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FOUNDATION STONES

LECTURES TO THE YOUNG.

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Introductory Note.

The lectures contained in this volume were prepared for young people. The attempt was not to “walk about Zion and go round about her and tell the towers thereof,” but simply to call attention to a few of the foundation stones on which we build, and point out their strength and solidity. The author wished to clear away doubts, remove stumbling-blocks, and arm the young against floating infidelity, as well as to fortify the faith of those who are still babes in Christ. No one can feel more keenly than he how poorly the work has been done, and yet he has the satisfaction of knowing that not a little good was accomplished by their delivery, not only among the class to whom they were especially addressed, but also among older persons. The favor with which they were received and the solicitations of many who heard them to have them put in permanent form and sent out upon a wider mission, induced the author to have them published. Their

preparation necessitated a somewhat extended course of reading, and for all the help received, grateful recognition is hereby made. If the lectures shall aid any who are seeking light, or prove a means of re-enforcing the faith of any who have already made the great decision, the author will have his reward. To this end he sends them forth, praying that they may be accompanied by the blessing of God.

R. F. COYLE.

CHICAGO, May, 1887.

Foundation Stones.

“If the foundation be destroyed what can the righteous do?”—Psalms 11: 3.

That there has been a remarkable development of the spirit of criticism within the past few years cannot have escaped the notice of even the most casual reader; this is not altogether to be deplored. Indeed in certain directions it has done an immense amount of good. It has corrected errors and cleared away not a little rubbish from about the truth, thus bringing it more and more clearly into view. But criticism is not by any means the highest function of the human intellect, and to call an age critical may be paying it a very doubtful compliment. The work of construction must always stand on a loftier and grander plane than that of destruction. “It is an easy thing to destroy; and there are always destroyers enough. It requires skill and labor to erect a building; any idle tramp can burn it down.

God alone can form and paint a flower; any foolish child can pull it all to pieces."

There never was an age more constructive than this along material lines; it has laid hold of the forces and secrets of nature and built them up into innumerable comforts of domestic and social life. So without exaggeration I think I may say that to an equal degree it is critical along all spiritual lines. Its faith in nature has developed into a passion; its faith in God, in many quarters at least, has degenerated into cold and questioning speculation. Here and there we find this spirit incarnating itself in certain advocates whose avowed purpose is destruction. They are professional iconoclasts, and with the axes and hammers of hostile criticism are seeking to break down the carved work of the christian ages. Bringing wit, and eloquence and cleverness to their aid, they have unsettled the faith of thousands, and thousands they have set hopelessly adrift on the troubled sea of doubt whose "other shore" is lost in fog and night. They are assailing the old house in which the fathers found refuge and driving the sons and daughters out into the pitiless storm to wander homeless and Godless to the grave upon which there grows

no resurrection flower. If they had something to substitute for that which they would take away; if they could point to some other support, some other hope, some other way out of the wilderness, some other foundation on which to build, it would not be so bad, but they have absolutely nothing to offer. They would rudely dash out our light and leave us to grope in darkness over life's rough road. They would strike the gospel cordial from the lips of the old, the weary, the burdened, the dying, and leave them neither balm nor physician. Surely such downright cruelty as that is hardly compatible with a spirit of benevolence and philanthropy.

There is a story that on a certain very inclement day in the city of Washington when the streets were ankle-deep with slush, and the cold, raw wind was driving fiercely, a well-known Colonel entered one of the hotels and walked into the reading room. He met there a friend, standing by the window, looking out upon the dreary scene, to whom he remarked:

“Isn't this a terrible day?”

“Indeed it is,” responded the gentleman; “and I wish you had been here a few minutes ago. A poor crippled old man was making the best of his

way thro' the storm across the street, when a big, lusty fellow came along, kicked his crutch from under his arm and left him lying in the slush and wet."

"The scoundrel!" exclaimed the Colonel. "I wish I had been here! I would have wrung his neck for him."

"Well Colonel, you are the big, lusty fellow I had in mind," said the man to the amusement of a number of weather-bound listeners. "You are big and strong and hearty, and you go about the country kicking the crutches of Christianity from under the arms of poor, crippled sinners who have no other support, and then leave them wallowing in the mud and mire of unbelief and despair. You are all tear down and no build up."

The Colonel, we are told, was stunned by the parallel, for he was a lecturer against Christianity and the Bible. He made no response but walked back into the office, where, it is said, he sat for an hour or more seeming to be in a brown study.

Whether the story is truth or fiction I shall not undertake to say. Dr. Seiss, of Philadelphia, is responsible for it. But this I know, that it very forcibly illustrates the spirit and work of infidelity.

A spirit which Rousseau declares would lead men "to trample under foot all that mankind reveres, snatch from the afflicted the only comfort left them in their misery, from the rich and great the only curb that can restrain their passions; tear from the heart all remorse for vice, all hopes of virtue, and yet boast themselves the benefactors of the human race!"

It is the prevalence of this spirit and its unsettling influence, especially upon the minds of the young, that has led me to the conviction that a course of Sunday evening lectures on the *fundamental truths* of the Christian religion would be both opportune and profitable. Christianity may be regarded as a great building, and as such has certain "foundation stones" upon which everything depends. It is at these we are to take a look and candidly consider their quality. By and by perhaps we shall "walk about Zion and go round about her and tell the towers thereof, mark well her bulwarks and consider her palaces." For the present, however, we are to give our attention to the foundations. Hence, I have chosen, as a sort of general text, the words of the psalmist as recorded in the eleventh psalm and third verse: "If the foundations be destroyed

what can the righteous do?" The passage suggests the necessity of holding and frequently preaching basal truths. Not that we fear that they can be destroyed absolutely, for God's church is founded on a rock and "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." But they may be destroyed relatively: that is, men may lose faith in them, and hence, so far as they are concerned, those foundations may be as though they were not. We have no fears for Christianity. It has rooted itself too firmly in the world's heart, and imbedded itself too deeply in the world's thought ever to be eradicated from the earth. At the very centre of Christianity stands Christ, whom even the infidel Renan calls "the corner-stone of humanity" and Christ's "name shall endure forever." "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth." This course of lectures is not undertaken to bolster up a dying cause, nor with the hope of throwing some beams of light upon a fading glory. To be specific my object is in the first place:

1. To confirm the faith of my fellow disciples, especially the young, by pointing out the strength of the foundations on which we build. Many of you

find it difficult to meet the sophistries and arguments of infidelity because you have never studied, perhaps never have had the means of studying, the evidences of Christianity in a thorough and systematic way. Hence your faith receives many a shock as you come upon the clever thrusts of the caviling skeptic in the newspaper paragraph and in the books and magazines you read. They set you adrift sometimes and you hardly know where you are. And this state of things is often encouraged and promoted by that strange perverseness of the human heart which leads, even Christian people sometimes, to read what is said against their religion much more readily than what is said in its favor. I have occasionally met Christians who were quite familiar with the objections of infidelity to our faith while they were profoundly ignorant of the abundant material, solid, trustworthy, unanswerable, that can be brought to its defense. If there are any such here I invite them to a candid survey of the foundation stones on which we build. I think you will find them broad and strong and abiding. A study of this kind will give intelligence and force and stability to your faith. It will put arrows in your quiver and enable you to take the

offensive and carry the war into Africa. You will see "that we have not followed cunningly devised fables" but that our feet rest upon the solid ground of indestructible fact. But while I desire to re-assure the doubting Thomases within the church and confirm their faith in the religion of Christ, I am no less anxious in the second place,

2. To show to those without, who are *honestly skeptical*, the substantial basis of our hope. I say honestly skeptical, for we can do nothing with the man who makes a virtue of his skepticism and doubts because it is the fashion. The person who can dispose of centuries of Christian thought and study with a sneer, and drive it out of the arena of consideration with some smart sally of wit, will get no good from any undertaking of this nature. But there are intelligent young men and women who are honestly in trouble and darkness about these things. They are not prejudiced against our faith. They would like to believe if they could. If their convictions went as far as their sympathies they would be disciples to-night. They are not in the territory of skepticism by choice, nor because they like its atmosphere and its starless skies, but because they can't see their way out. They were

born with a skeptical bias, and they have never yet been able to throw it off.

With such people, as another has said, "we need to employ gentleness, patience, argument and discussion, that we may bring the truth to view, obviate difficulties, and open the way for candid souls to come to a right understanding and conclusion. What such persons need is not severity, but reasonable consideration and a frank canvassing of the grounds of faith with some competent instructor in the spirit of brotherhood, charity, and truth, that they may have a just opportunity to see and know and fairly conclude for themselves." Proceeding in this spirit, as it is my purpose by the help of God to do, the undertaking can hardly be in vain. Indeed I believe it will result in a rich harvest for the Master's garner.

Those of us who have been induced by divine grace to commit ourselves and our destinies to the good ship Christianity like occasionally to go down into her hold and examine her oak ribs and take a look at her length and depth of keel and scrutinize anew the solidity of her carpentry. It does us good. It stimulates our faith. It brightens our hope. It makes us feel safer and stronger and enables us to

walk her decks with more certain tread, no matter how the wind may blow. And I am sure that if you, who have never yet embarked upon the old craft, will enter upon this investigation with us in all candor, you, too, will become passengers and continue with us to the other side. To the end that you may see your way clear to do this may God bless this humble effort. The history of the past is not wanting in cases of honest skeptics who were brought into the kingdom by an impartial and thorough examination of the essential truths of the Christian religion. There were Lord Lyttleton and Gilbert West, both avowed skeptics and men of great ability. The one decided to take up the conversion of St. Paul, the other the resurrection of Christ, and make an exhaustive study of these subjects. They did so, and the result was that both became humble followers of the Lord Jesus. So, in our own country, Dr. Nelson, the celebrated author of "The Cause and Cure of Infidelity," was led to renounce his skepticism and lay hold upon Christ by pursuing the same course. He made up his mind to canvass the whole subject of Christianity, and to do it with stern integrity, unwearying patience, and tireless zeal. He did so and became a man of

mighty power as a preacher of the Cross. And I am persuaded that if you will do in some small measure as these men did, you, too, will see that Christianity is a "city that hath foundations whose maker and builder is God." Such then is our object: To confirm those who are weak in the faith and convince sincere and skeptical hearts that we are not building upon the sand, but upon everlasting granite. It may be proper to add that, underlying and including and permeating both of these, our desire is to glorify God. May his presence be with us and crown the attempt with success to the praise of his Holy Name.

Having thus stated the purpose of these lectures, let us devote the remainder of this preliminary discourse to emphasizing,

3. *The Importance of the Undertaking.* Indeed, it cannot be exaggerated. It has to do with the very roots of life and involves issues the most far-reaching and momentous. Whether we accept Christianity or not, we are bound in all candor to admit that it presents the only adequate solution of the problem of existence. No other system of religion or philosophy assigns to man an origin so exalted and a destiny so sublime. In view of what

materialism and agnosticism have to offer, Lyman Abbott does not overstate the case when he says "there is no alternative between the Christian religion, and no religion at all." The inevitable logic of the situation is either the Christian's God, or no God. When men of world-wide fame tell us that there is "no God that can be known, or worshipped, or loved; no soul, no immortality; no eternal laws of right and wrong; no blame for guilt, or praise for patient, self-denying service; no religion, and no true, high, and hopeful life for either the here or the hereafter"—when this is the conclusion to which they are driven by a materialistic interpretation of the universe, then it is either Christianity or absolute despair. There is no middle ground, or if there is, the keenest intellects, the ablest investigators, have failed to find it. Every bird of discovery sent out has either returned to the ark of Christianity, or with weary and baffled wing, fallen into the fathomless waves. It has seen no olive branch of hope, and found no resting place for the soles of its feet save as it has come back to the vessel from whence it flew. To show you that I am not begging the question, I quote from one of the most brilliant infidels of the

age. I refer to the late Professor Clifford of England. Said he: "It cannot be doubted that theistic belief is a comfort and a solace to those who hold it, and that the loss of it is a very painful loss. * * * * We have seen the spring sun shine out of an empty heaven, to light up a soulless earth, we have felt with utter loneliness that the *Great Companion* is dead. Our children, it may be hoped, will know that sorrow only by the reflex light of a wondering compassion." What is that but the confession of a mind whose hope had been snuffed out by infidel philosophy, that it is either Christianity or blank despair; either the Great Companion or a lonely journey thro' the shadows into the night?

Since, then, there is no alternative, since it is either revealed religion or nothing, our subject assumes superlative importance. If we are content to believe that man is but the consummate flower of evolution, untouched and unfashioned by a divine finger, to bloom for a few short years and then drop back into unconscious dust; if we believe he is but a kind of theatre, in which are enacted little comedies and tragedies, and that when the fires of death consume the theatre the

play must stop forever, then, of course, we belong on the side of the Nothingarians, and are not much concerned about this matter. But those who hold such a creed as this are exceedingly few. I doubt if there is one such here. No matter how vague and shadowy may be our views, no matter how crude may be our notions, we have never been quite able to rid ourselves of the conviction that there is something beyond, that the grave is not our goal, but the gateway to another life. We feel that in some way or other we are related to Higher Powers, and that time is a probationary school wherein to achieve the purpose of that relationship. Well has it been said that: "The complex wheel of ongoing things has turned us out upon this stage, here in the span of earthly life, to determine all. We cannot postpone, we cannot escape. We must here make the great decision."

Ever and anon there steals into our consciousness some such questions as these: What if after all this earthly life is but the seed-plot of an eternal harvest? What if each day is a shuttle flying through the loom of time, carrying with it the thread with which it is weaving the web of our destiny? What if our thoughts and motives and

actions are every hour causing our characters to crystallize into shapes that will abide forever? What if there should be a heaven and a hell, and a Judge of the quick and the dead? What if the God-man did become incarnate, and die upon the Cross, and burst the bars of the tomb, and ascend to the right hand of the Majesty above? What if the faith of the ages is true? It may be doubted if there is one into whose mind such questionings have not come in the silent hour of meditation and serious thought. None of us would undertake to give them a firm and deliberate answer in the negative. But if they must be answered in the affirmative they are questions freighted with tremendous importance. They involve all that makes life desirable or even tolerable, peace and hope and immortal blessedness, as well as the punishment of evil and the moral equilibrium of the universe. They touch us at every point of our being. They concern our most cherished interests, our holiest aspirations, the most solemn events of our history, the birth, the baptism, the bridal, the burial; they have to do with the coffin in the upper chamber, with the inscriptions chiseled on the tombstones of our dead, with our churches and all their sweet as-

sociations, with our most revered and beneficent institutions; they enter into all the deepest and tenderest and most sacred things of earth. As sincere men and women, therefore, we are in no mood to cast them aside as unworthy of our consideration. May God help us, and give us the spirit of honest seekers after the truth that when we find it we may use it for his glory. Amen.

The Lock and Its Key.

“But ask now the beasts and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air and they shall tell thee. Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?”—Job 12: 7-9.

So evident is the existence of God that to some people it may seem like a waste of time to argue in its favor. They may consider it about as uncalled for as to attempt to prove the axioms of geometry. They tell us in the words of the apostle that “the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made.” But it is assuming more than facts will warrant to declare that the doctrine of the being of God appeals to all men with conclusive force. Says the Hon. George R. Wendling: “Countless are the reasons why men will not avow the full measure of their doubts concerning

the existence of an omnipotent and personal God ; nevertheless those doubts exist, and are greater foes to the progress of religion than any of the causes more frequently assailed by the pulpit. I would not presume to tell clergymen their duty ; yet mingling more than they with men of the world, I bring to them from workshop and from farm, from the bar and from the public places of every Venice where merchants most do congregate, the message that what most we need is the conviction that there is a personal God. Strive to supply that conviction and seek to hedge it about with unanswerable argument, and the church wins an invincible lodgment in the hearts of all sincere men." We are told in rhymic phrase that—

"In all the crowded universe
 There is but one stupendous word ;
 And huge and rough, or trimmed and terse,
 Its fragments build and undergird
 The songs and stories we rehearse.

All forms that human language tries
 All phrases of the books and schools,
 And all the words of great and wise
 Are weak attempts, or clumsy tools,
 To speak the word that speech defies.

That word, ineffable to man,
Though spoken thro' a thousand years,
Or thundered in the fiery van
Of all the myriad wheeling spheres,
Unvoiced remains where they began.

There is no tree that rears its crest,
No fern or flower that cleaves the sod,
No bird that sings above its nest,
But tries to speak the name of God,
And dies when it has done its best."

These, however, are the strains of a poet, and he who uttered the text was a poet too, and the poet is not expected to be scientifically exact in his statements. We may admit that his words strike a responsive chord in our hearts, but when we come down to the plain prose of the matter, what we want to have settled is the very thing the poet assumes. Now it will help us not a little in the pursuit of our object to have our minds thoroughly impressed at the very outset with

THE REALITY OF THE INVISIBLE.

We do not need to be told that the greatest things in the universe, though no physical eye has ever seen them, are as real as any solid granite on which we ever stepped. Begin with yourself. Flesh and blood and a certain grace and beauty of

form you can see, but these are not *you* any more than the house is the tenant or than the organ is the music. That which makes you a man, that which constitutes the grandeur of your being, is MIND, and yet you never saw it. But can you doubt its reality? You could as easily doubt the reality of your hands and feet. If, then, you should say "God cannot be seen, therefore there is no God," it would be answer enough to such an argument to reply "You cannot be seen; therefore there is no you." If I were to reason in that way you would hiss me from the platform as a mountebank or a fool. That, however, stripped of the drapery of clever and subtle speech, is precisely the position of not a few on this subject.

Let me ask you to lay hold of this suggestion, that all the greatest things are out of sight. You walk down the street and see magnificent buildings. In finish and architecture they are wonderful, and if some one should tell you that those buildings have no existence in fact, or that, like Topsy, they "just grew," you would be apt to apply to him a term more forcible than elegant. You know they are real, but not more real, and not nearly as great as the intellect that designed them. Here is

Milton's "Paradise Lost." It is a poem put up in book form—so much paper and ink. There is reality in that for you can feel it, you can look at it and count its pages and divisions. But the mighty genius that conceived it and found a Bethlehem for it to be born in, what eye ever got a glimpse of that? Does any one therefore question its reality? No more than he questions the reality of the wind that brushes the forest from its path, tho' he never beheld it or put his finger on it. Take music. We love it. It soothes, it comforts, it inspires, it steals into the soul with sweet memories of long ago, or with hopes of a bright to-morrow, and we are sure it is just as real as any bread that ever appeased our hunger or any water that ever assuaged our thirst. But where shall music be found? We take the singer, we examine his tongue, his larynx, his vocal cords, his diaphragm, the whole apparatus with which he produces sound and we do not find the first note. Then we turn to the organ, pull it apart, scatter its keys and stops and pedals all about, cut its bellows open, scrutinize it through and through, and after we have done all we have failed to discover music. But though it eludes us we know that music is, and

would be, if every organ and singer were destroyed. Take magnetism, gravitation, electricity, the laws of chemical affinity, all the great forces of nature, and not one of them can be seen, and yet they are as real as the mountain or the throbbing ocean. Not only do I want you to bear in mind the reality of the invisible, but to lay hold of this fact also that

THE INVISIBLE IS SUPREME.

It holds the sceptre of empire. The reasons, the passions, the appetites, the motives that rule your life are all beyond the reach of sight. That which rules the universe, looking at it now without any reference to a God; that which holds the stars in their orbits, that which governs the tides, that which directs animal and vegetable life, is the unseen. Hence, since all the greatest things are invisible, the fact that no man hath seen God at any time is an argument for, rather than against, his existence. I make nothing of this, however, but am simply clearing the way.

If your professor of mathematics should declare to you that a certain proposition in geometry is true because Euclid said so you might believe it or you might not. You would certainly be at liberty to doubt it. Euclid is only a reporter and you

could not be required to believe it on his testimony. What you want, and what you feel you have a right to demand, is a demonstration of its truth for yourself. So, as a religious teacher, if I were to tell you that there is a God because the bible says so, you might reasonably object that I had not proved my case. To proceed in that way would be simply begging the question. You are not certain about the authenticity of the bible. You want to know who gave it authority to speak on this subject. To say that there is a God because the bible teaches such a doctrine and then to affirm that we must believe the bible because God inspired it, would be to reason in a very vicious circle indeed. For the present let me say that I neither affirm nor deny the being of God. I make no dogmatic assertion, but simply point to the facts. Here they are all around us, in the world, in society, in ourselves; explain them, account for them, clear them up, give us a reasonable interpretation of them. Dr. Parker of the London Temple, from whom I expect to get a good deal of help, has an illustration something like this: When you enter upon the study of algebra the book says, Let x equal the unknown quantity, and you might

interpose an objection and demand that the x be explained first of all. You might say prove the unknown quantity or I shall not proceed a step. But that would be very foolish. Like a wise student you take the x , apply it to the most complex problems, and you discover that it works wonders and by and by you find its own value. So, for the time being, God is the unknown quantity. The facts of the universe are the terms of the problem. The task before us is to find x or something that will give us a satisfactory solution.

If the doctrine of the being of God gives us a point of view from which all things are seen to fall into the most perfect order and harmony, if it gives us the best and most complete solution of all we see about us, we are bound as reasonable men and women to accept it.

Ours then is

THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD.

The scientific man goes out into the world of nature, and gathers up all the facts he can, and seeks to account for them. That is the course precisely which we shall pursue. We shall take nothing for granted; we shall ask no favors from any man or any book. Here are the facts of nature and human

life, and here are Christianity and Christianity's Christ, and Christianity's Bible; now give us a rational explanation of them. This universe is a lock; now find a key that will open it and let us in to its secrets.

That method ought to satisfy the most critical. There is nothing abstruse, nothing meta-physical, nothing difficult about it. What we are after is a key that will open this complex and wonderful lock of a universe, and if we should find one I trust we shall take it and carry it in our breasts forever. Let us take the keys which infidel philosophy carries at its girdle and try them one by one. The first one we come to is

CHANCE.

It is somewhat rusty with age, for it was used by Democritus, a philosopher of Greece, more than two thousand years ago, and I know not by how many before his day and since. But we shall give it a fair trial, and if it opens the lock well and good. Please, then, examine the facts. Turn where you will, and the universe is full of order. The seasons come and go with unvarying regularity. There is nothing spasmodic about the recurrence of night and day. From year to year, and century

to century, they follow each other with undeviating uniformity. The stars march on in the same orbits forever. There is no jar, no confusion. The sun never fails to rise, nor is it ever seen in the north. The streams all hurry to the sea. We never saw one flowing towards the top of the mountains, and we never expect to. All life is from the little to the great, "first the blade then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear;" so that that famous fiction of the ancients about Minerva springing full-armed from the brow of Jove has no parallel in the world of nature. There are no sudden leaps, no violent twists, but everything unfolds and works in its own channel with the most beautiful harmony. Now these are some of the facts, and in every direction they manifest order.

But can chance produce order? Here is the Oratorio of the Messiah. Do you suppose that that sublime composition ever resulted from throwing the seven notes of the musical scale together in a helter-skelter, hap-hazard sort of way? Or take the dramas of Shakespeare. Can it be possible that they are the result of stirring and whirling the letters of the alphabet about in a blind and promiscuous manner? The very question is absurd.

But if chance cannot account for the drama or the oratorio, how much less can it account for the "grand poem of the universe, with all its living cantos?" You go thro' the great city and everywhere you notice indications of order. Instead of being jumbled together it is laid off in streets, and divisions. Its buildings are numbered; its official machinery is arranged in departments, and so in all directions we see evidences of method. But is not the order apparent in the universe just as marked as that in Chicago? And if chance will not explain Chicago, is it not preposterous to attempt to plain the universe with it?

But Order, as we are all aware, points to purpose. When we see things arranged in a certain way we infer at once that it was done with a certain end in view. This is what the books call

DESIGN.

There is a story in the *Century Magazine* of three persons who were shipwrecked in the Pacific Ocean and with the aid of life-preservers, made their way to a little coral island. There, in that lonely place, much to their joy, they found an uninhabited but well-ordered house. Did they say: "This is the work of chance! This house was

built by the fortuitous coming together of bricks and boards and nails and glass?" That would have been worse than childish folly. They said at once: "This house was erected by some cultured and intelligent man as a kind of summer residence." They were absolutely sure that some man had been there before them and that the house was his handiwork. It did not grow out of the island, it was not cast up by the sea. Well, young friends, this universe has all the marks of a building. Its parts are so related to one another, and so interdependent; it is so filled with traces of design, of adaptations of means to ends, that we can hardly escape the conviction that it must have had a Builder. At any rate the key we are working with now fails to open the lock. Let me ask you to remember a few suggestive facts in this connection.

Within the shell of the egg, entirely excluded from air and where all is dark, the wings and lungs and eyes of the bird are prepared for the atmosphere and the light. No watch ever made, no mechanism ever contrived, is anywhere nearly as complicated as the eye. Where no ray of sunshine could penetrate it was fashioned, as no lens of

man's making has ever been fashioned, with the most complete reference to the nature and properties of light. Did chance make the telescope and microscope? The man who should seriously urge such a doctrine as that would be considered a fit subject for the lunatic asylum.

But there are lots of people who will pay fifty cents a head to hear it eloquently and wittily affirmed that the eye has no Maker; that the world and all that is therein has come about by blind, unreasoning chance! The atmosphere that enswathes our world is composed of oxygen, nitrogen, and a small part of carbonic acid gas. The slightest variation in the combination of these elements would result in infinite disaster. So delicate is the adjustment of these constituents that we may well ask who planned it? If it was any other than it is, no living thing could exist. Think also of the beautiful arrangements of *water*. It is one of the most accommodating as well as one of the most necessary of all things. It will assume any shape, fit any vessel, adjust itself to any shore, fly thro' the air light as a feather, weave itself into fairy-like shrouds of mist, form itself into a cloud, freeze into ice so thick that it can be carted thro'

the streets as an article of commerce, and make of itself a bridge over which may march the traffic of nations. A thousand miles inland, rain is wanted, and in response to the wooing of the sun, water leaps from the bosom of the sea into the sky, is taken in hand by the winds, hurried away over the mountains, and falls upon the thirsty fields in refreshing showers. In all other directions "it is a general law of nature that bodies contract as they become colder." Water, however, is an exception. Frost expands it, so that we all know it is not safe to leave a vessel full of water standing thro' a cold winter's night. This is the reason why the ice floats on the surface of the lake. If water followed the general law it would contract under frost and thus the ice would sink to the bottom, layer upon layer, and not a fish could live in our streams. Now who can entertain the thought for a moment that this beneficent arrangement is the result of chance? In all its forms water bears the imprint of design, and design is an unmistakable mark of intelligence.

Look at the wonderful adaptation of animals to their surroundings, the polar bears to the snows of the north, the camel to the sands and hot suns of

the desert, so made that it can go many days without water; the bird that flies in the air to the atmosphere, the water-fowl to the water, the fish to the sea, and so on to the end of the list. If an animal must have a certain kind of food, it finds the means to secure it ready to hand. Does the wood-pecker live on worms? It has a bill to bore for them. Does a fowl find its sustenance along the edge of pond or lake or river? It has a long neck and long legs.

In the words of Job then I may say: "Ask now the beasts and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, they shall tell thee. Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.

Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?" At any rate it must be evident, I think, that the facts which we have been considering cannot be accounted for by chance. So far as we have gone it fails to open the lock. But here I stop for to-night. In our next lecture, God willing, we shall continue our subject from this point. May the God in whom many of us believe, bless us all in the meantime. Amen.

Trying the Keys,

"Who hath disposed the whole world?"—Job 34 : 13.

Last Sabbath evening we emphasized the reality and supremacy of the invisible. Our attention was also called to the order and design everywhere apparent in the universe as affording strong proof that it could not be accounted for by chance. This key could not open the lock. It failed to explain the facts. To-night we shall continue somewhat along the same line. We are still in search of a key. One of the most familiar of self-evident truths is this, that every effect must have an adequate cause. Now apply this universally accepted axiom to the great fact of

LIFE.

Life is an effect. It is something produced. Not long ago indeed there were scientists of no little celebrity who believed in the doctrine of spontaneous generation and did not hesitate to teach it. It was maintained that life did not proceed

from antecedent life but in some way or other sprang out of inanimate matter; that the living came from the non-living. But this theory has been entirely exploded, and according to Huxley the doctrine of life only from life is victorious along the whole line at the present day. So, also, Tyndall declares, though his sympathies seem to be on the other side, "that no shred of trustworthy experimental testimony exists to prove that life in our day has ever appeared independently of antecedent life." Chemistry has accomplished wonders but no combination of elements has ever yet produced life. But the effect must have an adequate cause. Whence, then, is life? Look at its abundance. Earth and air and sea are full of it. One naturalist tells us that he "saw hundreds of animalculæ in the space of a grain of sand, and 10,000 organized beings." The microscope has revealed the fact that an ordinary glass of water, which, to the naked eye, seems clear as crystal, teems with millions of living creatures each one of which is as perfect in plan and structure as are the beasts that roam over the plain. So abundant are the coral insects of the Pacific Ocean that they build whole islands. On the northeast coast of

Australia is a reef 1,000 miles long and for 350 miles without break or opening, which these little animals have formed. Humboldt estimated that there are about 50,000 different species of animals. Yet science teaches that there was a time when no life existed on our planet. The testimony of the rocks is that "the extant genera of plants and animals inhabiting our earth began to be within a comparatively short period in the history of our globe." Whence then is life? Admitting if you please that it all started from one original germ—an admission which only complicates the problem, for it requires us to believe that Gladstone and the bivalve, man and midge, were launched forth in the beginning from the same life cell!—but even admitting it to be true, still the question arises as to where that primordial germ got its life. And not only so but we want to know how that life became so amazingly differentiated along its 50,000 lines from the mollusk to the man, and how every order became so beautifully adapted to its environment. Life had a beginning. To that all agree. It was not the result of spontaneous generation. That, too, is admitted. It did not cause itself. That is self-evident. How then shall we account for its origin

and for its development, everywhere full of marks of intelligence not to say beneficence? That it was the work of chance is an idea that no sane person can entertain for a moment. This key we must set aside. The one to which we come next is

UNCONSCIOUS ENERGY.

This is the key which Herbert Spencer gives to the world as the means whereby to unlock its mysteries. Now an unconscious energy is something that acts blindly and unintelligently. It doesn't know what it does. It cannot plan, it cannot foresee, it cannot recall, it cannot reason, for these are the peculiar qualities of personality. An energy that is unconscious must of necessity be impersonal. Says Frederic Harrison, as quoted by Lyman Abbott, "Mr. Spencer's 'energy' has no analogy with God. It is eternal, infinite, incomprehensible, but it is not He, but it." This, then, is the key which one of the greatest philosophers of our own day proposes—a soulless, mindless, heartless, eternal IT. But let me ask you to consider how we can explain order and design, and adaptation of means to ends, and life with all its wonderful differentiations, by an infinite IT. If it takes a person, an

intelligent being, to build a house, or paint a picture, or chisel out a statue, can it be possible that a mere thing, a vague impersonality, ever built the worlds, or painted the lilies, or fashioned the human body? If it takes a thinking being to account for the less by what stretch of fancy or violence of logic, can the greater be accounted for by an *IT*, however huge? Our scientific men run up and down the earth and here and there they find caves and mounds and ancient tools and ruins and they say: "These are the work of pre-historic races." They are very certain that no *IT* ever produced them, for they show too clearly the traces of intelligence. And may I not ask to what or whom point the manifold marks of intelligence, written all over the earth and the sky? To an *IT*? To believe that would require as large an amount of credulity as belongs to any benighted heathen that anywhere bows down to stocks and stones this Sabbath day. No, "unconscious energy" does not satisfy us. It leaves the facts unexplained, the lock still fastened, and we must seek elsewhere. Another key offered us is that of

NATURAL LAW.

We are told that the only explanation of the

facts of the universe is to be found in the laws of nature, and for the interpretation of these laws we must turn to science. This is the last court of appeal. We can seek no higher, for there is nothing higher. Says Holyoake, the founder of secularism: "Nature refers us to science for help, and to humanity for sympathy; love to the lovely is our only homage; study, our own praise; quiet submission to the inevitable, our duty; and truth is our only worship." Let us then try this key of natural law about which we read and hear so much. Very pertinently has it been said: "Did law ever do anything? Can it by any possibility do anything? Never! neither in the world of men nor in the world of matter. Law is never anything but a statement of the way in which things are done, have been done, or will be done. Congress passes a law to dredge out the Mississippi river. But will the law dredge it? By no means. Engineers and engines and workmen will dredge it in accordance with the method which the law has prescribed. The law directs, but does nothing." We speak of laws prohibiting this and that crime. But the law in and of itself prohibits nothing. It simply points out the way

in which intelligent, determined, order-loving men are to proceed in the suppression of crime. Without living, acting men behind it, it is dead and useless.

The books tell us that it is a universal law that every two bodies attract each other with a force proportioned directly to the quantity of matter they contain, and inversely to the squares of their distances. But that is only the statement of a fact discovered by Newton. The law does not attract, but simply tells us how the force operates. Here is a machine. It was made to run in a certain way. That is its law, but the law has no power to make it run. The moral law says: "Thou shalt not steal," but that law did not create honesty. We speak of the laws of health, but we do not mean that those laws are the authors of health. We mean simply that if we pursue a certain line of conduct we shall avoid disease. The laws are merely sign-boards telling us which road to take, but the sign-boards themselves can never carry us to the place where health is. Law, then, can produce nothing, and is, therefore, entirely inadequate to explain the facts of nature. But leaving this let me ask you to consider some facts connected with

HUMAN LIFE AND SOCIETY.

We shall begin with the individual. Every man has a moral nature, a something which leads him not only to distinguish between right and wrong, but to approve the one and condemn the other. There is an inner voice which insists upon being heard. We may hush it for a season but it will speak again with greater emphasis than ever. Lady Macbeth could choke it out long enough to compass the murder of King Duncan, but after the cowardly crime it broke forth like a pent-up fire and thinking aloud she exclaimed:

“Here’s the smell of blood still. All
The perfumes of Arabia will not
Sweeten this little hand.”

After the massacre of St. Bartholomew, Charles IX was in such an agony of remorse that he sweat great drops of blood. And you may remember how Richard III cried out in his tent on the night before Bosworth Battle, as he fronted the ghosts of the murdered princes and his murdered wife. We know, too, in our own individual experience that there is something in us which, like Banquo’s ghost, will not down. It brings the wrong deed which we have committed to our re-

membrance in a way that is anything but pleasant. It has frequently banished sleep and made us positively miserable. It has driven many a man out of his hiding place to confess his crime before the world. We call it conscience, and every one of us has heard its voice. We are as sure of its existence within us as we are that we have minds that can think, and hearts that can feel. "Weave around this fact all the casuistry you will," says an eloquent writer, "and tell me if you choose with Hume, and Volney, and Voltaire that 'I ought' in Constantinople simply means 'I ought not' in London, still the fact remains that God made man with this omnipresent 'I ought' implanted in his nature." That conscience sometimes points in contrary directions is a matter with which we are not now concerned. Every truth has been abused by groping, stumbling man. So, no doubt, has conscience. But conscience is a *fact* which must be accounted for. If it be said that conscience is the result of education it will be sufficient to reply that education originates nothing. As the etymology of the word implies it simply *draws* forth, or develops that which already exists. Education does not produce the will, nor the memory, nor

the imagination. All it does or can do is to train and strengthen them. To say, therefore, that conscience is merely a matter of education would be to make a very thoughtless speech.

Nor can it be explained by Chance, or Unconscious Energy, or Natural Law, for conscience belongs to mind and these are mere things. There can be nothing moral or immoral about that which is impersonal, and, since like begets like, the existence of a moral sense everywhere among men argues the existence of a moral source. Another fact very closely akin to this: Man has

THE IDEA OF GOD.

This is not and cannot be denied. Every known language on the face of the earth contains a word which stands for God. The idea of a Supreme Being is found among all the tribes and races of our planet. Said Cicero long ago: "There is no people so wild and savage as not to have believed in a God, even if they have been unacquainted with his nature," and that statement has been amply corroborated by the passing centuries. The Zeus of the Greeks, the Jupiter of the Romans, the Osiris of the Egyptians, the Odin of the Scandinavians, the Great Spirit of the North American

Indians, the Infinite Being recognized by Confucius and Zoroaster, the Jehovah of the Jew—all bear testimony to its truth. Thro' all the ages, in every land and in every clime, runs the idea of one Eternal God. Admitting that it has been grossly abused and hideously caricatured, "still even in the midst of such deformity its original features may be recognized." The *idea* itself is a fact, and what we are after is something that will account for these profoundly suggestive facts.

So far as I am personally concerned I believe that the idea of God is innate, that it is a part of the original furniture of the mind, but I willingly accept the proposition of the man who stands at the head of American infidelity that "man has no ideas except those suggested by his surroundings," and I ask, whence then comes the idea of God? I put it in the form of a syllogism. Man can have no ideas except those suggested by his surroundings. But man has the idea of God. Therefore man is surrounded by God. Belabor your brain as much as you will, conjure up all sorts of forms, let fancy do its utmost, and you find that you have been simply recombining old material. You have created nothing. The subject matter existed be-

fore, and if it had not you could not have thought of it at all. Since, then, from the earliest ages man has had the thought of God, it follows that God is. But I must not anticipate. We are trying the keys, seeking a reasonable explanation of certain facts.

Here for example is another great fact which shines like a star in the night of the past, viz.:

THE TRIUMPH OF RIGHT.

We have seen it borne down by might, trampled upon, so nearly crushed out that we have said: "It is gone; it can never survive," but we looked again and behold, it blazed up like a resistless and conquering fire. We saw it in Egypt, making bricks without straw, oppressed, ground down, opposed, and we said: "Its end is near. A little while longer and it will be no more," but it was not long until we heard it rending the heavens with triumphant song on the Canaan side of the Red Sea. Another time we saw it hunted and persecuted among the hills of Palestine; we saw it thrust into dungeons and burnt at the stake; we saw all the prestige, all the wealth, all the armies of earth's greatest Empire arrayed against it, and we said, "This is too much. The right must

perish, for all the powers of this world are seeking to destroy it," but lo! in a few years we beheld these very powers and dominions bowing the knee before it and doing it homage. I have read of a German Countess, who, being about to die, ordered that her grave be covered with a solid granite slab; that around it should be placed solid blocks of stone, and the whole fastened together with strong iron clasps, and on the stone be cut these words: "This burial place, purchased to all eternity, must never be opened." Thus she defied the Almighty. But a little seed sprouted under the covering, and the tiny shoot found its way thro' between two of the slabs, and grew there slowly and surely until it burst the clasps asunder, and, lifting the immense blocks, the structure ere long became a confused mass of rocks, among which, in verdure and beauty, defying wind and storm, grew a mighty oak.

So we have seen the Right burst every sepulchre in which men have tried to bury it, make its way out of every imprisonment, and lift itself in triumph above the barriers of Might and Wrong, and, like the oak, throw out its sheltering branches to protect the poor and the weak and the helpless.

No lesson is more plainly written on the pages of the past than this, that the battle is *not* to the strong; the race is not to the swift.

“ Speak, History, who are life’s victors? Un-
roll thy long annals and say—
Are they those whom the world called the
victors who won the success of a day?
The martyrs or Nero? The Spartans who
fell at Thermopylæ’s tryst,
Or the Persians and Xerxes? His judges or
Socrates? Pilate or Christ?”

Here, then, is another great fact that calls for an explanation—the triumph of Right. There is something in the universe that “makes for righteousness,” that favors it and brings it ultimately to the front. It may be that Lowell is not far out of the way when he sings:—

“ Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong for-
ever on the throne,—
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and
behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping
watch above his own.”

At any rate there seems to be something “within the shadows” exceedingly jealous of the Right, for sooner or later it conquers all opposition and

wears the crown of victory. Now let me ask you to reflect for a moment upon that wondrous thing which we call

HUMAN SOCIETY.

Consider the endless varieties of men that compose it:—wise men and foolish men, brave men and cowardly men, “the generous and the mean, the unsuspecting and the distrustful, the earnest soul that prays for the race like an intercessor, and the villain whose life never heightened and softened into a prayer for any living soul.” Consider its divisions, its enmities, its mighty contrasts, its comedies and tragedies, its clashing principles, its battles, the diligence with which its members have sought to destroy one another—and yet out of it all society comes purer and better and stronger than before. Nation rises against nation, war reaps its harvest of blood, famine throws its desolating wing over states and continents, pestilence cuts swath upon swath thro’ the fields of life, individuals die by thousands and tens of thousands, “the whole earth is ripped and scarred with tombs,” but society is immortal. We have seen it convulsed by revolution, we have seen it torn in sunder by civil and religious strife, we have seen

it hurled into chaos by the reckless hand of anarchy, we have seen it writhing in the grip of contending factions, we have seen it, like a dismantled ship, swept by the tempest, the plaything of the angry billows, and yet somehow or other it has come out of every storm safer, more staunch, more sea-worthy than ever. For a long time historians thought that society was simply a disordered mass of human beings—a tangled web of twisted and crossing threads, without pattern or design, but they have learned better. They have discovered that the confusion is all on the surface; they have found that there is a Gulf Current setting grandly thro' the ages on whose bosom society is being steadily carried to higher and better things. Here, then, is another great fact to be accounted for. The lock does not yield to any key we have found yet. In our next lecture we shall try the key which Christianity offers. Till then some of us will find comfort and hope in the belief so sweetly expressed by Whittier:

“ Yet, in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed stake my spirit clings:
I know that God is good.”

Christianity's Key.

"Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands."—Psalms 102: 25.

In closing our lecture last Sabbath evening it was announced that to-night we would apply to this wondrous lock of the universe the key which Christianity offers. Before doing so, however, I want to call your attention to a few more facts. Many indeed must be passed by for lack of time, but in justice to our subject we cannot omit those that are most salient and significant. Besides, in trying the keys, it is desirable to have as wide a range of facts as possible in order that we may decide which of the keys, on the whole, furnishes the best solution. Proceeding, then, along the line which we have been following for the last two Sabbath evenings, let me direct your thought to the

TRACES OF BENEVOLENCE

stamped so plainly upon the works of nature. These

have already been hinted at, as for example, in the adaptation of animals to their surroundings, as if special arrangement had been made for their comfort beforehand, and in the floating of ice upon the water contrary to the general law of nature that bodies contract as they become colder. Under this head, too, we must place the order which everywhere reigns in the universe, by which man and beast are led to trust Nature and to prepare themselves for future contingencies. But this they could not do if things were irregular, spasmodic, uncertain, without system or harmonious succession. Suppose Night and Day should become tired of proceeding in the same order forever, and should decide to break up the monotony by bursting upon the world at unexpected times. Or suppose the Seasons were to mutiny and break ranks and march through the years with all the confusion of a mob—what would the husbandman do? How could he tell when to sow his seed? Or suppose the streams should take a notion to start back to the hills—what would become of the mills and factories that depend on water power? You see, then, though you may never have thought of it before, that order is an evidence of kindness. The truth

is, wherever we turn we behold indications of benevolence. We see it in the luscious fruit hanging in clusters from the vines and falling from the branches of the tree. We see it in the harvests that billow in the fields, and fill our granaries with seed for the sower and bread for the eater. We see it in the touches of beauty that everywhere charm the eye as we look out over the landscape. We detect it in the song of the wind and the splash of the brook. And not only so but on a larger and grander scale in the contour and conformation of the continents. Europe, with its hills and northern latitude, would be cold and comparatively barren but for the great furnace of the Sahara burning at its feet and sending warm currents of air away over the Alps and the Pyrenees. Transfer the Andes to the eastern coast of South America and the trade winds could not carry the vapors of the ocean into the heart of the continent. The result would be that the great plains of the Amazon would be an uninhabitable desert. Or suppose in North America the Rocky Mountains extended from east to west, at about the 45th parallel, thus cutting off the polar winds, the larger part of the United States would be African in temperature, and its vast plains would

lie scorched and dead beneath burning skies. Thus if you will take the pains to reflect upon it you will see that the existing arrangement of things in the world of nature is full of kindness, and seems to point to a benevolent cause. It would be interesting to dwell here but time forbids. In dismissing it let me ask you to ask yourselves how this bias of nature toward benevolence is to be accounted for? Why is nature not cruel? If it is blind and heartless and mindless, why is it so constructed as on the whole to contribute happiness rather than misery? The inquiry is certainly scientific for it points to the explanation of a great fact. Now we pass to the consideration of two or three additional facts connected with human life and society. Take for example

THE DESIRES OF THE HUMAN HEART.

Nothing is more evident than that man does not and cannot find complete satisfaction in the things of this life. He is constantly reaching after something higher, after something beyond. Alexander weeping because there were no more worlds to conquer only illustrates the fact that man has a capacity for happiness which this earth is not large enough to fill. Now, in nature I notice these two

laws everywhere: First, that wherever an animal or a plant has certain needs or capacities or desires, abundant provision is made to satisfy them. If the bird wants a peculiar kind of food it never fails to find it. If it has a migratory disposition, and at certain seasons longs for the sunny south-land, and spreads its wings to search therefor it always discovers it. If the bee wants honey every flower of the field and forest has a chalice full of it. If the plant calls for light and air and heat and moisture, these desired—for things respond saying: “Here we are.” The second law is that animals and plants “become all they are capable of being; all that belongs to their nature is fully developed; all their capacities are fully exercised, and all their wants fully satisfied.” The acorn contains within it the promise and potency of an oak, that is all. Beyond that it can never go. When the caterpillar bursts its little cocoon and comes forth a butterfly, it has attained the end of its development. The mere plant or animal soon reaches its limit. But this is not true of man. He never reaches a point where he can say: “I can go no farther.” He is always capable of more. The world does not yield him all he wants. He reaches after something more

than time and sense can afford. He has aspirations, he has longings, he has cravings for fellowship with some power far above himself. He knows he is greater than the things he sees around him; he can rise above them, he can control them, he can make them his servants; and yet, conscious of his power, he feels his weakness, his dependence, his need of support and help from some source higher than himself. It is these desires, these out-reachings, this unrest, this sense of insufficiency, that leads him to build altars and engage in acts of worship. Now, if the instinct of the animal never deceives it; if it never points to something that does not exist; if the duckling cannot be imposed upon by being hatched by a hen, but finds the water with unfailing certainty; if birds of passage make no mistake when they fly in search of a more genial clime; if the lower animals find all they want and all they look for, can it be possible that man is to be forever mocked and deluded when he craves for that which is boundless and eternal? Can it be possible that he alone of all organized beings has a hunger for which there is no satisfaction? Will nature be true to a bird, or a fish, or a bee, or a beast, and

be false to man, her crown and her king? I cannot believe it; for such a belief is unreasonable. It is unwarranted by the whole course of things. I cannot believe that man is playing the fool when he seeks for answers to the deepest and most persistent questionings of his soul. At any rate the scientific spirit demands an adequate explanation of these desires of the universal heart which everywhere manifest themselves in acts of worship. But we must pass on.

In the next place consider—

THE INEQUALITIES AND INJUSTICES OF
HUMAN SOCIETY.

Here the knave prospers and flourishes like the green bay-tree; there the good man suffers and grapples with poverty. In this house the man who never prays succeeds in every enterprise; in that the saint whose knees are calloused with devotion is baffled in every undertaking. Yonder on that street, rolling in wealth, surrounded by every comfort that money can buy, with men-servants and women-servants to do his bidding, lives a man who has trampled upon every law of decency and justice; on the next, battling hard to keep the wolf from the door, in a house scantily

furnished, with want sometimes looking in through the curtainless windows, dwells a man whom money cannot bribe nor appetite turn from the path of righteousness. Brilliant roguery is often applauded and lifted on high, while honest poverty often toils on in obscurity. The cunning, scheming, unscrupulous man who never drew an honest breath, and who never has a thought but for himself, frequently becomes the favored child of luxury, while many a one whose whole life is devoted to the welfare of his fellowmen, never gets more than a bare livelihood. In proof of what I say, let me give you two or three striking examples gathered from my reading.

There was George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham, one of the most talented of men. But his great talents were prostituted to intrigue, duplicity, treason and the most shameless profligacy. He was a man supremely selfish, and consequently supremely bad. Yet, notwithstanding, he was treated with marked distinction and honored with burial among the great of Westminster Abbey. Now contrast with him John Howard, the philanthropist. Falling heir to a considerable fortune he might have lived in ease

and comfort, but he did not choose to do so. On his way to Lisbon to do what he could for the sufferers in the great earthquake of 1775, he was captured by a French privateer and thrust into prison. This, with some experience gained afterward as county sheriff among the prisons of England, led him to take up the work of prison reform with which his name will be forever associated. We know with what self-sacrificing heroism he travelled up and down through Europe like an angel of mercy, and how he finally forfeited his noble life in the south of Russia as the price of his devotion to suffering humanity. Now this I say, that if there is no hereafter, no God who will set the balances right in another world and reward the good man for his goodness, and punish the bad man for his crimes, John Howard was a fool and those who imitate his example are no better.

Or take Nero, the most unprincipled and blood-thirsty wretch that ever disgraced a throne. Indebted to his mother for the crown he dishonored, "he caused her to be murdered, as well as his wife, and the celebrated writers, Seneca, Lucan, Petronius and others." "His cruelties

were incredible, his wickedness unspeakable." He is charged with having set Rome on fire in order that his vanity might be flattered by rebuilding it with greater magnificence than ever. For nine days the conflagration raged, and awful beyond description were the groans of the dying and the lamentations of survivors for loved ones lost. Meanwhile, the historian tells us, Nero was playing on his lyre. But this was only the beginning of horrors. It began to be whispered here and there among the populace that their own Emperor was the author of the great calamity, and to divert suspicion from himself he formally and deliberately charged the fiendish crime upon the Christians. The effect was shocking, fearful, and even at the distance of 1800 years, throws over us a chill of horror. Murder went forth to its fell harvest. "In the gardens of Nero Christians were crucified, sewn in hides of wild beasts, thrown before the dogs, enveloped with some inflammable stuff, raised on poles, and used as torches!" But now over against Nero set his illustrious contemporary, the Apostle Paul, whom he beheaded. The one burning, slaying, destroying, and "fiddling" in the midst of unparalleled disaster, yet living in afflu-

ence and grandeur; the other comforting, saving, building up, weeping with those who wept, and pouring all the wealth of his great heart upon sin-smitten humanity;—yet hunted, persecuted, imprisoned, stoned, shipwrecked, counting not his life dear unto himself, but laboring with consuming zeal to bless his fellowmen. Looking upon these two pictures, I ask if there is a man here who can convince himself that it all ended at the edge of the tomb? Does not every sentiment of justice and every dictate of reason require us to believe that there must be a future tribunal and a righteous judge from whom the Emperor and the Apostle will receive the due reward of their deeds? These cases I have selected from history not because they are isolated, but because they are conspicuous and well known to us all.

Human society everywhere is full of these inequalities. The heroic Haddock dies a martyr to a great cause; his murderer goes free and the liquor traffic continues to prosper. A brother falls, covered with a score of wounds received in defending his sister's honor, while the slayer and ravisher roams at large. Ten thousand brave boys, turning away from the ties and comforts of domestic

life, go forth to fight for the flag they love, and fall with their faces to the foe, cut down in the very flower of their youth, while ten thousand cowardly knaves stay at home and reap the benefits of their valor.

But why should men sacrifice themselves and lay their lives upon this or that altar if this life-story is to have no sequel on the other side of the cemetery? I hold that no man can give a satisfactory answer to that question who substitutes chance or unconscious energy, or natural law, or anything else, for a personal and holy God. "If you could persuade the tenement house population of New York," says Nordoff, "that there is no future life beyond the grave, they would sack the Fifth avenue over night," and the same might be said of the tenement-house population of other cities. Humanity at bottom believes in a throne that is great and a throne that is white; if it did not, nothing could resist the march of anarchy. Is this belief a mockery? Are these hopes of the soul to have no fruition? Is there no world beyond where the heroisms of earth will receive their just mead of praise, and the crimes of earth their proper punishment? I venture no affirmative reply

as yet, but ask you to follow me patiently while I apply to these great facts the

KEY OF CHRISTIANITY.

This key I need not remind you is the God of the Bible. No man hath seen him at any time, for he is invisible. But we have learned that the greatest things in the universe are out of sight, and not only so but that they control and rule the things that are visible. Mind cannot be seen, love cannot be seen, music cannot be seen, gravitation cannot be seen. We know them only by their effects as we know the wind. Hence reasoning from analogy, if there is a God at all we would expect him to be unseen. So far, therefore, as Christianity presents us with an invisible Creator it commends itself to our judgment.

The God of Christianity is intelligent and all-wise. He is set forth as one who knows the end from the beginning. Now we have seen that the universe is full of traces of intelligence. Among these are order, design, adaptation of means to ends, all of which are indications of PLAN. But a plan must always be conceived before it is embodied. The architect, for example, elaborates the plan of the house before he begins to build.

Moreover a plan is as inseparable from thought as shadow from substance, and thought implies a thinker. Thus we are driven to an intelligent first cause, and this Christianity supplies in the personal and absolute God.

So if the great fact of life, with its abundance and amazing differentiations, is to be accounted for, Christianity points us to the living, self-existent Creator, and we are compelled to admit that this is the only explanation that will meet all the necessities of the case. Is kindness stamped upon the face of nature? Christianity says there is a benevolent God, and the answer seems sufficient.

We have found, too, that there is a conscience in man, a universal monitor that warns of a judgment to come. Nothing can permanently silence its voice.

“Yet still there whispers the small voice within,
Heard thro' God's silence, and o'er glory's din;
Whatever creed be taught or land be trod,
Man's conscience is the oracle of God.”

Whether we believe these words of Byron or not, nothing else but the doctrine they teach can explain the fact. If there is no God, conscience is inexplicable, but under the light of Christianity,

which declares that there is a righteous God who can by no means clear the guilty, a moral governor to whom every man is accountable, the mystery clears up. It cannot be denied that in some way or other Christianity has hit upon a very happy and masterly solution of the conscience problem.

In like manner if we want to account for the ultimate triumph of right; if we are concerned to understand why it is that in the long run all things, as Emerson says, "assume a hostile front to vice," we shall have no trouble if we accept the God of Christianity. For this religion shows us an eternal Being, with whom a thousand years are but as one day and one day as a thousand years, one who loves righteousness with all the power of an infinite heart. It tells us of a God who dwells in the calm eternity, who is never in a hurry, the pendulum of whose great clock swings in a measureless arc, and who will accomplish his purposes in his own time. It represents him as being himself the Great Captain of the forces of truth and hence the church is moved to sing :—

"From victory unto victory
His army shall be lead
Till every foe is vanquished
And Christ is Lord indeed."

Nothing but the God of Christianity can account for the triumph of right as we see it in the long sweep of history. But this key does open the lock ; it explains the fact, it clears up the difficulties.

Or if we are puzzled about human society—how to account “for progress amid collision, for rest amid strife, for solidity amid earthquake and whirlwind,” for stability amid change ; if we seek for some adequate interpretation of these desires of the human heart ; if we want to know why man alone of all organized beings fails to reach completeness in this life ; if we want to account for conscience ; if we demand a reasonable explanation of the wrongs and inequalities of human society ; how it is that, while right conquers in the long run, within man’s span of seventy years, innocence sometimes suffers and guilt sometimes goes free ; why the strong man dies and the cripple lives on ; why the babe drops like a bud from the family tree ere it has learned to say “mother,” while the old man, decrepit, infirm, helpless, lingers on far into life’s winter ;—if we want answers to such questions as these Christianity’s one great reply is—God, God. And if any man can find another answer so full, so complete, so

satisfactory, so sublime, let him bring it forth. When it comes there will be no mistaking its quality. It will stand upon its merits and be its own vindication. The world has been waiting and looking for such an answer thro' all the weary centuries but never has it found one that begins to approach this ; "Of old Thou hast laid the foundations of the earth and the heavens are the work of thy hands." To every other key that human wisdom has ever tried the lock refuses to respond, but to that of Christianity it opens at once, and most beautifully. It is equal to the occasion. It meets the issue squarely. It accounts for the facts.

Not that it explains everything. I make no such assertion. It has many secrets to reveal but we cannot bear them now. We are primary pupils, and primary pupils must wait and plod along and toil up before they can know all that is going on in the High School. You might say to me, "I accept the proposition that God is the author of all things, if you please, but I cannot rest there ; I must push the inquiry farther. I want to know who is the author of God." There can be no objection to that. We must put no

shackles upon the intellect. And I reply, "Urge your question as to who made God, follow it up, seek, knock, thunder against every barred door in the universe and see what will come of it." Of this I am sure, that before you have continued your quest a great while, like the dove sent out from Noah's Ark, you will long for some resting place, some rock secure and eternal on which to plant your feet.

We must not think that we are going to get rid of mystery; seeing is a mystery, hearing is a mystery, the throbbing of the heart is a mystery, we live and move and have our being in mystery. If therefore you expect us to clear up all the mysteries that gather about our subject, you are going to be mightily disappointed. But this I say, that the key with which we are now working fits the lock so well and gives such a satisfactory explanation of the facts that no unprejudiced mind can set it aside as insufficient. As it opens door after door in this house of many mansions we can but conclude that we have the right key. This, then, is our first great foundation stone—the rock on which we build, God, God. What though it dips away into the unknown on every side, far, far be-

yond the reach of every plummet ever let down by human hands, enough that it lifts itself above the waves sufficiently to afford hope and rest and security to all who will row thro' the billows to its friendly refuge. On that Rock we stand and wait and look away, assured that the shadows will lift by and by. Before we are done we trust that every man among you will join us so that with one heart and one conviction we may sing :—

“ Rock of ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.”

Amen.

Among the Gods.

"Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord."
—*Psalms 86: 8.*

As the man of science goes out into the world of nature or into human society and gathers up all the facts he can find with a view to giving them a reasonable explanation, so that is the method we have decided to adopt in these lectures. We are massing facts of a certain kind and trying to give them a rational interpretation. If the man who takes his little hammer and goes chipping here and there among the rocks, or goes with his scalpel seeking to cut his way to the mysteries of the human body, or becomes an expert in classifying birds, or even bugs, and explaining their habits, is entitled to be called a scientist, may not the men who essay to account for the greater facts to which our attention has been directed, modestly claim a right to the same distinction? Leaving the question with you let me say that to-night we are to

spend half an hour among the gods. The great champion of infidelity in this country has said that "Every nation creates its own God." But the assertion is not by any means new. Among German Rationalists, Feuerbach taught that "Man created God after his own image." So, in the same strain, Prof. Clifford says: "From the dim dawn of history, and from the inmost depth of every soul, the face of our father *Man* looks out upon us, and with the fire of eternal youth in his eyes, says: 'Before Jehovah was, I Am.'" No doubt man has made a great many gods, and endowed them with his own passions and appetites and jealousies and weaknesses, as I think we shall see, but I think, also, that we shall come to a certain point beyond which some other explanation will be found necessary to account for the facts. I desire in this lecture to contrast the gods of Paganism with the God of the Bible. First, let us look at some of the

GODS OF THE EAST.

Brahmanism, as you know, is the ancient and aristocratic religion of India. According to this religion *Brahma* was in the beginning supreme, sole and self-existent. "He willed to create various creatures out of his own substance. Accordingly,

by meditation, he produced the waters; into them he put a seed, which developed into a golden egg." That egg, we are told, contained the seeds of all future worlds, and not only so, but into this marvelous egg we are informed that Brahma himself entered. There he sat, brooding and vivifying and hatching for 4,300 millions of years! "During this amazing period, the wondrous egg floated like a bubble on the abyss of primeval waters, increasing in size, and blazing refulgent as a thousand suns. At length the Supreme who dwelt therein burst the shell of the stupendous egg and issued forth under a new form, with a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, and a thousand arms. Along with him there issued forth another form, huge and measureless." This, let me say at once, without prolonging the quotation, was the universe as we now see it in all its glory. In addition to Brahma, the people of India have over 300,000,000 of inferior gods, so that they are well supplied. Among their objects of worship are the cow, the serpent and the monkey. Plants too, and certain stones and stately rivers receive religious adoration. Indeed their pantheism puts God into everything, and makes everything a part of God.

Buddhism, the religion of at least one-third of the human race, did not originally recognize any personal God or any soul, but afterward its gods became very numerous. These consist of images and relics of Buddha, as well as the god himself, and holy personages who descended to earth to be his successors. The only heaven that Buddhism has to offer is Nirvana, or absolute annihilation.

Passing from India to China we find that the gods worshipped by that very numerous people are for the most part Confucius, Buddha and their own ancestors. Now glance for a moment at the

GODS OF EGYPT.

These were so numerous that when Herodotus visited that country in the fifth century, B. C., he said it was easier to find a god in Egypt than a man. "Every month of the year, every day of the month, every hour of the day and night, had its presiding divinity." Among their great gods were Osiris, Ammon, and Ra, the sun-god. From Chamber's Encyclopedia we learn that the Egyptian gods were divided into three orders. "The first contained eight gods, the second twelve, the third an unknown number." The Egyptians also worshiped animals, the cat, the ibis, the dog-

headed ape, the hawk, the beetle, and I know not how many others. From these turn to the

GODS OF GREECE AND ROME.

With these I presume we are more familiar. They, too, were innumerable. Athens was full of them, and when St. Paul visited that city he found that the over-scrupulous people, fearing lest they might have made some serious omission, had erected an altar to "the Unknown God." In Greece every lake, every stream, every hill, every grove, had its diety. There were twelve greater gods and goddesses who dwelt on Mt. Olympus. At the head of these stood Zeus. He was the grand-son of the Sky and the Earth, and the son of Time, or Saturn. "As Time devours its offspring, so Saturn was said to have had the bad habit of eating up his children as fast as they were born, till at last his wife Rhea contrived to give him a stone in swaddling clothes, and while he was biting this hard morsel Jupiter (or Zeus) was saved from him." Jupiter had a son whose name was Vulcan, the god of fire, at whose smithies in the volcanoes, his workmen, the Cyclops, forged thunderbolts for his great father. Poor Vulcan was lame, and as the gods met one day on Mt.

Olympus to feast on ambrosia and drink nectar, he limped and stumbled so ridiculously as to make them all laugh, and they decided to choose the beautiful Hebe to take his place. But after a while she became very careless and, at one of their feasts, tripped and fell, cup and nectar and all. This caused them not a little trouble, but gods could hardly be expected to be troubled long. Turning their eyes away to Mt. Ida in the distance they saw a very handsome youth, Ganymedes by name, watching his flocks, and Jupiter sent his eagle to pounce upon him and bring him to Olympus. Of course he came and things went on smoothly once more.

Sometimes these old gods of Greece got drunk. Sometimes they indulged in unspeakable orgies; sometimes they quarrelled; sometimes they went to war. Among them there were jealousies, intrigues, scolding, wife-beating, violence, theft, adultery, murder, and in fact all the crimes of the calendar. Hermes was the god of thieves and all kinds of rogues. He stole everything he could get his hands on, from the oxen of Admetus to the sceptre of Jupiter. The way Vulcan came to be lame was that his father kicked him out of heaven

for taking his mother's part in a family fracas, and, after falling for a whole day, he alighted upon the isle of Lemnos and was pretty badly shaken up as we may suppose. Who has not heard of Jupiter's terrible fight with the Titans? They were a race of awful giants, one of whom Briareus, who had a hundred heads, tried to scale heaven by piling mountain upon mountain, for the purpose of flinging Jupiter down. But just at the proper moment Jupiter's head began to ache, and, calling to Vulcan, he told him to strike it with his hammer. He did so, giving it a tremendous blow, whereupon out darted Minerva, fully armed, and by the aid of her wise counsels the Titans were defeated. To keep them from making any future disturbance he buried them beneath their own mountains, Etna, Ossa and Pelion, and whenever there was an earthquake thereafter it was supposed to be caused by these giants struggling to get out, although Wiggins has adopted a different theory. I trust I am not wearying you with this recital, but I want you to see what conception the greatest and most enlightened people of antiquity had of their gods. It will be well for us to remember that the Greeks were entertaining these monstrous ideas at about

the same time David was writing his Psalms and the great prophets uttering their rapt and sublime predictions.

In all their essential features the gods of Rome were the same as those of Greece. Like all the other nations about which I have spoken the old Romans had gods without end. Every house had its Lares, "every city its guardian spirit, every stream its nymph, every wood its faun." Dr. Storrs, speaking of the divinities of Rome before the advent of Christianity, says: "All gods had come to be recognized as local. * * * The noblest of the divinities were not imagined to take any interest in human virtue. The most popular stories current about them were the frightful and depraving legends which rehearsed their furious passions and amours." Indeed the Romans simply transferred their own lusts, their own appetites, their own qualities to the gods they worshiped. As the old stock deteriorated in morals and in force and strength of character their gods grew worse and worse. In addition to their own peculiar dieties their Pantheon was filled with the gods of the nations which they conquered, and their worship recognized and allowed.

To the gods of our own forefathers, the early Anglo-Saxons, I can only take time to refer. Suffice it to say that there were plenty of them, chief among whom were Odin and Thor, and that they were little or no improvement upon the gods of Greece and Rome.

If we turn to the Mohammedan conception of God we shall find that it was considerably higher, but we should remember that this religion drew freely upon Hebrew and Christian sources for its ideas. Yet, as has been said, the Mohammedan God is "A stern, absolute, unloving Will, demanding only to be obeyed; a Being who will give to the fullest measure what those who serve him most desire—the sensual joy, ever fresh and immortal, of drunkenness and of lust."

Such then are the gods as conceived of by the leading nations of the world. I have simply touched upon them, but if you will take the pains to look the subject up for yourselves you will find them even more earthly and revolting and un-divine than I have represented them. In fact many of their exploits and intrigues and practices are too utterly abominable to be even hinted at. Before leaving these gods let me ask you to hold in mind the following facts concerning them :

1. They were *many*. While as Max Muller says there was originally the idea of one Supreme God among the nations, it everywhere, except among the Jews, became Polytheistic.

2. They were *Local*—shut up to certain places or certain spheres of dominion as Jupiter to heaven, Neptune to the sea, Pluto to hell, and so on.

3. They were *limited*, both in knowledge and power. Even Zeus was subjected to the immutable decrees of fate, while we find that on more than one occasion he was deceived and imposed upon by some of the smart deities around him.

4. They were *unholy*. They yielded to every kind of vice and folly.

5. They were *selfish*. Their employment consisted in promoting their own pleasures rather than the cause of virtue. They drank and ate and caroused, while their ears were regaled by Apollo's lute and the songs of the Muses.

6. They were *vindictive*. They laid their plans and took revenge upon their enemies with manifest delight.

7. They were *vulnerable* both in body and soul, and subject to most of the ills that flesh is heir to.

Or,

8. They were Pantheistic like Brahma, and consequently impersonal :—but parts or expressions of the universal All.

It is with a sense of profound relief that we turn from these to the

GOD OF THE BIBLE.

Let me ask you to note carefully the measureless contrast. It could hardly be greater.

1. The God of the Bible is *One* and beside him there is none else. “Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts. I am the first, and I am the last ; and beside me there is no God.” (Isa. 44:6.)

2. The God of the Bible is a Spirit. Many of the gods of heathen countries, as we have seen, were worshiped under the forms of various animals. They inhabited material bodies and were material in their mode of action. But the God of the Bible is a Spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

3. He is the *Universal Presence*. He secludes himself on no Olympus. He reigns in no far-off heaven whence he issues his decrees. He cannot be hid in any lake or grove or river. Never in all the great eternity can we be nearer to Him than

at this moment. Search thro' all the books of human wisdom and nowhere will you find such sublimity as is expressed in this passage from the 139th Psalm:—"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." Thus he is represented as filling all space and being equally present in all parts of creation.

4. The God of the Bible is *All-powerful*. "Behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee." (Jer. 32:17.) "But Jesus said * * * with God all things are possible," (Matt. 19:26); and in Revelation we have this ascription: "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." (Rev. 19:6.)

5. The God of the Bible is *All-knowing*. "His understanding is infinite," (Ps. 147:5) says the Psalmist. "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard that the everlasting God the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding." (Isa. 40:28.)

6. The God of the Bible is *All-holy*. "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." (Ps. 145:17.) "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." (Ps. 22:3.) "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." (Hab. 1:13.) It was hardly so with some of the other gods.

7. The God of the Bible is *eternal*. "Before the mountains were brought forth or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God." (Ps. 90:2.) "The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms." (Deut. 33:27.)

8. The God of the Bible is *unchangeable*. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning." (Jas. 1:17.) "They shall

perish but thou shalt endure ; yea all of them shall wax old like a garment ; as a vesture shall thou change them and they shall be changed. But thou art the same and thy years shall have no end." (Ps. 102:26, 27.)

9. The God of the Bible is a Father. Jesus taught his disciples to pray "Our Father which art in heaven." (Matt. 6:9.) "Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32.) This endearing title is applied to him a great many times. In the Old Testament he is called "the everlasting Father." It is a name of hope, a name of provision, a name of protection, a name of indulgence. With such a name as that in which to trust we can look up. Once more—

10. The God of the Bible is a God of *love*. "God is love." (1 John 4:8.) Like all the rest of his attributes his love is set forth as being infinite and eternal. He speaks of loving Israel with an everlasting love. "God so loved the world that he sent his Son." But I fear you are tired of this recital and I shall stop it. It was necessary, however, to set these conceptions of the gods over against each other that you might see the contrast

You see what an infinite gulf there is between them. How grand and sublime is that of the Bible; in every way worthy of the holy and eternal God. How absurd and ridiculous are many of those of the heathen, unworthy even of a man. Now, how shall this fact be accounted for? The ancient Jews were surrounded by all sorts of idolatrous people, and were constantly running off into idolatry themselves. They are not classed among the cultured and intelligent nations of antiquity. They were exclusive and clannish, and held no "intercourse with their learned neighbors." And, as like begets like, so they were held in contempt by all people that knew anything about them. How then, I ask, does it come to pass that their writers have given us a conception of God transcendently higher than that of any other nation—a conception which has never been improved upon in all the flight of the centuries? Our loftiest conceptions of God to-day were anticipated long ago, not in India, not in Greece, not in Egypt, but in Palestine, by the shepherds and herdsmen and prophets of Israel. The Greek and Latin literature is still held in admiration by the learned everywhere, but

the gods of the classics provoke our mirth if they do not excite our disgust, while the God of the Bible fills us with awe, reverence and adoration.

I know very well there have been some hideous conceptions of God even within the pale of Christendom. Even Christian teachers have been known to invest God with their own qualities and create Him after their own image. They have clothed him with their own narrowness, their own sternness, their own softness, their own tears and sentimentality. Some have made him cold, unbending, unapproachable, with a heart as hard and unsympathetic as granite, consenting only to love men and save them on condition that his innocent Son lay down his life for theirs. But the plain teaching of the Scriptures is that the incarnation, the atonement, all the provisions of redeeming grace, came out of the love of the eternal Father as the stream comes out of the fountain.

Some have made him too weak to maintain the integrity of his own government; a God whose "life is a tumultuous sentiment, rushing like an unbanked river into any swamp that will receive it and turn it into fetid and barren greenness." He is a God who will never hurt anybody's feeling

by such a rude thing as punishment. In the fullness of his love he will let men do as they please. Then when they plunge into all sorts of iniquity he will weep over them and sweep them into heaven on the tide of his affection. That is not my God, nor do I find him anywhere in the Bible.

Others again make him a kind of class-God. He is monopolized by certain denominations. He is found only in their churches, and listens only to their prayers. He is an esthetical God whose ears cannot endure the broken accents of vulgar supplication. Yes, there are such caricatures of God even in Christian lands, but let us not suffer them to blind us to the exalted and altogether unparalleled conception of the Bible. Turn to the old Book. Look at the character of God as described therein. Confine yourselves to no detached verses, but take the description as a whole, and see if it is not all that could be desired, noble, peerless and sublime. This God of the Bible is just ; but he is also merciful. He is omnipotent, the strength of the hills is his also ; and yet at the same time he is love. He is absolutely holy, but any poor penitent sinner can find a place in his heart. He inhabits eternity, and yet he will make his home in a human breast.

He is past finding out and yet he reveals himself to babes and sucklings. He is a Father, gracious and tender and pitiful, while at the same time he is not to be trifled with. Though his sovereignty throws itself over all worlds and exercises absolute dominion it is matched by his all-embracing sympathy. Thus we have this amazing balance of qualities combined and focalized in the Biblical conception of God, compared with which all others are puerile: "Torch-lights beneath the meridian sun ; tinted vapors before the heaven-high crystal air," and we ask whence did it come? Was it the product of the unaided Hebrew mind? Did the writers of the Bible dream this God, or did they climb up to the dazzling and stupendous conception over the sky-illumined stairway of inspiration? The answer hinted at in this last question is the only answer that will give us a satisfactory explanation of the fact. Once admit that the Bible is inspired, that holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and the difficulty vanishes. The fact is accounted for. The writers themselves were taught of God. Seek to account for it in any other way and we are driven into all sorts of absurdities. Here then we rest the argu-

ment for the present, having found in the conception of God given us in the Bible the first great proof of its inspiration.

The Inspired Book.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”—Second Tim. 3 : 16.

“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”—Second Pet. 1 : 21.

Last Sabbath evening we dwelt upon the Biblical conception of God and from its superiority as compared with all others, argued that it furnished a strong proof of the inspiration of the sacred Scriptures. It would be interesting to follow, to-night, with a lecture on the Biblical conception of man, but we can only refer to it and pass on. When we recall the fact that no other sacred book assigns to man an origin so exalted, or a destiny so sublime; that the Bible declares that man was created in the divine image, that he was made a little lower than the angels, that the son of God died to save him, that this was the purpose of infinite Love before the foundation of the world; when we remember that this book puts upon human life a value that

is measureless, that the whole drift and tenor of its teaching seeks to ennoble and dignify and protect man; that it represents all the heavenly intelligences as regarding him with profound and loving interest; when we recall these facts we can but admit that so far at least the Bible is consistent. For we feel that a book that contains so high a conception of God should also entertain a lofty conception of man. Thus, at the very outset, our minds are disposed in its favor. It *seems* to be our friend. At any rate we can hardly feel unkindly toward a book that holds such exalted views of our nature, and appears to be so deeply concerned about our good. But barring all prejudice that may have come from this or any other source let us apply to the volume the method to which we have thus far adhered. The Bible is a fact to be accounted for, and if we are honest seekers after the truth, as I trust we are, we shall give it the most careful and conscientious examination. Now in a general way I observe that—

THIS BOOK CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN INSPIRED
OF GOD.

I need not burden you with quotations in proof of this assertion. This claim is either true or false.

We may look at it, if you please, in the light of three suppositions. Suppose first, that it was the invention of the good. That would make it necessary for us to believe that the *good* made a book and were constantly lying while they were writing it, for they say again and again: "Thus saith the Lord," "Thus saith the Lord," when they were only recording their own fiction. But we cannot conceive of the good resorting to such downright deception as that, and hence, the first supposition must be ruled out. Suppose second, that it was the fabrication of the *bad*. Then we would be required to believe that the bad wrote a book prohibiting all evil, forbidding every form of sin, demanding absolute purity of thought and conduct, commanding all duty, and condemning their own souls to all eternity. That the bad would do such a thing as that is contrary to all reason and experience, and so the second supposition must be set aside. There is but one other supposition possible, viz.: that this Book was inspired of God as it claims to be. In support of this claim we allege nothing as yet, but proceed somewhat specifically to consider a few very striking facts. We find, first, that the Bible is—

UNLIKE ANY OTHER BOOK IN ITS MECHANICAL
FEATURES.

It has a beginning and an ending but there is an utter absence of the book-maker's handiwork in it. "Nobody," says Dr. Parker, "seems to have cared much how it was put together. It has not been edited, it has been huddled; there is no trace of literary plan; no editor or architect could have been employed in putting together the various parts. Man after man seems to have written just what he pleased, and the various parts seem to have been thrown together anyhow * * * * *

There is no preface, there is no index, there is no table of contents. Here and there—in fact all over the face of the book—strange hands have scribbled something by which they have meant to indicate the contents of the book, but the men themselves have written, as it appears to me, when they pleased, how they pleased, as much as they pleased, and have allowed other people to add little bits here and there, and the book has come together in the night time, when nobody could tell exactly how it was, to tumble into such rough coherence as it may claim. There is not the slightest attempt to secure beauty or uniformity of outline. Things

that belong to one another are not put together. Some are here, some there, and some other where, and a good many are half put; are suggested rather than stated."

But while this is true we find that from first to last there is progress, movement, a grand central current setting always forward toward a certain goal. We find, in fact, that the confusion is very like what we see in nature, much more apparent than real. The trees of the forest are not planted in rows; the flowers of the field are not classified and arranged and set in artistic beds; the streams do not run in straight channels to the sea; the stars are not fixed in the sky in lines and circles. We detect nothing of the gardener's cleverness in nature. Things seem to be thrown together promiscuously. And yet we have seen that there is order the most harmonious and wonderful. In this respect, then, the two books seem to be very much alike, and it would not surprise us if they were really the work of the same author. Nature builds no houses, it constructs no sciences, and yet every architect and every scientist goes to nature for his raw material. So it is in regard to the Bible. It furnishes man with the truth in its native state, and

leaves him to fashion it into whatever forms or systems he will. Now there seems to be wisdom in that and goodness too. The mechanical changes, the system-builder's handiwork, passes away. New architects come on with new plans. Taste is a variable and uncertain quantity. Old houses are torn down to give place to new. But the material out of which men build is the same forever.

Another thing under this head, viz.: the *size* of the book. Other sacred books fill a library. They spread out into volumes as the Talmud of the Hebrews, and the Vedas of Brahmanism, and deal with every conceivable subject. No one life is long enough to become familiar with them, but the Bible is a comparatively small book and its essential truths may be read and laid up in memory in a very short time. This, we must admit, is just what we would expect in a book inspired of God for the religious instruction of men. But we shall leave this for the present, as we expect to refer to it in another connection. In the second place, the Bible is unlike any other book—

In its style. It is plain-spoken. It drives straight ahead and calls things by their right names. It uses no gloss, no refinements of speech, whereby

sin is softened and made almost beautiful. If its language sometimes shocks, it is because it describes a most shocking and awful thing. It puts no bright colors upon that which is inherently and utterly black. It never sugar-coats Satan's pills—never; but sets them before us in all their horrid ugliness. Other books, made by dainty writers, blush and stammer when they come to some dreadful sin, or they labor to conceal its hideousness by throwing around it a handsome garment woven out of fastidious and unoffensive words. They hide the serpent in a garland of flowers. But the Bible knows nothing of such devices. It makes no apologies, it suppresses nothing for fear of offending somebody's taste, but moves right on, painting life as it is and giving us some glimpses of life as it may become. It is rough, rugged and grand as the mountains, and yet modest and sweet and gentle as the lilies of the valley.

In tone it is *imperative*. It speaks as one having authority. It does not come saying: "By your leave, or if you please, I would like to make known certain truths which I would be greatly gratified to have you examine." It commands. It says: "Do this and live," or "Do that and die." This is its

tone throughout, and we can see that no other would be consistent with a book claiming to be inspired of God. The book must be like its author and when God speaks we expect him to be positive, peremptory, and final. Again the Bible is unlike any other book in the—

ENTIRE FRANKNESS OF ITS WRITERS.

While they are modest enough never to obtrude their own personal dignity they are disingenuous enough never to conceal their own weaknesses. Other men when writing about themselves or brethren keep back all facts of a damaging nature while they give the worthy things which they did as prominent a place as possible. David was an adulterer and a murderer, and yet we find him recording his own crime and saying: "Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight." Why did he rush into history with such a confession as that? Why did he blaze his deed of shame to the world? We read in the Bible that Noah got drunk; that Jacob played a very scurvy trick upon his brother Esau, and deceived his aged father; that the great Elijah turned coward and acted in a very foolish manner; that

Moses lost his patience and Aaron worshipped the golden calf; that Solomon bowed down to idols and wrought folly in Isreal; that Peter, the man of rock, cursed and swore and deliberately lied, and that Paul and Barnabas quarreled. Now it seems very strange that the writers of the Bible did not suppress facts like these which reflect so seriously upon the characters of its great men. Here are twelve men claiming to have been charged with a divine commission; yet when their history is written by two of their own number and by two devoted friends and admirers, one is described as a thief, a traitor and a suicide, one as a skeptic, one, and he their leader and spokesman, as weak, impulsive, and on a certain occasion, as breaking forth into profanity and falsehood, and all of them as deserting the Master in a very cowardly manner at the very time when he needed their friendship and sympathy most.

These are the things that impress me with the absolute honesty of the book. Forgers do not write after this fashion. Men who were inventing a Gospel, or trying to make out a case, would have carefully avoided such facts as I have just indicated. Imagine a company of wise men coming together

in solemn council to make a Bible containing a religion for mankind. They want certain representative characters to stand in the foreground to give tone and dignity to the volume. Now is it probable that they would fix upon such a deceiver as Jacob, or such a criminal as David, or such a dissembler as Peter, for this purpose? Or if they did, would they not keep their foul sins out of sight and speak only of their great and shining qualities? Do we not know that if such men were to write a Bible they would fill up its pages, not with the biographies of poor sinners, but with those of high and mighty saints and patterns of piety and virtue? But the writers of this Bible tell the plain truth about themselves and their friends and their brethren, no matter how black and damaging it may be. Now here is a striking fact to be accounted for. I leave it with you, pausing long enough simply to say that this entire frankness, this fearless honesty, looks as though it might have been born in Heaven. It does not ring like counterfeit coin, and if we rub the prejudice from our eyes I wouldn't be surprised if we should see on it the image and superscription of God. Again let me say that the Bible is unlike any other book in that—

It is *entirely free from anything like flattery*, or from any attempt to *smooth over the sins of those in high places*. We know that as things go among men, money and position cover a multitude of evil doings. If a young man, belonging to a wealthy home, runs away and gets into trouble through his own folly, and is brought before the police court charged with some very serious crime, it is hushed up or his offence is palliated as much as possible. But let some poor fellow, without friends or influence, or a decent coat to his back, be found guilty of a crime not half so heinous, and every detail of his case is brought out. Nothing is kept back. The whole story is told. Not an item is suppressed. That, however, is not the way of the Bible. No man knows the name of the thief that died on the cross, or of the fallen woman who bathed the Saviour's feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, or of the adulteress to whom he said: "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." But when David, the king, commits a great sin it is all brought out. The whole black, damning record is written down. No account is made of his position. He is taken from his throne and made to sit in sack-cloth and ashes

and cry from the depths of a broken heart: "Have mercy upon me, O God." So it seems that, nor power, nor wealth, nor position, nor anything else, can induce this old book to keep back the truth. It matters not though that truth may show up the faults of its own writers; out it must come, and the record stands to testify against them forever. A fact so unlike anything we see in other books calls for an adequate explanation. Furthermore, the Bible is unlike any other book—

In its omissions. Somewhere in my reading I have seen the remark that Swedenborg and Mahomet and Joseph Smith, and the writers of all other sacred books, knew too much, and it is true. Their very wish to appear inspired carried them into all sorts of extravagances. They never knew when to stop. In straining after the supernatural they became silly, and in their desire to be counted wise beyond their fellows they filled their pages with a vast amount of nonsense. But no one can say this of the writers of the Bible.

In the weighty and stupendous matters which they record, there were a thousand things to awaken curiosity and beget speculation but to this spirit they never yield. They lay down doctrines

the most profound and wonderful, surrounded with infinite difficulties, but they never suffer themselves to turn aside from their main purpose to explain them. On they go, never stopping for a moment to set down any reflections of their own. Judging from ourselves, and from what we know of mankind, we can readily suppose that they were often tempted to do this. Why didn't they tell us more about heaven? Why didn't they tell us more about hell? Why didn't they enter more into particulars concerning the astonishing events to which they refer? Other sacred writers do, giving us all sorts of details, and it is strange that the writers of the Bible so uniformly resist this very natural tendency. We wonder sometimes that they do not say more. At the very point where they excite our curiosity they stop. They lead us up to the edge of some great unknown region and there they leave us. What became of Lazarus after Christ raised him from the dead? What became of the ruler's daughter and of the widow's son whom he brought back to life? Not a word do these writers of the Bible say about it. How shall we account for their silence upon such facts as these? Why is it that just where our curiosity wants to penetrate they refuse to throw one ray of light?

We have felt a great many times that we would like to know more about the infancy and childhood and youth of Jesus, but with the exception of a single incident, nothing is said in the Gospels about those early years. I can imagine how the writers thereof must have longed to enlarge upon the wondrous story. But I thank God for their silence. It is grandly eloquent. It argues with resistless force that they were no mere inventors, and if not, what then? I leave you to answer the question for yourselves.

Before leaving this, however, let me call your attention to some fictions about the child Jesus, as found in the Apocryphal Gospels. I condense from Canon Farrar's "Life of Christ." He is represented as carrying spilt water in his robe; as moulding sparrows of clay and then making them fly by clapping his hands; as turning a variety of cloths into the desired color by throwing them altogether into a dyer's vat; as turning his playmates into kids; as striking dead the boys who ran against him, and many other wonderful things. How shall we account for the fact that the Gospel writers of our Bible kept aloof from all such puerile and unworthy inventions? In only one way, viz.: that they faithfully told the truth.

Thus you see the book is no less wonderful in what it *omits* than in what it relates. When a man writes a book to-day it is impossible for him to keep the thoughts and theories and speculations of the times from being more or less woven into its subject matter. They are in the air and he appropriates and assimilates them unconsciously. Whether he knows it or not he commits himself to some system or school of philosophy, and his teachings are colored, and his conclusions shaped by his surroundings. It is not so with the writers of the Bible. They wrote in the midst of political conflict and philosophical inquiry and all sorts of discussions, but nothing of these outside matters was transferred to their pages. They stick to their one purpose everywhere. Nothing can turn them aside from it. To the spiritual idea they cling with never-swerving loyalty. Let any man account for this fact, if he can, apart from the doctrine of inspiration and put his explanation in the question box in the vestibule that I may read it to the congregation. One other fact and I am done for to-night. It is this, the Bible is unlike any other book—

In the *abundance of its resources*. Most of the

books read now-a-days are laid aside after the first perusal, never to be taken up again. That is an unusual volume that will repay a second reading, and you can count on your fingers those that will bear going over half a dozen times. Frequently it happens that many of the choice thoughts which we marked as we went over the book at first are found to be much less profound and important than we thought they were when we revert to them again. So it often comes to pass that a book suffers in our estimation by a second reading. The more familiar we become with it the less we like it and the less we see in it. But the Bible is inexhaustible. The more you read it the more it grows upon you. The deeper you dig into this mine the richer and more abundant the ore. The oftener you go back upon its thoughts the more wonderful they seem. Every time you turn to it with earnest attention, you discover some new beauty, and are surprised at its never-failing adaptations. Luther likened it to a tree whose boughs were always full of fruit. The more you took off the more there was left. There are chapters in it—single precepts indeed—that might be elaborated into volumes. This is the reason why it has been so prolific of

other books. Its great seed-truths, dropping here and there, have sprung up to enrich all the fields of literature. It has thoughts for the statesman, it has thoughts for the economist, it has thoughts for the man of business, it has thoughts for the literary man, it has thoughts for the reformer, it has thoughts for men living, and thoughts for men dying. Let me quote from a man who has a right to speak on this subject and whose words are always heard with respect in this country. I refer to the illustrious Gladstone. He says: "All the wonders of the Greek civilization heaped together are less wonderful than is the single book of Psalms."

Two infidels were sailing by a desolate island when one of them said, "Suppose you were condemned to live on this island alone and had the choice of but one book for your companion, what book of books would you choose?" The other replied, "I would select Shakespeare, because of the variety of his themes." "Well I wouldn't," rejoined the questioner, "Although I do not believe in the Bible, yet I would choose it as my companion, for the Bible is an *endless* book."

Endless ! just so. Endless in resources, endless in its adaptations to human need, endless in the

freshness and variety of its lessons, endless in its stores of comfort and wisdom. And yet I find that some of its writers were shepherds, some were fishermen, one was a herdsman, and one was a tax-gatherer. How then did it come to pass that they have given us a book of such inherent merit that it never wears out? A book which never grows old and which is most loved and honored in communities where there is most intelligence? To find a satisfactory answer to these questions I would not be surprised if we should be compelled to turn to the text and say: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." At any rate here we stop for to-night, and, Lord willing, we shall continue our argument from this point next Sabbath evening.

The Inspired Book.

(Continued.)

“Thy Testimonies are wonderful.”—Psalms 119:129.

It is conceded by all that we have in the Bible a wonderful book. Whatever we may think of its origin we are compelled to admit that it is a very remarkable volume. To cast aside a production so extraordinary without giving it a careful examination would be an act unworthy of serious-minded men and women, and I cannot believe that we are in a mood to do anything of that kind. I feel that we want to push the investigation as far and as thoroughly as we can. We are dealing with facts and seeking to account for them upon principles of reason and common sense. No appeal is made to prejudice or educational bias, but we say: “Here are certain facts; explain them; give us the interpretation thereof.” That is the method men adopt in searching for truth elsewhere, and in examining

the *foundation stones* of Christianity we claim no rights, no privileges, no immunities, which are not claimed in other directions. Continuing the discussion, then, from the point where we left it last Sabbath evening, let me ask, in the first place, how we shall account for—

1. *The correctness of the Bible as to matters not immediately connected with its main purpose.* The main purpose of the book is spiritual; to reveal God, the sinfulness of the human family, and to make known the way of salvation therefrom. This is the one end it has in view. But as it proceeds to unfold this great purpose from age to age it has to do with a great variety of incidental matters. It does not profess to be a scientific book and yet it abounds in allusions and references of a scientific sort, not one of which, thus far, has ever been proven incorrect. Every intelligent person knows how fiercely the conflict has raged over the first chapter of Genesis. But to-day the order of creation, or of evolution, as taught by the most advanced science, is precisely that of the Mosaic record. Go to geology, read the testimony of the rocks; or turn to botany and zoology, investigate the story of life, both vegetable and animal; or take

up the subject of light, and you find yourself following step by step the order laid down in Genesis. According to the Biblical narrative, there was light before the creation of the sun, and infidels have laughed at this scientific blunder, and called it one of the "Mistakes of Moses." But advancing knowledge has shown that there are other sources of light apart from the sun. Heat produces light, chemical combination produces light, electricity throws out light, the rocks in crystallization emit light, so that no one to-day who is even moderately posted as to the formation of the earth, *as explained by science*, questions the accuracy of the Mosaic statement. But Moses was not a scientist in any sense nor in any direction. How then did it come to pass that he gave to the world a record which, though abounding in scientific matter, the ablest scholarship, the keenest criticism, the most painstaking investigation, have proved to be correct?

Is it not remarkable that many of the great truths of science, brought to light within comparatively recent times, were known to the writers of the Bible thousands of years ago? It was considered a great step forward when astronomy discovered

that our earth, instead of being stationary, is sweeping through the heavens in a majestic orbit. But Isaiah, the prophet, knew it and spoke of "the circle of the earth." Solomon seems to have understood the laws of the trade winds thirty centuries before Maury discovered the rotations and revolutions thereof, and he gives us this description: "The wind goeth toward the south and turneth about to the north, and the wind returneth according to his circuits." Job talked with his three friends about the inclination of the earth's axis and its equilibrium in space on this wise: "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place and hangeth the earth upon nothing." No scientist of modern times has more briefly and clearly propounded the laws of condensation and evaporation than did the ancient Elihu in the following words: "For He maketh small the drops of water; they pour down rain according to the vapor thereof; which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly."

So we find that the Biblical description of the great deluge, so often laughed at by atheists and scoffers, is corroborated by science as well as by the traditions of the nations of antiquity. The Bible tells us that at the command of Joshua "the

sun stood still in the midst of heaven and hasted not to go down the whole day." How the infidels have laughed over that and made merry. "And this is the book," they say, "which we are expected to believe." But just in this connection we are glad to be able to refer them to Ovid, the Latin poet, to whom we are indebted for the story of Phæton's chariot. He tells us that a day was once lost and that the earth was in great danger from the intense heat of an unusual sun. True, he has surrounded the incident with all the coloring of a vivid imagination. "But," says Dr. Nelson, "our notice is somewhat attracted when we find him mention Phæton, who was a Canaanitish prince, and learn that the fable originated with the Phœnicians, the same people whom Joshua fought." It is certainly strange that there should have been a common tradition among early nations that a day was lost about the time when the volume of truth informs us that "the sun hasted not to go down for the space of a whole day."

In matters of history, too, the Bible has been found to be perfectly reliable. Many of its statements, long held in doubt, have been proven true by scientific exploration and investigation. But its

writers were neither historians, in the strict sense of that word, nor men of science. How then did it happen that they made no mistake when writing of incidental and collateral things, about which we could hardly expect them to be well informed? Another fact to be accounted for is—

2. *The subject matter of the Book.* Verily in this respect it is most wonderful. Man fallen, man redeemed, not by gold, nor silver, nor any of the corruptible things of earth, but by the blood of the Son of God! That God should have loved man with an everlasting love, and that Christ should have died, the just for the unjust; that the Divine should assume the nature of man, and veil his glory in a robe of flesh; that he should be born in a manger, reared in the midst of poverty, trained to toil in a carpenter's shop; that friendless almost, and homeless, he should accomplish his mission; that He who made all the waving harvests, put the gold away in the mine, and owned the cattle on a thousand hills, and poured the seas from his chalice as easily as the child pours water from its little cup,—should hunger and thirst, and suffer fatigue, and finally die on the cross; that the writers of the Bible could have invented such a story as this is simply impos-

sible. To believe that they could, demands too great a stretch of credulity.

There are some who claim that it is belittling a great subject to take God out of eternity and make Him walk the rough hills of time with blistered and weary feet; to take him from the throne of heaven and put Him, a helpless babe, upon his mother's knee; to transform the Eternal into a man, weak enough to shed tears! But in this representation I rejoice, for its very strangeness, the utter improbability that it ever would have occurred to the writers if left to themselves, is a strong argument in favor of its truth.

In what sense, however, does this representation belittle God? When fire comes down from its home in the sun, as another has suggested, and, going into the kitchen, cooks our food; when it goes up stairs and keeps the little children warm during the cold, wintry nights; when it consents to do the most menial service for the comfort of man, now burning in the night lamp, and now warming the sick chamber; when it cheers the poor man's hearth as gladly as that of the rich, and hesitates not to warm the meanest hovel—does all this condescension on the part of fire bring the sun into

contempt, or in any way detract from its dignity? Nay, but it glorifies it. So this representation of God coming down to earth, subjecting himself to human conditions, becoming a servant, ministering to the comfort of the poor and the fallen and the sinful, instead of belittling, clothes him with grandeur and beauty and love. And this leads me to say a word in the next place about—

3. *The boldness of the Book.* It is not afraid to say that the Son of God died; that the author and sustainer of life gave up the ghost. Glaring as the contradiction may seem it does not fear to affirm that God is omnipotent and yet that he stands outside of the door of the human heart knocking and waiting to be admitted. Think of it. An Omnipotent God barred out by the puny hand of one of his own creatures. How shall we account for the audacity of such a statement as that? Fabricators, it seems to me, would have been more guarded. They would have said: "We must be consistent. Our story must hang together. It will never do to say that the mightiest of all beings can be resisted and defied by man." But the writers of the Bible declare this very thing. They boldly set limits to the Almighty. They make Him wait the

pleasure of the human will. And not only so, but in one breath they tell us that the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, and in the next, that he will enter the penitent breast and make his home in the contrite soul. We are told that he does what he will among the armies of heaven, and yet when he comes as a husbandman to visit his own field he is seized and killed. Now he is the Lord God Omnipotent, and now tears flow down his cheeks. Now he is said to be terrible in majesty, and now asleep on the hinder part of a fishing boat. Thus we have these opposite ideas boldly placed right alongside of each other, and no effort whatever is made to harmonize them. Inventors would certainly have been more careful. Besides, the conception of such self-contradictory ideas never could have been imagined. But there stands the fact, and, as seekers after the truth, we are not at liberty to dismiss it without looking for a reasonable explanation.

4. *Its Radicalness.* It tells us how sin entered the world, and how to get rid of it. Its remedy is unique and without a parallel. It refuses to work upon the outside, or content itself by dealing with symptoms. Here are the countless crimes and

evils with which society is afflicted: theft, violence, arson, forgery, murder, not to mention the ten thousand lesser sins in the calendar. And what does society propose as an antidote—what does the wisdom of the great and learned recommend as a cure for these evils? Legislation, better legislation. They tell us to invoke the aid of law and bring power to bear upon the workers of mischief. Well, we do it and power is a failure. It may repress, but it cannot destroy. Like an arrested stream the evil thus checked gathers such force that after awhile it breaks over every barrier and goes sweeping on with greater destruction than ever. This is the explanation of revolution after revolution in history of the world. Others advise us to try *education*, and we build schools and we educate. We improve our methods of instruction and go on refining until our schools are marvels of human skill and cleverness. But do they blot out crime? Do they diminish the evils of society? Let our forgers and bank robbers and highly educated thieves who are fleeing to Canada for refuge every week in the year be the answer. France believes that education is the one panacea for all human ills, and, acting upon that belief, she has been

gradually losing prestige and power. No, education is not enough. Unless it is coupled with something else it only makes men more proficient in wrong doing.

But the Bible is radical. It goes at once to the very core of the difficulty. When it sees a man sick of the palsy, paralyzed, helpless, or leprous, or blind, or ailing in any way whatever, it says: "This is the work of sin. This comes from a deadly taint in the moral nature, from poison in the very blood of the soul." And in order to destroy the effect it strikes at the cause. Thus it deals with every form and manifestation of evil. It does not reform, it regenerates. It proposes to make life clean by purifying the fountain. It does not throw about a man the restraints of power and compel him to a certain course of conduct, but it begins by changing his heart and begetting within him a prevailing preference for the right and good. Now we must admit that this is just what we would expect in a book claiming to have been inspired by God. A book coming from such a source must be thorough. It is certainly incumbent upon us to find some rational explanation of the extremely radical character of this volume. How did its writers come to

lay hold of a philosophy so profound and a remedy so complete? Another very remarkable fact which must not escape our notice is—

5. *The unity of the Bible.* It is not every man that can write a book that will be consistent in all its parts. We are not surprised when we run upon incoherencies here and there. And if a man is the author of several volumes, nothing is more common than to find large discrepancies between his earliest and latest publications. But suppose forty men belonging to various stations in life, from fisherman to king, differing widely in education and in natural gifts, and covering a period of 1,500 years, should write a book of sixty-six parts; suppose some were to write in one language, and some in another, and from places as remote from one another as their separation in time, from the prison, from the land of exile, from the school, from the hillsides, from the throne; suppose they were to write in every style known to literature, history, biography, poetry, prophecy, proverbs, letters, speeches and parables; suppose them to be as much subject to prejudice and local influence as men are in general. Now would it not be a marvelous thing if these forty men should produce a book con-

sistent and harmonious throughout? But precisely in this way, and by this number of authors, was the Bible produced. Men of every grade and condition contributed to this wonderful volume. Some of it was penned in shepherds' tents, some in royal courts, some in the schools of the prophets, some within prison walls. You will find in it, too, every variety of writing, from the loftiest poetry to the plainest and most unpretentious dialogue. But with all its variety of authorship and style it is one book, one in theme, one in its teachings, one in purpose. While it consists of two grand divisions, called the Old and New Testaments, it is as much one as foundation and superstructure, as root and blossom, as the two halves of the same circle.

Now, I affirm that this unity of a book prepared as I have indicated, is nothing short of a miracle. If it had been the outgrowth of any single age from which it caught its spirit, or if it had come from any one class of authors, we might perhaps account for its unity upon merely natural principles; but when we remember that it was the product of various ages, and of men of widely different gifts and classes, we are compelled to look elsewhere for an explanation. And just here I cannot forbear to

quote the words of Dryden on this very point:

“Whence but from heaven could men unskilled in arts,
In several ages born, in several parts,
Weave such agreeing truths? Or how or why
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Unasked their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gains, and martyrdom their price.”

If there should come forty different men from different lands, strangers to one another, each bringing with him a piece of work made by his own skill, and if when the forty pieces were put together they formed one beautiful and symmetrical structure what would we say? How would we account for it? In only one way, viz.: that the whole structure had been planned by one master mind, and that each workman had been assigned his particular part and given a pattern by which to shape it. So when we see Moses and John, David and Paul, Daniel and Peter, Amos and Matthew, herdsmen, shepherds, fishermen, kings, each bringing a block or more of his own fashioning, and combining them so as to make this one grand temple of truth, we say it was because they were divinely controlled; that they worked according to a divine plan, and followed the leadings of one supreme mind. But the illustration is hardly correct; for the Biblical

writers did not bind up their productions in one volume but left them to be collected and compiled by other hands. No compilation, however, can produce unity unless there is one plan running through all the parts.

This unity of the Bible appears on every page, if the reader will open his eyes and look. It is a house of many mansions, but there is one key that will fit every lock in it, and open every apartment. That key is the atoning Son of God. The Scriptures, he said, "testify of me." To the disheartened disciples on the way to Emmaus he appeared, and "beginning at Moses, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." Are there shadows? Are there types and symbols and sacrifices and blood-sprinkled altars? Are there promises and prophecies? They all point to Christ.

In Him they have their meaning and fulfillment. He is the all-uniting centre. It is said that "if you go into a British navy yard, or on board a British vessel, and pick up a piece of rope, you will find that there is one little red thread which runs through the whole of it—through every foot of cordage which belongs to the British government—so, if a piece of rope is stolen, it may be cut into inch

pieces, but every piece has the mark which tells where it belongs." In like manner there runs through this Bible the *scarlet thread* of redemption woven into it by the fingers of infinite love. Separate it as you will and you find one controlling thought around which all others revolve. That thought is Christ, now called "the seed of the woman," now "the seed of Abraham," now "the seed of David," now "the Branch," now "the Plant of Renown," but by whatever name he may be called he is always there as the one great unifying centre.

I know that some people find this book disjointed and fragmentary, but it is because they do not read it in order from beginning to end as they read any other book. Take the finest volume in your library and pick out a chapter here, another there, and see what you can make of it. When you read some work of fiction you do not glance at an occasional passage and then complain that you cannot get the run of it. You begin at the beginning, you find out who the hero is and you follow him on through all the intricacies of the plot, and you never stop until the story culminates in his triumph, and all the characters fall into their appropriate places.

Do that with the Bible. Before you have read three chapters you will come to the Hero of the immortal story. Follow Him on and by and by you come to a manger over which the angels sing; a little farther and you hear Him speak words such as never fell from mortal tongue, and see Him pouring out his life in works of love; a little farther and you see a cross upon a rugged hill, and there the Hero dies praying for those who drive the nails; a few chapters more, and you behold Him going up the skies in a chariot of cloud, and then, a little farther, as the climax of it all, you see Him crowned and enthroned as King, and hear the countless hosts whom He has redeemed, saying: "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever!" Thus you find it pervaded by one supreme idea—one steady, undeviating purpose; and my conviction is that this unity alone stamps upon it the signature of the skies. At any rate it devolves upon those who demur to account for the fact in some more reasonable way.

The Inspired Book.

(Continued.)

"Thy word is true from the beginning ; and everyone of thy righteous judgments endureth forever."—Psalms 119:160.

Let me ask you to-night to consider some additional facts connected with the Bible. And first I desire to call your attention to some of

1. *Its remarkable prophecies and their fulfillment.* That it abounds in predictions is a fact well known to all who read it, and if it can be shown that these have proved true, it will be a strong point in favor of the book. The world is not without its prophets to-day. They boldly essay to forecast the future and tell us about terrible storms and earthquakes, and tidal waves, and divers calamities which are to befall at such and such a date and place, but when the time comes these direful prognostications fail to materialize, much to the relief of everybody, but those who make them. Napo-

leon the First predicted that in fifty years all Europe would be either Cossack or Republican, but he was a better soldier than seer. Besides, to utter a prophecy with an *either* in it is, to say the least, a little ambiguous. But you will find no such double-barreled prophecies as that in the Bible. Among prophets of later times it is conceded that the mysterious Mother Shipton has hit the mark with a surprising degree of accuracy, but her prediction that

“ The world to an end would come
In eighteen hundred and eighty-one,”

having turned out false, we have lost faith in her, for the world rolls on as of old. Clever guesswork, ambiguous foretelling is one thing; prophecy is quite another. To write the history of the time to come, if I may so speak, with such accuracy that it will stand the test and unfolding of the future, even to the smallest details, is certainly a wonderful thing, and is not to be classed with the random predictions to which I have referred. That the prophecies of the Bible have stood this test I shall now proceed to show. Let us begin with

THE JEWS.

Fifteen hundred years before Christ, Moses pre-

dicted that if the Jews were unfaithful to God they would "become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations" (Deut. 38:37), all of which has literally come to pass. In the book of Numbers it is said of Israel: "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (23rd chapter). Yet in apparent contradiction to this prophecy, it is declared in Amos (chap. 14): "For lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the last grain fall upon the ground." Now, is it not a remarkable thing that the history of the Jewish race so completely answers both of these predictions incongruous as they may seem? The Jews do "dwell alone." In every land and in every age they preserve their identity. Other races run together and become fused into one, but the Jew never loses his individuality. His religion, his features, his characteristics, remain the same beneath every sky, and through all time. Nor are the Jews "reckoned among the nations." They are a people without a country and without a ruler. They are everywhere, and yet they hail no flag as theirs. The prophecies which I have quoted concerning them have been

fulfilled to the very letter. Everybody knows that they have become "an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word," that they "dwell alone," and that they have been scattered and "sifted among all nations." Here is a fact to be accounted for. It stands by itself in the history of the world, and while it stands it will put the stamp of truth upon this old book. Look next at a few of the prophecies concerning

THE CHRIST.

We find them relating to the place and manner of his birth, to his parentage, to his treatment by the people, to his work, to his death, to his resurrection. So numerous and pointed are they, and so exactly do they tally with the events of his history as to make it impossible for us to believe that they could have had their origin in any mere human foresight. Thus Isaiah foretold his birth: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bare a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (chap. 7). And Micah predicted the place as follows: "And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel" (Matt. 2:6). Isaiah described the treat-

ment he should receive in these words: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid, as it were, our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not" (Isa. 53:3). Every word of this came true. He *was* born of a virgin, he *was* born in Bethlehem, he *was* treated with scorn and contempt. Forecasting the sufferings of the Messiah, Isaiah wrote: "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter." "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities" (chap. 53); and in the 22nd Psalm it is written: "They pierced my hands and feet." Says Zechariah: "They weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver;" and according to the Gospel record that is just what the priests paid Judas for playing the traitor. David predicts: "They shall laugh him to scorn, and shake their heads, saying, he trusted in the Lord that He would deliver him; let Him deliver him seeing he delighted in Him" (Psalms 22); and Matthew, the historian, writes thus: "They that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads and saying, he trusted in God, let Him deliver him" (chap 27). But I can only call attention to a few of these wonderful prophecies concerning Christ. The Bible is

full of them and such is the force of the evidence they furnish as to the truth of the book that infidels have affirmed that they were written after the events, to which they point, occurred. But this needs no refutation and is not accepted by respectable scholarship anywhere. The original Septuagint, or Greek version of the Old Testament was undertaken three hundred years before Christ, and that version contained these predictions relating to the Messiah.

Passing from this let me ask your attention to one or two prophecies touching

BABYLON, NINEVEH, TYRE AND JERUSALEM.

Anybody, be it observed, may prophecy in a general way. It would be perfectly safe to predict that London, and New York, and Chicago will pass away. To foretell the destruction of perishable things does not require very much inspiration. But to enter into details and specifications would be dangerous business for an impostor. For example, it is easy enough to foretell that you will die, but to point out the manner and circumstances of your death, whether it will be caused by accident or by this or that disease, is quite another matter. False prophets must steer clear of particulars if they

want to keep up their reputation. We find, however, that the prophets of the Bible are not afraid to go into all the *minutiae* of a case. Thus Isaiah foretells the doom of *Babylon*: “It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there; neither shall shepherds make their fold there; but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces” (Isa. 13:20–22). Every traveler bears testimony to the literal truth of this remarkable prediction. It is not strange that *Babylon* should have been destroyed as the tides of civilization swept away from it toward the west, but that it should never be inhabited from generation to generation, that the wandering Arab should hold aloof from it, that it should become the home of the bittern—a species of water fowl—were details which no human sagacity could have foreseen. Now, notice what those who have been on the spot say. Concerning this ancient city Buckingham writes as follows: “There are many dens of wild beasts in

various parts. In most of the cavities are numbers of bats and owls." Says Porter: "It is the refuge of jackals and other savage animals." Says Mignon: "Morasses and ponds tracked the ground in various places. For a long time after the subsiding of the Euphrates a great part of this place is little better than a swamp."

As to Nineveh, in the prophecy of Nahum, it was foretold that it should be destroyed by the two agencies of flood and fire, and so it came to pass. The historian tells us that the great river, having swollen to an unusual degree, swept away a large portion of its walls. Taking advantage of the breach thus made, the besiegers rushed in and set the city on fire. Out of the ruins explorers dug charcoal, burnt beams and slabs of half-calcined alabaster which were deposited in the British museum and bear eloquent testimony to the truth of the prediction. So, in regard to Tyre, the fulfillment of prophecy has been no less wonderful. It was a commercial city of great wealth and magnificence. Her ships floated over the seas and conveyed the riches of the earth into her ports. But, said the prophecy: "I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock" (Eze. 26:4).

In exact agreement herewith we read in history that Alexander the Great, in order to reach new Tyre, which had been re-built on an island, half a mile from the shore, gathered up the ruins of the old city, *scraping the very dust from her*, and with this material constructed a causeway over which he led his troops and engines of war.

Said the prophet, also, concerning Tyre: "Thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more" (Eze. 26:14). In corroboration of the truth of this detail Volney, the infidel, writes: "The whole village of Tyre contain only fifty or sixty poor families, who live obscurely on the produce of their little ground and a *trifling fishery*; and Bruce describes Tyre as a "rock whereon fishers dry their nets."

Passing now to glance at a few of the predictions relating to Jerusalem we find it was foretold that the holy city should "be trodden down of the Gentiles" (Luke 21); and every reader knows how Saracens, Turks, and crusading hosts, pouring in from Europe, fulfilled that prophecy. Of Zion it was foretold that it should be "plowed as a field * and the mountain of the house become like the high places of the forest" (Jer. 26:18). To this

day the name of the soldier, Terentius Rufus, who plowed the foundations of the temple, is preserved, and the Jews have never ceased to curse his memory. Jesus predicted concerning Jerusalem: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23:38). But Julian, the apostate, emperor of Rome, determined to falsify this prophecy, and sent Alypius, his friend, with an army and treasure to rebuild the city. The Jews joined him in the project with enthusiasm and "their women took part in the work, and in the laps of their garments carried off the earth which covered the ruins of the temple. But a sudden whirlwind and earthquake shattered the stones of the former foundation; the workmen fled for refuge to one of the neighboring churches, the doors of which were closed against them by an invisible hand, and a fire, issuing from the Temple-mount, raged the whole day and consumed their tools. Numbers perished in the flames." So wrote the ecclesiastical historians of the early church. If it should be said that their narrative is partial, one-sided, and colored by prejudice, we are glad to be able to quote from the other side. The pagan historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, "the friend and companion in arms" of Julian, writes as

follows: "Horrible balls of fire, breaking out from the foundations with repeated attacks, rendered the place inaccessible to the scorched workmen, and the element driving them to a distance from time to time, the enterprise was dropped." See, then, how marvelously the prophetic sayings of this old book have been fulfilled. But I am not done yet. Indeed there is material enough of this kind for half a dozen lectures. I fear, however, I am wearying you with these details, and if you will bear with me while I call attention to some predictions in regard to Egypt, I shall pass to something else.

Thus spoke the ancient prophet: "It shall be the basest of kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations. And I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked; and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein by the hand of strangers; I, the Lord, have spoken it. I will also destroy their idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph, and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt" (Eze. 28:30).

Notice there are three specific predictions here: First, that it should be the "*basest* of the kingdoms." That was very unlikely, looking at it from

a human point of view, for such was the fertility of that land that it was justly called the granary of the world. Besides, its natural defences, the Red Sea on one side, the Mediterranean on another, the great Sahara on a third, furnished unusual protection from invading armies. But there stands Egypt to-day, poor and starved and lean and base. From the day of the ancient Babylonians to the present, it has been held down and subjugated by *strangers*. The infidel Volney says of it: "A universal air of misery manifest in all the traveler meets points out to him the rapacity of oppression, and the distrust attendant upon slavery."

The second specific prediction relates to the destruction of idols and image worship. From what we know of Egypt, a greater improbability could hardly be conceived than that idols should cease out of the land; for her people were in the habit of bowing down to almost everything from the sun to the beetle.

Besides, is not baseness the invariable companion of idolatry everywhere else? How, then, did it come to pass that idols and images have long since been destroyed in Egypt, as we know they have, by the Mohammedan, who disdains to kneel

before wood or stone, living animals or painted statues? It does look as though it was because the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

The third specification in the prophecy is that there should "no more be a prince of the land of Egypt." A most unlikely thing, if we may judge from all historic analogy, but so it turned out. "Deprived twenty-three centuries ago," says Volney, "of her natural proprietors, she has seen her fertile fields successively a prey to the Persians, Macedonians, Romans, Greeks, Arabs, Georgians, and at length the race of Tartars, distinguished by the name of Ottoman Turks." No native lord governs there, no prince of the land of Egypt sits upon an Egyptian throne. Her rulers are, and for ages have been, imported. So far as the argument from prophecy is concerned we stop here. I realize that I have scarcely entered into the subject at all, but, for our purpose, the facts which I have given you are sufficient. They carry with them a force which no unprejudiced mind can resist. There is a cumulative power about them which cannot be withstood except by those who have made up their minds beforehand not to be convinced. We have seen that the Jews were to "dwell alone," yet be

scattered abroad; abhorred, persecuted, and yet preserved; we have seen how the manifold predictions concerning the Christ were literally fulfilled; we have seen how Babylon should become the dwelling place of wild beasts, and bats, and owls; how Nineveh, "that great city," was to be destroyed by flood and fire; how Tyre was to be scraped bare like the top of a rock, and become a place for the spreading of nets; how Jerusalem should be plowed as a field; how Egypt should be the basest of the kingdoms and no more be ruled by native princes. All these prophecies we have seen fulfilled, even to the smallest particulars, and now I say: "Account for them. Give us a reasonable explanation of these astonishing facts." When we find history unfolding in exact accord with the records of ancient prophecies as we have them in this book, blazing conspicuously from hundreds of pages, and appealing to every eye that will take the pains to read them, we ask "how did those old writers come to have this prophetic vision?" and we find the answer in inspiration. To that conclusion we are driven, not by the wish of the heart, not by religious prejudice, not by motives growing out of our calling, but by the inevi-

table logic of the facts. Any man who will take these prophecies and examine them carefully and compare the events to which they point with the sober record of history will be compelled to admit that this book is true. But if he hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would he be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

I have spent so much time on this part of my subject that I shall detain you to say only a word or two as to

2. *The Adaptation of the Book.* Does it not seem strange that men living in a remote age, some of them in the very morning of the world's history, brought up in the midst of oriental manners, and trained to oriental methods of thought and expression, should, nevertheless, write a book whose teachings are thoroughly adapted to every race and clime and age? Carry this Bible where you will, to the heart of China, to the centre of Africa, to the South Sea Islanders, or to the Esquimau in his house of snow, and it fits right into human conditions and conveys the same good news to mankind everywhere. It speaks the universal language and addresses the universal heart. It is suited to the negro who lives beneath burning suns no less than to

the Laplander who wraps himself in furs three-fourths of the year. It meets the spiritual wants of the king on his throne, as well as those of the poor man in his cabin. Other sacred books are local and stay among the people with whom they originated, but the Bible finds its way to every corner of the earth and is everywhere found to be adapted to sinning, struggling, sorrowing humanity. Translate Shakespeare into Chinese or Choc-taw and its beauty and much of its strength are gone. But such is the amazing adaptation of this book that no number of translations from language to language can divest it of its power. There is a spirit in it that glorifies the meanest dialect found among men. As water is just as sweet when leaping from the bosom of the unsightly rock as when bursting from fountains of silver and gold, so the truths of this book are no less precious when clothed in the most barbarious speech than when attired in our own racy and world-famous English. It is suited to the individual, suited to the family, suited to the nation, suited to the race. It accommodates itself to the philosopher as well as to the peasant, and fits the nineteenth century as well as the first. These are facts, and while they can be affirmed of

the book, the inference we have a right to draw from them can be embodied in no better words than those of the text: “Thy word is true from the beginning; every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever.”

An Indestructible Book.

“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever.”—Isa. 40 : 8.

No book has ever been so fiercely assailed as the Bible. From the days of Celsus and Porphyry down to the greatest product of American infidelity the hosts of unbelief have made it the centre of attack. Some of the keenest intellects of the ages have hurled at it the powerful weapons of their satire; some have gone through it, cutting and slashing with the knife of relentless criticism; some have tried to laugh it out of existence; some have tried to argue it down, but still it lives and grows and gathers power with every passing year, while those who labored so hard to destroy it have passed away into the silence of oblivion. Four or five generations ago Voltaire filled Europe with his irreverent wit, and his travesties of the Bible were read in court, and palace, and cabin. Indeed, they

were the sensation of the hour. He actually believed he had demolished the book—shattered it so completely that it must perish from the earth. He said he lived in the twilight of Christianity, and so he did, but it was the twilight that precedes the day. The very house in which he lived and wrote has been converted into a Bible depository. Voltaire died in 1778; the British and Foreign Bible Society was organized in 1804. Since then the Bible has been translated into about three hundred languages and been carried to every corner of the earth. It has vanished from book-seller's shelves at the rate of *seven thousand per day for seventy years!* When the Revised New Testament came out, so great was the demand for it that "from the first of Matthew to the end of Romans, about 118,000 words, the longest message ever wired, was telegraphed from New York to Chicago, for the sake of getting it twenty-four hours sooner than steam could carry it to print in the Sunday newspapers."

It does seem as though the book had come to stay. The world wants it. The more it is laughed at and attacked and despised the more it thrives. As the rough wind only cause the tree to strike its roots farther into the earth, so the storms of opposition

which rage about and against this book only give it a firmer grip upon the affections of humanity. Other books are like men. They are born, they live, they do their work, they die and are buried. But this book is like the race; it lives and multiplies forever. It is in fact a most striking illustration of the law of the "survival of the fittest." And this fact is not to be overlooked. It lives and flourishes because it satisfies a universal hunger, and a book that does this could not have been the work of impostors and enthusiasts. Let me ask you to consider—

1. *The variety of the Book.* Our attention has already been called to its remarkable unity. But its variety is equally pronounced and wonderful. Humanity is many-sided, and to make a book thoroughly suited to all classes and conditions was a problem worthy of a God. It certainly never could have been compassed by man. Whoever wrote this Bible must have understood that the man of poetic tastes would want to read it and so its pages abound in the most thrilling and sublime imagery. Isaiah tells of the Lord weighing the mountains in scales, and taking up the sea in the hollow of his hand, and stretching out the heavens

as a curtain. David tells how the earth shook and trembled because the Lord was angry; how he bowed the heavens and came down, with darkness under his feet, flying upon the wings of the wind!

The author of this book must have known also that the lover of nature would want to read it, and so as we pass from chapter to chapter we can hear the splashing of the brook, and the water leaping from the rock, and the sheep bleating upon the hills, and the cattle lowing in the pasture, and the wind roaring among the mountains, and the waves dashing upon the shore, driven by the terrible Euroclydon. We can hear the hum of the bee, and catch the fragrance of the rose, and the perfume of the lily, and see the harvests billowing in the fields, and hear the ring of the reaper's sickle.

He seems, moreover, to have anticipated the wants of the lover of thrilling story, and so has given us the graphic narratives of Joseph and Moses and Ruth and David and Esther and Job and Jesus—stories which to many of us were the delight of our childhood, and are the wonder of our maturer years.

Nor did his foresight omit the man who is fond of the weird-like and mysterious, but wrote for

him Daniel, Ezekiel and Revelation wherein he may revel to his heart's content. So likewise the keenly intellectual man has been provided for. In the Epistles of Paul he will find logic, therefore following therefore in such compact and solid order that it will tax his thought to the utmost to follow the grand argument, link upon link. Nor did he by any means overlook the children, but, with a simplicity that is charming, tells of little Samuel in the temple, and the boy David among the sheep, and the little captive maiden, and the lad Jesus among the doctors. Thus in the endless variety of the book, old and young, learned and unlearned, high and low, persons of all tastes and temperaments, have been provided for, so that "it can calm the last thoughts of the immortal philosopher, and smooth the dying pillow of the negro child." But is not this precisely what we would expect in a book claiming to be inspired of God? The wisdom shown in this matchless variety cannot be accounted for on the ground of unaided human authorship. The explanation is too narrow to meet all the necessities of the case. If human cleverness produced this book why has it never been able to produce another that can compare

with it? Is human cleverness becoming less clever? Does the genius that designed the dome of the Capitol at Washington end up by building pigeon houses? Until, therefore, human skill shall bring forth some competing work, we must be excused for assigning to this book an origin divine. Look in the next place at—

2. *The effects of this book upon men.* The tree is known by its fruit. The test is fair and just, and tried by that test what shall we say of the Bible? Wherever it goes light follows in its train. I quote from a man not usually regarded as a friend of the Christian religion, one of the intellectual giants of the world, namely, the late Charles Darwin. He says: "The power of an idolatrous priesthood, infanticide, profligacy unparalleled elsewhere, bloody wars where neither women nor children were spared—all these have been abolished by Christianity," and to scatter abroad the teachings of the Bible among the miserable inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego, Canon Farrar tells us that Charles Darwin's name may be found among the subscribers to the South American mission. A book that can make a cannibal people Christian in the short space of a lifetime, and cause hoary superstition to topple

on her old foundations, and instil new life into stagnant civilizations, must be a good book, a mighty book. That the Bible does this and more anyone can see for himself who will lift up his eyes and look. It goes into Wales and elevates the standard of morals to such a degree that no bad book, no indecent publication, can live in that atmosphere. It goes into Scotland and makes her as solid and substantial as her own granite hills—makes her the mother-land of your Carlyles, and Gladstones, and Livingstones and Duffs. It goes into England and makes a little island throw the spell of its tremendous energies around the earth and zone our planet with her uplifting institutions. Up from the “Dark Continent” there comes a swarthy chieftain, and amazed at England’s greatness, he asks the secret of it and Victoria puts a Bible into his hand and tells him the secret is there. It comes to America, roots itself in a rugged soil, grows into a mighty tree whose branches, reaching across the continent, drop their healing leaves over mountain and valley and plain. And America will be, “the home of the free and the land of the brave” just so long as it honors the Bible.

Mighty book! It goes to Japan and the clouds

roll up and away. It goes to Africa and the light begins to blaze around her sea-girt shores and is answered back by beacons from the far interior. It goes to the islands of the sea, and lo! ships carrying the threads of commerce, weave those islands into the web of nations, and church bells peal forth their music to the battling waves. It goes into the temple of literature, too often filled with impurities, and cleanses it with the scourge of an awakened conscience. It goes into politics and rebukes charlatanism and demagoguery and corruption and lifts aloft the banner of reform.

Oh, it is a wonderful book—surpassing the wisdom of men; for the tree is known by its fruit. It goes into Gibbon's house on Lake Lemman and turns it into a depot of Christian literature for the mountaineers of Switzerland. It goes into Lord Chesterfield's parlor, once the rallying point of sneering infidelity, and converts it into a vestry-room in which to hold prayer-meetings. Goes! It goes everywhere, up and down. It goes down into the haunts of sin and leaves health and beauty and purity in its track. It goes to the man who is tired and worn and troubled and says in words tender as heaven: "Come unto me all ye that labor

are are heavy laden and I will give you rest." He hears, he heeds, and lo! the burden is gone. It goes into the house where the hearts of father and mother are heavy and their eyes are red with weeping, because there is heard no more the patter of little feet, and it tells them so sweetly that Jesus came and put his arm about their little lamb and took it away to the upper fold—"for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Dear old book! it has balm for every wound. It has healing for every troubled soul. It has the right word for every occasion. To the sick and the afflicted it can speak in tenderer accents than those which spring to a mother's lips; to the proud and haughty and rebellious, in words that are sharper than a two-edged sword. We want its council at the marriage alter, we want its comfort at the grave, we want it as the guide of youth, we want it as the staff of age.

Go ask the prodigal who has returned from his wanderings, the drunkard who has been saved from his cups, the debauchee who has been snatched from the fires of passion—any man who has come up out of sin and uncleanness and moral ruin—what it was that rescued him, and will he ascribe

his salvation to infidelity, or mathematics, or science or human philosophy? Nay, but in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred he will tell you that it was owing to a message from the book. Perhaps he was a miserable wreck, the slave of appetite, a gutter drunkard, will-power gone, self-respect gone, manhood gone, everything gone, and his family ragged and starving, but there came to him a gracious promise, a word of hope, from the Bible. It laid hold upon his soul, it nerved his heart, it aroused his conscience, it renewed his will, it kindled again the fires of his affection, and now the children are tidy and neat, the flush of health has come back to the cheek of the wife, there is bread on the table and fire on the hearth, and sighs have given place to song. This is no fancy sketch but is drawn from life.

While passing thro' a village one day in western Massachusetts, a Bible distributor stopped at a certain house to leave a copy of the Scriptures. He did so with fear and trembling for he had heard that the head of the family was an intense hater of Christianity. As he was not at home the agent left the book with the wife. She received it reluctantly for she dreaded her husband's wrath. Pretty soon

he returned, with an axe on his shoulder. He saw the Bible in her hand and stepping up to her said, "We've always had everything in common, and we'll have this too." So saying he placed the Bible on a block and chopped it in two with his axe, giving one part to his wife and keeping the other for himself. Not many days after he was in the forest chopping wood. At noon he seated himself on a log to eat his lunch. He thought of the dis-severed Bible, and taking it from his pocket, began to read. As Providence would have it, it was the story of the prodigal son that fell under his notice, but just as he came to the son's exclamation: "I will arise and go to my father" his part ended. At night he said to his wife, "Let me have your part of the Bible. I've been reading about a boy who ran away from home and after having a hard time decided to go back. There my part of the book ends, and I want to know if he got back and how the old man received him." She handed him her part of the book. He read the story thro'; he re-read it; he read far into the night. Next day he said, "Wife I think this is the best book I ever saw." Day after day he read it and finally he said, "Wife, I'm going to try and live by that book. I guess it's the best

sort of a guide for a man." And is there anyone here to-night who will say it is not?

This book teaches men to be truthful; it teaches them to be pure, sober, faithful, industrious, peaceful, unselfish, kind as parents, obedient as children, loyal as citizens, loving as neighbors, and just as soon as we can find a community completely regulated by its spirits and principles we shall find ourselves in heaven. Suppose some of you men who have been snarling at the Bible, caviling at it, were to go home to-night resolved to practice its teachings just one week. Then you would have to give up lying; you would have to give up growling; you would have to let the sunshine into your heart and into your face; you would have to spend your evenings with your families and prefer the home to the club, or the lodge, or the theatre, or the office. There would be such a change in you that by next Saturday night your wives would be the happiest mortals on this side of the pearly gates. We know what the Bible can do, for we have seen what it has done, and a book that has produced such marvelous results must be adequately accounted for.

Everybody knows that where the leaven of this book works, where its influence is felt, it is the

best safeguard of society. The perpetrators of the Haymarket Massacre were not readers of the Bible. Thieves, murderers, destroyers of homes, enemies of social order, bad men of all kinds hate it; for it condemns them on every page in words that burn like a fire in the soul. While on the other hand men seeking to reform abuses, and put down iniquity, and bring about social regeneration, go to it for precept and example and inspiration. Now if it was not inspired of God it must have been the work of liars and impostors, and will some one tell us how it comes to pass that a book thus produced everywhere promotes truth and righteousness; how the stream rises so far above its fountain. In the next place let me say a word about—

3. *The completeness of the book.* It begins with the beginning of the race and unfolds under theocracy and monarchy; unfolds book by book when Israel is vanquished as well as when Israel is victorious, unfolds under kings and priests and prophets, unfolds in the teeth of Roman persecution and in spite of Jewish hate, until it ends in the grand "Amen." On its opening page we read: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;" on its last: "I saw a new heav-

en and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." In Genesis we find Satan coming in to deceive and destroy; in Revelation we find him cast out "that he should deceive the nations no more." At the commencement we read that because of man's transgression the earth was cursed with thorns and thistles; at the close we read: "There shall be no more curse but the Throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it." At the beginning there is the tree of life in the midst of paradise, but man is excluded from it by a flaming sword; at the end there is the tree of life once more, "in the midst of the paradise of God," but the flaming sword has been put in its scabbard and all who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb may enter in. As we open the book we find man on account of sin coming under the power of death and the grave; as we are about to close it we read: "The dead, small and great, stand before God, and death and hell are destroyed in the lake of fire." In the introductory chapters we see the first Adam deprived of his dominion over earth and driven out of Eden in disgrace and sorrow; in those with which the book concludes we see the second Adam triumphant

over sin and death and hell, enthroned as king and Lord of all and reigning in glory forever ! *

Thus the book is rounded out; it is complete, not a stone is wanting from base to pinnacle. The solemn minor of "Paradise Lost" brightens away into the thrilling and loud-swelling major of "Paradise Regained." Men can see backward and draw a few inferences from things that are gone. They wax eloquent as they tell us about origin but leave us in ignorance as to destiny. Not so does the Bible. Its light shines both ways, backward and forward. It knows no barrier of time. It cannot be limited by days and years. Representing time as a river flowing down between two eternities the Bible is the bridge that spans it. It comes up out of eternity on one side and goes off into eternity on the other. It is a complete book. It cannot be supplemented; it cannot be abridged. It were easier to add a tinge of beauty to the lily, a ray of brightness to the sun, than to improve upon this book.

Whence then did it come? When we consider its unpparalleled conception of God, its style, its boldness, the frankness of its writers, its subject matter, its boundless resources, its unity, its fore-

* Condensed from H. L. Hastings Famous Lecture on Inspiration.

sight, its variety, its effects, its completeness, its survival, and remember that in every one of these respects it is unapproached by any other book, we repeat, whence did it come? We are told that when Columbus sailed into the mouth of the Orinoco river some one said to him: "This river flows from some island." But he replied: "No such river as that flows from an island. That mighty torrent must drain the waters of a continent." So it seems to me unreasonable to believe that such a pure and mighty river of truth as is found in this Bible ever came from the little island hearts of men. The only adequate explanation of the fact is that it flows from the measureless continent of God's love and wisdom and grace.

The Christ.

“What think ye of Christ?”—Matt. 22 : 42.

In the writings popularly known as the Gospels, we have the story of a most unique and wonderful life. Look at it from whatever point of view we will, it stands alone. It lifts itself far above the ordinary plane of humanity into the deep blue of heaven and gathers about it the sunshine of God. It is majestic, yet simple; “earnest without being fierce, and calm without being dull.” It is mighty in power, and yet infinitely tender. It is not pitched to a high key of excitement, but flows along in quiet dignity and grandeur, from first to last, as the river moves serenely on to its home in the sea. There is nothing spasmodic about it. It is not characterized by occasional great efforts whose interstices are filled up with the trite and commonplace. Be our belief what it may, we are constrained to admit that the life of the Christ pro-

ceeds forward very much after the manner of a God. He is born in a manger, trained in a carpenter's shop, brought up in the midst of the most humble circumstances, but when he opens his mouth all the ages listen. He speaks and men wonder at the gracious words that fall from his lips. He rebukes sin in a tone that burns into the soul like fire; he denounces hypocrisy in terms that are hot and withering with the breath of indignation; but to the poor outcast, spurned aside by every foot, he speaks in accents more soft and sweet than were ever articulated by mortal tongue. He is original without being eccentric, holy without being sanctimonious, serious without being sour, stern without being severe, and tender without being weak. Though a Jew by birth he loves the world; though of the seed-royal he is no respecter of persons. The poor and the illiterate are just as welcome to his company as the refined and rich and educated. He mingles with men, speaks their language, resists their temptations, endures their experiences, and yet he seems to walk among the stars. He prays as naturally as he breathes, and in answer to his supplications, blessings distil upon men like the rain. Indeed his character has in it an ethereal cast

which seems to speak of another and higher world.

In him, moreover, we see the most opposite elements combine in perfect harmony. Pure as a star, he is tempted as never man was tempted. Mighty enough to furnish bread for the famished multitudes, he appeases his own hunger by eating raw corn in the field. Able to bring money from the mouth of a fish with which to pay the custom dues for himself and Peter, he is nevertheless so poor that he has not where to lay his head. With power sufficient to calm the raging of the sea with a word, we find him sitting on the curb of Jacob's well, weary with his journey, asking drink of a woman that is a sinner. He raises the dead, yet falls a victim to Pharisaic hate. "He saved others; himself he could not save." But these contrasted and apparently incongruous elements blend in him without a jar; they conspire to give us a character of the most wonderful symmetry. If he is set forth as God, we find that his words and works abundantly sustain that claim; if as a man, we find that his humanity is as real as our own. Such very imperfectly sketched is the character of Jesus as we see it in the Gospels. Without stopping to say anything about the genuineness of these Gospels,

let me remind you that the picture they draw is a fact, hung up in the chambers of literature, and must be accounted for. The first question I propose to-night is this—

I. Could the character of the Christ have been invented? It is admitted by all that there is an originality about it that is amazing, and puts it into a class by itself. But originality in a writer is a very rare gift. There may be cleverness amounting to genius in the arrangement of pre-existing material but that is a very different thing from inventing *de novo*. Take the great poets of the world and which one of them can be called original in the strict sense of that word? Virgil borrows from Homer, Dante from Virgil, and Milton from Dante. Even Shakespeare, it is said, “borrowed his plots, incidents and characters without scruple. True, he improved them when he made them his own, but still they were not original.” Or take the heroes and heroines of Scott, and Thackeray, and Hawthorne, the great masters of fiction, and what one of them can be said to be truly and purely original? They are not creations, but simply improved copies of what these sons of genius saw about them in human society or read in the books. But from

whom did the writers of the Gospels copy? What character could have given them a clue to such a life as that of Christ? See what men who cannot be classed among his worshippers have said about him. "His character," says Lecky, "through all the changes of eighteen centuries has filled the hearts of men with impassioned love, and has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions; has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the highest incentive to its practice, and has exerted so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and than all the exhortations of moralists." John Stuart Mill calls him: "The ideal representative and guide of humanity." Says Diderot, the atheist: "I defy you all, as many as are here, to prepare a tale so simple, and at the same time so sublime and so touching, as the tale of the passion and death of Jesus." Says Strauss, the German rationalist: "He remains the highest model of religion within the reach of our thought, and no perfect piety is possible without his presence in the heart." And Dr. Channing, the great

Unitarian, speaks of him thus: "The character of Jesus is wholly inexplicable on human principles."

The infidel, Renan, as he contemplates his death, breaks forth as follows: "Repose now in Thy glory, noble founder, Thy work is finished ; Thy divinity established. * * * * *

For thousands of years the world will depend on Thee! * * * * *

A thousand times more beloved since Thy death than during Thy passage here below, Thou shalt become the corner-stone of humanity so entirely, that to tear Thy name from this world would be to rend it to its foundations." Hear, also, Theodore Parker: "Measure him," says he, "by the shadow he has cast into the world—no, by the light he has shed upon it. Shall we be told that such a man never lived—that the whole story is a lie? Suppose that Plato and Newton had never lived. But who did their wonders and thought their thoughts? It takes a Newton to forge a Newton. What man could have fabricated Jesus? None but Jesus." Listen, also, to the words of Rousseau. Speaking of the Christ he exclaims: "What sweetness, what purity in his ways, what touching grace in his teachings! What loftiness in his maxims, what profound wisdom

in his words! What presence of mind, what delicacy and aptness in his replies! What an empire over his passions! Where is the man, where is the sage, who knows how to act, to suffer and to die, without weakness and display? My friend," he continues, "men do not invent like this; and the facts respecting Socrates, which no one doubts, are not so well attested as those about Jesus Christ. These Jews could never have struck this tone, or thought of this morality, and the Gospel has characteristics of truthfulness so grand, so striking, so perfectly inimitable, that their inventors would be even more wonderful than he whom they portray."

But I forbear to quote farther, although testimony to this effect might be adduced by the hour. Let it be borne in mind that the writers of the Gospels were not great men. They were neither scholars nor geniuses. Matthew was a collector of taxes; Mark a disciple of the fisherman Peter; Luke was a physician and evidently an educated man, but not possessed of any marked literary skill, and John was a fisherman. How, then, did it come to pass that these men depicted such a matchless character as that of Christ? Whence came this sublime conception? They were Jews, every one of them, but

Jesus is neither Jew nor Gentile. The world is His country, and as Leckey says: "He acts on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions." These writers were sinful men like ourselves, but they have given us an absolutely sinless character. They set before us in the most simple and unaffected manner a life transcendently grand, altogether unapproached by the greatest inventions of human genius, and yet they were obscure and comparatively ignorant men. Now, I say, account for it. Give us a reasonable explanation of this astonishing fact. I am very certain that if you look into the matter carefully you will be convinced that these men were not inventors but reporters; that they wrote down the things which they had seen and heard, and that Jesus was as real as any character that ever figured in human history. The second question which I propose for our consideration is this—

II. WAS CHRIST WHAT HE CLAIMED TO BE?

1. *He claims to be all-powerful.* To his disciples he said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will."

2. He claims to be *omnipresent*. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

3. He claims to *have existed before the world was*. In that infinitely solemn prayer of his in the seventeenth chapter of John he uses these words: "And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

4. He claims to *have come from God*. Thus: "I proceeded forth and came from God." Again: "I came from the Father, and am come into the world."

5. He claims to be *the Judge* before whom all men shall be gathered: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another." "For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."

6. He claims a *right to equal honor with the Father*. "That all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father." "He that honoreth

not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him.”

7. He claims to be *able to forgive sin*. “But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sin, then saith he to the sick of the palsy: Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine house.” “And he said unto her, ‘thy sins are forgiven.’”

8. He claims to be *without sin*. “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” Conscious of his purity he flings down the challenge, and the testimony of the ages is: “I find no fault in him at all.”

9. He claims to be *one with the Father*. “I and my Father are one.” “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”

Such are a few of the claims he makes. Besides, he calls himself the “light of the world,” “the bread of life,” “the way, the truth, and the life,” “the door,” “the shepherd,” “the vine,” and so on, as though he would lay hold of the most common and necessary things, of the tenderest and most beautiful emblems, to set himself forth and bring himself down to the level of our comprehension.

Now, in the face of these claims, it is universally conceded that Christ’s character is perfect. His

purity is without stain. No man can point out a single item of his life that could be improved upon. Even his enemies admit that he is without spot or blemish or any such thing. The morality of his precepts is sublime, lofty as heaven, and his conduct tallies with it in every particular. He lives up to his own principles. Between his profession and his practice there is not the least disparity. He is true and consistent throughout.

But let us suppose that his claims are *false*. Let us assume that he was not omnipotent and omnipresent; that he was not equal to the Father; that he could not forgive sin; that he was not divine, but simply a man; then it follows that he was not good and true, but of all men the most consummate impostor. He was a man we say and sinless, yet he put forth claims to which he had no right. He not only used language conveying the idea that he was God, but allowed himself to be worshiped by the disciples and called Lord and God. If he was only a man this, of course, was idolatry, and yet he suffered it to go unproved. The Jews certainly understood him to claim that he was God, and for this they condemned him to death; he was also honored as divine by his followers, and if

he was not, why did he not disabuse their minds of a delusion so cruel? Will a good and pure and noble man allow his friends to entertain opinions of him which are not only utterly false but which will lead to persecution and reproach and martyrdom?

The fact is, if these claims of Christ are false, then, as another has said—and I quote the language almost with bated breath—“there is something fearfully dark and wicked about his character. The sin of falsehood he must have carried to a complete perfection. The sin of blasphemy he must have been guilty of in a higher degree than was ever possible to any mortal man. His ambition must have gone beyond all limits. The evil he has set in motion is beyond all reckoning. He has corrupted the whole current of human history. He has deluded millions of people for nineteen centuries, and made them rank idolaters. Surely he is the great impostor of a race; a man so mighty in sin that forgiveness cannot reach him.”

Now that seems like a terrible thing to say, but what else can be said if Jesus Christ was only a man? He made claims that belonged to God only, claims which, if we were to hear them fall from the lips of any mere human being, would lead us either

to brand him with insanity or with infamy. What would you think of a man who should say to you in all seriousness : " Before Abraham was I am. " " I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again. " " Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, I will do it. " You would charge him either with being deranged or devilish. Such words, such claims, can be uttered consistently only by an infinite and eternal God. Put them upon the lips of Plato, or Socrates, or Paul, or Milton, or Shakespeare, or Emerson, and they seem ridiculous and absurd, or blasphemous in the extreme, and why should they be otherwise on the lips of Jesus if he was a mere man ?

Just see into what a tangle of contradictions we are driven if we believe that these claims are false. If they are false, then it follows that the holiest man, confessedly, that ever lived, led a life of imposture ; that the " loftiest ideal of humanity " usurped honors which did not belong to him ; that the most lovely and candid being that ever trod the earth was guilty of playing a part ; that the most humble of the sons of men was filled with vanity ; that he who was the most unselfish was constantly exalting himself ; that the heart that was full of

deceit never wearied of communing with God; that he who died to establish the world's purest and best religion was what the Jews called him, "*a deceiver.*"

That, fellow-men, is the logic of the situation, and there is no escaping it. Here is the Christ of history with a character white as the throne of God. It could not have been invented; that is conceded. This character is set forth in the Gospels which are acknowledged to be the original sources of all we know concerning Jesus. Upon every page of these Gospels you will find these claims which we have been considering. If they are false everything is false, and we have the mass of contradictions to which I have referred. I tell you, my hearers, if it is hard to be a believer, it is harder to be a skeptic.

See how the matter stands. Jesus either uttered these claims or he did not. If he *did not* we cannot believe the Gospels; if we cannot believe the Gospels, Jesus was a fiction; if Jesus was a fiction he is the sublimest creation of human genius, and the sublimest creation of human genius emanated from obscure and unlearned men! Who among us is willing to take that view of the case?

But if Jesus did utter these claims they must be

true; for we have seen the absurdities into which we are driven by assuming that they are false.

Admitting that they are true, difficulties vanish, contradictions are reconciled, the sky clears away. The miracles fall into their proper places and seem to belong to him as naturally as light belongs to the sun. His power and his weakness, his majesty and his lowliness, his sovereignty and his service, his riches and his poverty, his wondrous words, and parables and paradoxes all conspire to produce the same divine harmony.

Whether we see him in the manger, or in the wilderness, or moving among men, or dying on the cross, or alive from the dead, the music is one, rhythmic in its consistency and heavenly in every burst and throb and strain from prelude to *finale*.

We look at his life, we look at his words, we look at his works; we follow him over the hills and into the city; we watch him in home and temple and synagogue, teaching, healing and scattering blessings on every side; we contemplate him in all sorts of relations and tho' we see not the prints of the nails in his hands and his feet we exclaim with swelling hearts: "My Lord and my God." He weeps, but behind the tears there is a hiding of

almighty power. He condemns, but never in bitterness and anger. Back of the words there is a tone of infinite pity. He pleads and his accents seem to be thrown to the surface from a heart bursting with suffering love. He said he came to save and in beautiful agreement with that program, the one feeling that rules him is, compassion. Thus the practice fits right into the profession.

Young men and women, all who hear me to-night, "what think ye of Christ?" He says he is Savior, Redeemer and Lord. He says he is the only way back to the Father, the "light of the world," the life of the soul, the door thro' which men must enter the kingdom of God, if ever they enter at all, and that he will come again to judge the world.

"What think ye of Christ?" Do you say he was only a man? Then you not only become involved in these contradictions which I have pointed out, but you give the lie to the Holy One of Israel. "What think ye of Christ?" Do you say he is God manifest in the flesh? Then what excuse can you render for withholding from him your homage and love? Do you say nothing or care nothing about it one way or the other? In that case your indifference is unworthy of a man with a brain and

heart and is even more culpable in the sight of heaven than downright antagonism. My closing word to-night shall be to urge you to Christ. I would come nearer to him myself and catch more of his spirit for he is the "one altogether lovely." He is divine, Son of Mary, Son of God, Immanuel, the Prince of Peace, the Savior of sinners, the only one that has the words of eternal life. "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

What Then?

“What shall we then say to these things?”—Rom. 8 : 31.

To-night we bring this series of lectures to a close. I have been not a little gratified at the interest they have awakened, and by the kindness with which they have been received. It would be easy to prolong them much farther but we have gone far enough for our purpose. To attempt anything like an exhaustive examination of the great doctrines of the Christian system was not my design, even if I had been equal to such a task, but simply to call attention to some of the Foundation Stones on which we build. The Christian system is a mighty structure and to investigate the quality of its material, the strength of its walls, the skill of its workmanship, and all the niceties of its architecture, would be an immense undertaking, though no doubt if we had the patience and pluck to go into it we would be amply repaid for our trouble. I am quite certain we would find some things about the building which were not in the original plan of the Architect; little touches and conceits and refine-

ments of a very human kind here and there which detract in no small degree from the general effect, but I feel sure that on the whole we would be struck with the solidity of its masonry and the magnificence of its finish. Any one who will take the pains to "walk about Zion and go round about her, tell the towers thereof, mark well her bulwarks and consider her palaces," will be abundantly rewarded therefor. But we have not essayed anything so ambitious. It has been ours merely to take a look at the fundamentals upon which the whole superstructure rests. We found that the facts of nature, order, design, the existence of life, the adaptation of means to ends, the traces of benevolence, the facts of human life, man's incompleteness in time, the desires of his heart, the admonitions of conscience, the facts of human society, its inequalities, its progress amid strife, the ultimate triumph of right,—can be satisfactorily explained only by assuming the existence of a holy and eternal God. We found, moreover, that the facts of the Bible, its sublime conception of God, its tone of authority, the entire frankness of its writers, its boldness, its radicalness, its omissions, its unity, its variety, its effect upon men, its completeness, can be accounted

for only by the doctrine of inspiration. We found still farther that no such character as that of Christ could have been invented, that he was not only a real person but must have been what he claimed to be, God manifest in the flesh, thro' whom alone men can attain unto everlasting life.

These are our *foundation stones* and they are tried and sure and precious. God who loved the world, the Son who died for the world, and the Book that brings us the glorious news. "What then shall we say to these things?" I think we may say first that—

I. THEY TEACH US THE FOLLY AND SHALLOWSNESS
OF INFIDELITY.

It is not affirmed that there are no difficulties connected with belief, but in view of the facts which we have been considering, unbelief is a great deal harder. God has written his name upon the universe in letters so large and plain that he who runs may read it. Said a French infidel to an Arab guide who was leading him over a desert, and who was ever and anon throwing himself upon the sand to pray: "How do you know there is a God?" To which the guide replied: "How do I know that a man and camel passed before our tent last night? I

know it by the foot-prints in the sand. And, sir, look at that sunset. Is that the foot-print of a man?" And one time when the great First Consul of France was on ship-board with some of his prominent officers, the conversation turned upon religious matters. Some of them began to scoff and air their atheism, whereupon he rose and said, as he pointed to the stars: "Very well gentlemen, but who made all these?"

If a man were to come to you and insist that a certain machine was the work of chance, or that a certain beautiful painting had evolved itself out of chaos, or that a certain house had come together part upon part, without a builder, you would be apt to call him a fool, or conclude that he certainly took you to be one. So "the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." The individual who can be an atheist with all the great facts of nature and human life and society spread out before him, is of all men the most credulous. He has a larger capacity for belief than the most ignorant idolater.

And can any greater folly be imagined than to sneer at a book to which even the ungodly and un-devout have been compelled to pay the highest tribute of praise? "The Gospel," said Napoleon Bon-

aparte, "possesses a secret virtue, a something which works powerfully, a warmth which both influences the understanding and penetrates the heart. The Gospel is no mere book, but a living creature with an agency, a power, which conquers all that opposes it. Here lies this Book of books upon the table. I do not tire of reading it and do so daily with equal pleasure." Says Theodore Parker: "The literature of Greece which goes up like incense from that land of temples and heroic deeds, has not half the influence of this book from a nation despised alike in ancient and modern times. * * *

It is woven into the literature of the scholar, and colors the talk of the street. It enters men's closets and mingles in all the grief and cheerfulness of life. The Bible attends men in sickness when the fever of the world is on them. The aching head finds a softer pillow when the Bible lies beneath." And so I might continue to quote. The greatest of men have made it their companion and guide. The illustrious Gladstone carries it with him constantly, reads it by day and meditates upon it by night. To thrust it aside, therefore, coldly, indifferently, and even contemptuously, as some young people do, is in the highest degree foolish. It indicates not

only a careless and trifling heart but a very shallow brain.

In this book we have that transcendent picture of Jesus Christ to which your attention was called a week ago. Other characters can be sounded, measured, weighed, but we have no line long enough to fathom the depths, no glass strong enough to see up to the heights, of the matchless character of Christ. The more we look at it the more amazing it seems. There is a brightness about it above the brightness of the sun, but like the sun it warms and vivifies while it dazzles. If he is great upward, far beyond our thought, he is equally great downward. His exaltation is only paralleled by his condescension. "Never man spake like this man," said his enemies. "I find in him no fault at all," said Pilate the wily politician. "Truly this was the Son of God," exclaimed the Roman centurion. "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God," answered Peter the man of rock. And such is the concurrent testimony of the greatest and wisest men that have ever lived. I cannot forbear to quote the words of two of the world's mighty men, neither of them a Christian, and hence their testimony cannot be said to have been colored by prejudice. In the course

of a long conversation with his friend and companion, General Bertrand, on the Isle of St. Helena, among other things, Napoleon said: "In every other existence but that of Christ how many imperfections. Where is the character which has not yielded, vanquished by obstacles? Where is the individual who has never been governed by circumstances or places, who has never succumbed to the influences of the times, has never compounded with any customs or passions? From the first day to the last, he is the same, always the same—majestic and simple, infinitely firm and infinitely gentle." Again he says, "I know men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ was not a man." And he concludes thus: "General Bertrand, if you do not perceive that Jesus Christ is God, very well; then I did wrong to make you a general." The second quotation is from Disraeli, the famous premier of Great Britain. Referring to what the Jews anticipated from their Messiah he says: "The wildest dreams of their rabbis have been far exceeded. Has not Jesus conquered Europe and changed its name into Christendom? All countries that refuse the Cross wither; * * * * * and the time will come when the vast communities

and countless myriads of America and Australia, looking upon Europe as Europe now looks upon Greece, and wondering how so small a space could have achieved such great deeds, will find music in the songs of Zion, and still seek solace in the parables of Galilee."

Believe me, young friends, it is no mark of attainment or brilliancy or intellectual strength to be skeptical and indifferent as to these great matters, but a mark of something the very opposite, which we shall leave unnamed. God is a fact, the Bible is a fact, Jesus Christ is a fact,—the most solemn and profoundly significant facts that ever came to the knowledge of men, and it is strange and sad that any should be found foolish enough, superficial enough, to ignore them. These facts have been wrought into our civilization, wrought into our literature, wrought into the songs we sing, wrought into the very constitution of things, and if it were possible to tear them out, the home, society, all the institutions men hold dear, would be rent in sunder, and red-handed anarchy begin its reign. I beg you, therefore, as you regard your own and the welfare of your fellowmen, to give to these facts the serious consideration which their importance deserves. A

God who loved us, a Saviour who died for us, a Book that brings to us the gracious and wonderful tidings. "What shall we say to these things?" I think, in the second place, we may say that—

II. THEY TEACH US THE SOLEMNITY OF LIFE.

Let any man sit down and seriously reflect upon it with these great facts in mind, and it will make him grave and sober I assure you, if it does not appall him with its infinite significance. His life is from God, but in passing through the world it becomes tainted and corrupted with sin, and when the time-circle is rounded out it is going back to God to be judged according to the deeds done in the body. If the sin has been blotted out in the blood of Christ, that life will shine forever among the spirits of the pure and blest; if not, it will go away into the dark and stern and pitiless condition of things which it has made for itself, called in the graphic language of the Scriptures, "outer darkness where there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth." Given a holy and righteous God, who to save sinners sends his Son down to the humiliation of the manger, the agony of the garden, the shame and torture of the Cross, and inspires men to write a book by which to convey the good tidings to the

race,—given these stupenduous facts and the alternatives they present are enough to blanch the cheek and freeze the heart. These facts we cannot deny. The proofs in their favor are many and infallible. They are written in our hearts and written on the face of nature, and flame from the pages of the past and the teachings of the present, and press upon us in the anticipations of the future. To set ourselves against them is to run in the face of Omnipotence; to be indifferent to them is not only moral insensibility but moral insanity. It is to walk on the brink of a precipice when the next step may plunge us into the abyss. The only wisdom is in bringing ourselves into harmony with these facts as soon as possible; for until we do we shall be in jeopardy every hour.

Depend upon it, young friends, life is no trifle. It is not simply a fire that has been kindled to burn for a few days, only to go out in the night. It is not something to be toyed with and petted and pampered and feasted upon the delusive pleasures of time, but so precious, so dear to the heart of God, that his Son consented to die for its redemption, and the angels of heaven regard it with profound interest; so much so that when it puts itself

in the keeping of Christ they rejoice with unspeakable joy. "What then shall we say to these things?" I think we may say in the third place that—

III. THEY TEACH US THE GRANDEUR OF LIFE.

The traces of benevolences everywhere seen in nature, the division of the earth into land and water, thus promoting the diffusion of rain and facilitating commerce, the treasures of coal and iron and the various metals, the regularity of the seasons—all seem to indicate that in making the world God had man in view. He seems to have been the objective point of creation. Step by step God moved up the mighty sweep of matter and life until he reached man, upon whom he stamped his own image as a being with whom he could enter into a bond of spiritual communion; then he "rested from all the work which he had made." Think of the grandeur this gives to life, young people. You cannot reach life with the point of the scalpel. You cannot weigh it in scales. It is spirit, the very breath of God. It is a beam from the everlasting Light. Speaking of man an eloquent preacher over the sea says: "Two worlds contend for his possession; the angels want him, and the damned host gnash their teeth upon him and long to devour him.

What is he? Some dying insect; some frail, animated dust, some little creature that can be consumed utterly as to his soul, as well as to his body, before the moth? It is not so that I read the Biblical account of my own nature; the divinity stirs within me, I can utter vast prayers, I can stretch my supplications onward till the stars fall under them. * * * * Do not tell me that I am little and mean and worthless. I know what I am when the devil would give all he has to get me, and Christ laid down his life that I may never die." The words are true. With God bending over us with infinite yearning, loving us with an everlasting love; with the Son flinging aside the purple of empire and fleeing to our rescue; with the great, rugged, thunder-riven, Cross speaking to us over the ages with an eloquence which time only heightens and glorifies; with this dear old book forever repeating to us the matchless story; with all these glorious facts before our eyes we can see something of the grandeur that belongs to our nature. We were never made to live a mere animal life and then die as the brute dies. We are sons of God—prodigals it may be and far away from the Father's house,—but sons still for whom the home-

door stands ajar to-night to welcome us back, and oh, that we might be induced to step over its blessed threshold this very hour. I know what we are, not because the scientific man has spoken, not because the philosopher has written a book and filled it with his wise sayings, not because mighty men of genius have filled our libraries with their learning, but because of the Cross of Jesus Christ. Therein I read the mystery of my life, the value of my soul, and the essential dignity of my nature. That tragedy, felt by anticipation in Eden, and sending a thrill through all the ages, was not enacted for nothing. With all the pathos of the skies it tells us that we are not worms of the dust, not creatures of an hour, but sons and daughters of the "King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God," and that he longs to have us come back again into the kingdom which sin caused us to forfeit, and take our places in the royal family of heaven. I know what I am only when I read that the heart of the Lord Jesus actually broke to save me, and how stupid, how unspeakably foolish it would be to sell my life for a mess of pottage, instead of rising to the height of my glorious birthright. "What shall we then say

to these things?" This is what we shall say as the conclusion of the whole matter, that—

IV. THEY CONSTITUTE OUR ONLY HOPE.

The centre and source of this universe is God. The foundation of human hope is Christ the Son. The only rule of faith and conduct that will stand the light of the judgment day is the Bible. If outside of these there is any other substantial hope, any other standard of living worthy of men, they have never yet appeared, and from all we can see on the horizon of human thought they are not likely to. "Among the gods" there is none like unto the God of Christianity. Among saviors and prophets who can stand for a moment beside the Prophet of Nazareth? Among all the sacred books which one is fit to be compared with the Bible? Outside of these, all is vague and shadowy and dark. There is nothing definite and tangible enough on which to found a hope that can act upon human life as an inspiration; and hence it is that despair spreads its black wings over all pagan and unchristian lands.

These, then, are the *foundation stones* on which we build. They have been pounded by many a hammer, but the hammers are gone while they remain. They have been assailed, criticised and

laughed at, but the critics and clever wits pass away into the silence of oblivion while these abide, immortal, imperishable. Come then, young people, come, and build upon the foundation offered you in the Gospel. You will find no other, though you were to search creation through. Here the best and wisest and brainiest men of history have built, for elsewhere they saw no hope, no refuge for the soul. They looked to reason, but its light cast too short a beam. They looked to morality, but they found it a cold and well-chiseled statue which could impart no warmth and inspiration to the soul. They looked to philosophy but it left them weary and sick, groping in the dark. But they looked upward; they cast themselves upon the mercies of God in Jesus Christ according to the Gospel, and the light dawned, and with it came a hope, both sure and steadfast. Go ye and do likewise and the result will be the same.

Do you tell me that this is an age of great intellectual activity? I admit it; but what has that to do with the soul which must soon spread its wings for the eternal flight? Do you tell me in answer to my concern for your welfare that science is making very rapid strides? True, true; but can science

lay a foundation sure and strong enough upon which to walk out into the hereafter? Do you remind me that there has been wonderful progress in knowledge? Yea, verily. But what can all this boasted knowledge do when the fire burns low on the hearth and the soul flutters in the cold breath of eternity? I tell you, fellow men, in the stern and solemn hours of life, when sorrow settles about us like a cloud whose bosom is charged with storms, when nights of trial fall about us with a darkness that is crushing, when the bitter, bitter cup of disappointment is pressed to the lips, when every day that comes to us out of the future brings only failure and defeat, we want something more than human wisdom can offer. Indeed at such times it can only mock us. We want a hope that will flame out like a star above the blackest storm. We want within us a light that can transform the cloud into a canopy of glory. We want to feel around us an arm that is tender and mighty. We want to feel beneath our feet, no foundation of sand, but the "Rock of Ages." To that Rock, young people, you are invited to-night. God help you to come and build your house there, and to his name be the glory forever. Amen.

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