some, too, are seen departing out of this life, without having consciously felt what the word represents as the genuine and necessary effect of the divine influence in the heart.

Experience on this point corresponds.

How, then, is it possible to doubt the reality and efficiency of this operation, when we continually witness the most decisive illustrations of all that the Bible asserts on these points. Individuals, subdued under the touch and the power of conviction, they know not how, perhaps suddenly arrested by a single sentiment of scripture, or by the ministry of the word, and thrown into a state of alarm and self-condemnation, for which they find no palliative, and which cannot be relieved by any human considerations, but which the doctrines and promises of the divine word alone seem to meet and relieve. They may, at first, try their old amusements, or their habitual sins; but the relish is gone; all are embittered: or their old friends may endeavour to rally their spirits, and persuade them that they are only the dupes of their imagination, or have been imposed upon by fanaticism, or have suddenly and casually sunk into a fit of melancholy, which time and change of scene will remove; but it all proves conspicuously in vain; the authority of God has taken fast hold of their understanding and conscience; their imagination is filled with no unreasonable terror; they try to escape from their fears and griefs, but it is quite impossible. The impressions remain; the seeds are vital. They have taken root in nature. The word of God has revealed truths of the clearest evidence and deepest interest, and these have made indelible impressions; hence their fears, instead of being dissipated, rise higher, and their minds, instead of recovering their wonted indifference

LECT. IX. to divine things, become increasingly like a troubled sea. Their resistance to the force of conviction, and the striving of the *secret* power of God, is fruitless, and at length they are constrained to yield, and submit themselves to the prescribed, though hitherto despised and hated doctrine; and so, falling on their knees in the deepest penitence, they invoke the divine mercy. At length they perceive the authority, the beauty, the adaptation of the whole gospel scheme to their particular case and experience. They may continue for weeks and months, or sometimes for years, passing through this process, before the distress of their mind, or the violence of their convictions, yields to the consoling doctrine of forgiveness. But at length, by continued prayer, attention to the Scriptures, and belief of the gospel, they are led to such views of the Saviour, as effectually remove and suppress both their fears and their sins: the promises inspire hope, and induce them to indulge a full confidence in final acceptance.

All this is terminated by an entire change in the character and habits, approximating gradually to the standard of gospel-purity. They thence begin to pursue a new course of life, conforming themselves, as by an inward, constraining influence, to practices which, before, they disapproved and disliked, and most ardently cherishing views and principles which formerly were either unknown or hated, and taking a view of life, its

ends and uses, altogether the reverse of that which previously engaged them. LECT. IX

Multiplicity and variety of the cases.

Now these are not rare cases, nor such as can, by any possibility, be attributed to delusion, to the effect of imagination, or of an unsound state of mind. They cannot be denied or explained away; but are obviously the effect of a most powerful, wonderful, and peculiar cause; since the instances are so numerous, and are to be met with among all classes and professions, among those most fortified by reason, philosophy, and learning, against any sudden or fanatical notions, and whose change evinces a power above nature, and which no one could either have foreseen or exerted, but a Being of infinite wisdom and power.

Admitted excellence of the results.

It is, moreover, quite certain, that the highest character of which human nature, in any state, is susceptible, the most lovely form which can be impressed upon it, is that of the true Christian. A human soul most entirely devoted to the influence of the truth of God's word, and most thoroughly transformed into its spirit and practice, surely all must agree, would be the most perfect specimen of humanity, and such as, undoubtedly, all ought to hail and wish to see universally exhibited. Nothing could be desired or effected among mankind more felicitous, more attractive, more nearly approaching to our ideas of the excellence of which man might be supposed susceptible in his best and most perfect state, than the entire personification of Christianity in a human being.

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Some deficiency, though admitted, will not invalidate the general fact.

It may, without invalidating our argument, be conceded, that the Christianity of multitudes is far from approaching this high standard. Their deficiency, however, neither supplies ground for an impeachment of Christianity, nor for the rejection of that argument which rests upon the general efficiency of the gospel, as a system of moral renovation. It is surely enough, for the vindication of Christianity, to show, that a change the most entire, the most propitious, in reference to others, and the most happy for the individual himself, does take place upon those who are conscious of being brought under a divine influence, in connexion with the gospel; a change far surpassing what our nature can attain, or ever does attain, in any other way, or under any other influence.

For man, under this supposed power of the Divine Spirit, becomes uniformly obedient, submissive, reverential, and devout towards God. He justly estimates his own spiritual and eternal interests; he forsakes whatever, in habit or practice, is degrading or polluting to the mind; and appears, on the other hand, a cultivator of the

highest virtues, both personal and relative. He LECT. IX. becomes, in numberless instances, a devoted friend to his fellow-men, a patron of benevolent projects; for the promotion of which he is ready to practice self-denial, and forego his own interest, ease, and gratification; stands prepared to sacrifice his comforts, or even himself, that he may promote the highest interest of others.

The influence uniformly beneficial.

Now these are actual proofs, every where observable, of the transforming and renovating influence accompanying Christianity, which cannot be substantially denied; and, considering the immense multitude of instances in which they occur, the great variety of personal character and circumstances under which they are produced, afford, in the identity of the results, a most satisfactory and striking verification of the divine word. The production of such effects upon human nature, evinces, at once, the presence of a divine power, and thereby demonstrates the divinity of that book, which before-hand describes them, and assures us, that only by the exertion of such a power can they ever be produced.

The doctrine liable to abuse.

It may be true, that the doctrine of divine influence we have been considering, is liable to abuse, to mistake, to fanaticism. But so is every doctrine of the Bible. The true cause of such abuse, is to be found in the weakness and wickedness of human nature. It is very certain, and readily admitted, that many have run into the wildest extremes, and attributed the folly and

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infirmity of man to the Spirit of God. Some have presumed to possess and feel this influence, whose lives have done it no honour, and whose works bear no seal of the unrivalled excellence of divine virtue. Some, in modern times, have pretended to extraordinary influences; as if God had granted *them* special signs and special authority, not imparted to the rest of his people. But the Spirit is to be known or discriminated only by its fruits; these are always peculiar, inimitable, and good. Divine influence is not given for ostentation, not for mere wonderment, not for man's honour, but for God's. Its operation uniformly tends to humble us, and to exalt the eternal and immutable source of all goodness and purity. The doctrine itself must not be charged with the follies and vices of men who profess to hold it. Let not the truth and mystery of God himself be made answerable for the extravagances of the weak, or the impositions of the crafty. We are quite sure that these are all broadly enough distinguished from the pure and genuine influence of divine grace upon the mind, if men are only concerned to discriminate. The real operations of the Spirit produce love, joy, peace, long-suffering, temperance, and such like. If these effects do not follow, all such pretensions are proved to be vain and false. We may be quite certain, that God will never allow his selectest operations to be counterfeited by man; and we are equally sure, that his influence is

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never bestowed without the accompanying seal to distinguish it from the effects of human artifice or passion. There is, throughout nature, a clear and recognisable signature upon all the works of creative power and skill, which never has been, and we may safely say, never will be, counterfeited. God will not permit a creature to be mistaken for himself, nor suffer his own works to be rivalled, or his glory to be given to another.

Connexion with human agency.

It seems only further necessary to remark, that there is, to a certain extent, a connexion between the bestowment of divine influence and our own agency, especially that which we employ in prayer. The doctrine of Scripture teaches, that God gives his Spirit in answer to our petitions. While, however, there is in this fact much to encourage human exertion, there is also something to confound and humble our pride; because we cannot explain why it is that prayer does not always succeed in procuring it. We may, as our last resource, resolve this into the sovereignty of God; but there may be reasons in ourselves which involve a forfeiture of our claim; for the divine word must be unimpeachable, which says, "ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find."

Especially with preaching.

It may not be deemed irrelevant further to observe, in reference to the preaching of the gospel, that this, as a divine institution, is found to be so intimately connected with the bestowment of divine influence, that it may be said to be the chief instrumentality by which God savingly

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works upon the minds of men. "I create the fruit of the lips," says Jehovah. And it is confessedly his blessing which has made the preaching of the gospel, in the history of the church, the means of promoting his own glory, and of saving the souls of men. This, which is esteemed foolishness with men, is the wisdom and power of God to salvation. How wonderful have been its general effects, and how striking the especial instances of its efficacy, as in times of the signal revival of religion, many of which have been witnessed in this country and elsewhere! These surely contain proofs, now and then granted, out of the ordinary course, and above the ordinary measure, of the Divine Spirit's power, and, at the same time, equally valid proofs of his sovereignty in its exercise.

Prospect of Christianity in connexion with a more copious effusion.

It is to this divine influence, promised and pledged, as they conceive, in a more copious effusion, that Christians are now looking for the final victory to be won by their religion. "The whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord." It was this influence which at first shook heathenism to its very base, and overturned the altars of the ancient idolatry. The names of Jupiter, Venus, Apollo, and Diana soon sunk into universal contempt and execration. But what was it that effected the mighty change? It was not philosophy, it was not education, it was not legislation, but it was Christianity, and Christianity propagated by a company of the meanest,

most ignoble, and defenceless of mankind; yet accompanied by the power of God. And so that same Christianity, accompanied by that same divine influence, in the days yet to come, is destined to work the overthrow and desolation of all the remaining superstitions of the earth, until the worship of the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent, shall become the religion, and the only religion of mankind. LECT. IX.

CONCLUSION.

Importance of the whole subject.

In closing the present course of Lectures, I may be permitted to remind every thoughtful and candid inquirer, that, upon the authentication of the sacred Scriptures, as the word of God, our entire hope of immortal life is suspended. The final question is not between the belief of this book, and some other, equally or nearly as good; nor between this religion and any other that may present rival claims, and rival hopes, but between the faith of the Bible and infidelity, which is, literally, *no faith, no hope.* If this religion cannot be proved true, no other can. The ultimate choice, therefore, which all must make, will be between the Bible and the some difficulties which may yet attach to it; or the no-creed of infidelity, attended by the same and still greater difficulties; a scheme of disbelief, which is contradicted and

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stultified by nature, by history, and by consciousness at every step.

Superiority of a Christian's belief.

There cannot be a doubt, that the belief of a Christian is more noble, more elevating, and more felicitous than any other belief or disbelief. Even the sceptic must admit as much as this. Every one, therefore, ought, above all things, to *desire* that the Bible may be found true. His highest interest, the true dignity of his rational nature, is implicated with it. Prove it true, and he becomes a candidate for a blissful immortality; prove it false, or suffer one radical doubt to prevail, and he sinks down into a mere reasoning animal, with no end in view worthy of his high endowments, and no prospect answerable, either to his moral and religious nature, or to the station he occupies as the head of this lower creation, and as subject exclusively and directly to the Supreme Lord of all.

Permit me to say, it will prove an exhilarating issue to our present inquiries, if you have been convinced that the Bible has kept pace with the flight of time; if it has been made to appear, that the sacred word still maintains its position, parallel with the advance of science; and if we have succeeded in showing, that it is a divine timepiece, harmonizing strictly with the true shadow upon the dial.

Christians deeply concerned in the fulfilment of Scripture.

Let me especially remind the christian believer, that he is most deeply concerned in the fulfilment of Scripture. All his anticipations are involved

in its yet unfulfilled promises. It is, therefore, LECT. IX. a matter of infinite moment with him, to enjoy a valid guarantee, that he has not believed a cunningly devised fable; and this guarantee, we conceive, he possesses, and may find in so much of the sacred word as is already fulfilled. It is unspeakably important, that he should perceive the laws of his own nature, the facts of his physical and moral condition, and of the whole visible system with which he is connected, working the accomplishment of revelation, and all converging as lines to a centre, and that centre, the glory and the truth of the sacred volume.

The highest end of all things.

Surely we do not exaggerate, when we represent the fulfilment of the Scriptures, as connected with the highest end to which all things created, organic and inorganic, mental and moral, material and spiritual, can be subordinated. To view them as terminating or issuing in any thing short of this, is, at least, immensely to diminish their importance, and detract from their sublimity. The maintenance of the laws of nature, simply as laws of nature, without any ascending reference, or merely as tending to the conservation of the human race, without connecting that race, so conserved, with a system of moral government, and that moral government again, with the revealed will of God, and a future state of retribution, were, after all, but to attribute a very inferior, and virtually an abortive or vanishing conception to the Infinite Being; a conception

LECT. IX. incomparably less sublime, and less worthy the Supreme Intelligence than that which brings the three systems, the physical, the moral, and the revealed, into one focus—into the identity of a common authorship. The maintenance of the two former of these systems, merely as restricted to the continuance of the human race in this world, is infinitely less important, than their maintenance as essential to the consummation of a system of things and beings, on which are suspended the solemn and sublime results represented in the sacred Scripture. It is, in the one view, a matter of little moment to any of us, whether we continue to live an hour longer, whether the sun continues to shine another day, the clouds to rain upon the earth, and the earth to bring forth its harvests; whether our powers of thought remain in exercise, or henceforth become enfeebled, confounded, and extinguished. Even as it regards the whole human race, if we have no permanent relation to God, and a future state of existence, or, in other words, if the Bible be not true, it is a matter of comparative insignificance, vast as the catastrophe would be, whether the frame of nature should endure, as it now is, and our race continue to live another year, or another thousand years, or the whole system be at once dissolved. Its instant termination might then be supposed possible, without involving any absurdity, any injustice, any failure of purpose, or any unfaithfulness in the Supreme Being.

But the other view of the subject involves the most beneficent and sublime considerations. The fulfilment of God's "word, that has gone forth out of his mouth," is a matter of infinite concernment, both to us and to himself. It is so to *God*, as implicating all his higher attributes; it is so to *us*, as involving our future destiny. Whatever he has spoken is essentially, necessarily, and for ever *true*. It must be verified, whether it refers to what has been, is now, or is to be hereafter. The succession of time, and the disclosures of eternity, can only subserve its elucidation and fulfilment. There cannot appear, therefore, any higher or more sublime reason for the existence and maintenance of the material, intellectual, and moral systems, than this. "Not one jot or tittle shall pass from the law, till all is fulfilled." The written word sufficiently attests the importance of its fulfilment, and boldly rests its veracity and divinity upon this single test. It is emphatically declared, "the Scripture cannot be broken." The universe is represented as merely a theatre for the development of the divine conceptions, and this earth but a temporary stage, on which the truth of God's word is perpetually demonstrated. Time and nature, with all their vast and minute, all their complicated and delicate machinery, while they obviously subserve immediate and subordinate ends, are yet just as obviously directed to the fulfilment of the divine word, as their highest and most sublime consummation. LECT. IX.

LECT. IX. Thus there would appear to be an *ascending reference*, and a true sublimity in the whole system of things with which we are connected. The procedure of Providence, through all past ages, is represented as uniformly tending to this exalted and momentous issue. Christians believe, that the kingdoms of this world have been turned upside down, the loftiest of mortals abased, and the meanest exalted;—the elements made to change their nature, time commissioned to suspend his flight, and the sun to stay its course; in fact, they believe every thing has been made tributary, and that in the most remarkable manner, when deemed necessary, for the fulfilment of the divine word. For the same end, they believe the ordinary procedure of things is still preserved, and all nature continues its course. Both the order and the disorder, the law, and the miraculous exceptions, have alike been made to effect this object; and thus, we infer, it must be, till the whole word of God is accomplished.

It will not, perhaps, be presuming too much, to express a hope, that the course of reasoning here pursued, may have proved tributary, in some degree, to your faith in these grand truths. We, as Christians, have embarked in this vessel, with all our interests, fully confiding in its trustworthiness, and hoping, by its aid, to reach the haven of eternal rest. We have all to gain, or all to lose, by the truth or falsehood of those propositions which the sacred word lays down. The

question, is the Bible true, or is it false? is the hinging point of all our brightest hopes. Is it fulfilling, or is it disproved by the advancing history of human nature and the Universe? Does time confirm or refute its decisions and statements? Does science illustrate the truth of this book, or convict it of fraud, folly, or mistake? These are questions in which, not only Christians, but all men, are deeply interested; and which, to a certain extent, all may become qualified to answer for themselves. LECT. IX. All men concerned in this question.

It is quite impossible, that the coincidences between the words of scripture, and the facts we have reviewed, should have been the result of artifice or imposture; or, indeed, of any thing but truth. These verifications are altogether far too numerous, too complicated, too specific and minute, extending over too vast a lapse of time, and involving too great a variety of subjects, to allow of their being explained, on any hypothesis that excludes inspiration. We have, I hope, shown, that they could not be happy guesses; that they could not be forgeries; that they cannot be attributed to philosophy or human wisdom, or any shrewd calculation of probabilities. Every conclusion to the whole case seems to be precluded, except that which fully recognizes divine inspiration. The verifications examined exclude imposture.

This general inference is additionally confirmed by the concurrent testimony of the various other christian evidences. For it is to be distinctly Confirmed by connexion with the other evidences.

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borne in mind, in terminating the present course of Lectures, that we have dwelt exclusively upon a single branch of the great subject. We are anxious, in closing the subject, to remind you, that this argument is to be united with the more direct evidences, and by no means to be considered separately, or as a summary of the whole. The result of the distinct reasonings here employed, whatever it may be, has to be harmonized and aggregated with the other arguments, which are usually stated in treatises upon the whole subject. If this argument be not viewed in connexion with the main body of the external and internal evidences, your estimate of its value will be incomplete and erroneous. It has, so to speak, yet to be *carried to account*. There is a concentrated and accumulated force in the sum of all the evidences, taken together, which they lose when separated and considered at intervals. To divide them is to do them injustice. They are all united in their subject. A series of circumstantial evidences which, taken unconnectedly, would appear trivial, become irresistible when combined. In a court of justice, one advocate may press one circumstance, a second may dwell upon another. But the jurymen must not distribute their attention, and each take up a different circumstance. Every juror, to give a true verdict, must endeavour to comprehend the bearings of the whole series of proofs.

The whole mass of evi-

It is this accumulative and concurrent testi-

mony of the whole evidence, on behalf of revela- LECT. IX.

dence must be met by sceptics.

tion, upon which we lay especial stress. If a sceptic should think one isolated argument weak or insufficient, so may the jurymen think a single fact by itself; yet taken in connexion with a series of others, it might effectually turn the scale, and remove all doubt. We, therefore, protest against estimating the value of any arguments in this case separately. If an army were to be brought before the enemy, regiment by regiment, man by man, victory would be no difficult achievement. But a skilful general would not allow himself to be thus beaten in detail. An unbeliever may think this or that argument weak, when taken alone; and this is the usual method in which the christian evidence is treated by such persons. Another thinks there may be some force in one proof, but finds a flaw in a second. Few have ever been found willing to meet the whole array. Yet upon no other ground can the christian evidence be fairly dealt with. In no other way can the unbeliever stand excused of dishonesty, even *to himself*. This is a matter for his own conscience; and in parting with him at this point, we place him in the presence of that light which will ultimately render all concealment impossible, and convince him that all dishonesty was criminal.

Ultimate object of the argument.

I have attempted in these Lectures an argument, upon the ground of fact and reason, to show the truth of revelation; but the conviction

LECT. IX. aimed at, if produced, will only be introductory to a higher purpose. Our speculative conviction is not to be regarded as the ultimate end of revelation. Faith in the truth must ripen into piety and virtue. Then the excellence of revealed religion will be understood, because it will be felt. Its secret seal upon the heart will, after all, be its best voucher. Happy, however, will the author of the present attempt consider himself, if his labours serve to remove, in however small a degree, the difficulties of any who rationally doubt, or to confirm the faith of any who sincerely believe.

THE END.

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