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TRUTH FRAE 'MANG THE HEATHER:

A PRIZE ESSAY

ON THE

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY WILLIAM M'CAW,
SHEPHERD.

The noblest friendship ever shown
The Saviour's history makes known,
Though some have turned and turned it.
And, whether being crazed or blind,
Or seeking with a biased mind,
Have not, it seems, discerned it —COWPER.

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MDCCCLVI.



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TO

JOHN P. TROTTER, Esq.,

SHERIFF-SUBSTITUTE OF DUMFRIESSHIRE,
AND PRESIDENT OF THE THORNHILL INSTITUTE,

This Essay

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY THE COMMITTEE OF THE
THORNHILL INSTITUTE.

NOTE.

THE following were the terms of competition for the essays on the Evidences of Christianity:—‘The essays to be sent to the Secretary of the Thornhill Institute, Mr Robt. Brown, on or before 30th Jan. 1855, to be inscribed with a motto, corresponding with a motto on a sealed letter, containing a declaration in the competitor’s own hand-writing that the essay is *bona fide* his own production, excepting quotations that he has marked as such; to this declaration, his signature to be appended. None of the sealed letters will be opened, excepting the one corresponding with the successful essay. The successful essay to be the property of the Institute, and at the disposal of its Committee.

The Committee of the Institute submitted the essays received to William M’Dowal, Esq., editor of the ‘Dumfries and Galloway Standard,’ to be judged by him; and the essay which is now published under the title of ‘*Truth frae ’mang the Heather,*’ having been judged to be the successful essay, and the terms of the competition having been fully observed, the prize which had been offered by Sheriff Trotter, through the Institute, was awarded to its author, Mr William M’Caw, shepherd, Cormilligan, Tynron.

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE following pages were written in connection with the Thornhill Institute. Several prizes were offered by the Institute and its friends for Essays, &c. ; and among others a prize by Sheriff Trotter for the best Essay on 'The Evidences of Christianity.' A list of the subjects for which prizes were offered, was sent me by Dr T. B. Grierson, Vice President of the Institute, with the request that I would become a competitor. An Essay on the above subject was commenced, not with the least intention of competition, but with a view to self-improvement ; expecting that the subject would receive the attention of ministers and others qualified to do it justice, and judging that on my part it would evince presumption rather than good sense, to attempt competition in these circumstances. Being assured by the doctor that there would be no such opposition, and urged to compete, the Essay was sent in.

The eye of the critic will, no doubt, easily detect a number of defects ; but consent is given to its publication in the hope that it may be interesting, and even edifying, to some among the working classes of society, to have a kind of summary of the leading ' Evidences ' of our most holy faith presented to their view, by one whose educational attainments are on a level with their own. There are many who have no time to read the elaborate productions of Paley and Chalmers, &c., and more who, like the writer, have not the necessary education to master much that is found in the works of these authors. To such this Essay may be of some use, and if so, it is enough. The author calculates with confidence on being spared the criticisms of the learned.

W. M'CAW.

Cormilligan, Tynron, Feb. 1856.

A N E S S A Y

ON THE

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

IN essaying to write on the evidences of Christianity, it does not seem necessary to enter into any lengthened explanation of what Christianity is. Yet for the sake of order, it may not be out of place briefly to premise, that Christianity is a belief in, and an experience and practice according to, that system of doctrines and precepts taught and enjoined by the prophets and apostles, and Jesus Christ himself as the chief corner stone; and found at large in the books of the Old and New Testaments. The leading features of that system may be indicated by the following sentences:—‘God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.’ The substance of the communications thus delivered to us from God are :

—That 'God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions'—That 'God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life'—That 'He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained'—That 'the wicked shall be turned into hell'—That 'they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.'

In these few extracts we have the doctrines that there is a God, and that he has given us a revelation, pointing man to his sin and his Saviour, his desert and his danger, his help and his hope. And now the question proposed is:—Are these things so? Are these facts or fancies—the imaginations of men's minds—or stern realities that have been and shall be verified?

Such a question, obviously, is not to be treated with indifference. It has occupied the minds of the most profound thinkers and the most accomplished scholars. The great and the good have embraced Christianity; and it is neither to be denied nor forgotten that talent and learning have been arrayed against her. Nor is it a question for the learned only; it involves a point of the highest moment for every human being. And it is a presumption in Christianity's favour, that she is adapted to talent in all its grades, and learning in all its degrees. She is profound enough for the great-

est thinker, and plain enough for the weakest mind. Her evidences may be so obscure, that many have died rejecting her, and so clear and strong, that multitudes more have died in her defence. True or false, her effects are wonderful. Give her full possession of your heart, and she will teach you to exclaim—'Oh death, where is thy sting!' She endows the believer with a calmness and a confidence in life's last struggle, that tempt her enemies to exclaim, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.'

From these remarks it will appear that we regard the question as one of supreme importance; and we now proceed to inquire into a few of the facts supplied by history and philosophy, on which Christianity rests her claim to be regarded as a system of truth—the only religion revealed from heaven.

First, Christianity teaches that there is one Almighty Being, who made the universe, fills it, and presides over it—in other words, that there is a God. This is *the* grand fundamental point in all religion; but it is a point which various writers, from Moses downward, have assumed rather than argued. Satisfied that 'the heavens declare his glory, and the firmament showeth his handywork,' they have set themselves at once to the record of facts, and the elucidation of principles. Whether their theme was the laws of nature, or the history of nations, at every step of their progress, facts have been accumulated in proof of the point assumed. The

philosopher looks abroad upon nature, and tells us that marks of design are everywhere distinctly visible. The astronomer scans the starry heavens, and when he observes the distances, motions, and magnitudes of these orbs of light, he is struck with wonder and amazement, and concludes that nothing short of some Being possessed of power, wisdom, and goodness, could contrive, and set in motion these glorious orbs. And when he beholds their influence upon our earth, that the moon, though at the distance of two hundred and forty thousand miles, raises tides in the ocean and currents in the atmosphere; that the sun though at the prodigious distance of ninety-five millions of miles, raises vapour, moves the ocean, directs the course of the winds, fructifies the earth, and distributes light, and heat, and colour, through every region of the globe,—when he beholds these and a thousand other wonders, he scarcely waits to inquire whether it were possible that such magnificent machinery, contrived with such exquisite skill, could possibly exist without an Almighty and All-wise Designer, but gives vent at once to the emotions of his mind, exclaiming,—“Thine, O Lord is the greatness, and the glory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine. Thou art great and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone. Let all the earth fear the Lord, let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him: for he spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast.” *

* Dr Dick.

The natural historian gives us a description of all the known facts in the material universe ; and he tells us of marks of design, power, wisdom, and goodness, in every object that comes within the range of his observation. In the rain, the breeze, the fountains and streams of water : in the reflecting cloud, and the thunder's roar, the lightning's flash, and in the storm and whirlwind : in the nature and growth of plants, and in their adaptation to the purposes for which man requires them : in the song of birds, in the buzz of insects, and in the instinct and docility of animals. All these he contemplates, and he finds that his reason will no more allow him to deny the existence of a God that made them, than to affirm that the habitation in which he lives must have built itself, or that its various articles of furniture are the accidents of chance.

When the student of physiology contemplates the human frame it excites his astonishment and admiration. 'What an immense multiplicity of machinery must be in action,' says Dr Dick, 'to enable us to breathe, to feel, and to walk ! Hundreds of bones of diversified forms, connected together by various modes of articulation ; hundreds of muscles to produce motion, each of them acting in at least ten different capacities ; hundreds of tendons and ligaments to connect the bones and muscles ; hundreds of arteries to convey the blood to the remotest part of the system ; hundreds of veins to bring it back to its reservoir in the heart ; thousands of glands secreting humours of various kinds from the

blood ; thousands of lacteal and lymphatic tubes absorbing and conveying nutriment to the circulating fluid ; millions of pores through which the perspiration is continually issuing, an infinity of ramifications of nerves diffusing sensation throughout all the parts of this exquisite machine, and the heart at every pulsation exerting a force of a hundred thousand pounds, in order to preserve all this complicated machinery in constant operation ! The whole of the vast system of mechanism must be in action before we can walk across our apartments ! We admire the operation of a steam engine, and the force it exerts. But, though it is constructed of the hardest materials which the mines can supply, in a few months, some of its essential parts are worn and deranged, even although its action should be frequently discontinued. But the animal machine, though constructed, for the most part, of the softest and most flabby substances, can go on without intermission in all its diversified movements, by night and by day, for the space of eighty or a hundred years ! the heart giving ninety-six thousand strokes every twenty-four hours, and the whole mass of blood rushing through a thousand pipes of all sizes every four minutes ! And is it *man* that governs these nice and complicated movements ? Did *he* set the heart in motion, or endue it with the muscular force it exists ? And when it has ceased to beat, can *he* command it again to resume its functions ? Man knows neither the secret springs of the machinery within him, nor

the half of the purposes for which they serve, or the movements they perform. Can anything more strikingly demonstrate our dependence every moment on a superior agent, and that it is in God we live and move and have our being? *

Thus it is, that, whether we contemplate the heavens above, or the earth beneath, or the wonderful construction of our own bodies, we behold everywhere marks of *design*: and the mind by a natural instinct, rises up from design to a designer—from exquisite contrivance to a most skilful contriver. And who is this but the God of Christianity? If we ask the atheist, who made the universe, with its parts so admirably adapted to each other; and who preserves in harmony its innumerable movements? we may suppose him to reply in one of two ways. Either he may tell us it was nature, or that he does not know. If he confess his ignorance, and tell us he knows not; then we may ask him if he knows of any combination of materials beneath man, and over which he has the mastery, so constructed and adapted to each other, as to afford shelter from the blast, protection from the cold, facilitate his movements from place to place, indicate the lesser divisions of time, or aid him in the acquisition of knowledge, and does not know that these are the result of design—the workmanship of men's hands? All contrivances of which men are capable, at once convey the mind to a contriver; and it would be refusing reason her proper exercise, not to admit of a contriver, for

* Christian Philosopher, page 450.

these infinitely more wonderful contrivances which are above his reach. Many of the works of scientific men are far beyond the reach of the vulgar crowd ; and are perhaps as much a wonder to the ignorant as is the mechanism of the starry heavens to the profound philosopher. But yet they neither think of denying nor doubting that the wonders they behold are the result of superior skill. And when we see men of learning either denying or doubting the existence of the maker of the teeming wonders which are beheld in the kingdom of nature, viewed as a whole or in separate parts, we are led to suppose that they are not guided by reason, but by a heart-aversion to arrive at the conclusion to which reason, unrestrained, could scarcely fail to lead them.

It is not supposition, but fact, that wherever there is design, reason says there must have been a designer. There are contrivances beneath man, that is, of which he is capable, the honour of which we readily accord to him ; and there are contrivances above man, and of which he is no more capable than to be the architect of his own body or the designer of his own designing faculty. And it would be the height of irrationality, to admit of a designer where the design is less skilful, and then infer from the grandeur of the design, that there could not be a designer at all. The mind, by a natural process, rises up from effect to cause—from design to a designer, till she rests in a great first cause. It has, indeed, been objected against this line of

argument that, 'if design implies a designer, contrivance a contriver, nature's contriver himself must have been contrived.' But this assumes that the author of nature has marks of design in himself. Now it must be observed, that the argument from design is drawn chiefly from material things, and carries us just so far and no farther than marks of design can be discerned. It raises us from a man's work to a man's *will*; but it does not carry us beyond that will for the cause of the man's performances. When we contemplate a machine, composed of material substances, so formed and adapted to each other as to produce motion, or contribute to any useful purpose, we feel quite sure that these substances did not so form and collocate themselves as to produce this result. We say at once, 'This is the result of *mind* and *will*.' We cannot find a cause sufficient to produce the machine till we go to the *will* of him that made it. But when we go there we are satisfied, and never think of seeking a cause beyond it, for there is nothing in the line of argument making it necessary that we should. There is nothing about the will of man, considered by itself, to suggest the necessity of a higher will, but the fact that its power is limited. It is an absolute sovereign within the range of its own limits. It wills to do, or it wills not to do, just as itself determines. It is on the recognition of this fact that we maintain the doctrine of responsibility. Now if this is true in regard to the will of man, it is also true in regard to the will of man's architect. As we

cannot rationally go beyond the will of man for the cause of *his* works, so we cannot with any reason go beyond the will of God for the cause of *his*. There is a necessity for reasoning from man to a will above his, because he has a wonderfully contrived body, in conjunction with a wonderfully skilful mind, yet not sufficiently skilful to contrive what obviously has been contrived—his own body. But we know of no such necessity for arguing from God to a will above his. We may be told, that if there is thus evidence of a *will* that has willed man into being, there may be another will above that, by which in like manner the will that made man has been brought into being. But this is at most a *may be*, there is nothing in the argument, when we reason from design to a designer, which implies that it *must be*. And there is something in the supposition so absurd, that the mind refuses it. It is the exploded idea of an endless succession of causes—a chain of infinity, on which the mind may go out a certain length, but, like the dove on the surface of the deluged earth, she can find no resting-place till she return and repose in a great first cause which we call *God*.

But the atheist has yet an alternative. Perhaps his reply is, that all things exist by the laws of *nature*: and, admiring his goddess he may apostrophize her thus:—

' Nature ! Parent of all ! whose ceaseless hand,
Rolls on the seasons in their endless course ;
How mighty ! how majestic ! are thy works !'

But then we ask who is this Nature? What

is it, or what has it done? We have a right to press this question; for if nature is nothing, and has done nothing, then we have nothing to say to it. But if it is the author of the astonishing grandeur with which the universe is adorned, then how is it distinguished from the God ~~which~~ ^{whom} we worship? Though it should be conceded that *matter*, with all its properties and laws, may have been eternal; it is in its essential character inert, and has neither power to produce *life*, nor mind to produce *order*. It is an old way of arguing not easily gainsaid, that whatever can *produce* life must *have* life, and whatever can produce order must be possessed of skill. Now the universe abounds both with life and order, and we say to the atheist, If your nature is the living, loving, ruling, judging, skilful deity, who planned and executed this gorgeous structure, then he is our God; only called by another name. But if you set up a blind and dumb and deaf creation, with a crown upon its head, in the room of Him who is, and was, and is to be — the living Jehovah, then our own spirits, though clothed in perishable dust, are far superior to such a being, and reason withholds from it her reverence, and the heart its love.

Thus reason recoils from all the shifts of atheism; so much so, that some have supposed that a thoroughly confirmed atheist does not exist. How this may be we know not; but we think this much at least is true, that there can be no such thing, till the voice of reason is

silenced by a hardened heart and a seared conscience.

If the existence of a supreme being is clearly demonstrated by the facts of science, it is equally so by the facts of history. Moses tells us in plain language, that 'God created the heavens and the earth:' that he arranged the mechanism of the whole, and peopled the earth, the air, and the sea, with their various tribes of inhabitants. He records various particulars respecting the formation of the first pair, from whom the nations of the earth have sprung. He records, moreover, that God instructed Noah to build an ark by which he and his family were saved, when a deluge of water overflowed the earth, and destroyed the remainder of mankind—that he called Abraham by name and held converse with him in many instances—that by a wonderful providence he brought the posterity of that patriarch down to Egypt; and by still greater wonders, delivered them again, at the time appointed, from the tyranny of the Egyptian despot. And still farther, Moses records his own experience, how he held almost daily converse with the God of heaven; how he was with him forty days, and received a law written with his finger, which millions of mankind continue to honour as the law of heaven's God; how he went up to a hill in Arabia with seventy-three men, and *they saw* the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles

of the children of Israel he laid not his hand ; also they *saw* God, and did eat and drink. From statements such as these, so thickly interspersed in the oldest history extant, it is manifest that the existence of a supreme being is not only a deduction of philosophy, but a fact made patent in various ways, and in very many instances, to the eyes and ears of the ancients. And so conclusive is the evidence, that it does not appear that there was a single atheist amid the thousands of the Hebrew host. How could *they* deny the existence of an Almighty Being whose power and presence ~~was~~ manifested to their senses every ^{WERE} day ? They had seen the sea opened for them, that they might escape in safety from their pursuing enemies. And the heavens—obedient to the Divine command—raining food to satisfy their hunger. They thirsted in a dry wilderness—the rock was ordered to supply them, and forthwith there issued from its bosom a pure refreshing stream. Covering was necessary. The region was uninhabited : but the action of decay was arrested, and ‘their garments waxed not old upon them, nor their shoes upon their feet.’ Hard-hearted they were, stiff-necked they were, but one to say—‘There is no God’—was not to be found in all their company. It has been reserved for more recent times to furnish the men, who, professing themselves to have become wise, have manifested their folly, by presuming to teach the world that there is no evidence of a God that made it. There was indeed one atheist in those days, who,

scorning, said—' Who is the Lord, that I should obey him : I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.' But sad experience told him that atheism was rather a dangerous guide. And even he, misgiving, said—' I have sinned, pray for me.'

Nor is Moses the only historian whose record of facts affords evidence that God is. The Hebrew historians, without exception, supply such facts profusely on almost every page. It was not one man, or one generation, who lived in the faith of Jehovah's being. Writer after writer, race after race, record his wonders, and talk of his works. We are told that he stayed the sun—spake in the whirlwind—stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the fury of flames. These things, and many such, are given as facts in Hebrew history. They were affirmed boldly, they were believed fully ; and not a tongue was moved against them. Either these things prove the being of a God, or the whole history is a collection of falsehoods. Either God is, or the history is a lie. Let us therefore see if there is any evidence that the history is true.

Secondly, The foregoing observations may be regarded as more related to the doctrines of natural religion, than the evidences of the Christian revelation. But although the proofs of the Divine existence, and the nature of the Divine attributes, must necessarily evolve in a discussion of the Christian evidences, yet it might appear to some minds a begging of the foundation on which to raise the superstructure, to

argue that Christianity has come from God, while as yet it remained an open question whether or not there is a God at all. Having, therefore, disposed of that point, we now proceed to inquire what evidence there is, that 'God hath *spoken* unto us in time past by the prophets, and in these last days by his Son.'

Of this evidence, *miracles* may be regarded as the first link in the grand chain. When Moses and Aaron presented themselves before Pharaoh, saying, 'Let Israel go,' they wrought miracles before the eyes of the Egyptian monarch, to show him that their demand was accompanied by the authority of one whose might is greater than the kings of the earth. When Jesus Christ appeared in our world, professing to be the 'sent of God,' his works drew forth the testimony from Nicodemus—'We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.' He qualified his disciples likewise with the same power to manifest to the world that he was no impostor. Than miracles, there is no higher proof of Divine authority. The human mind is so constituted, that it seems instinctively to demand at once, some display of supernatural power of every pretended bearer of a commission from God. Hence every impostor has found it necessary to lay claim to miraculous gifts. Mahomet, so far as we know, did not pretend to miracles, farther than a revelation from God might be regarded as such. But the Church of Rome, in order to make good

her exclusive claim to be regarded as the church of Christ, has now and then proclaimed her miracles. And her younger sister, the church of the Latter-day Saints, seems to outvie even the *Mother of Abominations* in her bold assertions that she is possessed of the gift of miracles by which to prove her heavenly origin! It is not necessary at present to wait on an inquiry into the truth or falsehood of such pretensions. It is quite in harmony with our faith to admit that there may be—nay, that there must be—‘the spirits of devils working miracles to deceive them that dwell on the earth.’ We are more concerned to show that all the pretensions of Romanists and Mormonites are in perfect contrast to the genuine miracles of the Son of God. *Assertion* is expected to prove theirs—ocular demonstration was given in proof of his. They say, ‘Believe and you shall see our works;’ he said, ‘Believe me for the works’ sake.’ When John sent to inquire if he were the Christ, he answered—‘Go and show John these things which ye hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up.’ In this one sentence we have a brief summary of the stupendous miracles that met, almost daily, the astonished gaze of the inhabitants of Judea, during the ministry of Christ and his apostles. To facts like these, Rome can point us to no parallel in the annals of her history; nor yet Mormonism in the fervour of its zeal. The *publicity* of Christ’s miracles proved that he was no pretender: and their

nature manifested that they were no tricks. To give limbs to the maimed, sight to the blind, and above all, life to the dead, are works too high for the art of the juggler. And when these are not done in a corner, but in open day, in the sight of multitudes, with every opportunity for investigation—in the face of foes as well as friends—what proof could be more conclusive that the authors of such works are the Messengers of God?

Such were the miracles of Christ and his apostles. Ye objectors to Christianity, what say ye to these things? Do you tell us they were the tricks of magic? Give us one such specimen of your magical trickery. Do you deny the truth of the alleged events? They are the facts of history, supported by the concurring testimony of eight or ten witnesses. Do you object that these witnesses were Christians, and interested, and therefore their testimony must be received with caution? Yes, they were Christians, but they became such, by the strength of the evidence. The fact you object to, instead of diminishing the proof, adds new force to the allegation, that the miracles were true. Do you object, that if these astounding wonders were true, all who beheld them must have believed them? To such an objection, the reply is—It does not appear that any doubted that the works were done; and had all believed and embraced Christianity, the evidence of these miracles at the present day, would have been less conclusive than now it is, as in that

case, we could not have appealed to the silence of enemies, which we can now do with triumphant success.

But here we may remark that enemies are not silent. Silent they are, if we search for their denial that the works were done. But yet they speak out; and the friends of Christianity can point to the testimony of more than one of her early and bitter enemies, in proof that the miracles recorded in the New Testament were actually performed. Celsus is often referred to, in this connexion. And we may quote the words of Julian the apostate. Referring to Christ, he writes, 'Jesus, whom you celebrate, was one of Cæsar's subjects. After he was born, what good did he do to his relations?—Jesus, who rebuked the winds, and walked on the sea, and cast out demons, and, as you will have it, made the heavens and the earth, could not order his designs so as to save his friends and relations. Jesus having persuaded a few among you, and these the worst of men, has now been celebrated about 300 years, having done nothing in his lifetime worthy of remembrance, unless any one think it a mighty matter to heal lame and blind people, and exorcise demoniacs in the villages of Bethsaida and Bethany.'*

Now, let it be remembered that Julian was an apostate. He had been a professor of Christianity, and consequently he could not fail to know if there had been such a thing as cunning, craftiness, or false pretensions, by which Chris-

* Divine Origin of Christianity.

tians were deceiving others, in order to prop up their delusive system. He was now an apostate, and as such, he would not fail to expose all the trickery of the Christian camp, if there were such to expose. But he is silent. There is none. He sneers indeed, at the miracles of Jesus, but his sneers are the proof that the works were done. The fact of the Christian miracles, thus conceded by the silence and sneers of enemies, has been boldly maintained by a constant succession of friendly witnesses in every generation. Can the enemies of our most holy faith point to a single era, even in the darkest of the dark ages, when there were none to believe the New Testament, and maintain the reality of the miracles of Christ? If there is none, where could they find a suitable opportunity for palming the new imposture on the credulity of mankind? Did the Christians at some period, agree to forge these things, and give them forth to the world as the foundations of their faith? Then at what time was the forgery committed? for at what time soever it took place, all the writings, professing priority to that period, and which refer to the events in question, whether Christian, Jewish, or heathen, are so many parts of the universal forgery! If forgery there had been, it must have been at the outset. But the vigilant eye of enemies, both Jews and heathens, all eager for their own ends to detect deception, render it impossible that fraud could exist.

But it is needless to insist on this line of

argument. The authenticity and genuineness of the histories recording the origin of Christianity cannot be denied. The miracles may be ascribed to magic, but no enemy of that period has ever questioned their existence. Mr Hume, an infidel of last century, has made a somewhat ingenious attempt to neutralize the force of the argument from miracles, by alleging that no testimony can prove a miracle. He argues that we are sometimes deceived by testimony, but never by the laws of nature; therefore, when testimony asserts that nature's laws were violated, as in the case of miracles, we must reject the testimony by which we are sometimes deceived, and believe the testimony of our own experience that nature's laws are uniform. So argues Hume. But in the strong hand of Dr Chalmers, his sophistry is crushed to pieces. He forgot that some sorts of testimony have no more deceived us, than the laws of nature. And that, although all our experience may be in favour of the uniformity of nature's laws; yet the experience of a man, or an age, or even of centuries, can never disprove a series of well-authenticated historical facts.

It would be doing injustice to the weight of the historical evidence for the truth of Christianity, to omit the mention of some circumstances connected with its early witnesses, and their testimony; any of which, taken separately, would go far to prove that these witnesses were true, but which, when joined together, furnishes an argument for the truth of the Christian revela-

tion, which has, to use the words of Dr Chalmers, —‘in strength and conclusiveness, no parallel in the whole compass of ancient literature.’ Such circumstances, for example, as the harmony which subsists between the writers of the New Testament, and those Jewish and profane authors who wrote about the same time—the substantial agreement of these writers with themselves, and with one another, and the strong proofs they gave of their perfect sincerity.

In reference to the harmony which subsists between the Evangelists and their contemporaries, amid the much that might be said, we shall only refer to the writings of Josephus, who, being a Jew, and no friend to Christianity, was not to be expected to say much about the facts and circumstances on which the sacred writers dwell with interest. Each party have in view their own object, and accordingly, pursue their own course. But nevertheless, they frequently refer to the same men, the same manners, and the same customs. And in doing this, there are only a few discrepancies, and these not difficult to reconcile. For example, three of the Evangelists call by the name of Philip, the same man who is called Herod by Josephus; but then we gather from the writings of both, that it was no uncommon circumstance in those days for the same person to have two names. Now we have only to suppose that such was the case in the present instance, and the difficulty is removed. But, even granting that this supposition could not be made, that there is a real contradiction—

in that case, whom shall we believe? Shall we credit the *three* witnesses whose testimonies agree, or the *one* who differs from them—the *men* who lived at the time of the events they record, or the *man* who was not born for some ten years afterwards?

But, although Josephus says less than might have been expected, about one who made such a stir among his countrymen as Jesus of Nazareth, his testimony to his miracles, death, and resurrection is not to be overlooked. He writes as follows:—‘Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those who loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him, and the tribe of Christians, so named from him are not extinct at this day.’ •

If the narrations of the Evangelists are thus confirmed by the substantial agreement and direct testimony of the Jewish historian, they are not less so by their agreement with themselves and with one another. Each writer is consistent with himself, and betrays no symptom

• Antiquities, Book xviii, Chap iii. Section 3.

of fear, that the truth of his narrative will be suspected; while there is very little in the writings of the four Evangelists to beget in the mind of any the least fear of a contradiction. It may be thought strange that these four narratives should bear so close a resemblance to each other, and that their authors should work up into so much importance facts and circumstances which other historians pass by with so little notice. But that is precisely what was to be expected. Their objects and interests were widely different. It is enough that they agree so far as they refer to the same things.

And, although there is much similarity, there is likewise some dissimilarity between the narratives of the four Evangelists. There are some discrepancies, but they do not amount to contradictions. They are more valuable than hurtful in discussing the Christian evidence. Had the resemblance been greater than it is, it might have awakened the suspicion that they had copied from each other; and thus their value would have been destroyed as independent historians. But they address us in an air of honest independence; agreeing about the facts, but each stating them in his own way; and so it is the world over with all credible witnesses.

The rapid diffusion of Christianity in the early ages, and the constancy and the firmness of the Christians under their dreadful sufferings, are likewise striking evidences that Divine truth characterized the one, and Divine agency

upheld the other. There was no earthly consideration in those days to induce men to embrace Christianity : and yet she took possession of the hearts of multitudes. If they sought earthly honour, it was not to be found there ; for its preachers were poor fishermen, whose master was crucified. If they sought the rulers' favour, it was not to be found there ; for the name of Christian was odious to the powers that then ruled. Whatever reason may be assigned for so many becoming Christians, it cannot be found in their earthly prospects. Racks, and fires, and wild beasts, to torture and burn their bodies ! such were the encouragements held forth by the world's great ones for men to believe in Jesus ! And yet the cause spread with amazing rapidity. While many were enduring torture, multitudes more were casting in their lot with the despised and down-trodden sufferers — priests and princes, statesmen and philosophers, were all against them, and yet they triumphed. It has been well remarked that ' theirs was a message of such a nature, and delivered under such circumstances, that not one human being would naturally be friendly to it. Princes would scorn Galilean fishermen ; philosophers would despise a wisdom that represented their boasted wisdom as folly. Priests would hate a system that would overturn their altars, desolate their temples, and strip them of their ill-gotten wealth, influence, and grandeur. The people would abhor a system that forebade all their idolatrous revellings, and struck at the root of all their superstitions. And though the

religion of the gospel is of so holy and unyielding a nature, that every class in society would be armed against it. Yet, hated, despised, and persecuted, it marched on conquering and to conquer, desolating idol temples, overturning the hoary systems of heathen superstition, and in its most effectual triumph, bringing millions to receive Jesus Christ as their all for time, and bliss for eternity. Whence sprung these triumphs but from the power of the Most High? In them we see the finger of God.* Yes, verily. In respect to her triumphant march against opposition, Christianity is altogether unrivalled amid the extended catalogue of religious systems. Systems of corruption may spring up, and be extended and diffused with some rapidity: but, on examination, they are found on the one hand to accommodate themselves to man's pride or his depraved passions; and, on the other, to borrow so much of Christianity's truth as enables them, with less or more plausibility, to promise Christianity's blessings, and represent themselves to be Christianity herself in her purest form. Such systems for a time may grow and prosper: but no system in the world, it may be affirmed fearlessly, has ever risen, and spread, and continued, destroying pride, and defying fury, like the religion of Christ. Mahomet set up a religion, and extended it *with* the sword. Christ set up a religion, and extended it *against* the sword. If Christianity is not true, it is the wonder of the world. If they were not miracles that the early

* Divine Origin of Christianity,

Christians believed, it was then a miracle that they believed them. But believe them they did. Of this they gave the strongest evidence that it is in the power of man to give for anything. They gave their bodies to the tormentors, and loved not their lives unto the death. And there is this peculiarity about the early martyrs for Christianity which distinguishes them from all others. A few wild enthusiasts may have suffered death, rather than renounce some false *opinion*: they died rather than deny *facts* of which they had been the eye and ear witnesses. And when martyrs in hundreds were testifying to the truth of these facts, all the vigilance of enemies, with all the aid of apostates, were unable to convict them of a single falsehood. In these transparent facts, the heavenly origin of Christianity is clearly seen.

Thirdly, Another link in the chain of evidence that the Christian revelation has come from God, is found in *prophecy*. Prophecy is the foretelling of future events. This it is not in the power of ordinary men to do. Now, if it can be shown that the prophets and apostles did foretell things to come, the only satisfactory explanation that we have ever heard of, is, that they were 'holy men of God, and spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.'

The predictions contained in the Old Testament scriptures are so numerous, and many of them have been so clearly fulfilled, that a serious refutation of them has never been attempted. So long as the fate of ancient cities—Tyre, and

Babylon, and Nineveh, and others are not forgotten—so long the denial of the reality of prophecy will prove a tax too heavy for the ingenuity of sceptics. Babylon, once the glory of kingdoms, has now no inhabitant but the wild beasts of the desert.* Tyre, is 'made like the top of a rock,' † and there the fishermen spread their nets. Nineveh has just been dug from her 'grave,' ‡ as if on purpose to testify in the face of modern infidelity, that the predictions are true, and the judgments terrible that are found written in the book they despise. These are a specimen, but *only* a specimen, of the predictions which abound in the prophetic books of the Old Testament, respecting cities and countries which once flourished, but are now the monuments of God's truth and justice.

The predictions of the Old Testament respecting the coming, the character, and the kingdom of Christ Jesus, are worthy of particular attention—as these, taken in connexion with their recorded fulfilment in the New Testament, constitute a golden chain by which these two parts of revelation are joined together. According to the account given by Moses, Adam, even before he left Eden, had a dark intimation of a coming Saviour. And by the same authority we are informed that God said to Abraham—'In *thy seed* shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.' And in after ages, when that people were greatly multiplied, Moses himself reiterates the same inti-

* Isaiah xiii. 19-22.

† Ezek. xxvi. 4, 5.

‡ Nahum i 14.

mation in fuller, clearer, and more distinct terms:—‘A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren.’ Isaiah wrote:—‘There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and the fear of the Lord.’ Jeremiah followed, saying:—‘Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.’ Micah, points, not only to the coming of a Great One, but to the very village of his birth:—‘Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me who is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.’

In this way, we have the lineage, the birth, the place of birth, the character, the sufferings, the death, the burial, and the kingdom of Jesus Christ, all distinctly foretold in ancient prophecy. Nor were these random utterances which were neither believed nor regarded. They were believed by the whole Jewish nation, so as to awaken in their minds an ardent expectation that God would raise up for them a glorious deliverer. Aye, and so strong was the expectation thus awakened, that, although eighteen centuries have rolled away since he came, in whom (according to the belief of Christians) these

predictions had their accomplishment, that expectation is not extinct in the minds of many of that remarkable people.

But it is more to our purpose to remark, that, in the history of Jesus of Nazareth, as recorded in the New Testament, these predictions were fulfilled to the very letter. It is there testified that Jesus, who was crucified at the instance of the Jews, was of the seed of Abraham—of the house of David—that he was born of a virgin—that the place of his birth was Bethlehem—that he had the spirit of wisdom and might—that by his miracles the eyes of the blind were opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped—that the lame were made to leap like harts, and the tongues of the dumb to sing—that he was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief—that he poured out his soul unto death—that he was numbered with the transgressors—that he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. These things are not more undoubted intimations in the writings of Jewish prophets, than they are undenied facts in the history of Jesus. True, they were Christians who recorded these things; but the Jews, with all their jealousy, *did not*, because they *could not*, challenge the accuracy of a single statement. The very circumstance that these facts in the history of Christ, were published to the world in the centre of the Jewish nation, and declared to be the fulfilment of Jewish prophecy,

is an unanswerable argument for the truth of the history. Had the disciples of Christ designed to deceive the world by imposing upon it a false history, the course they adopted was of all others the most certain to insure defeat. The Jew believed his prophets. He was acquainted with their predictions. He looked with jealousy, and even enmity, on the sect of Christians. And had they ventured to assert of an impostor what was not true, and endeavoured to confirm and carry out the imposition by grafting it on Jewish prophecy, the Jew's keen eye would have seen the falsehood; his burning indignation would have crushed the impudence; and the sect of Nazarenes would have been covered with confusion. But these Christians, though hated, and scorned, and persecuted, have not yet been contradicted—they were men of integrity, and wrote the truth. So prejudiced were these Jews against the humble parentage, and mean condition of the lowly Jesus, that few of them, comparatively, acknowledged him as 'he that should come,' but still continue to 'look for another.' Yet we are informed that 'the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.' These circumstances combine to give the Christian argument a strength impregnable. Had *all* the Jews believed that Christ was the promised Messiah, they might have adapted his history to the ancient prophecies, and coloured it as they thought fit, and there would have been none to

contradict them. But we have Jew against Jew, equally armed with zeal for their respective systems; so that neither the history could be adapted to the prophecy, nor the prophecy altered to suit the history without detection. Thus the mutual rivalry of contending parties affords us the strongest guarantee that the Jewish prophecies have come down to us uncorrupted, and that the New Testament history is a record of facts. And thus certified, that both the predictions and the account of their fulfilment have reached us in all their integrity, we have the fullest opportunity of judging for ourselves whether or not the prophets have really foretold us future events, and are entitled to the high character which we ascribe to them. And we hesitate not to pronounce judgment, and say, *They are so.* We might challenge the philosophers of heathenism, and all the infidels of Christendom, of every age and name, to produce, if they can, another book like that which we call the Book of God. Can they tell us of another book with so many prophecies so clearly fulfilled as we find in the Bible? Can they find in the volumes of heathen lore, or amid the prodigies of fabled deities, one single instance of a clear and undeniable fulfilment of a prophecy? Such are the often-repeated questions of the friends of Christianity; but her infidel enemies are dumb. There is no book on earth but the Bible can declare to us 'the end from the beginning; and from ancient times the things that are not yet done:' by this fact our position is strengthened,

and we call it with greater confidence the 'Book of God.'

It is likewise worthy of notice in this argument, that, in respect to all fulfilled predictions, we can appeal either to undoubted facts, or to the testimony of disinterested parties, in proof of their fulfilment. Thus the Jewish prophets foretold the ruin of Tyre, Nineveh, and Babylon; and heathen historians record its accomplishment. By Jews the coming of Christ was predicted; by Christians his coming is recorded. Christ foretells the overthrow of Jerusalem, and that it would be accomplished with great signs and wonders. That generation did not pass away till all was fulfilled; and, Josephus—with no intention of confirming the prediction—supplies the account. Paul foretells the rise and reign of a dreadful apostacy;—we have the apostacy before our eyes.

It is also worthy of notice that the *obscurity* of prophecy is another element in the strength of the argument which we derive from it. There are some prophecies of such a nature, that if they had been given with all the clearness of history, they might have been acted out by designing impostors; and, so far, their fulfilment have been realised, and thus their end would have been defeated. But they have been delivered to us in the best possible manner—so obscure as to prevent imposture, and so clear as to leave no doubt on the mind after their fulfilment that they were real predictions.

A large amount of prophecy remains yet to be

fulfilled—so that we have reason to believe that, as time rolls on, this branch of the argument for the truth of the Christian revelation will greatly increase. There is much fulfilled, but much remains to be accomplished. Probably we are on the verge of a great prophetic epoch, when a crowd of prophecies are to pass before us in rapid succession to the side of history. Yea, we think that the all-engrossing topic of the present day is adding strength to the prophetic argument for the truth of revelation. The days are not far gone when some wise politicians calculated that the days of war were ended. They argued that science and civilization had advanced so far, that it was not likely that wars would again disturb the nations. The Bible student, however, thought otherwise. He confessed indeed that he saw no reason for the return of war, only he had read something in an old book published eighteen hundred years ago, that left an impression on his mind, that the ‘battle of the warrior with its confused noise,’ would yet roar in the ear of the nations, and that ‘the garments rolled in blood’ would yet be exhibited on a large scale before the eyes of some future generation. Now the politician with his worldly wisdom is silent, confounded, and ashamed of his conclusions; while his neighbour stands erect in humble dignity, the world’s eyes being turned to the proof of his accuracy. But he asks no praise for superior discernment. All he asks is the reasonable request, that the old book be believed

and studied, that thus discloses with unerring certainty, the events of the future.

Fourthly, Another argument for the heavenly origin of the Holy Scriptures, is *the high standard of pure morality* which they reveal and inculcate. This is what is called an *internal evidence* that Christianity has come from God. The arguments from miracles and prophecy are called *external*. We think, however, that the distinction is of no great importance. When we speak of external and internal evidence, we are apt to convey the idea, that the *external* means evidence gathered *without* the book, and the *internal*, evidence found within the book. This distinction, however, cannot be carried fully out; as the strength of the evidence, whether external or internal, will be found in most cases to be elicited by a comparison of what we find written in the Bible, with what we know otherwise, whether we obtain that knowledge by the testimony of others, or by our own observation of the economy of nature. The whole value of the distinction appears to amount to this:—that the *external* evidence derives its main strength from the testimony of others—corroborating the fact of Bible miracles, and the fulfilment of Bible prophecy; whereas the *internal* evidence does not much depend on the testimony of others, but on the felt harmony between the statements of the Bible, and our own knowledge of things derived from personal observation. For example, we have a conscience

which distinguishes between right and wrong ; we have a knowledge of our own hearts, and even a knowledge of human life and character, grounded chiefly on personal observation. Now, the felt harmony between all this and the statements of the Bible, may be regarded as the *internal* evidence of its truth ; while facts recorded by heathen historians, by which we are able to prove that Bible prophecy has been fulfilled, and Bible miracles actually wrought, constitutes the strength of external evidence.

In proceeding to discuss the *moral* evidence for the truth of Christianity, it is much to be regretted that we can appeal so little to her practical development. We can appeal with the greatest confidence to Christianity in the Bible, in proof of the high standard of her pure morals ; but we are crippled and hampered in no small degree, when we would appeal to Christianity as exemplified in the conduct of her professors. This is a serious incongruity—a fact which has, perhaps, done more to prejudice the minds of men against Christianity than all the ridicule that has ever been heaped upon her by her bitterest foes. The Christian's *conduct* is seen and read by many who will not attend to the Christian's *book*. And, unreasonable though it be, yet so it is, that the book is judged of by the conduct of its professed believers, rather than by its own merits. But we deplore the inconsistencies of professing Christians, and deny them as constituting any part of Christianity ; and we protest against judging the heaven-derived

morals of the Bible, by a practice often differing from them as far as light differs from darkness. We will have the Bible judged of by its own merits : for although we have had a few miniature specimens of pure practical morality exemplified by individuals, yet Bible morality on a large scale has never yet been exhibited to the world. Under its reign, the folly of idol worship would be unknown, as all would worship the living God. Religious strife would cease, as all would worship God in the way appointed. By the oaths of the blasphemer, no ears would be shocked, and none polluted. To labourers, time would be allowed for recreation and amusement, and the seventh day employed for the heaven-appointed purpose of resting our wearied bodies, and holding intercourse with God. In every habitation an altar would be erected, and a morning and evening sacrifice offered to the God of the families of the whole earth. Nor would it be a cold formal devotion, with half of the domestics absent, and a part of the remainder asleep : but the lively, cheerful, warm devotion of a united and happy family. The mother's affectionate smile would be employed to stamp on the hearts of her infant children the impress of heaven's law ; and the father's influence and example would guide in the way of holiness. Children would be the joy and stay of their parents ; and no heart would be torn by the conduct of profligate sons, or the lost honour of fair but fallen daughters. Were the influence of Christianity universal, the sun would never shine on a murderer. Wars would

cease to the ends of earth; and the thousand evils that tend to destroy life, would be sought out and shunned. All lewdness would be detested in look, and lip, and conduct; and the broken hearts and squalid poverty that follow in the track of uncleanness, would cease to be. Bolts nor bars, nor locks, nor keys, would then be needed to protect property, and every man's would be as safe as if he alone inhabited the earth. Industry would characterize all classes, and as none would waste, so none would want. In one sentence—love and knowledge, truth and peace, kindness and contentment, would diffuse their balmy sweetness, and shine in holy splendour in every social circle, and unite in happy brotherhood the family of man.

The heavens may wonder and the earth be astonished, that there should be one member of the human family to oppose a system fitted to impart felicity like this! It is a scheme unmatched for the world's welfare, and yet rude hands would maim and mangle it. They would abolish the faith and the hope of a future state of being, so that they might exert no influence on the conduct of men. They would cancel every remembrance of these things from the history of the past, and draw a veil across the future, so that we would have no prospect beyond death but dismal darkness. They would expel God from the universe, and erase his name from every language. And when attempting all this in mad infatuation, if you venture to call them fools, they complain of rudeness!

If we ask them, when tearing away Christianity, what they mean to supply in her room, all that is valuable in what they propose, is patches of our holy religion which they have torn to pieces. Yes, Christianity is at once the object of infidel enmity and infidel envy. But they envy her as Balaam envied the death of the righteous. They would like the love and the mercy, without the inconvenience of the humility and justice. They tear from the Bible its leaves of love, and thereby deceive the unsuspecting. Infidelity could never soar in the air of Christendom if she did not deck herself with feathers from Christianity's wings. Nothing has ever come from Infidelity with all her boast, that can stand comparison with the morality of Scripture. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. Do good to all men as you have opportunity. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying. Dearly beloved, avenge not, but rather give place unto wrath, for vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.' What laws! Could human wisdom improve them? If it would cease from its presumptuous attempts, and resolve to act upon them, the statute books of nations might be gathered and burned. For what purpose are our almost countless acts of parliament, but to guard, and fence, and compel obedience

to these simple precepts : ' Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them ; ' ' If thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst give him drink ' ? Ye worshippers of philosophy, can ye point us to maxims like these among the sayings of the sages ? ' If an ass kick me, must I needs kick him again ? ' is one of the boasted sayings of your wise men ; and no doubt it would be very good if uttered in reference to that beast of burden. But when we are told that it was uttered in reference to a *man*, we cease to admire its wisdom, because of the contempt of human nature which it wears on its front. How unlike the exclamation of Him who is the founder of Christianity and the pattern of Christians—' Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do ! '

Mr Holyoake * claims for human reason the honour of the Persian maxim—

' The sandal tree perfumes when riven
The axe that laid it low ;
Let man, who hopes to be forgiven,
Forgive and bless his foe, '—

and tells us it was originated far from Christianity. But the statement is questionable. Christianity was persecuted in Persia for generations, and if she has now been extinguished, we may hazard a guess that this beautiful maxim is exerting but little influence. The probability is that when the tree of vital Christianity fell in Persia, this famous axe, like that of the beam

* A leader in the school of modern Infidelity, under the title of Secularism, and editor of the *Reasoner*.

feller on the banks of Jordan, fell along with it; with no prophet to recall it, and no mourner to wail over it—'Alas, master! for it was borrowed.' Human reason, unaided by the light of revelation, has been trying experiments before the world ever since the beginning. And what has it accomplished? What has it done for India? What for China? What for New Zealand; or any nation under the sun, where it has reigned in full sway? The unanimous and uncontradicted testimony of every missionary of the cross assures us, that, notwithstanding the time it has been plodding and experimenting, it is just where it has ever been—grovelling in darkness, superstition, and crime. Even in Greece and Rome, where Reason attained to a higher pinnacle of fame than she now occupies among the nations of modern heathenism—even there notwithstanding their almost unmatched specimens of elegant oratory—in respect to moral conduct the result is not greatly otherwise. No doubt there were some good laws. But compared with the laws of the New Testament, they are like the enchantments of the Egyptian Magicians compared with the miracles of Moses. We presume that all the extant volumes of Grecian and Roman lore might be searched in vain for precepts like the following:—'Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you.'

It affords us some knowledge of the boasted elevation of the Greeks and Romans, when we

are told of the number and character of their gods. The greater number seem to have worshipped some god; but then such was the confusion and darkness of understanding that prevailed among them, that their gods were a multitude which no man can number. Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Neptune, Vulcan, and Apollo, were some of the chief of the Greek and Roman gods: and many goddesses, such as Minerva, Diana, Venus, &c., seem to have been equally popular. The conduct of some of these gods is represented by their votaries as profligate in the extreme. Mercury is represented as a thief. Saturn is said to have devoured his own children. Vulcan to have been lamed by being tossed out of heaven by Jupiter, for taking part with Juno when he and she were quarrelling.*

If such was the character of the gods, what must have been that of the worshippers? It seems to have been in all respects what in these circumstances might have been expected. We are told that the Carthagenians on one occasion offered two hundred children in sacrifice to Moloch; that 'at Sparta boys were frequently whipped to death on the altar of Diana; and that Bacchus had an altar in Arcadia where a great many young damsels were beaten to death with rods.'

So much for the *humanity* of the ancients, where reason ruled uncontrolled by the light of revelation. The following extract from the *Divine Origin of Christianity*, will show that

* *Divine Origin of Christianity.*

their conduct was as impure as it was cruel :—
'The most shameless wickedness not only was practised by the worshippers, but *constituted a part of the worship*. This was the case in various Greek and Roman rites. The Greeks had a goddess of wantonness, and they had one temple at Corinth, with which were connected a thousand women of abandoned character. In fact, various shocking abominations made a part of the religion of the Gentiles. Some of these were so horribly impure, that it might have been supposed none but demons could invent, and none but persons possessed of demons could practice them. Yet they were practised by men and by women, not only under the cover of darkness, but in the face of day. Little do Christians know what they do who admire the ancient Greeks and Romans. More reasonable were it to admire the great majority of criminals, who die on the gallows for their crimes, than those nations whose very religion was worse than the crimes for which those criminals suffer.' This testimony is in striking harmony with that of Paul, who must have known from personal observation that he was stating facts. He is writing to the few who had become Christians among the people about whom he affirms,—'That when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful ; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to

corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. . . . Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness ; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable unmerciful.* This is the elevation to which boasted Reason has raised her votaries. How unlike the results wherever obedience is yielded to the religion of Jesus. There is contrast, but no comparison. For it is to be remembered that these things did not exist in spite of philosophy, but were sanctioned by some of the wisest philosophers, and entered into the elements of their devotion to their gods.

The above extract from Paul's epistle to the Romans, presents the sum of all that philosophy, unaided, has done for mankind: It raised them high, for 'they knew God.' Plato, it is said, has several passages containing an express acknowledgment of one Supreme Being, but he did not think it proper or safe to communicate such things to the people ; but recommended them to worship the sun, moon, and stars, and the gods established by law. This is the highest flight of philosophy ; though some of our modern infidels may not admire it. But mark the different effect when God is discovered by the gospel of Jesus. Plato discovers God by reason,

* Romans chap. i.

but he conceals him from the people. Paul discovered God by the revelation of Christ, and he counts all things but loss for 'the excellency of the knowledge;' and not conferring with flesh and blood, he proclaims everywhere the 'unsearchable riches.' Thus it appears that the very highest pitch to which philosophy has raised man, still leaves him to contrast most unfavourably with what he is when elevated by the gospel. And if this is all that unaided Reason *has* done, we may now conclude it is all she *can* do. She has afforded a peep at the heavens, and anon left mankind to grovel in the mire, and wallow in corruption; while the Gospel is raising from the mire, and elevating to heaven, not merely to obtain a peep, but to dwell there, in a hope and expectation that rises above life's ills, and induces to walk in the ways of holiness, till death drop the curtain, and close the scene for ever on the eyes of mortals. Whence has the Gospel this power? How account for her superiority to all that earth has furnished? The only rational reply to such interrogations is, that she has come from that heaven whose purity she represents—whose character she describes—and unto which she invites mankind with such smiling benignity.

Fifthly, Such are a few arguments which go to show clearly that Christianity is of no mean birth. Whether we examine her history or her character, we are supplied with proof abundant that she is of celestial origin. We might go on to multiply arguments from her consistency with

herself—from her preservation and progress in the world—from the harmony of her doctrines with the laws of nature, and even from the opposition of her foes. But it is presumed that there is as much said as will satisfy Christians, and more than Infidels will ever overturn. Instead, therefore, of entering upon any particular consideration of any of these departments of the argument, we shall meanwhile leave them to answer a few infidel objections, and in doing so may, perhaps, touch upon some of these branches of the argument incidentally.

So far as our knowledge of the controversy between Christianity and Infidelity enables us to judge, the opposition of infidels is not directed so much against the historical evidence for the truth of Christianity, nor yet the high standard of morality which we allege in her favour, as against certain parts of the Christian system. We sometimes find, likewise, that there is a good amount of strength spent in combating what they are pleased to represent as doctrines of Christianity, but which are rejected by every intelligent Christian as well as they. For example, Mr Holyoake denounces Christianity for teaching the doctrine of 'spiritual dependence' that leads to 'material destruction.' But as he proceeds with his illustrations, he constantly represents Christianity as teaching an 'absolute' spiritual dependence to the neglect of the laws of nature. Now, the allegation is so palpably at variance with fact, that it is scarcely entitled to notice. It is true that Christianity does

teach the doctrine of spiritual dependence. She does teach that God is a *Spirit* on whom the universe is dependent for existence and preservation—that it is in ‘God we live and move and have our being’—and that without that God, no hair of our head can fall to the ground; but it by no means follows that she teaches the neglect of the laws of nature. On the contrary, she respects them as the laws of that God on whom we are dependent; and the very belief of dependence on the Author of these laws, supplies an additional motive to respect and observe them. The creed of the Secularist runs thus—‘Do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.’ The Christian rises higher, and prefixes to the same terms an important clause—‘TRUST IN THE LORD, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.’ The Christian maintains the importance of faith; but maintains, at the same time, that ‘faith without works is dead, being alone.’ Christianity teaches us to pray; but she never teaches us to expect a violation of the laws of nature in answer to prayer. The Christian is taught to expect an answer to prayer, when he prays in Christ’s name, and according to Christ’s example. That example is, ‘if it be thy will.’ The Christian prays, therefore, ‘for things agreeable to God’s will;’ but he does not expect that *will* to run counter to the laws of nature. At the same time, he believes that there are laws in nature infinitely beyond the ken, either of the Christian or Secularist; and

that these are all known to, and regulated by, an unseen and Almighty power. And he believes that by prayer and attention to the known laws of nature, as well as those of revelation, he is brought under the influence of these laws in nature, many of which he does not comprehend, but which, nevertheless, will work together for the renovation of his moral nature, and fit him for a purer state of being in the heavens. This is the ultimatum of the Christian's desire, and his confident expectation, though he does not profess to comprehend, and does not presume to dictate, how it is to be accomplished.

We are not, however, to be understood as maintaining that prayer never secures any result but spiritual improvement. On the contrary, we admit and maintain that prayer may, and does, procure temporal blessings. It may not be in every case. It is not likely to be in the same direct and striking manner as it sometimes was in the days of miracles. Still there is no evidence whatever to show that temporal blessings have ceased to be communicated in answer to prayer. The only difference is, that it is more a matter of faith than of sense, and is brought about much in the same way as is our spiritual improvement. The widow, in the gospel, who besought the judge to avenge her of her adversary, did not at first obtain an answer; but the delay occasioned the importunity, and the importunity at last moved the mind of the judge, and the request was granted. In all this there was no violation of the laws of nature;

they were only set in motion, but it was nevertheless a real answer to prayer. Just so with the Christian. He offers his prayer. The laws of nature are set in motion. He does not know how many links in the chain of circumstances may require to be moved before he obtain a result. He is not sure what the result may be; nor may he be aware of some of these results when he is actually enjoying them. But between experience and hope he goes on joyfully, and sings, saying,—

Deep in unfathomable mines,
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his Sovereign will.

In proceeding to notice more particularly, some of the objections that are urged against Christianity, we shall notice the four following which are preferred by Mr Holyoake.*

'*First*, The universal sinfulness of man; *secondly*, The great death atonement of Christ for those sinners only who believe in Christ; *thirdly*, The expiation for inherited and constitutional sin is made by another, and not by the sinner himself, and the salvation is available by faith only and not by works; *fourthly*, The penalty of unpardoned sin is coarse damnation to all eternity.' We think it will be no fault in this Essay, if, in replying to these objections, we keep our eye on Mr Holyoake's arguments, as well as his objections, seeing it will be admitted

* See Christianity and Secularism. Grant & Holyoake. Page 133.

that he is a fair specimen of modern infidels, both in talent and in temper.

The *first* of these objections, then, which we find here preferred against Christianity is, that she teaches '*the universal sinfulness of man*;' and the argument is, that the doctrine is 'demoralising and discouraging. When the young are taught that they are deplorably sinful by nature, it snaps the sinews of moral effort.' Now the reply to this is, that the assertion on which it is founded is opposed to observation. Nowhere has the universal sinfulness of man been taught more fully and scripturally than where Christianity has taught it; and nowhere have moral efforts been more active and successful than where Christianity has prevailed in greatest purity. We therefore meet that part of the argument with a direct denial of the assertion. But we may notice further, that Mr Holyoake does not seem to have his mind made up as to the origin of our depravity. He does not deny its existence, but he can give us no information from whence it sprung. He is inclined, however, to deny that it is inherited: for he tells us of a lady who had much to do in the way of training children, and her account is, that she never knew any *bad* boys: that boys were all good till they were *made* bad. But he surely does not expect us to accept of the negative testimony of this one lady, before the positive affirmations of thousands, who had boys to train as well as she. It may be that the excellent example and influence of this lady did much to

check the development of depravity; and it is likewise possible that in her passionate fondness, she may have overlooked some of its lesser manifestations; so that the argument is one which would have no great weight with the editor of the *Reasoner*, if offered against him. But it still remains to be explained how the *first* 'bad boys' were made so. How or where did the influence originate by which they were vitiated? Such a question, we think, is not easily answered in harmony with the lady's theory. Unprejudiced reason is more satisfied with the answer indicated by the ancient prophet—'Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.'

Secondly, Mr Holyoake objects to *atonement by death*, because it is not needed. 'Humanity,' he says, 'does not want *expiation*; it wants *reformation*.' Now, let it be remembered, that we have found him already mistaken as to the *effect produced* by teaching the doctrine of man's universal sinfulness—ignorant of the origin of sin—and now we find him blundering in statement. It is not *humanity* that needs expiation, but the *crimes* of human beings. Now, if we find him false, and ignorant, and blundering, in a few sentences, it does not say much for his competency to judge of what is *needed* for the atonement of sinners. He calls atonement by death, 'a barbarous idea.' This proceeds on the assumption that it is not necessary, for he tells us, next page, that, in the case of martyrdom, though we dare not devise it as a scheme,

we *applaud* it as a necessity. He goes on to say, that 'sacrifice by death is the old contrivance of Paganism.' This objection is an argument against him; for if we find this 'old contrivance' all but universal among heathens everywhere, how can we account for it, but on the supposition that a consciousness of guilt—the necessity of an expiation—and even that by death, is a radical principle in the constitution of human nature. Now, when we find a book professing to come from the Author of our being, and stating more fully, clearly, and satisfactorily, the ground of these natural instincts, it is a presumptive proof that the Man and the Book have had the same origin; and it is perversity, not wisdom, to disregard its information. There is therefore nothing in Mr Holyoake's objections to atonement by death, but his own sentiment and feeling. Now, when we find a radical principle in human nature calling for it—and a book professing to come from God, and attesting its claims by signs and wonders, teaching it with a clearness, far surpassing the brightest glimmerings of unaided reason—and multitudes of fallen men rejoicing in it, the evidence in favour of atonement by death, far outweighs the *opinions* of a few men who are ignorant of the origin of sin, and cannot comprehend the necessity of an atonement for sinners.

Thirdly, Mr Holyoake objects to the Christian scheme of salvation, because, according to it, 'expiation is made by another, and not by the sinner; and is made to depend on faith, and not

on works.' He asks, 'Would it not have been better that we should have been enabled to have combated it with success, and so expiate it in process of time?' We reply:—If we are guilty through a representative, reason approves of expiation through a representative. If sin is acquired, then the fact that we go on acquiring it, says little for our ability to 'combat it with success.' And if it thus appears that we are unable to combat it with success, reason says we should rejoice, rather than quarrel with the appointment of a substitute. 'But,' says he, 'this is not so wholesome;' and gives an instance of the British government refusing a substitute in the room of a criminal, and adds—'Now, when a Christian government solemnly refuses to follow the example of God, it must be that there is antagonism between the ideas of human and divine justice.' Before this can be shown to be the case, it must be shown that there is an exact parallel between the cases. This cannot be done. For, in the first place, if a human government should accept of a substitute in the room of a criminal, the innocent man would be lost to the community, and the criminal left at large. Secondly, Christ's death obtained security for the reformation of the criminal, which could not be in the case supposed. This being the case, it would be equally unwise to offer, or to accept of, such an arrangement. We see therefore, no antagonism between human and divine government. On the contrary, we see human governments acting on the divine continually,

in cases where it can be done with advantage. But Mr Holyoake's principal objection to this scheme is, that salvation is made to depend on a special faith, which, he says, 'is not always possible.' This is identical with the old doctrine, that 'Man is no more responsible for his belief than for the hue of his skin, or the height of his stature.' Accordingly, he says—'Every sincere man is equally entitled to salvation, whatever be his belief.' It is true, Christianity teaches, that 'faith is the gift of God;' but it is also true, that it is an offered gift. The sinner is not responsible for the creation of faith, but he is accountable for refusing every effort to exercise it. Mr Holyoake's illustration is in point here. Supposing a criminal under sentence of law, and an offer of pardon made to him—no matter for our present purpose on what ground. Let him just be told that he may have it if he will, but it is to be without money and without price. If he refused the pardon, because he *believed* it beneath his dignity to accept of it for nothing, would he not be responsible for his belief?' Would he not be deserving of death and all its consequences?' Deny it as some may, responsibility for belief is, not only a doctrine of Christianity, but a principle in man's nature. If he is not responsible for his belief, neither is he for his conduct; for all conduct proceeds from faith. No man, we are persuaded, performs even his worst deeds without believing that thereby he will do, or obtain some good. Now, if he is not responsible for the

faith, neither can he for the conduct springing from it. But that he is responsible for both, is manifest from the fact, that all the while that he is doing evil, his conscience may be accusing him; and a feeling of remorse follow him all his life afterwards. It is true that conscience may be silent. It may be drowned in ignorance, or in sensuality, or bewildered in a false philosophy; but the principle of responsibility remains eternal; though the criminality of a false belief may have aggravations, or palliations, according to circumstances.

This objection, still farther, includes a distinction between inherited and acquired sin; and denies the guilt of the former. We do not suppose that we have an argument that will *satisfy* infidels on this point; but we think there are such as ought to *silence* them. If sin is by heirship, so is salvation. If the Bible reveals a representative by whom man fell, it reveals another by whom he is to rise. There can therefore be no reasonable objection to a scheme with inherited sin, which provides a remedy on the same principle. But more than this—suffering for the sin of others is according to the laws of nature, and is a matter of daily observation. If a monarch is ambitious, proud, and arrogant; he goes to war, and his subjects suffer. When there is power on the side of cruelty, the weak and helpless invariably suffer. When a parent is profligate, his children often suffer in ignorance, rags, and misery. This is the law of Nature, the goddess of infidelity.

Infidels quarrel with the God of Christianity, and call injustice, what they applaud as constancy and faithfulness, on the part of their own divinity. And all this, notwithstanding that their god holds forth no prospect of redress, either in this life, or, as they think, in the life to come; though in that respect, we think, their idol is more intelligent than they have yet discovered.

Fourthly, Mr Holyoake's last and great objection to Christianity is,—'That the penalty of unpardoned sin is coarse damnation to all eternity.' This is the objection on which infidels in general spend their greatest strength. It is also observable, that a quarelling, rather than an argumentative complexion, characterizes the opposition to the doctrine of eternal punishment, except when it assumes an air of levity to drown bitterness. In every direction we observe signs that it is *feeling* rather than *reason* that is arrayed against it. Mr Holyoake says, 'In no direction do I discover such painful signs of the moral torpidity of our public men, as when I meditate on the indiscriminate praise which reformers bestow upon the Bible. Either they do not believe what they read, or they do not *feel* what they read. Theology is lowered before you with a dark scowl. There is a terror in the third chapter of Matthew,' &c. All this too plainly indicates a deep and earnest hatred at the doctrine in question, but contains no argument against its truth, except this,—he *hates* it. He allows the righteousness of punishment by

human governments,—and one would have thought there would be no objection to it in the divine. But no. Human governments, he says, in their weakness, *must* punish as a matter of necessity in self-defence ; but God, almighty and allwise, could and therefore ought to do otherwise. But then, unless his finite mind can take in all the relations and adaptations of all things that have been, are, or shall be throughout the universe and throughout eternity, we are bound in reason to doubt his ability to determine so presumptuously. We are told, moreover, that the scriptural idea of eternal punishment ‘contradicts all human idea of justice—making life one long dismay to all who are brought under the influence of such a faith.’ Now this is not the fact. Observation testifies, as well as history, that multitudes of those who *are* brought under the influence of such faith—shout and sing, because they have been made glad. Nor does it contradict all their ideas of justice. On the contrary, not one of them quarrels with its justice, and most of them confess that they themselves were deserving of it to the full extent. Mr Holyoake may call this moral torpidity,—though it should be so, it gives the lie to his assertion. But it is not so. It is no stupid acquiescence, but a rational assent on clear ground, which the Christian gives to the doctrine of eternal punishment. He reads in the book which he believes to be from God—‘The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.—He that is filthy let him be filthy

still ; and he that is holy let him be holy still.— 'What a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' There is Justice shining in all her glory—justice in which the Christian concurs with no stupid submission ; but with a rational admiration of its absolute perfection.

We have seen, then, the substance of the infidel evidence against the doctrine of eternal punishment. Evidence there is none ; but a strong *feeling* prompting to decide against it. And it is worthy of notice that there are three things, any one of which taken separately, would nullify the testimony of a witness in a court of justice. There is, *first*, a strong enmity against the accused ; *second*, incompetency to judge in the particular case ; and, *third*, there is palpable falsehood in the testimony. These are the three characteristics of the three phases of the evidence : surely we may conclude that the charge is not proven.

Not only is there no rational evidence against the scriptural doctrine of future punishment, but there are facts in nature, apart from revelation, which render both a future judgment, and the eternity of punishment extremely probable. We have seen that the feeling against it is not universal in human nature. It only exists in certain circumstances. Infidels, perhaps, would feel offended, if we should call these circumstances a consciousness of guilt. That very consciousness of guilt which awakens a feeling against a future judgment, is in itself a strong evidence that a future judgment will be. The

doctrine of felicity in heaven, is no better established than the doctrine of woe in hell: yet there is no opposition to it, and why? Just because there is nothing to fear from it. If the one may be a delusion, so may the other: and we see not but the hope of the one, as well as the fear of the other, might be hurtful to the activities of the present life. And if so, consistency demands that they should be equally opposed. But no. We could not account for the vehemence of the opposition to the one more than the other, if there existed a clear, calm, undisturbed conviction that there is no such thing: There is a felt necessity for a constant warfare in order to keep out the disturber of the peace.

Not only do the fears of the guilty, but the yearnings of the innocent, suggest the probability that there will be a judgment. Injured innocence ever feels a yearning for retribution. Shall the sad tale of wrong, to which no human ear ever listened with sympathy, be lost for ever? Or, shall the cheek of the ruthless oppressor escape the crimson hue of shame? To such interrogatories Christianity answers, 'No:': and that No finds its response in the inmost soul of every innocent sufferer. Conscience, then, whether guilty or innocent, is looking for a judgment: and this supplies a strong plea in favour of the Book, which teaches so distinctly that a judgment shall be.

These facts show the probability of a future judgment; and we only notice another, which

shows the probability that it will be eternal. As love to God and man is the essence of all religion, and when in full practical operation, conduces to enjoyment in the highest degree; so *hatred* to God and man is the essence of sin, and produces misery in proportion to its fury. Now, the sinner hates God: and the question is, Will suffering under his justice, in the nature of things, tend to awaken love, or increase the hatred? Among men, no criminal who hates a government will be changed from love to hatred by suffering punishment at its hands. The more you protract the punishment, the more the hatred is increased: this is the order of nature. Now in the case before us, the hatred is the crime, and so long as the crime continues, justice demands that so must the punishment. On the one hand, the laws of nature intimate that protracted punishment will not produce love. On the other hand, justice says, Let punishment continue till there be love. If a man will thrust his hand into fire, he must either withdraw it, or he must suffer—nature's laws are eternal. If a man will hate God, he must either love him, or he must suffer—for the God of nature is likewise unchangeable. We are thus led to conclude that the punishment of the wicked will be eternal—judging it in the light of the laws of nature. And when we find a book containing doctrines confirming so clearly the doctrines of dim nature, the conjoint evidence amounts to a moral demonstration that the doctrines in question are solemn verities.

Thus, we have glanced briefly at a few of the leading arguments for and against Christianity. We have seen a religion, attested to have come from God, whose character it reveals, by the most extraordinary signs and wonders—a religion breathing the purest love, teaching the loftiest moral sentiments, and revealing a free salvation and a glorious heaven, to beings the most needful and helpless. What a wonder that ever there should be need to contend with opposition to a religion like this! But, although we wonder, we do not stumble. Our holy faith—with so many evidences of her heavenly origin—adds this one more, that she anticipates her accusers, and accounts for their opposition. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' We are told by wise men, after the flesh, that, 'if Christ, instead of bequeathing to the world the melancholy symbol of the cross, had set up some star-shining standard of wisdom; if, instead of being the greatest of Jews, he had made himself the greatest of men—had made himself the apex of a pyramid, resting on Aristotle and Homer; on Bacon and Shakespeare, what a different world we should now have.* All this is conceived to be proof positive against Christianity! But she replies, 'the foolishness of God is wiser than men;' and so it proves. The ridicule of the scoffer is a better proof that Christianity is

* Holyoake.

true, than would be the eulogy of an angel. Let her answer for herself, and let us listen to her utterances: 'We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks *foolishness*,' Are we astonished at the vehemence of the opposition to Christianity? She informs us of an 'old serpent who is the devil and Satan, who worketh in the children of disobedience.' The friends of Christianity may pity her enemies, and regret their opposition for their own sakes; but they have no cause to fear that she will suffer in the conflict. Every blast from the mouth of the pit, is only blowing off the dust that would bedim her evidences. See to it, fellow Christians, that she is not suffering more at your hands, than at the hands of her bitterest foes. May it not be that her greatest enemies are those of her own house. Your conduct is expected to represent her; and if that representation be false, what if she be judged and condemned unjustly on your account? You are expected to exhibit her practical glory; infidels are not. No one will misjudge her from the conduct of infidels; but they may from yours. O how great the responsibility! Heaven's moral grandeur has been let down to earth, and you profess to show it. If you fail, hell's emissaries will take advantage; and heaven's heirs will mourn. Your cold hearts, your unkind looks, your harsh words, your malicious censures, will do more to insult Christianity, and rob her of her glory, than the blasphemy of a thousand infidels. By false con-

duct, her glory will be tarnished—by *no* conduct, it will not be seen. In either case Christianity is suffering. Give her fair play in your practical exhibition of her, and she will chase every infidel to the shades of oblivion. Give her full sway in the heart, and all will be calm and comfort. Give her full sway in the home, and all will be joy and peace. Give her full sway in the world, and your enemies will be at peace with you. Give her full sway on the throne, and it will be established in righteousness. Give her full sway, for the world needs it. Give her full sway, for her friends expect it. Give her full sway, for your King demands it. Give her full sway, all ye nations, and the blessings of peace, joy, and plenty shall abound in a renovated world.

APPENDIX.

The following are the Lectures that have been delivered before the Thornhill Institute, since its institution.

Session 1850-1.

- Jan. 28. Opening Address by Sheriff TROTTER.
 Feb. 14. Physiognomy, by W. M'DOUALL, Esq.
 Editor of the Dumfries and Galloway Standard.
 March 7. Electricity, with Experiments, by J. BECK,
 Esq., Assistant, Wallace Hall.
 March 13. Written Thoughts, and the Invention of
 Printing, by P. GRAY, Esq., Courier
 Office, Dumfries.
 April 15. Self Education, by Sheriff TROTTER.

Session 1851-2. No Lectures.

Session 1852-53.

- Jan. 10. The Benefits of Science, by the Rev. J.
 JULIUS WOOD, Dumfries.
 Jan. 24. The Geography of the Holy Land, by the
 Rev. W. MENZIES, of Keir.
 Feb. 14. The Composition, Relations, and Properties
 of Water, with Diagrams and Experi-
 ments, by Dr GRIERSON, Thornhill.
 Feb. 21. Geology, by the Rev. J. RIDDELL, Moffat.
 March 8. Egypt and Palestine, as visited in 1851, by
 the Rev. Dr AITON, of Dolphinton.

March 22. Reason and Faith, by Sheriff TROTTER.

Session 1853-4.

- Dec. 5. Astronomy, by the Rev. A. BENNET, Clouseburn.
- Dec. 20. Poets and Poetry of the Holy Scriptures, by the Rev. J. G. CARNACHAN, Maxwellton.
- Jan. 14. The Study of History, by the Rev. J. DONALDSON, Kirkconnel.
- Jan. 30. The Physical Effects of Stimulants, with Diagrams, by Dr M'CUCCLOCH, Dumfries.
- Feb. 18. The Pilgrim Fathers of New England, by the Rev. J. GAILEY, Annan.
- March 6. The Religion of Mahomed, by the Rev. Dr BRYDON, Dunscore.
- March 17. The Wonders of the Atmosphere, by the Rev. T. PULLAR, Dumfries.
- March 28. On Living Beings, with Diagrams and Specimens, by Dr GRIERSON, Thornhill.
- April 4. The Cultivation of the Feelings and Affections, and the Study of Poetry, by Sheriff TROTTER.
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Session 1854-5.

- Nov. 27. The Church in the Catacombs, by the Rev. T. M. LAWRIE, Partick.
- Dec. 11. Education of the People, by the Rev. A. GRIERSON, Irongray.
- Jan. 15. The Dead Sea, by the Rev. W. MENZIES, Keir.
- Feb. 18. The Monuments of Egypt, by the Rev. R. R. RAE, Avondale.
- Feb. 26. The Philosophy of Life, by the Rev. F. ROSS, Sanquhar.

- March 8. A Natural Religion, by the Rev. P. CAR-
MICHAEL, Scarbridge.
- March 12. The Solar System, by the Rev. Dr BENNET.

Session 1855-6.

- Nov. 13. The Churchyard, by the Rev. Dr SIMPSON,
Sanquhar.
- Nov. 28. Switzerland and the Rhine, from Notes
taken in a Recent Tour, by the Rev. G.
B. BLAKE, Durrisdeer.
- Dec. 12. Prize Essay on the Evidences of Christianity,
read by the Author, Mr WILLIAM M'CAW,
Shepherd. Also the Prize Poem, read by
its Author, Mr INNES, of Carronbridge.
Sheriff Trotter presided.
- Dec. 25. The Solar System, with Diagrams, by the
Rev. M. N. GOOLD, Dumfries.
- Jan. 8. Lunar Science and Scenery, with Diagrams,
by the Rev. J. G. MURRAY, Auchencairn.
- Jan. 22. Times of Cromwell, by JOSEPH EWING, Esq.,
Sanquhar.
- Feb. 5. Professor Wilson and his Works, by Dr
ADAM, Dumfries.
- Feb. 20. National Fasts, by the Rev. G. ANDERSON,
New Cumnock.
- Feb. 28. On the Madrigal and Vocal Music, by C.
HARKNESS, Esq., Dumfries. Illustrated
by a numerous Vocal Choir.
- March 18. The Inlets of Thought. By Dr W. A. F.
BROWNE, of the Crichton Royal Insti-
tution.

RECOMMENDATORY NOTE.

(Copy of Letter from the Rev. DR. THOMAS
GUTHRIE, *Edinburgh.*)

EDINBURGH, 31st March, 1856.

DEAR SIR,—I return you Mr M'Caw's Essay. The pleasure with which I have read this remarkable production, has been heightened by astonishment. I knew that not a few of our country's shepherds were men of deep thought, much reading, and well-stored minds. Far from the voice of cities, and the bustle of the busy world, left much alone to hold converse with God and nature, and their own hearts, amid their pastoral uplands—I knew that many of them were, in a sense, men of cultivated minds; still I had no idea that such a work as you have sent me, could have proceeded from a shepherd's pen, without smelling of the oil (which is an advantage); one would have supposed that it had been written by the light of a pale-faced student's lamp, and that it had issued from the halls of a College, rather than from the *but* or *ben* of a shepherd's cottage.

This work deserves publication—it deserves a wide circulation—it does great honour to Mr M'Caw, and Mr M'Caw does great honour to his class. May he get grace to wear his honours meekly, and continue to wield his pen of power in the noble cause he has so nobly defended.

In nursing up such men, and evoking such hidden talent, your Institute is doing a service to our country and our faith, which places it above all attack. . . .

Believe me, and very truly,

(Signed) THOMAS GUTHRIE.

To Dr Grierson.

ERRATA.

Page 14, Line 1, for *these*, read those.

... 19, ... 13, for *was*, read were.

.. 25, ... 29, for *render*, read renders.

.. 41, ... 14, for *constitutes*, read constitute.

... 65, ... 18, for *intimates*, read intimate.

THE MUSEUM of the INSTITUTE is Open Daily.

Admission to Members, free ; to Non-members, Threepence.

The Loan of Objects of Interest is solicited, which will be returned when required.

As the Museum consists principally of specimens lent for a time, it is continually changing, and has always a fresh interest.





