The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby, Volume 6 (Apologetic 1)

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The Irrationalism Of Infidelity

Being A Reply To “Phases Of Faith”1

“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sures having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” 2 Tim. 2:19.

To Francis William Newman

You will not be at a loss to discover the author of this attempt at a reply to your last publication, so strangely entitled “Phases of Faith;” nor to recognize one once well known to yourself.

I have had no thought of sparing your book. You have denied and dishonoured in it the Lord that bought me, to whom I owe everything a soul can know in blessing and God reveal in grace. I have no sympathy with cold indifference in such a case. It is a duty to feel. Not to feel proves we have never felt what it seeks to pull down.

With yourself the case is somewhat different. Not that I can distinguish, as some do, between a book and its author. If the book is a guilty one, its author is guilty of it.

But there is another feeling arises as to the author, which does not as to the book. To the book I can measure out, without a pang, unmingled feelings of disgust and contempt; to the author I could not. The thought of him awakens sorrow, regret, pain, a thousand feelings which the evil I find in his work, the thoughts as to Christ once expressed by him and supposed genuine

by me, and my own love to souls, however feeble, as alas! it is, contribute to produce. I do mourn; and hence it is I add these few prefatory words.

I have known you, supposed you loved Christ, took for granted (as one unsuspectingly does) you believed in Him, heard a testimony from yourself to your spiritual delight in Him, as the joy, the food, and delight of your soul. Was all a delusion? Is not your present book? Did you feel these things? Were they, as you thought, livingly linked up with a Christ known to yourself? Does your book prove a greater moral elevation? Forgive me, if I think that, independent of all dogma, it proves frightful descent from what at least restrained your steps, your lips, then, if it did not possess your heart. Can you compare what then expressed your joys with the feelings and manner of thinking (I am not talking of views or groundwork of judgment, but of their effects) which your book betrays, and feel happy at it? Take some of your own letters, and say. I have some which, of course, I cannot quote here for these expressions of your feelings. But what a difference when I read them! I cannot bring myself to believe that there was nothing real in them. My soul looks out for some gleam of such thoughts in the book your infidelity has produced; but I can only find a miserable nature let loose by it. Who can tell how deep something else may be buried by such a mass of nature's ruins and filth, which the mighty grace of God may yet disencumber and make grow, and thus the old serpent lose its natural and congenial haunt?

But I write that you may at least feel that my attacking your book is as far as possible from bitterness toward you. I have no desire to spare your book. I am dealing with a book—with principles and with minds that may be

affected by it. I believe it a dishonour to yourself; but as regards your book, you are but a name attached to the moral condition of mind contained in it, and there presented to the public. I am not dealing with you about it, but with it before God and my reader. The thought of yourself, which intruded itself necessarily upon me in reading it, was one of deep sorrow—I trust of gracious feeling. My answer to the book was not the place to express it: I can here assure you of it. If you read my book, you must expect no concealment of a severe (I believe a just) judgment of your publication.

You have here the unfeigned expression of what I feel as regards yourself—not in its strength, as this must be public (and I hate published feeling), but at least the true character of it— pain—sorrow—I trust divine love—and a lingering clinging to the hope that, however low he may have fallen, it is impossible that one who has expressed the feelings you have in bygone times could have done so without some reality.

May the Lord, who alone has power to blot out and overcome our wretchedness, and new-create the heart, make you—as in other ways He has me—a monument of His almighty and infinite grace!

I remain, as one well known to you, and desirous of remaining unknown to others, Yours with earnest desire in Christ.

1 London:1853.

Preface

I have no pretension to learning or leisure, yet I have written and now present to my reader a book, the size of which, when I see it complete, alarms myself. It may be asked why I undertook such a task when I knew that I had neither. My answer is this: When any one loves, confides in, and is deeply indebted to another (and in this case the debt is infinite), he will seek to defend, if he has any heart, the beloved object when it is attacked, without perhaps exactly measuring his power to be fully successful in its defence.

One qualification (none is of any value if God be not with us) I may boast of—profound, unfeigned (I believe divinely given) faith in the Bible. I have, through grace, been by it converted, enlightened, quickened, saved. I have received the knowledge of God by it to adore His perfections—of Jesus, the Saviour, joy, strength, comfort of my soul. Many have been indebted to others as the means of their being brought to God, to ministers of that gospel which the Bible contains, or to friends who delight in it. This was not my case. That work, which is ever God's, was wrought in me through the means of the written word. He who knows what the value of Jesus is will know what the Bible will be to such a one. If I have, alas! failed it, in nearly thirty years' arduous and varied life and labour—at least such, as far as the service of an unknown and feeble individual usually leads, I have never found it fail me: if it has not for the poor and needy circumstances of time, through which we feebly pass, I am assured it never will for eternity. "The word of the Lord abideth for ever." If it reaches down even to my

low estate, it reaches up to God's height because it comes thence: as the love that can reach even to me, and apply to every detail of my feebleness and failure, proves itself divine in doing so: none but God could, and hence it leads me up to Him. As Jesus came from God and went to God, so does the book that divinely reveals Him come from and elevate to Him. If received, it has brought the soul to God, for He has revealed Himself in it. Its positive proofs are all in itself. The sun needs no light to see it by.

This, indeed, has made me hesitate as to how far it is to the purpose to go through much of the matter of this book—that part, I mean, which takes up the objections to scripture. My only reason is, that they are thrown down before a multitude of minds, as every one knows, in these days—a heartless and sickly age, which finds its refuge, from the cold and desolate waste of infidelity and human wilfulness, in the more pleasing imagery of imposed superstition. The man of intelligence produces human infidelity. The man of imagination will give us human superstition, coloured over with the haze of antiquity, for fear what it really is should be too clearly seen. Both give me man. The scriptures alone give me God. Hence the peculiar form of modern infidelity is, attack on the written word—the scriptures. Superstition takes exactly the same ground. The cry of "Bibliolatry!" sounds alike from the intellectual and from the superstitious infidel. Both have the same object of attack, both are infidels—one an intellectual, the other an imaginative one. Both would persuade me that the Bible cannot itself command my conscience and oblige me to faith as coming from God. Do they not both seek to do this? Is it not infidelity? Doubtless, through the

sinfulness of man's will, without divine grace, he never will really receive the word as it is in truth—the word of God. But is that his fault or the word's? Infidels and superstitious persons will both tell me that the word itself has not divine authority over my soul; that I cannot receive it as such on its own authority without something more to prove it. It is hard to say who is guiltiest here: he who denies it is the word; or he who, not denying that it is, declares that what God has said cannot bind the conscience of man unless validated by some authority other than its own.

I should not certainly have entertained these objections even in order to reply to them; but they had already done positive mischief to many, and shaken the comfort, and agitated the minds, more or less, of many accustomed to confide simply in the word with real faith. Most Christians have met with examples. One which came in a painful way under my own observation led me to read, and, in result, to answer the book. Some who have read the MS. have desired that it should be printed. It was not like a book of edification, which, if it failed to attain its end, came simply under the negative charge of being profitless or stupid. It was worse than this to occupy the mind with questions, if there were not positive good to be done by it. The book is meant for those who have been already occupied with these questions. Knowing that to feed on the word is what the soul wants, not to discuss it, I have no desire that any should read it before whose mind the subject has not already come. But how large alas! this class is now as well known to most interested in these subjects.

I desire to add one remark here in reference to inspiration. I beg to avow, in the fullest, clearest, and

distinctest manner here, my deep, divinely-taught conviction of the inspiration of the scriptures. That is, while of course allowing, if need be, for defect in the translation and the like, when I read the Bible, I read it as of absolute authority for my soul as God's word. There is no higher privilege than to have communications direct from God Himself. I say this, because, in reasoning with infidels in the body of the book, I have sometimes done so on their own ground, to shew how untenable their positions were—how unreasonable their complaints, even setting aside inspiration. Indeed, did not the scriptures claim this authority, no one would dream of calling in question their authenticity or the evidence on which they rest. Such a method might lead some unguardedly to suppose hesitation or want of depth of conviction on my part. My joy, my comfort, my food, my strength, for near thirty years, have been the scriptures received implicitly as the word of God. In the beginning of that period, I was put through the deepest exercise of soul on that point. Did heaven and earth, the visible church, and man himself, crumble into nonentity, I should, through grace, since that epoch, hold to the word as an unbreakable link between my soul and God. I am satisfied that God has given it me as such. I do not doubt that the grace of the Holy Spirit is needed to make it profitable, and to give it real authority to our souls, because of what we are; but that does not change what it is in itself. To be true when it is received, it must have been true before it was so.

And here I will add, that although it require the grace of God and the work of the Holy Ghost to give it quickening power, yet divine truth, God's word, has a hold on the

natural conscience, from which it cannot escape. The light detects “the breaker-up,” though he may hate it. And so the word of God is adapted to man, though he be hostile to it—adapted in grace (blessed be God!) as well as in truth. This is exactly what shews the wickedness of man’s will in rejecting it. And it has power thus in the conscience, even if the will be unchanged. This may increase the dislike of it; but it is disliked because conscience feels it cannot deny its truth. Men resist it because it is true. Did it not reach their conscience, they would not need to take so much pains to get rid of and disprove it. Men do not arm themselves against straws, but against a sword whose edge is felt and feared.

Reader, it speaks of grace as well as truth. It speaks of God’s grace and love, who gave His only-begotten Son that sinners like you and me might be with Him, know Him—deeply, intimately, truly know Him—and enjoy Him for ever, and enjoy Him now; that the conscience, perfectly purged, might be in joy in His presence, without a cloud, without a reproach, without fear. And to be there in His love, in such a way, is perfect joy. The word will tell you the truth concerning yourself; but it will tell you the truth of a God of love, while unfolding the wisdom of His counsels.

It is because I have found it all this, feeble and unworthy as I am, and because it is the scriptures that have made God thus known to me through grace, that I have ventured on ground to which I am not much accustomed; from which I gladly retire, to use the word which I here in a particular case attempt to defend. I have sometimes feared I might be a little like David with Saul’s armour on. I have done it, I trust, in love to the Lord and to the souls of others, yet with some

reluctance. Let me add to my reader, that by far the best means of assuring himself to the truth and authority of the word is to read the word itself.

In fine, I would say, that as I am conscious I have no claim to literary honour, so I neither pretend to nor desire it. I hope I may have been, in general, sufficiently clear to be understood. I would only beg my reader kindly to remember, that sometimes the subjects are somewhat abstract; and while he who publishes anything must expect, of course, to be criticised (if what he writes is indeed worth it), I would so far claim indulgence as jne may who has snatched from hours of rest almost the whole time occupied in composing what the reader has before him (service in ministering amongst souls from day to day, and other labours in the Lord's field, needless to mention, fully occupying all ordinary hours of toil). If I am useful to any, and the Lord accepts it as service done to Him, I am content. I think one or two points are twice referred to from being connected with different subjects. It is not very material. If it be so, the reader will excuse what other labours forbid my now correcting.

I draw the attention of my reader to one point, on which this whole question of revelation greatly hangs in the reasoning of those with whom we have to do. I have noticed it in the body of the book from feeling it was really the basis of their reasonings. I have since seen it laid down as the foundation of them by a French writer of this class in his attacks on scripture. It is this —that man is not capable of other ideas than those his own mind can create or produce. These may be awakened by some occasion, but they must exist in an abstract sense. This is true, as to mathematics, because they are the

expression of the relationship of quantity or form, and these are perpetually inherent in what is subject to the mind of man, and what he has the capacity of pursuing to all its consequences. But in moral facts it is quite otherwise. Every being who has a superior moral nature to mine will produce acts, of the influence of which I am susceptible, though quite incapable in virtue of being morally inferior. Nay, so true is this principle, that the same act done by beings of a superior nature or position has an entirely different moral character and effect. If that nature and position are infinitely superior, the difference is infinite, the obligation quite of another character; yet the act may be quite intelligible, even through my wants. I do not measure it, but I know a love, if the act be one of love, which is beyond my measure.

Thus Christianity tells us, that “God was manifest in the flesh” to fulfil a work of self-sacrifice for me. A man’s sacrificing himself for me would present the highest human claim on a grateful heart; but God’s doing it (that new, lovely, yet infinite fact, capable of filling the whole moral world,) puts all that world in a new condition. Again, take the moral difference merely: man could die for a benefactor perhaps, but he is not capable, in true simple-hearted love, of unostentatiously dying for an enemy; God’s becoming a man to do it silences the heart, and creates, by the sovereign title of love, a new order of feeling.

The result is, that the notion that new moral thoughts which no human investigation could reach cannot be produced, cannot be communicated, is utterly and stupidly untrue; and of these truths man is abstractedly incapable of judging but by the effect and thoughts

produced by them. He becomes capable of estimating them by the change which takes place in his state in virtue of them, and not by pre-existing thoughts; he receives the new moral ideas from the objects and grows up into them. This is eminently true of Christianity, as an unexampled divine act, for and in man. I reserve the answer to the French rationalist for another occasion, if God permit. He has stated more definitely the basis of the argument; and, consequently, the gross absurdity of the system is more palpable.

The heart and conscience, then, is capable of impressions, of effects, which neither could produce; because beings in a higher order of moral nature can act on principles, and with rights entirely above man, and yet can act on and towards him in things he was wholly ignorant of before, which meet his need, but which no moral effort could, by any possibility, have produced, because they proceed from a nature superior to his. It is a false assumption, that man is so constituted that he is not capable of a certain impression by an act of which he was wholly incapable of forming an idea before it was accomphshed by another. He knows it as so accomphshed by the superior being in the effect produced in his heart by it. I do not doubt that there is a divine work wrought in communicating the knowledge of it; but on that ground I do not enter here.

Introductory Remarks

How, And How Far, Can God Be Known By Man?2

When a man makes his own mind the measure of his knowledge of good, he soon sinks to the level of that by which he measures it; indeed he is already sunk there morally.

This is the case with Mr. N. He judges of what God ought to be, of what a revelation ought to be if there was one, by his own mind and feelings.

A book presents itself as a revelation from God; and he judges that it is not one. By what rule is his judgment formed? By what his own mind is, independent of revelation, which he subjects to the test of his own thoughts, when the book is presented to him as such. He can do this only in virtue of the competency of his mind to judge, before he has received it, what a revelation ought to be. That is, his own mind, and even his own mind in its present state, is the measure by which revelation is to be judged of. Were it so, the mind of God must be on a level with the mind of man, and even of the particular man who judges. But the fallacy of such a principle, as well as the excessive self-sufficiency of it, is evident.

First, the measure of what the divine Being ought to be or require (for if it be a revelation by Him, it must declare what He is, or what He requires) will vary with the moral condition or the natural disposition of each individual who seeks to form a judgment.

More than this, it will vary with the circumstances in which a man is placed, with the age of the world in which he lives, with everything through which he has passed in emerging out of the state of natural ignorance of all things in which he began his life, and which have exercised an influence in forming his character.

It would be mere folly and ignorance of human nature, blindness to the most obvious facts, not to recognize these influences in the forming and moulding of the human mind, and thus their power in colouring its judgment of all around and above it. Does Mr. N. think he has not profited by the influence of the Christianity he rejects? He miserably deceives himself if he does. But, to do him justice, he does not think so. In another volume of his (it is well the confession is absent from this) he avows (speaking of the New Testament, with the devotional parts of the Old, and declaring his intimate knowledge of it), “to it I owe the best part of whatever wisdom there is in my manhood.” (Soul, p. 242.) But of this farther on. He will not suppose that he himself soars entirely above the ken of the moral discernment of others as to his own condition, since he accounts himself capable of judging what God and a revelation ought to be. He has profited, he tells us, by the wisdom and piety of this false Messiah. But he thinks he has emancipated himself from the trammels of a revelation which he does not believe, and emerged into the truthful results arrived at by the logical and philosophical workings of the human (let us say the word, of his own) mind.

But here a question arises: Have all emerged alike into the same thoughts of God and moral truth? Have these philosophers, these rare men few and far between (for the mass have followed stupidly some religion or other),

this elite of the human race— have they all formed the same estimate of good and evil, of God and His relationship with men? Have Stoics and Epicureans, Platonists and Peripatetics, come to the same result? I might almost ask, have they come to any result? Are the rationalist infidels of Dr. Paulus's school (of which Germany is well nigh tired), or the spiritualist infidels of Dr. Strauss's (of which it has been, for the moment, enamoured), the true interpreters of what they are agreed to doubt about and cast off? Is the "desolating pantheism which is abroad" (ib. preface xii.) the same as Mr. N.'s objective relationship with a God whom he knows as a personal Deity by specific sense, but of whose mind he knows no more "than a dog does of his master's?" (Soul, pp. 119, 121.)

Mr. N. and others tell us of "following truth." (Phases, p. 116.) What is the truth they are following? Where is it? The truth they are following is truth they have not got. What is it—this truth they are seeking? They do not know. If they knew, they would not be following it.

Mr. N. may here object, that he arrives at this conclusion, that God has sympathy with individual man. (Ib. p. 201.) Now the sympathy of God with individual man is rather a vague word. God does not sympathize with sin, with lusts, with passions, with ambition, with avarice, with violence. I suppose Mr. N. will not deny that there are such in the world—alas! that they largely prevail in the world in general. Indeed, he tells us elsewhere (Soul, p. 44) that there is "prevailing wickedness." The sympathy of God is a lovely word, a gracious thought: but what is this sympathy, if it cannot be exercised in reference to so very large a portion of man's moral existence in the state in which it is actually

found? Mr. N. shall tell us. “The Christian advocate,” he says in the same page (Phases, p. 201), “assumes that God concerns Himself with our actions, words, thoughts — assumes, therefore, that sympathy of God with man which (it seems) can only be known by an infallible Bible.” Is this the sympathy of God with individual man? He “concerns Himself with our actions, words, thoughts.” No doubt He does; but this may be in the way of a judge, mere responsibility on my part, as well as sympathy on His. The law of England concerns itself about my actions and words, at least, without much sympathy. In what way does God do so? This is the serious question.

Now I believe there is a consciousness in man that God does concern Himself about our actions, words, and thoughts. But then, in spite of clothing this with the graceful name of “sympathy,” what I am concerned to know is, Who and what is the God that does concern Himself about them? Is He a righteous Judge? By what rule does He judge? Is He love? When my conscience tells me I have sinned, when some vile wretch feels in bitterness what he has done, what resource is there for him? How is his conscience to be purged? How is he to get happy with the God he has offended? In a word, what is the God that does concern Himself about my very thoughts? This is the important point to know. All religion assumes what Mr. N. says it does, as he explains it; because all consciences feel that God does so concern Himself about our actions, words, thoughts. But in what manner? What is He who does so? For this we need revelation; but Mr. N. denies us it altogether—the only thing I want, because we have the consciousness that God concerns Himself about us.

Revelation does not tell me that I have a conscience and aspirations; it gives me the answer to them. And this is what I want, and not to be told I have got such. I do not want a book for this: I want a certainty of what God is, to answer the need of my soul. I know what He is by His revelation of Himself in Christ. Of this Mr. N. can tell me nothing; and he deprives me of that which tells me everything. There I find perfect love to me as-a poor sinner, and thus have the possibility of truthfulness and honesty in a sin-conscious soul. There I find a love which is consistent with God's maintaining that absolute righteousness and hatred of sin which my soul has learnt He ought, and which my heart (now renewed in knowledge) desires Him to maintain, and could not own Him as the God I desire if He did not maintain. In Christ I am (I will not say restored to Him, but) brought to know Him in perfect peace, as nothing else could make me know Him, love Him, walk with Him, as a known God who loves me.

Would I exchange this with Mr. N.'s aspirations and thoughts of God? Can he give me this? Doubts he can give me (this is easy work), difficulties in scripture doubtless, uncertainty as to everything I supposed to be truth. Philosophers (like Mr. N.) think that they can prove, that what has made my heart divinely happy has made me bless God, because of a goodness I never dreamt of till I knew it in Him; that what has consecrated the hearts and lives of thousands, and changed, where the heart was not consecrated, the whole condition of the world (for men are ashamed of doing in the light what they would do in the dark, though they are not changed in heart)—they think, I say, that all this has been done by a fable, an imposture. Poor

human nature! Ay, the reader will see that Mr. N. thinks this of himself. But the truth they are following—Where is it? What is it? Why, they are following it: how can they tell you what it is till they get it? True, they cannot, and I must wait.

“Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis; at ille

Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis aevum.”

Is this all? Not quite. They are the only really honest people, save some blinded persons who are led by others (as Mr. N. once was) in an honest delusion. They are honest because they believe nothing, and are following—following they cannot tell me what. Their honesty is in following without believing anything, and in trusting all the conclusions of their own minds, in rejecting what they supposed they did believe. And their descending steps in this are called “phases of faith!”

But, perhaps, the age is enlightened. Be it so; though in philosophy and moral apprehension it may perhaps be doubted. But be it so, I repeat. Is the age’s opinion of itself to content me in my measure of God, and of what a revelation of Him ought to be? Millions in previous ages have believed in a revelation—in the revelation which Mr. N. rejects—enlightened men too, philosophers even, wearied with searching after a truth they never found. They are all wrong.

But why am I to think we are arrived, just in our day, at the perfection of the human mind, so that we are exactly right now? Mr. N. will tell me that they were superstitious ages. The age in which Christianity was introduced or made progress among the Gentiles, was very far otherwise. Witness the various forms of mind, the Philos, the Celsuses, the Porphyries, the Alexandrian

School of the Neo-Platonists, the Lucians, and others, whose reputation is publicly known (without any pretension to learning), to say nothing of earlier Grecian philosophy which led the way. But suppose it was superstition: what does that prove but this, that the theory that man's mind is the measure of revelation and of what God ought to be, makes truth and error, and the very character which God ought to have, depend on the age a man lives in? I speak of facts.

Men, and men of able intellectual minds, have received the revelation which Mr. N. rejects as being unworthy of God. They have thought it very worthy of Him—have adored the God revealed there as alone worthy of adoration, as supremely worthy. I am not now seeking to prove that they are right. But the fact cannot be denied. They had minds enlarged by stores of knowledge, they were of a philosophical turn of thought, they had considered all, or almost all, the objections which Mr. N. presents in his book (for on this head there is little or nothing new in it: his objections are mostly as old as the Celsuses of the first centuries, and other such objectors); and, in spite of all, they have bowed before the God of the Bible as supremely good, supremely just and wise. Mr. N., applying his mind as the measure of it, thinks it all utterly unworthy of the God which his mind has pictured to itself: for what other has he?

Now, to say nothing of the heathen, who had gods to please their lusts, for lusts men have after all; nor of those who made God a kind of soul of the world, or who do, as there are many, with a "desolating pantheism," make Him an all-pervading power or influence, so that everything is God; but to take such men as Mr. N., Sir Isaac Newton, Pascal, Paul, Justin Martyr (Mr. N. loves

such associations), I must either judge that Mr. N.'s mind and judgment are the sole true measure, or that the human mind is not a competent measure of what God ought to be, or what should characterize a revelation from Him. Nay, should I think Mr. N. and his school alone right, I should not have gained much, for I should then have to consider all other minds incompetent; and he would, if he has not a revelation, be himself a Deaster, and the sole revealer of truth. What does Mr. N. think?

I beg the reader to remark, I am not here supposing Sir Isaac Newton or Paul to be right. I only shew that they differ from Mr. N. in his idea of what a revelation ought to be (quot homines, tot sententiae); and that I learn thus that the human mind is not a competent measure of a revelation. Mr. N. and his school will surely forgive me if I do not think they stand alone in their competency to measure what becomes God. How can I tell that the author has arrived at the end of his "phases"? I humbly conceive, from his own statement, that he never has had faith at all (unless in the Irish clergyman). Would I could believe he had! How gladly would I commit all this to the fire! He may alter yet once more; light may break in upon his mind; he may learn to see a beauty in Jesus he has never seen yet. The Lord grant it may be so! What a joy to think it is true that all (even his writing against that Blessed One) would be freely forgiven! And 0 how does the thought of Christianity refresh the heart in the midst of all the cold logic of infidelity, if logic such confusion can be called! But all his previous estimates were false—were "phases" of the state of his own mind. And can he assure me this is not one which some subsequent illumination ("movement," p. 233, is the

word) will throw into equal discredit? The Lord grant that it may be so!

Nor is this without example in history as to men in general. Where superstition has bound down the will and degraded religion below the standard of natural conscience, it awaits only an adequate impulse from good or from evil to break the chains. I leave aside the good now; but the working of the mere will of man, under the impulse of evil, brought about such an event in the French Revolution. The Bible was not there as a restraining power, nor as formative of human enquiry and thought. Superstition and a hollow state of society came down with a tremendous crash, and all reverence for God was buried in its ruins. Man had emancipated himself, to have—what? Uncertainty in everything, and a ruin from which he found no resource. Conscience and the Bible, under God's good hand, had emancipated at the Reformation (imperfectly perhaps, but really); man's will without the Bible, at the French Revolution. In the country in which it burst forth superstition had continued; and society, as it was, was attacked with it, and all fell together. But man is a dependent creature; and, when he pursues his own will like a naughty child, he ere long tires himself, and is not always agreeable to his neighbours. Its energy is a feverish and feeble thing. Men as they are in general, that is, man as such, must have something certain to lean upon; he tires of uncertainty—tires of wandering he knows not whither. He is feeble, he wants rest; and, after a certain effort, he will have it. What has resulted in the case we refer to? Men have gone back, alarmed, disheartened, and weary, to the superstition which at any rate clothed itself with the certainty of Christianity; and, as far as they dare,

impose on conscience, for peace' sake, what never satisfied nor purified any conscience before the God with whom men have to do. They have given an outward stability to what pretended to certainty, and had sufficient influence to make that certainty available to quiet the mass, sufficient remains of Christianity to deck itself with its name, that they may have what, at least, can be called certain, and may so far give rest to society, if not to conscience. The will broke loose; the will of tired man would have rest somewhere. Corrupt Christianity was better than nothing.

It will be said, "This will not endure." I believe, undoubtedly, it will not. But we are seeking what certainty the human mind can in itself secure to us, and whether this enlightened age can afford me the rest which the soul seeks after; we are enquiring into its competency to measure truth—if its present phase is really a resting-place.

And even for what this age does possess of what is morally superior to every preceding one—to what is it indebted? To Christianity. Activity of intellect was not wanting, nor acuteness either, in other times. If ever a tongue shewed nicety of thought and mental cultivation, it is the Greek. Nor was elaborate and striking speculation on the soul and on God wanting, nor development of systems of large theoretical conceptions of what is hidden from material observation in the Godhead. Philosophers will tell you that the christian scriptures (such as the gospel of John) borrowed, as to their highest elements of thought, their ideas from some of these. Civilization was not wanting, nor study. Yet who can deny that, where Christianity is received, you would find in the mass of mankind truer notions of God, and of

right and wrong, beyond all comparison now than then? Yea, the peasants and beggars have a truer knowledge of God, and more real, more holy, more instructed affections when its doctrine has taken effect, than the most elevated philosophical mind in the Academy at Athens, or its imitators at Rome. This is due, Mr. N. tells us, to an enthusiastic imposture—an imposture of a most audacious character, for Jesus pretended to be Son of God (Son of man according to Daniel 7)—an imposture ill reported too. Is this credible? Does man want an imposture to bring him out of mental and moral degradation, and make him know God? Such is Mr. N.'s theory. Nay, as we have seen, he owes most of what his manhood knows of wisdom to this imposture.

But does not the knowledge of God—produced where Christianity or even Judaism has existed, and that even where no aspirations after God exist, where the heart is not practically changed—prove that there was a revelation of God? For it is in the knowledge of God there is such amazing general progress. It is really the statements afforded by this revelation which have drawn out Mr. N.'s aspirations. This formed his boyish mind, this communicated his manhood-wisdom. Can I believe, then, his theory? Why should this ardent piety which now attracts him, these energetic statements about God which have drawn out his soul, have sprung up among these narrow bigots of ordinance-bound Jews, rather than from the finely cultivated understanding of an academician, if there had not been a revelation of God so as to produce them? The world moralized by imposture and enthusiasm! What a world it must be! And such a mind as Mr. N.'s gets almost all his manhood-wisdom from it! What an imposture it must be!

Let us consider other religions. Mohammedanism has borrowed much from revelation; but it has met the lusts of men as on God's part, who, as He is there represented, will and does satisfy them: Christianity does so not even in thought.

Again, let us turn our eyes in another direction.

So exceedingly strong, even according to Mr. N., is the moral power of Jesus's character, or the effect produced by His agency, that the very attempt to portray it in pictures has given an entirely different tone to the ideal of those pictures, and imprinted on them a grace and expression of which the highest and most perfect works of art are otherwise entirely destitute, and such a tone of moral loveliness as was conducive to moral improvement all through the dark ages. This result he connects with the effect of the highest moral qualities of man, the absence of which in heathen statues deprived them of this power. These were wholly wanting, he says (see Soul, pp. 20,21): "meekness, thankfulness, love, contentment, compassion, humility, patience, resignation, disinterestedness, purity, aspiration, devoutness." He does not say these were in Christ; but he is speaking of what was wanting in the Apollos and Mercuries of antiquity, in contrast with the pictures of the Saviour, conducive during centuries to the spiritual improvement of men, and the effect of the character of Jesus on the human spirit.

Let us now turn to see what Jesus, who produced this immense moral effect on after ages, was in Mr. N.'s judgment—what He was, in whose imperfect portrait the above enumerated graces more or less shine forth.

“The cause of all this [the mischief of present Christianity] is to be found in the claim of Messiahship for Jesus.” (Phases, p. 225.) “He selected ‘Son of man’ as His favourite title, which is a direct annunciation to us that He based all His pretensions on the seventh chapter of Daniel, from which that title is adopted. On the whole, then, it was no longer defect of proof which presented itself, but positive disproof of the primitive and fundamental claims.” (Ib. p. 198.) “My positive belief in its miracles [those of Christianity] had evaporated.” (Ib. p. 187.) “He [Jesus] had receded out of my practical religion, I know not exactly when. I believe I must have disused any distinct prayers to Him, from a growing opinion that He ought not to be the object of worship, but only the way by whom we approach to the Father; and as in fact we need no such way at all, this was (in the result) a change from practical di-theism to pure theism. His mediation was to me always a mere name, and, as I believe, would otherwise have been mischievous.” (Ib. p. 188.)

“Thirdly, while it is by no means clear what are the new truths for which we are to lean upon the decisions of Jesus, it is certain we have no genuine and trustworthy account of His teaching. If God had intended us to receive the authoritative dicta of Jesus, He would have furnished us with an unblemished record of those dicta.” (Ib. p. 213.)

Mr. N., then, has acquired nearly all his manhood-wisdom, ages their highest moral tone, and the world its beau ideal of grace, from (the Lord forgive even the thought in one’s mind!) a bold impostor—One who, having found a spurious prophecy (which, however, must have been pretty ancient to be so used), pretended to be

the object of it, pretended to work miracles which He never wrought, and sent others to pretend to work them, He and they being alike incapable of doing so, whose deception was deliberate and intentional. For, speaking of riding on the ass, Mr. N. says, it was “a deed which Jesus appears to have planned with the expressed purpose of assimilating Himself to the lowly king here described.” (Ib. p. 195.) What kind of piety and wisdom, which attracts and adorns his mature and manhood-thoughts, must Mr. N. have learnt from such a One? Yet this is philosophy; this is logic—the philosophy of one who has been in the East, and can tell what majnu„n means!

It was the character of Paganism that their deities had nothing to do with conscience, unless it were a future gloomy Pluto.3 They were the helpers and satisfiers of their lusts and wishes. Christianity alone acts directly and immediately on the conscience, puts God in connection with it—an immense benefit, and yet takes away fear by revealing love; and unites perfect love and perfect righteousness in the character of God in the doctrine of atonement, so that the conscience and heart may be elevated to the height of God Himself—a God known in love. What the human soul never did before for itself, what it never could do, nay, what it never ought to have supposed, Christianity has done. Another thing characterizes it as introduced into the world—its activity towards souls. Others may have since imitated this. It is not the activity of souls about God, come for money who may to learn, but the activity of God about souls. Hence it is what has (as far as this has been done in spite of human nature) moralized the world, nay, Mr. N. himself. It acts on man for good. Who and what does this?

Mohammedanism is active. Ambition is active. Corruption is active. But what is that activity which has permanently moralized the world, taken in the mass of men, and elevated their notions of God? Whence did the activity flow?

Mr. N. has attempted to compare the progress of Christianity with that of Mohammedanism, by introducing the wars of Constantine, and the Saxon conversions by the sword of Charlemagne. But the Mohammedan conquests were the avowed principle of the religion from the beginning. The conduct of Constantine and of Charlemagne was contrary to its principles and to its practice for three hundred years. But Mr. N. is here feeble, in spite of himself. Constantine used the Christianity which existed, and which was (though suffering up to that hour, as is well known—for Diocletian's persecution had not long since been raging) strong enough for a competitor for the throne to secure his pretensions by. Mr. N. says that Constantine's christian army established Christianity. Perhaps on the throne it did; but how did the christian army come there?

But there is another ground on which to rest the proof of man's incapacity to measure what God and what a revelation ought to be. Men have lusts, passions, ambition, avarice: alas! though restrained by Christianity so that society is altered, yet the heart of man is still influenced by all these evil principles. Now all this must dim the spiritual perception, and render it more or less incapable of rightly judging of God and a revelation. How is it to get the thought of God which is to set it right? Christianity has no need to be ashamed of its axiom, "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall

see God." How are the impure to be capable of judging? Mr. N. has no revelation to act on them. Is the soul, when governed by corrupt lusts, that is, corrupt desires, perhaps habits (and with how many is this true), capable of judging? If not, this large class is incompetent to form any estimate of the scriptures. These lusts will not correct those who are under their power. What is to be done for them? They may sink, on Mr. N.'s plan, to the level to which their lusts may carry them.

In fine, in whatever aspect we view man, all is uncertainty if man's mind be the measure of truth. But you will say, This is undermining everything—it is the Pyrrhonism of a Pilate.

No; the Christian believes God has spoken—has been active in love towards man; and he bows. He is not a judge, but a receiver of truth. He desires, as a newborn babe, the sincere milk of the word, that he may grow thereby, having tasted that the Lord is gracious. I am not saying he is right or wrong in receiving it, or on what ground he has done so. I am only shewing that he is not on the same ground on which he is who considers man's mind to be the measure of truth. He has said, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He has bowed to what he beheves to be absolutely certain, and to be the truth—absolutely such. He may have a great deal yet to learn of it, but he beheves it is there revealed by God. "He who hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true; for he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God." Faith, then, has certainty, because it bows to Him who cannot he, and receives His word as the truth itself.

And here is the real question. Mr. N. takes the soul's thoughts, and excludes wholly God's making Himself known. The believer brings Him in, and this changes everything. On this I shall enter into some detail farther on; I merely state the real point in question here. There is not a greater fallacy, a more impudent presumption of man's self-sufficiency, than that it is the capacity of the organ (as men speak, that is, of the soul), in itself, which is the measure and limit of its knowledge; embracing even, in the word "capacity," all knowledge acquirable by its own powers, and all affections acted on by objects known within these limits. It can be acted on by that which it has no intrinsic capacity to acquire; as light enters into the eye, and gives a capacity of seeing by acting on it; as medicine or even food on the body. A susceptibility of being acted on, so as to have effects and even powers produced, is not a capacity in oneself to measure or acquire. The entering in of the word gives light and understanding to the simple. Now this is the operation of a revelation where it is really received. No doubt it is adapted to man in every sense, to his conscience, to his actual state, to his heart; but it is nothing acquirable by man as he is. God is active in communicating to him what operates on his soul, but which is true whether it operates or not, and which has no place in the soul, nor ever will, nor its effects, unless it be positively communicated. Evidently a revelation has this for its proper character, though it may enforce known responsibilities by sanctions known only by that which is revealed, or by the authority of the Revealer, whose perfections and claims are made known. Has man no need of such communications? Has God nothing to communicate which may be a blessing to man, which

may morally and spiritually elevate him? Is He incapable of doing it?

And this leads to another very important point.

Morality, properly speaking, is relative; that is, it flows from relationships in which we stand to others, and in which we owe such and such things to them in virtue of the claim upon us which their position gives them. I do not mean by this that intrinsic purity of heart is not to be sought, and the subjugation of passions in their workings within us. No Christian could question it for a moment. It is peace in itself. We ought to be pure: it is a good in itself, and it is the practical condition of communion with God: “Be ye holy, for I am holy;” and, as it is stated in a passage we have already cited, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” This claim of purity distinguishes Christianity as revealing God. No other, religious system knew it; for none associated man with a God known to be light, and who called us to walk in the light as He is in the light. Love also in exercise where it is not relatively due is the proper characteristic of the Christian. And these two distinguishing characteristics flow from this blessed and glorious truth —that the Christian partakes of the divine nature, and hence is called to imitate it in practice. “That eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us” (as John teaches us, in Christ, so that He should be an absolute practical example to us) is also “true in Him and in us” whose life He is, “because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.”

This is the christian life. Without disputing about words, I do not call this morality, though it be really that which is the spring of and accomplishes it; because the proper

and natural display of life in us is not properly obligation, though that life may, in this display, fulfil those obligations. Now morality, I apprehend, is, properly speaking, the maintenance of obligation. Of this latter we will now speak. In its nature, and by the force of the term obligation, it is, as I have said, relative.

Before entering on this point, I would notice the connection, as stated in the scriptures, between the two; that is, between our partaking of the “divine nature,” and our fulfilment of moral obligation.

“Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” Here this principle of the divine nature communicated to us accomplishes what would be a moral obligation enforced by the law; but the two things are distinguished. And then love goes farther also, because there is positive active energy in it, where there is no relative obligation. While I say no obligation having this nature, I clearly have it to live in it, and so also please God, which itself is the highest obligation. Hence, “he that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” So the Lord Himself united both, even to the giving of His life. “But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given me commandment, so I do.” The precepts of the gospel are the guidance of this nature, according to the perfection and perfect wisdom of Him who is its source; they are needed by us in the obscurity of our feeble nature and distracting passions, and give (as ought to be the case, as it was in Christ) to the movements of the divine nature in us the additional character of obedience.

It remains then true, that what is called generally and properly “moral obligation” is necessarily and in its

nature a relative thing. And hence the measure of it is the claim which the being in relation to whom I stand has upon me in virtue of that relationship.

In this sense it is, though the expression be very incorrect, that morality is eternal. First, if we consider as morahty our own (or, to use the modern word, our subjective) state (to which the term is hardly properly applied), the love and holiness which become a man are the communication of the nature of God Himself, and are eternal in their source and character. But secondly, morality, properly so called, drawing its source from the claims attached to certain beings with whom I am in relationship, in virtue of which they are in that relationship, is as unchangeable as the relationship itself. For “eternal” in this case has only the meaning of absolute and unchangeable when the relationship exists; that is, the relationship being known, the duty attaches to it essentially. Thus, father and son, for example, is a known relationship. The relationship of father and son cannot exist without certain relative duties necessarily arising. The obligation is inherent to the relationship of father and son amongst human beings, and so in other cases.

But this shews the importance of a revelation.

As to the first (that is, our likeness to the divine nature), it is absolutely necessary; for God is unknown in His real perfection without it.

In the latter (that is, moral obligation properly so called), it has equal importance in another way, namely, that the revelation which God makes of Himself creates an obligation commensurate with that revelation. If the Son of God has died for me—is my Saviour and my Lord,

it is clear He has a claim morally upon me, according to what He is as so revealed, and what He has done. That is, a revelation creates a part of morality; just as a woman's marriage does by her entering upon a new relationship with her husband, with this difference, that the obligation of marriage is abstractedly known in itself, whereas what is newly revealed then first begins even to be known as an obligation. The obligation takes its origin from it.

Some remarks may be added here. The mere capacity of nature to enjoy or stand in certain relationships does not constitute a base of morality; the relationship itself must exist. An orphan may have a nature susceptible of all the feelings and obligations of a child toward a parent. The moral tie does not exist, because the claim of the parent cannot be there.

Next, holiness in its nature, and love, as we speak of it here, suppose sin, though it may be only known as the opposite of the nature which knows it. Innocence is not holiness; it is ignorance of evil. God is holy, for He knows good and evil, and is perfectly good, and evil is perfectly abhorrent to Him. We have the knowledge of good and evil; hence naturally our conscience is bad; but if holy, and as far as holy, we abhor the evil we know, and know as evil, when it is present, in the measure of our holiness.

Love too, as we know it in God, is exercised in respect of evil; for evil exists and exists in us, and He loves us in that state.

Now, the understanding of perfect holiness by a sinful nature is, as to its own capacity, impossible. Conscience may so far understand it as to see its opposition to sin,

and angrily or in terror dread the consequences; but an unholy nature does not comprehend or know a holy one in its separation from evil, as to affections—will—delight; for it has contrary ones. So, indeed, of love: “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

To say that a man is not a sinner is mere folly and insensibility to good and evil, and the strongest possible proof of ignorance of God and hardness of conscience. “Thou thoughtest,” says he whose piety Mr. N. declares he delights in (Phases, pp. 223, 232), speaking in God’s name, “that I was altogether such a one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set before thee the things that thou hast done.” To say that he is a sinner4 is to confess his incapacity of knowing God, or judging of Him, or the revelation He gives of Himself, unless sin (that is, an opposite moral nature in thought and desire—in insubjection too of will) be the capacity to know Him.

But if we consider morality, properly speaking, as grounded on relationship, it is clear and easily made evident that man cannot, and ought not, to suppose in his own mind the only thing which God can be to his comfort. For in that for which man is responsible to God he has failed. I ask not the cause. I am willing here to take the ground Mr. N. takes (proof as it may really be, as I shall shew, of indifference to God’s presence and favour). I will suppose that sin is come in neither by following Adam, nor by inheriting his fallen nature; that it is all the pure fruit, without other cause, of man’s own individual will. Be it so.

He has failed, then, in the relationship to God and man in which he stood as a responsible creature, and that by his own proper perverseness. He needs mercy. He

needs, then, forgiveness. He needs a God of goodness, who cannot hold the guilty for innocent, and yet forgives iniquity. But if a person has sinned against One to whom he owes so much, his taking it for granted that he is to be forgiven, as a matter of course, is hardness and impudence of heart.

If my child had been very naughty and offensive to me (and it is nothing compared to sin against God), and he were to say, “Of course my father will forgive: forgiveness is a proper thing that suits his character—is becoming conduct;” would not his state be really worse than his offence—his conscience shewn to be hard? Conscience—right feeling—thinks of what we have merited from those good and gracious, when we have offended them, and judges itself, though it may be attracted by grace. The heart which coolly expects forgiveness, because it suits the character of Him we have offended, is in a state which unfits it for receiving it.

If God reveals it, it does indeed suit Him; and I bow in thankful adoration when He has shewn Himself such (but this is revelation): to expect it is to be insensible to it—to be unfit for it.

And here I may take up Christianity itself, because I only shew that, being what it is, there must be a revelation to communicate it: the sinner’s mind ought not and could not judge it, or appreciate it, or suppose it, unless it were revealed. It declares a love of God which gave His only-begotten Son, One with Himself, the object of His infinite delight before the world was, for vile and polluted sinners. It declares that the Son came in the exercise of this same love, giving Himself for them to

put away their sin and bring them to God—thus known to be perfect love to themselves—and with a conscience which knows that He imputes no sin to them at all (without diminishing, nay, giving a far deeper sense of His holiness), because His character had been perfectly glorified about it.

The Father did not spare His Son, but delivered Him up. He freely and in the same love gave Himself for it, to glorify God and save us. Could a sinner expect such a dealing? Would it not have been a presumption which increased his offence, and shewed his pride and the naughtiness of his heart? Revealed, it is a love which nothing else could manifest, and the glory of Him who has love for His nature.

That is, not only the human mind, as such, is incapable of appreciating in itself God and the revelation of Him, but, seeing we are sinners, it cannot, morally it ought not, to suppose the revelation to be such as it must be, if of any use to man, seeing he is a sinner. The supposition constitutes unfitness to enjoy and profit by what is supposed. Known by revelation, grace is the perfection of God as He manifests Himself. The expectation of it destroys its nature (for it would not then be mere goodness), and debases still further him who expects it.

All these considerations shew that the mind of man, and specially of sinful man, is incapable of estimating what God ought to be, and what the revelation which He would give of Himself should be.

Hence utter uncertainty in the soul as to what He is. This is, indeed, an unquestionable fact—He concerns Himself about our words, actions, thoughts. Solemn thought! for if He does so, it is because He has a right

and a will to do so. But what is He who does? Here all is solemn or irritated silence, or an effort to believe Him good, so as to set the conscience easy and the will free.

Mr. N. would take away what I have, if he could. He will give me his thoughts instead, but no revelation of God. I must take his thoughts (worse than secondhand faith), or my own, or everybody his own:—that is, everything beyond the thought that God concerns Himself about our actions, words, and thoughts; and almighty power and Godhead are the sport of every man's mind, and of the fancies which a sinful will may have about the God men have to say to. For what else than his own notions can Mr. N. give them?

And does Mr. N. deny this horrible uncertainty, this incapacity to judge of revelation?

He cannot and he does not. I am not here supposing that he does not give us his thoughts about God: these we may hereafter examine in a measure. But we are here examining his views of revelation. On this head all is avowed uncertainty and incapacity. "There is no imaginable criterion," he tells us, "by which we can establish that the wisdom of a teacher is absolute and illimitable." (Phases, p. 213.)

Now this is not a statement that the Bible is not a revelation of God because of what it is; but that no revelation can be established as certain to man.

If there be no imaginable criterion by which it can be established, man is incapable of judging of the certainty of a revelation; for he has no criterion to judge by. I do not deny that some might be proved to be false, by evident contradictions, or such other proofs as are within the measure of man's apprecation, for which he

has a criterion. If a pretended revelation declared there were many gods, and of the basest immorality and born in time, such as Jupiter and Venus,5 and the like, it could not be a revelation of the one true God, whose “eternal power and Godhead” men ought to know without a revelation given by inspiration. (Rom. i.) But for receiving a revelation as certain in a positive way, man has no criterion; that is, he is incapable of judging of it.

It cannot be pretended that God cannot reveal anything (that is, state anything with certainty as to the past, as to the future, or as to what is unseen). Only man, according to Mr. N., has no criterion by which to judge that it is such. That is, man is incapable of judging with certainty of it; he is capable of uncertainty in such a case, and that is all.

A poor condition to be in if God be capable of giving such a revelation! Mr. N. tells us (Phases, p. 212) it would be very “undesirable;” but he cannot say in principle that God has not revealed and does not reveal anything, for he has no criterion to judge by in order to assure himself of it.

But let us measure this proposition a little more accurately. It affirms very clearly what I have stated as to man’s incapacity, supposing him to be the judge of revelation. He is, it is confessed, a totally incompetent one.

But morally (that is as regards man’s responsibility before God, or his comfort or enlightening from God, and God’s competency to place man under responsibility or to comfort or enlighten him,) it goes something farther; for it assumes that man’s criteria are the only means of the certainty of a revelation; and, in doing that,

it affirms that God is incapable of giving a revelation which can bind the conscience of man as being God's revelation to him. I say morally, because I admit that sinful corrupt-minded man is an incompetent judge of a revelation. But Mr. N. admits no other way of its reception than the a priori moral competency of man; and on this ground his proposition really declares that God is incapable of so revealing Himself to man as to make Himself known, or bind the conscience, or assure the heart, by such revelation.

For if there be no imaginable criterion by which man can be assured certainly of its authority, and man's judgment be the only way of receiving it, God in no imaginable way can communicate his mind or will so as to make it certain to man as such, and thus binding on him, or a comfort to him. This is a bold proposition. It is always well to know what men do really mean; sometimes it is enough to state it to see its falseness.

This statement declares God's total incapacity to communicate with man. He must remain, as far as He is concerned, an unknown, perhaps an Epicurean (i.e., an indifferent) God. Any expression of love to His creature He is debarred from, as well as that of righteousness. For any revelation of His character to instruct man He is incompetent. He has made man in such a way as that all communion to him on His part is forbidden. Would He elevate man to an increased knowledge of Him? He cannot. Would He manifest any love to him in his sins and sorrows? He must resign Himself to be silent, shut up in His own perfection, if perfection an inactive love, incapable of telling itself to the one it loves, can be called. Such is the theory of Mr. N. But this is not all.

For if God cannot reveal Himself to man, man's thoughts of God must be entirely within the limits of his own mind. I shall just now shew Mr. N.'s theory false as to fact, on ground not yet noticed, but I take it now as he states it.

Now if God be brought within the limits of man's thoughts as such, if by searching Him man can find Him out, then is He really not God at all, or man is. At least, his mind is equal to the divine infinity; for when it comes to power instead of presump-tuousness, the difference is soon found out.

I remember (for I also have had my "phases of faith") when first awakened to serious and, in some measure, continued moral thought, I was reading, partly through desire of knowledge, partly alas! through the vanity which likes to possess it, Cicero's "Offices," and I came to the passage, nearly the only one which remains to me unobliterated by an active life, "subjecta Veritas quasi material," that is, "truth subjected as a material" to the mind. I said to myself (or rather the divine truth flashed across my mind), "This cannot be in the case of God, for my mind must be superior to the matter which is subjected to its operations; if it be, that which is so is not God. Faith alone can put Him in His place, which, if He be God, must be above me, as much as God must be above man."

Is not this true? But then there must be a revelation of God in some way, or I (deplorable condition!) remain in total ignorance of Him. I am not saying man is so, but that he must be so if there be no revelation of God. I believe conscience knows that there is a God—Mr. N.'s conscience, my conscience; but it wants something more

than it knows: for conscience knows responsibility, and it knows sin—sin lying on itself—on him who has the conscience of it.

Argumentatively, it is an absurdity to make man's mind the measure of God.

Morally, it is a horrible iniquity as well as a folly.

But perhaps the reader will consider it unjust in argument, and even morally, to impute to Mr. N. such a thought, as that which the Psalmist, whose piety he admires, puts into the mouth of God, being inspired so to do, as a charge against the wicked, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself."

But Mr. N. has reasoned out his principles too boldly to their consequences to conceal them. Any God known by revelation is too entirely excluded from his thoughts to make him fear to bring out his God such as He is according to his theory. He tells us, indeed, that we must regard Him as morally more perfect than man. Still his conclusion on the whole matter is, that "the perfections of God are justly called a projected image of our own highest conceptions."6 (Soul, p. 41.) That is, as a fact, God is more morally perfect than man, which is not, indeed, saying much; but, adding boundlessness to our idea, our highest conceptions are the moral measure, as to kind, of His perfections, though it be a projected enlarged image of them.

Now, the mental absurdity of this I am not answerable for; nor is it surprising in logicians and philosophers meddling with God's nature, and measuring it by their own. Absurdity is the necessary result.

But it is evident that the addition of boundlessness changes everything morally, so that the application of a limited nature to judge of a boundless one by is moral nonsense. If boundless love and boundless power go together, the result must be entirely different in kind from the responsibility by which I judge my conduct, who have but very limited power.

The title to use goodness sovereignly is a different thing from obligation under which I lie to God (if, indeed, Mr. N. admits any); for I am bound in my use of that by the obligation. Infinite goodness, coupled with infinite power, is free to act from itself.

But with this point I am not here concerned. I cite the passage from Mr. N.'s other book, to shew that his system does establish our mind as the moral measure of what God is, though we may attach the idea of greater degree to it.

Such is the necessary result of the exclusion of inspired revelation.

I have said, however, that it is really false in fact. Man does not, nor ever can, form his idea of God without his mind being acted on in the way of revelation, though it be not a direct inspired communication from God. He is surrounded by a system altogether beyond his power and control, which witnesses a Being that rises in divine supremacy beyond all his thoughts, which tells of a creating God. Yet, mark, he sees around him a confusion, a disorder, in the condition of those set as masters over the lower part of this creation, which tells a tale of their moral position before God which no wit of his can solve—too bad to be such as it ought to be, with too many signs of God having to say to it—of goodness

and mercy, to think it possible it should not be a system of responsibility with which God has to do, with which He will deal otherwise than He does as yet—which put Tartarus and Elysium into the minds of the heathen, a vague and anxious future into the breasts of all: the very insoluble enigma of which shews some mighty moral relationship in disorder, proving by its very greatness that it must refer to God, and hence that it is only His coming into it which can give the key to all, or set it right, in fact.

Mr. N. admits “prevailing wickedness” (Soul, p. 44) in the creation of a Being of perfect goodness. How strange! He tells us, with cold calculation which one would think had never visited man’s sorrows, that sorrow is needed to perfect man morally. A poor comfort to thousands of despairing souls, writhing in misery and complaining of God because of it! A poor answer to millions worshipping stocks and stones, and, according to Mr. N., a supposed devil,7 through fear! Is this necessary for Mr. N.’s philosophical happiness and moral perfecting of man? If Christianity had produced all this, what would he have said? Had it done so, that would not alter the fact. There it is for cold-hearted drawing-room philosophers to pronounce it necessary at their ease.

Mr. N. tells us, indeed, that had we had it all to arrange our own way, man could not have done it better. Man could not have done it better! Is that all he has to say? Could God have done it no better? is the question, if we are to take it up as Mr. N. does, as being the original ordered system of God. Is prevailing wickedness, as the necessary result of all a supremely good God could do, the projected image of our highest conceptions? I dare

say it is; but does it not then betray the true nature and competency of these conceptions? Mr. N. also declares there is an antagonist will in man. Is this also necessary to his moral perfecting?

But further, as evil is finite and transitory, Mr. N. thinks, while lamenting the actual state of the world, that in prevailing wickedness, however intense and whatever misery it causes, there is nothing to inspire rational doubt of the divine goodness. (Soul, p. 45.) Is this all the soul and its aspirations can give us? The chance that evil will be transitory taking away rational doubts of God's goodness, when what is intensely the contrary prevails, and that goodness is almost universally unknown! Is this Mr. N.'s highest conception, projected as an image with boundless proportions of abstract goodness ?

The Christian has no such difficulty; he believes that there is alas! an "antagonist will" (Soul, p. 47), a rebellious and sinful nature, with all the miserable consequences of its "intense wickedness" (ib. p. 45); but he believes that God has come into the midst of it to win man's heart away from this perverse and miserable enmity to God by surpassing goodness, and to make Himself known to man as love in the midst of the fruit of his ways; yea, finding in all the misery and sin the occasion of shewing it, and at all cost of love to Himself. He does not rationally suppose God is good, because, in cold philosophy, man's sorrows are necessary to his moral perfecting. He sees in the sorrow (such as none ever had; for who could have such?) of God, come down to carry man's, and redeem and bring him out of it, the proof of that love which makes God known, alike in its greatness and its nearness, in its height above sin and its condescension to those sunk in it; according to that

grace which could reach from the throne of God to the vilest of sinners, yea, to be made sin for them, and so bring up the heart, by reaching it there where it was, to the throne from which that grace had descended, and the God of whom it was the perfection. For the highest exercise (or, at least, display) of that perfection which dwells on the throne of heaven was that which visited the lost sinner upon earth, linking his soul to itself, and making known God as He is. Yes, there was a revelation, a revelation of what man wanted, and which God alone could give, and which made Him known.8 But I must return to the point I was upon. A certain revelation of God is necessary, and exists, and that revelation is the basis of all Mr. N.'s reasonings—that is, "the things that are made." Rom. 1. From these Mr. N. deduces design, a designer, and so on. No doubt Christianity fully recognizes this. But, then, this is only one way of God's revealing Himself—the lowest way. It reveals His eternal power and Godhead. But this raises other questions. Undoubted traces of goodness are infallibly seen in the creation; but while order reigns in the material world so as to leave no doubt of One of infinite wisdom who designed it, in the moral, such is the "intense wickedness," the confusion, and discontent that, if a man attempts to unriddle what he sees, he falls into a labyrinth from which there is no way out.

A mind which feels that God has to say to the world cannot, with the flippancy of philosophy turning despot in its despair, say, Evil is only transitory—hang the man that troubles society (as Mr. N. would do), and from the reasonableness of this deduce that God may leave the majority of mankind in such a state that even the heart that could reason thus "laments" over it, yet counts it

good enough after all. (Soul, p. 43; the whole passage will be quoted hereafter as characteristic.) It cannot say, It is a part of the perfection of beasts of prey to be cruel and destroy, therefore the misery of the destroyed is intelligible; because it may say, “How is it they have such a kind of perfection? What is come in, that, in proportion as created being approaches man, evil begins to manifest itself; that where creation is without a will, all is material order, all lovely where man cannot reach; where will comes in, where man meddles, all is misery and sin? How is it that, if the beast’s furious passion passes away with its occasion, man uses his intellect to perpetuate and perfect his vengeance? Is this for moral perfecting?”

The Christian does see that there is a revelation of God in His works which are seen, such as leaves man without excuse in not owning His eternal power and Godhead. He sees, plainly enough, that Mr. N.’s highest conceptions did not, and could not, take a step without it. But he sees that he wants something else from God to explain the riddle of the moral confusion which exists, since there is a God; and that as God has to say to it, and evidently it has to say to God (for His creatures surely have something to say to Him9), God, and God alone, can give the key and the answer to that in the midst of which his soul groans. He sees, moreover, that such as Mr. N. depend on a revelation of God as much as any: only that, in order to maintain man’s importance, they take the lowest, the one morally inadequate to solve the grand question of the eternal interests of a soul with God, and reject that which would reveal God fully, and make man dependent on Him.

Why, if God has partially revealed Himself in His works, is it impossible He should reveal Himself in some other way? Is that the only possible one? If God can give in mere nature infallible evidence that it is He, why cannot He reveal Himself in some other way with adequate evidence that it is Himself who does so? This, we have seen, Mr. N. declares Him incapable of doing. But who will take his highest conceptions as an adequate guide to God? Why is he to use a partial revelation in which God has not left Himself without witness, if haply man might feel after Him and find Him, and deny all other? Mr. N., while using Christianity really to elevate his account of what God is, would reduce us to that which God's revelation points out as true, but as of the lowest kind. That is all his books amount to. The christian revelation recognizes this testimony: but it shews from the plainest facts, which Mr. N. very wisely passes over, that such a testimony, though it left man without excuse, had been perfectly useless, through man's perverseness, to elevate man above the corruptions of his own heart; that its existence had even left idolatrous revelling in abominations not fit to be named, and making gods to themselves to help them in them. Christianity owns the testimony, and shews that man's soul when in possession of it sank into the utmost degradation. Mr. N. avails himself of Christianity, from which he avows he has got almost all his manhood-wisdom, to prove the competency of this previous partial revelation to lead man up to God and render all other unnecessary, and to deny the Christianity which has given him the results and ideas to which the other never in fact led man. Which is the most philosophical, the most logical, the most true?

Principles on Which the Examination is Carried on

I turn now to the revelation itself on which Christianity is based. The real object of Mr. N.'s book is to destroy the Christianity from which he gained almost all the wisdom he has. It is not very kind to others. Would he be the only depositary of it in some improved shape into which it has been refined in his mind?

Our task now must be to examine Mr. N.'s reasonings as to the revelation he rejects.

And here, at the outset, I stumble on what proves the whole course of his argument, from one end of the book to the other, to be utterly illogical and unsound. His enquiry really is as to the truth and certainty, and hence the authority, of the revelation which the book called pre-eminently "the Bible" professes to give. Is it a credible authoritative revelation from God? Now, by his own confession, he has conducted this enquiry upon a principle which makes it impossible ever to receive any revelation at all as such. That is, he begins his enquiry, and carries it on, on a principle which shews the whole enquiry itself to be absurd and useless. The conclusion was come to before he began, it being contained in the principle on which he set out. He enquires into the authority of a revelation on a principle which in itself denies such authority in any case.

"We cannot build up a system of authority on a basis of free criticism." (Phases, p. 213.) This, Mr. N. puts in italics, as the grand result he comes to. Why then enquire, if such or such a one be authoritative, by free criticism? Effectively, if my mind is superior to the object

it is exercised upon, it cannot have, morally, authority over me.

But this only shews Mr. N.’s book to be an illogical absurdity; and that he assumed his conclusion in principle before he set out.

Mr. N. states, as to what practically amounts to this same principle, “Perhaps I could not have gained this result by any abstract act of thought, from want of freedom to think: and there are advantages, also, in expanding slowly under great pressure, if one can expand, and is not crushed by it.” (Phases, p. 200.)

Now it is possible his mind had to go through a long process before it could divest itself of the outward influence of revelation. But when he had discovered that his enquiry was absurd (for it is absurd to enquire if a particular revelation is authoritative on a principle which denies the possibility of any being so), why should he communicate this absurd process of his own mind to others?

Not to shew justness of logical reasoning to those who had power to estimate its justness! That is a clear case. Had truth been really his object, he would have stopped and said, “Whatever results as to details I may have arrived at, my enquiry has been carried on on an illogical absurd principle; and as the principle involves the impossibility of an authoritative revelation, my enquiry must be, Is there no other means of ascertaining whether there is one or not? Is free criticism (I speak of it such as Mr. N. presents it) itself the just means of trying the question? “But this would not have been Mr. N.’s book nor answered Mr. N.’s purpose.

But now I ask, What does Mr. N. mean by “free criticism,” such as, in its nature, to exclude all possible authority? It means the absolute supremacy and competency of man’s mind to judge everything. God is wholly excluded. And this is the grand principle of Mr. N.’s book: for to judge God, if He be there, is absurd and impossible. His authority and word must prevail; if He be there, He must be perfect and right; but He judges and cannot be judged, or He is not there as God. Mr. N. supposes a man judging whether something be of God or not; but if criticism excludes authority, it certainly excludes God Himself. It supposes the absence of God and His word always. It means—I exclude God, and judge of all for myself without Him; and I will never do anything else. So thought Job, till he met with Him, and found his own littleness. But this is the whole of Mr. N.’s principle. He will in no case allow God to come in; for then, surely, criticism ends. This, stated here in principle, is found in every page of the book. Bring God in in thought—and all is false. But for man to exclude Him is always false. It leaves out the grand spring, test, and key-stone of all moral truth.

If man says, “What, then, is to be done? Must not I judge morally before I receive anything as of God? Otherwise I may receive Hindooism or Mohammedanism.” I will tell you what to do, if this be really so. Confess that you are away from Him. Is this the normal state of man? You are away from God, ignorant of God; or you would not need to use all this effort to know whether anything be of Him or not. I add, if you are away from Him, then confess your need of Him. But that would suppose a revelation or ruin. And such is the truth, and the efforts of free criticism involve it.

But, taken as a just human instrument, criticism, in the true sense and legitimate use of it, does not destroy authority. I admit that, morally, God's grace is necessary, because a corrupt —an "antagonist will" is to be dealt with; but, in the human sense, criticism does not exclude it. I may ascertain that a letter of my father is really his. When adequate evidence is acquired of that, his letter assumes at once his authority over me. Now the only thing that makes a difference in a divine communication is, that man is incompetent to judge of God, and has an antagonist will which will not receive Him. But this proves the necessity of a revelation and of divine grace —that is, of Christianity—unless man is to remain ignorant of God and opposed to Him.

The real secret of Mr. N.'s book is, that he desires to destroy confidence in Christianity. It is a common, very common, misfortune, through the weakness of our corrupt natures, to find invaluable moral truths mixed up with the grossest human corruptions. The divinely-wise man separates "the precious from the vile," and he becomes as God's mouth, being subject to truth from God. The self-confident man rejects all together, because his intellect is capable of seeing the corruption, and incapable of valuing the truth.

Such has been Mr. N.'s case. One knows it to be the case of millions who wear a transparent garb of popery, or, if bold enough or honest enough, have cast it off, and languish often in true and unsatisfied aspirations. How many have I met with in this state! How many, whom true Christianity made tell their thoughts of popery—ay, and the sorrows of their own hearts too —though they might not have the courage (that is, were not spiritual

enough) to find a sufficient motive for being anything else!

But is there not this will, this desire, to destroy Christianity and all revelation? The whole book witnesses it; and often the speech of the author betrays him.

Thus, in a passage I shall permit myself to translate: “O false-named theology! O may the last part of so long a life remain to me, and energy (or breath), and whatever may be sufficient, to tell your deeds!” (Phases, p. 131.) Is there no will here?

Again: “If by independent methods, such as an examination of MSS., the spuriousness of the chapter could now be shewn, this would verify the faculty of criticism which has already objected to its contents: thus it would justly encourage us to apply similar criticism to other passages.” (Ib. p. 108.) Encourage us! What does that mean?

These shew the animus of the book.

Let my reader allow me here to make a few remarks on the moral sentiments connected with a rejection of scripture. No doubt prepossessions of any kind warp the judgment; but indifference to what ought to have a place in the affections if true— indifference, that is, to its truth —shews a heart incapable by moral defect (while in that state) of judging justly in a moral question.

I have long, I suppose, looked at the portrait of my mother, who watched over my tender years with that care which a mother only knows how to bestow. I can just form some imperfect thought of her looks, for I was early bereft of her; but her eye fixed upon me the tender

love which had me for its heart's object —which could win when I could know little else—which had my confidence before I knew what confidence was—by which I learnt to love, because I felt I was loved, was the object of that love— which had its joy in serving me—which I took for granted must be, for I had never known aught else. All this which I had learnt, and which was treasured in my heart and formed part of my nature, was linked with the features which hung before my gaze. That was my mother's picture. It recalled her, no longer sensibly present, to my heart. A retailer of pictures comes in, and tells me that, from the painter's name and style, it could not be my mother's. The date proved it. It could, at best, be an unlike drawing from memory. Is the quiet, indifference of criticism here the proof of a right state of mind? I am astounded. I may be forced to acknowledge my mistake, to give up the much-loved memorial that brought her back to my thoughts; but I shall groan in heart—turn away—wish it were not so. Indifference would prove, not a good critic, but a worthless heart.

Is Christ's picture in the word less precious to me? He was taken early from man's sight, to whom He had shewn this tender love. I have found—thought I found—His traits in the word. I know I have loved Him, and felt His love. That word recalls His love, gives me the expression of it. It is, has been, His look of love to me. Shall I feel "encouraged" to pursue criticisms which are to prove it all a fraud? He who has never tasted His love may; not I. Were I forced, I would cast it by with sorrow, lingeringly, if I must. I have lost what brought known love to my mind, what re-awakened thoughts and an image I had difficulty to recall. Be it so; His love may be

true; but I sit down in sorrow. To pursue the criticism which “picks holes” in it I cannot. I lay it aside; I forget it; I do not trust it: but I shall not forget my sorrow. Did I take it up, it would be associated with my affections to what I knov is true. I leave it, therefore, and admit it is better not to associate mistake with affection. But the loved Object I know of undoubtedly in my soul. That Mr. N. does not, never did, if I am to take his own account. The picture is gone, by what he supposes is sound criticism of these connoisseurs of pictures, and all is gone with it; for he had but the picture, and nothing else: and why should he not judge a picture, which is nothing else—worse than nothing, therefore, if a false one? For him Jesus is gone, with the written revelation of Him. He will believe enough of the history, indeed, to set Him down as an impostor, but has seen no trait of beauty in Himself which makes him regret to find Him such.

He has only by the process degraded his own mind to the point of considering an impostor among the most excellent of the earth.

Mr. N. must forgive me if I do not think he has gained by the process which has produced this result. I do not believe that he, when a professed Christian (though we know that where there is mere profession, men may be very wicked—away from God— and that we may all fall, though sincere), or any one who professed Christianity, would have associated with inquiries about God and His truth, the low-minded insinuations which are found in Mr. N.’s book, and which certainly I shall not copy. I am but a poor sinner, I well know: real Christians are inconsistent beings. The reality may be wanting when the doctrine is professed; but n<5 one, even merely

professing it, would have connected God's name and truth with filth. It is for an infidel to do that. That I may not seem unjust to Mr. N., I shall mention the pages where it is found, and no more. (Phases, pp. 129, 150.)

Animus Of The Examination

Before examining the details of Mr. N.'s book, I would yet make a general remark.

The kind of opposition men make to Christianity proves its truth in the main—proves in it the consciousness of a real claim of God on the soul.

No doubt men have attacked Paganism as false. They have resisted Mohammedanism, though its sword was its principal argument, so that there was less of this.

But the constant and laborious exercise of free criticism, the close and sifting examination the Bible has gone through for ages, the anxious research after errors or contradictions within, proves anxiety to shew that it is not what it pretends to be. Why all this anxiety? Those not immediately under the influence of Mohammedanism are long satisfied that it is false, and leave it there; but these minute researches after a flaw in the scriptures continue—are repeated—renewed. Men take it up on every side. Astronomy and geology are called in aid. Geography is ransacked: history, antiquity, style, manuscripts of all kinds, foolish writings of the fathers, absurd writings of heretics, apocryphal imitations of its contents; nothing left unturned to find something to discredit it; wise writings of philosophers to prove they could do as well, or were the source of the good, or even of the alleged absurdities of doctrine; every other influence sought out which could have

moralized humanity, that it may not be supposed to be this. Why all this toil? Why, if it be a doctrine like Plato's, should it not have produced its effect, and our philosophers be as cool about it as about other things? It has—their conscience knows it has—God's claim and God's truth in it; and they will not allow that the true God, that Christ, is the source of it; for then they must bend, and admit what man is.

And this shews itself in the most curious way. Though they pretend to think nothing of Christ, or that He was an impostor, they will not allow that the authorized books of His religion give a true account of the doctrines of the religion. If I read the Koran, I am satisfied to take it as the account of Mohammedanism, absurd as it may be; and I say Mohammedanism is absurd. So of the Vedas and Puranas.

But when the christian books are in question, not only are they charged with error, contradiction, &c, but the free critics will not even allow them to teach the real Christianity after all. They are not a true, not an authentic account of Christianity. Why (if it be a mere fable, an imposture) so difficult about the exactitude of the account of it? Surely the main propagators can give a sufficient account of the imposture and its doctrines, for anything that concerns us. But no. There is the consciousness that God is in Christianity. The conscience, in spite of the will, knows it has to do with God here; and it wants a true revelation, a real and authentic account of what that God is. It is right. But though curiosity and a favourite subject may absorb many for a time, or an individual all his life, men are not so continuously, so perseveringly anxious to get at the truth of a fable. They do not reject the sacred books of

any other religion, as not being a true account of that religion. They take them as they are, because they know they are a fable; or, even if it be known to be the work of men's minds, it is the same. A stranger to Lutheranism takes the symbolical books of Lutheranism as being Lutheranism, let him agree to or dissent from them. Why not the christian books as stating Christianity? An infidel cannot let God and His truth alone, because it is His truth. He is a zealot against it; for his will is engaged. He is a bitter zealot because his conscience is uneasy. He will laugh at a Mohammedan carpenter, who thinks he only has the true religion; he will curse a consistent Christian who thinks he has, and denounce and abhor such if they do not let him amongst them when he denies their Lord, and only wish for. energy and all needed to proclaim their deeds. Why this difference?

God Is Excluded

In running through the contents of Mr. N.'s book, I shall first notice that the grand object, as the grand fallacy of it all is, the getting rid of God; and this, whatever the subject may be. Only introduce God, and argument after argument crumbles and disappears. If there be only man, the difficulty may be great. Let God be acknowledged, and all is necessary and plain. If this be so, the real meaning of the book, what its reasonings are worth, will not require much other argument. The consideration of the passages I shall refer to will shew, I think, that all real knowledge of God, all sense of His value, was wholly absent from Mr. N.'s mind.

Here I would remark, that when we are reasoning on the force or meaning of a christian doctrine, we are entitled to receive it, hypothetically, as true. This does not prove

it to be so: but if I can shew it to be right and consistent with other truths, assuming it to be true, this removes the difficulty alleged against it on the score of what it means.

For example, in Phases, p. 8, Mr. N. says," I certainly saw that to establish the abstract moral right and justice of vicarious punishment was not easy."

Now, I will first say that no one dreams of the abstract moral right or justice of vicarious punishment. He who undertakes it does so in love, not in justice. If I pay another man's debts, it is love. Kindness makes me do it. When it is done, it is then just in the creditor not to exact the discharge of them from the debtor, and the latter owes it to my love. The doctrine of Christianity is, that Christ gave Himself, offered Himself, was willing to suffer, to make good His Father's righteousness and glory, and to redeem guilty men. There is no idea of compensation, properly speaking, in it. Sin dishonoured God in the sight of the whole universe. His holiness, His truth, His justice, His majesty, all were compromised; and the simple exercise of love to the guilty would have been acquiescence in the evil, frightful disorder in the universe. Christ willingly gives Himself, that God may be perfectly glorified. On the cross all that God is is perfectly and infinitely glorified, and so is Christ in the highest way. "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." God's majesty is vindicated. What could have so done it? His just judgment against sin is shewn—His perfect love to the guilty is displayed in a higher manner than could be otherwise conceived —His truth, which had pronounced death against sin, established in the highest way.

In the garden Satan had persuaded man that God was not good —had kept back the wisdom-bearing fruit lest man should be like Himself. He had persuaded man that He was not truth, that man would not die, that God would not execute the judgment. Had God executed it simply against man, there was no love; had He not, there was no truth nor righteousness.

But Christ gives Himself up an offering for sin. God does execute judgment in a way amazingly conspicuous in its moral character, so that angels desire to look into it. His truth is displayed, His despised majesty vindicated, His perfect love exercised, and that in a way far surpassing all possible thought of ours. If we say, But He gave up another to the suffering; no doubt it is love to me, but how love and justice to Him given? I answer, He gave Himself in the same love, and it is His highest glory, that in which a motive-bond of love has its source even between Him and the Father. “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again.” Here, too, death, and the power of death, and he who had it, were overcome, to the divine glory and our perfect comfort; so that death has wholly lost its sting. Now, leave God out of it, and what does it become? To make out the fact of any “compensation” was “harder still.” (Phases, p. 8.) That is, admit the christian doctrine as true; and every truth as to God finds its place, and is exalted by it. But God has no place in Mr. N.’s judgment as to the doctrine we have here touched on.

Mr. N.’s friend argued, that “carnal reason could not discern that human or divine blood, any more than that of beasts, had efficacy to make the sinner as it were sinless.” (Ib.) Human or divine blood had no more efficacy than a beast’s! But, on the one hand, Christ’s

shedding His blood is giving His life; and, on the other, for us death, morally, is man's plague, Satan's power, and God's wrath. So, according to Christianity, Christ underwent it. Is that nothing more than a beast's dying? If Christ was "God manifest in the flesh," was the love shewn in His dying nothing? Was the bearing wrath nothing? For such is the christian doctrine as to it; and it is that we are now considering. Is it nothing that the Son of God does, and bears all this even to death? No more than a beast's being killed? The author himself could not, then, quite receive it; because in the Epistle to the Hebrews the sacred writer "seems to expect his readers to see an inherent impropriety in the sacrifices of the law, and an inherent moral fitness in the sacrifice of Christ," (Phases, p. 8.) It is not fitness but value, "greater efficacy," that is in question now. And is there no more value in the death of Christ—"God manifest in the flesh," who attached the value of divine goodness and a divinely perfect will (which yet was perfectly obedient), of a divine person, to every act He did as man —than in the death of bulls and goats? instructive no doubt as figures, and a witness to the universal sense of need which the conscience of man feels of an expiation.

Am I not right in saying that God is left out? He who knew divinely infinite love knew infinitely divine wrath; and He who was the "Holy One" felt, in the proportion of that holiness which is beyond all measure, what it was to be made sin before the God of holiness. I know carnal reason (that is, philosophy) has no capacity to understand this: but that is not the fault of Christianity, but of the "antagonist will" which needs it while it rejects it.

Again, on another important point, speaking of the Athanasian Creed and the Trinity, the author says, “It came distinctly home to me, that, whatever the depth of the mystery, if we lay down anything about it at all, we ought to understand our own words.” (Phases, p. 13.) Now this seems very plausible; but bring in God, or anything connected with Him, and if it be meant that we ought to be able to define the human words employed, it is necessarily and wholly false, because God is in another order of being from that to which our words belong. Words express man’s thoughts in the way of definition—can do nothing else; but man’s thoughts are finite, and God is infinite; and therefore it is impossible in the nature of things, that human language can be an adequate (or properly speaking, a just) expression of what God is. Yet almost all Mr. N.’s growing infidelity sprung from this evident fallacy: any real faith in God or knowledge of Him became impossible the moment he laid down this absurd and really illogical rule—illogical, if we admit there is a God. Take Mr. N. himself as witness. He says, in another work, “Concerning the divine nature, we know that our metaphorical language must be inaccurate; but it is the best we have got. To refuse to speak of God as loving and planning, as grieving and sympathizing, without the protest of a quasi, will not tend to clearer intellectual views, [for what can be darker?] but will muddy the springs of affection. Metaphorical language on this whole subject is that which the soul dictates, and therefore must surely express our nearest approximation to truth, if the soul be the eye by which alone we see God. Jealousy to resist metaphor does not testify to depth of insight.” (Soul, p. 39.)

Now, it is true, he speaks here of metaphor alone; but why is metaphor used? Because of the incompetency of the human mind to use, as to God, the language of exact definition. It flows from the fact that man is man, and not God, and his language the expression of his nature, be it in its affections or its intellect. Hence it must speak as man speaks (i.e., use the expressions suited to the measure of man's nature, because man can do nothing else). If these are used as definitions of God's nature, they are necessarily inaccurate; if as means of communicating particular thoughts about Him, they are true, though inadequate. But if it be insisted that a man should know what he meant, that is, define his ideas, he cannot. Our language as to God, not merely our metaphorical language, must be inaccurate. It is, as Mr. N. professes it to be, our nearest approximation to the truth. It will be said here, "I do not ask you to define God, but the words you use about Him." But the definition of the words, by Mr. N.'s admission, makes them inaccurate, for they are to express something about God. But in exactitude of meaning they must be inaccurate. To this exactitude Mr. N. seeks to reduce them. Nor let the reader be alarmed at this impossibility of definition: it is the case with all the ideas he is most certain of, or most delights in. Let him try to define a straight line, a right angle, beauty, love, one's country, home. Yet these words convey either most accurate or exceedingly powerful ideas.10 Again, as to christian evidences, whether miraculous facte or moral character were the bases, Mr. N. finds that neither system went to the bottom of human thought, or shewed what were the fixed points of man's knowledge. (Phases, p. 41.)

Now this ground takes man's mind as the measure of evidence, to the exclusion of God. Can God, if He comes in (and the object of a revelation is to reveal Him)—can God give no evidence of Himself demonstrative of His presence and testimony, which is entirely beyond any previously fixed points of man's knowledge? If there be a revelation of God, it must do so. It may make man morally responsible by that which it brings.

Besides, Mr. N.'s reasonings here, as to which proof was the best and a warrant for the reception of the other, only shew narrowness of apprehension; because two proofs of a distinct order may corroborate each other, and make the truth of what they attest certain, when one only would leave it uncertain, though it might not prove it false. Thus a miracle, to sustain the doctrine that there were many unholy gods whose business was to please men's lusts, might test and try the heart and spirit, but could never prove the message to have the authority of one holy God; nay, a miracle by itself might be an inadequate proof of the authority of a message which was not in itself grossly inconsistent with such a Being. On the other hand, though moral truths are, perhaps, even a surer, if not so striking a kind of evidence, yet they may not (though they may go very far towards it) prove the mission of any one to be what he asserts it to be. But when plain and evident miracles (such as the restoring sight to one born blind by a word, or making a man with crippled feet of forty years' standing able to leap and walk before all immediately, the man being well known by all previously, or such as the raising the dead) are accompanied by a doctrine which has morally (as nothing else ever before it had) the stamp of goodness and holiness upon it, and of a

divine knowledge of human nature, not of its lusts and character so as to use them, but of hearts so as to judge them:—when these things go together, they may, by being united, afford a proof which the unbelief of the will may surely resist and reject, as it will everything, but which will make it guilty and prove it such, if the testimony be rejected.

In a measure, too, Mr. N. loses sight of the fact that these evidences, as given, were before the eyes of men. They are not before our eyes; but we have undoubted historical proof of the effect produced by them then—of the character of the witness— the wide spread of Christianity which resulted (though no human force was used for its propagation for three hundred years); and we have the moral doctrine which produced this effect still subsisting, not only in the documents which profess to contain this revelation, but which are cited by friends and foes during all this period, as containing the authentic instructions of the religion the one professed and the other attacked. This countercheck of evidences of a different and independent character, in the way of proof, will be found to pervade scripture and to be characteristic of it, and a principal safeguard of the minds of the simple and true against subtle or fanatical pretensions.

If conversion were the subject in question, Mr. N. had never any thought of God’s acting.

“How,” he asks, “could such moral evidence become appreciable to heathens and Mohammedans?” “Mere talk could bring no conviction.” (Phases, p. 43, and so on to p. 45.)

Again, in speaking of the very being of God, he proves, in referring to the Athanasian Creed, that the compiler "did not understand his words;" because, had he spoken of three men, he must have meant "three objects of thought, of whom each separately may be called man." So of God; so that on this ground there must be three gods. (Ib. p. 48.) What is this but excluding all idea of God even from Godhead, and reducing our thoughts of the divine nature to the limits of our own circumscribed one? Can there be any more entire exclusion of God from a person's thoughts? Besides, there is a gross fallacy even in the terms of the reasoning. Language is formed on thought. The word "God," being one and distinct in nature from all else means not only a being, but a nature. "A God," save metaphorically, or in heathen mythology (ein Gott und die go„tter), revolts the moral ear. When I say, "the Word was God," I use "God" for a nature which none else can have but the true God; but I use it as speaking of His nature. When I say, "God created," I speak of a Being who did so. "A God," speaking of the truth of divine existence, is nonsense. But if I say, "the Father is God," I say that He is ineffably possessed of everything that belongs to that nature which partakes it with none else: for pone is God but God. Now I could not say, God is the Son; because then I should speak of Him as that one only Being, and exclude the Father and the Holy Ghost from the term "God" in my phrase. This is perfectly plain in English; the Greek distinguishes these two uses by the article— QeoV" h|n oJ lovgo". *En arch/' ejpoivhsen oJ Qeov". &O lovgo" h\n proV" toVn Qeovn. Now Mr. N. overlooks entirely this double use of the term in English, and confounds all ideas on the subject by the use of the senseless term "a God."

Having the unity of the Godhead constantly asserted in scripture, the manner of the divine existence is a subject of mere revelation. There I find that the Holy Ghost wills and distributes; the Father sends; the Son is sent; and yet He and His Father are one. I find that the "Word is God," that the Son is "the true God," that "all things were created by him." If it is said of the Holy Ghost, "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit," I read in the same passage, "It is the same God that worketh all in all." Now, I have no better word than "person" for one who is sent, who wills, who distributes, who sends, and so on. It cannot give me that circumscribed idea of "person" which the word applied to man does (for then one existence excludes another); but I have no reason whatever to impose the limits of my manner of being on God's, but rather the contrary. Now all Mr. N.'s reasoning is merely the reducing the Godhead to the strictest limits of creature-nature, which is a mere absurdity and a miserable exclusion of all above us, and a levelling of God to man—the necessary degradation of man too, for he is elevated in knowing God.

I remember I always regarded with indignant contempt Air. Hume's argument against miracles—that it was contrary to experience that a miracle was true, but not contrary to experience that testimony was false. It was really no argument at all; because the use of the word "experience" in itself excluded the idea of miracle, and the question is, if the testimony was true, not whether the testimony could be false: otherwise I should believe nothing I had not experienced. But making man's experience the limit of knowledge and of the elevation of man's thoughts, seemed almost to me a mixture of insolent self-sufficiency and degradation at the same

time, which did not deserve reasoning about. It was degrading nonsense, making itself the limit of all possible power and knowledge. It was sufficient to state it to despise it, and all that flowed from it.

I add, that the Christian has a knowledge, by the Holy Ghost dwelling in him (not of course of the manner of union in the Godhead in any adequate way, but), of such a union as gives him a competency to understand that God can indwell in a way wholly above any creature-communication; and hence he knows that what he knows is beyond his knowledge. “In that day,” that is, when ye have received the Comforter, “ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” “He who searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to God.” Is this the saint’s heart or the Holy Ghost? Both. It is my groan, the real groan of my heart; but it is the Holy Ghost dwelling in me who gives me the feeling, and the groan too, according to God. And it is His intercession. This is indeed God’s sympathy with man. I am well aware that philosophers may mock at this. Of course, as such, Christianity supposes them not to have it—to be ignorant of it. “Whom the world,” says the Lord, “cannot receive, for it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” Hence it is no proof for them in the way of argument. But it is for those who possess it in a way beyond all argument, and a way of understanding too that which argument will never teach. I cannot make a prayer to God without the whole Trinity. “Through Christ we have access by one Spirit to the Father.” It is the hourly exercise of the Christian’s faith, and better known there than in the Athanasian Creed, and by those

who never knew what Trinity or Person meant; for definitions are poor things. What can be defined is not God, for God is infinite.

Mr. N. takes this same ground as to the Spirit's personality. (Phases, p. 52.) I do not go over it again. I only remark that he always had a repugnance to it; that is, he had never known it. Now, if I see willing, distributing, coming, teaching, guiding, being sent, I have no better word than "Person" to use. I have no attachment to the term, but the true Christian believes this of the Holy Ghost, and he knows Him as a divine Person dwelling in himself. God's love is shed abroad in his heart by the Spirit given to him. Now, supposing that the "Spirit of God "meant in the New Testament "God in the heart," as Mr. N. says, is not God a real Being, that is, a Person, in a real though inadequate and imperfect use of the term? I believe the New Testament means often by this expression "God in the heart;" and if the Holy Ghost be such, He is God; and, according to the New Testament, He is what is best expressed by the word "Person," for He is sent by the Father and from the Father, another Comforter, on the Son's going away. I repeat, I have no better language than "Person" when I have another who wills and acts. And what is Mr. N.'s question here? "Who by logic or metaphysics will carry us beyond this?" (Ib. p. 52.) Could any one more nakedly confess how God was shut out of his mind even when the subject was God's presence in the heart? a doctrine he admits to be taught in the New Testament; and then turns to logic and metaphysics to carry us farther in the knowledge of it.

So, in his conversation with an infidel, he has no thought of the possibility of God's acting. (Ib. p. 54.)

Even on the question of his reception among Christians, of which we will speak historically in a moment, he never suspects that it can be of any importance that he should hold the truth about God and His salvation. He was to be received upon some personal qualities, or, at any rate, without any truth as to God being considered to be material. He calls this “dogma.” What he was was sufficient; what God was, immaterial. (Ib. p. 59.) And again (ib. p. 60), he never supposed union was on the ground of intellectual propositions. Is God an intellectual proposition only to him, then? So as to our thoughts and comments on scripture, he “most rigidly demanded a clear, single, self-consistent11 sense” (ib. p. 65); that is, not a living, perhaps imperfect, communication of divine truth, but something fully reduced to the level of man’s mind, and not in anything passing its limits. It must be a human truth. Now it is just this human singleness which distinguishes human from divine truth. Have I human thought? I have it: my mind measures it as it is; I have it all within my own limits. Afterwards there is nothing new. When I get the word— the communication of divine truth—I get what is linked with God as flowing from Him; it is part of infinite divine knowledge into which I am introduced; and though I know only in part, I am introduced into that which is infinite in itself, infinite in its relations and bearings. If I am a man, I am a man: everybody knows what that means. But if God becomes a man, I know it: yet is it now limitable by my notion of a man—my just, single, self-consistent notion? So to limit it would at once destroy it altogether—would falsify, by its pretension, the whole truth with which I am come in contact. How endless are the consequences in love, power, dominion, grace, obedience, communion, righteousness! The very

character of everything is altered. Such is Christianity. It is the bringing in of this in the midst of the world of misery in which man's heart is plunged, and from which he sees no exit. And your philosopher would reduce me again to his one single self-consistent sense of the word "man."

Christianity may be true, or it may be false; but such a way of taking it up is not power but imbecility. It professes to bring God in as a resource to the misery of man—a misery which is there, whether it be true or no, and much greater where it is not received. And the philosopher tells me to take God out of it, and then it will have a single self-consistent sense—then it will be intelligible! Will it? How will leaving God out of it make His coming in intelligible? Who by logic or metaphysics will carry us beyond this?

The reader may see, too, how Mr. N. (ib. p. 71) sets cultivated understanding as a purifier of religion (i.e., above it).12 Now what does this mean, if God be not excluded from religion? Is the human understanding to purify the truth of God? Would one who thought of the living God in religion dare to speak so? I am aware that Mr. N. may say that your religion is not necessarily God's. But he does not say "my religion," but "religion," adding, that religion and fanaticism are the same in embryo. Do they not come from man, then—entirely from man? Are they not a passion, a phrenological bump, a propensity of which understanding is to correct the uncertain tendency? Is it possible more entirely to exclude God even from religion? For certainly, if any religion comes from God, man cannot purify it.

Hence, Mr. N. naturally concludes that “morality is the end, spirituality the means, religion is the handmaid to morals.” (Phases, p. 72.) That is, man and his conduct is the end, anything of God (for where am I to find Him if not in religion?) a mere means. God comes in for His share, because the love of morality proves His excellence, who “is the embodiment of it to his heart and soul.” But this exclusion of God is thus summed up—“It was pleasant to me to look on an ordinary face [i.e., not evangelical], and see it light up into a smile, and think with myself, There is one heart that will judge of me by what I am, and not by a Procrustean dogma.” (Ib. p. 73.) Now, I conceive that making man—what man is—as morally amiable, to the total exclusion of any importance in what God he owned, what he thought of God, whether he denied one faith or every faith, whether he had any—could not be more clearly stated. That is, God is totally excluded. It is indifferent what a man thinks about Him, if that man is amiable towards me.

Again (ib. p. 75), even when he speaks of worship, he “worshipped [he says] in God three great attributes, all independent —power, goodness, wisdom.” That is, he worshipped some ideas. He did not worship God Himself as his God, but certain qualities which he approved of: these he must discern, and then he would condescend to approve of God, and admire qualities; for as to worshipping qualities it is nonsense. We worship somebody.

That is, really, though he attached a name to certain qualities, though this name embodied these ideas of his own mind, God Himself was not owned at all.

Again, as to sin, he “saw that it was an immorality to teach that sin was measured by anything else than the heart and will of the agent.” (Ib. p. 78.) Elsewhere he boasts of discovering that morality was eternal, of eternal ethics. A strange way of having them so, for they vary with every heart and every will. But how is God excluded here? Man’s heart and will are the only measure of his wrong! Morality is eternal, as already explained; but its measure depends on the relationship which creates the obligation, and hence is measured by the claim of the being with whom we are in relationship. That, in grace, ignorance may be a real occasion of mercy is true, but the sin is not measured by it, if I would elevate my soul to any real morality, to what it is in itself; or morality changes with caprice. I should not treat a Hindoo widow as a professing Christian, if she burns herself; but her ignorance does not make the measure of sin, though I may have compassion on her because of it: otherwise the grossest and most cruel superstitions become the measure of sin. But God is excluded, and hence man’s heart and will become Mr. N.’s measure of sin too.

And see the practical consequence. A man degraded in seeking the satisfaction of his own lusts is for Mr. N. “a good-humoured voluptuary.” (Phases, p. 81.) How was he “to think that he deserved to be raised from the dead, in order to be tormented in fire for a hundred years?” Give an account of himself to God! This is all nothing to Mr. N. His morality is far better than christian truth. The voluptuary may go on in his good humour without troubling himself. Sin is only measured by a man’s will and heart. God need not be in all his thoughts. And this is correcting and improving on Christianity! See this

character treated in his contempt of and indifference to the misery of his fellow-man in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. But I proceed.

As to relationship of the divine Persons, there is the same reducing everything to man's level in speaking of "begotten." It must signify a beginning of existence, since it does with man. Scripture warrants another use of it: "I will make him my firstborn," is said of Solomon; and "Israel is my son, my first-born." "Only-begotten Son" is a term of relationship, not a low, carnal, human idea of begetting (the use of which, in respect to God, only proves the degradation of thought of him who so uses it, when referred to Godhead). And what is Mr. N.'s way of reasoning here? A doctrine which could not be proclaimed in English cannot be true! That is profound philosophy! Yet he admits what we say of God as loving, repenting, &c, must be inaccurate —cannot be a single, self-consistent idea. The want of it here raised unspeakable loathing. A man who could not define a circle, which everybody can understand and see,13 would define the manner of divine existence by terms which should have the precise, definite sense which they have when applied to man.

It may be seen how entirely he has lost the idea of God, when he affirms that it became clear to him "that polytheism as such is not a moral and spiritual error, but, at most, only an intellectual error; and that its practical evil consists in worshipping beings whom we represent to our imaginations as morally imperfect." (Phases, p. 89.) Otherwise, also, if a man "made the angel Gabriel a fourth person in the Godhead, to worship him would be no degradation to the soul,

even if absolute omnipotence were not attributed—nay, nor a past eternal existence." (Ib. p. 89.)

Could one more clearly state, as to oneself, the loss of all real knowledge of one true God? To suppose the possibility of these "gods many" shews that the idea of one true God has lost its place in the soul—that one has not the knowledge of God. One may admire qualities, as one may in man or any one else; but a God who begins must begin somehow, and owe his existence to the creative will of another, and hence be under obligation to a superior. True Godhead would not be there. Could any one who knew God speak of there being many not eternal, not omnipotent, as indeed they could not be if there be many? Does not the mind of one who knows God feel at once there must be the one true One behind all these?

Am I not right in saying God is unknown to Mr. N.—is excluded by his reasonings?

Hence it was a question, solved only by other considerations, whether the doctrine of Christ's having a superior nature was not an indifferent thing. If His nature was a good one, and He only a man, why not worship Him? Can God be more completely excluded? (Ib. p. 90.)

Again, take the fall. "Adam fell by the first temptation; what greater proof of a fallen nature have I ever given? I was surprised to discern that there was, a priori, impossibility of fixing on myself the imputation of degeneracy, without fixing the same on Adam." (Phases, p. 96.) Now this assumes the truth of the fall for the sake of the argument. Now, is the enjoying God's benefits in innocence the same thing as the actual

“antagonistic will” which Mr. N. has? Is the existing alienation from and enmity against God of a carnal mind nothing? Take the history. Adam abandoned God—was turned out of His presence. Mr. N. begins there. That is all nothing to him till he commits a sin, because God is nothing. Adam fell; he falls—all is one, says Mr. N. accepting the history.

Adam was with God, Mr. N. was not. That this makes any difference does not enter into his mind. Liability to fall in a creature, he understands, it regards man’s condition; being in the presence of or absent from God does not make even a part of his enquiry, or subject-matter of his reasoning. Why?

Again (for he is speaking of a period when he professed evangelicalism), as to the person of Jesus, he says, “So, if any one dwelt on the special proofs of tenderness and love exhibited in certain words or actions of Jesus, it was apt to call out in me a sense that, from day to day, equal kindness might often be met. The imbecility of preachers who dwell on such words as ‘Weep not,’ as if nobody else uttered such, had always annoyed me.” (Ib. p. 102.) Could anything more mark the total absense of any sense that God was there? Other men were fully as kind as Jesus!

Again: “If one system of religion may claim that we blind our hearts and eyes in its favour, so may another; and there is precisely the same reason in becoming a Hindoo in religion as a Christian.” (Ib. p. 114.) Now how totally does this deny the fact that God can bring in that which can enlighten man? Christianity and Hindooism lie there, and “the moral and intellectual powers of man

must be acknowledged as having a right and duty to criticise the contents of scripture." (Ib. p. 115.)

Is it impossible, then, for God so to reveal Himself as to command the responsibility of man? Is He incapable of enlightening the mind by His truth? Must He remain the subject-matter of man's judgment, according to a human standard previously possessed, as much as Hindooism? Can anything more entirely deny God, and shut Him out from revelation itself? Again this is thus expressed:—"If we are to blind our eyes in order to accept an article of king Edward VI., or an argument of St. Paul's, why not," &c. (Phases, p. 119.) Now, if God reveal anything, as Christians believe God did by Paul, this argument applies just as much; that is, God is absolutely excluded from all authoritative revelation whatever. He must not interfere.

Again as to proofs given: "Why should I look with more respect on the napkins taken from Paul's body (Acts 19:12) than on pocket-handkerchiefs dipped in the blood of martyrs?" (Ib. p. 130.) Is it forbidden to God, for man's sake, and to overcome his incredulity, to "confirm the word by signs following?" God acts by one, He does not by the other. One was a divine act, the other a human. It is not a comparison of a napkin and a handkerchief—Paul's body and a martyr's blood—but of God's acting or not; but this does not even enter into Mr. N.'s mind.

See, too, his remarks on miracles, and "useless miracles," such as Christ walking on the sea. Useless! to whom? to man? Was it useless to learn Christ's power over creation, and the way faith could use it, and unbelief lose it? "What was to be said of a cure wrought

by touching the hem of Jesus's garment, which drew physical virtue from Him without His will?" (Ib. p. 131.) Was it nothing to shew that humble, trembling, unfeigned faith, could find resource in Jesus when all else failed, and find health and blessing there, approach ever so timidly? It is all nothing to Mr. N. But what does that prove? That such proofs of divine presence and goodness, such cheering encouragement to those whose trembling but unfeigned confidence might otherwise stay far off, have no charms for him. Intellectual power to judge God, if He ventures to shew Himself —that is all well. Divine goodness—health and cure for the poor and otherwise failing heart, so as to knit it to God; the assurance that it can surely get the blessing, there is no "moral dignity" in. What a judge of it!

Again (ib. p. 143), he treats the distrust of one giving up all revelation of God in scripture, as proving the existence of an artificial test of spirituality. Are, then, the largest and most intimate communications from God nothing? Is the fact of His so communicating with us, treating us, as Jesus expresses it, as "friends," by telling us all that can be divinely communicated to man, nothing? Is its existence, and the reception of it, a mere artificial test of spirituality—a small hanging branch gone, and all as well as ever? Is this Mr. N.'s value for communications from God?

We are not now discussing whether those which profess to be such are genuine, but whether their rejection, supposing they are, is of any consequence. For Mr. N. it was of none—a mere artificial test of spirituality. This is his estimate of communications from God. What is his value for Him who makes them? Did I treat my friends

so (i.e., if I were indifferent to having them or not), what would it prove as to my feeling towards themselves?

Mr. N., indeed, states this indifference as to God, in connection with His word, with singular clearness: —"Meanwhile, I sometimes thought Christianity to be to me like the great river Ganges to a Hindoo. Of its value he has daily experience: he has piously believed that its sources are in heaven; but of late the report has come to him that it only flows from very high mountains of this earth. What is he to believe? He knows not exactly, he cares not much: in any case, the river is the gift of God to him: its positive benefits cannot be affected by a theory concerning its source." (Ib. p. 153.)

The title of Mr. N.'s fifth period is remarkable, "Faith at second-hand found to be vain." This sounds well. Faith must surely be in God Himself. "Abraham believed God." But is every one to have God so speaking to himself that he is infallibly directed by it? Each communication being absolutely limited to the one who receives it, and excluded from going farther, all communication of truth being impossible. If it passed the one who had the vision, it is second-hand faith in the sense of Mr. N. And the favoured and exceptional visionary or auditor of God Himself cannot even be known, for then others would receive it as a revelation of God; but this would be believing at secondhand. Any one, therefore, receiving moral truth, or any truth which concerns men, would be an impossibility; for if confined to himself, it would not be such. That is, again, all possibility of any communication from God is denied.

He looks for a broader foundation for his creed than any sacred letter. Creed he had none yet; that is, he believed

nothing. But the result is that it is impossible to believe anything. You may reason out a god of your own mind, as a spider the cobweb out of-its bowels; but believe you cannot: for who is to tell you anything to be believed? You may be taken in the cobweb of Mr. N.'s spinning; but God must hold His peace. Can God be more wholly excluded?

"Without caring on what grounds they believed, though that is obviously the main point." (Ib. p. 146.)

"An ambitious and unscrupulous Church that desires, by fair means or foul, to make men's minds bow down to her, may say, 'Only believe, and all is right. The end being gained— obedience to us—we do not care about your reasons.' But God cannot speak thus to man." (Ib.)

It "is obviously," says Mr. N., "the main point" to know on "what grounds" we believe. "God cannot speak" as "an ambitious and unscrupulous Church." … "Only believe, and all is right." Well, if God speaks, I should think He must say, "Only believe, and all is right." If He speaks, the ground for certainty is that He is speaking. That He will and does, in the most gracious way, give adequate proof to make man know it is He that speaks, I undoubtedly believe: it is worthy of His grace. But if He speaks, rejection of His word is rejection of Him, of His authority, of His truth. That is, it is the condemnation of him who rejects it. An ambitious Church doing so has not the same effect, because it is not God. God's speaking and man's speaking is not the same—has not the same claim nor the same consequences. For Mr. N. it has, because God is not in His thoughts. Bring Him in— his reasoning is not worth a straw. Suppose I ascertain clearly that the ambitious Church speaks— a matter

hard enough, it is true; what then? Nothing: men have spoken. Supposing I ascertain God has spoken; is the consequence the same? The ground of faith that God must give —the only ground of divine faith, i.e., of certainty—is that He has spoken. If man reject His word, what can he be but condemned?

The ambitious Church does not say, Only believe God: it says, “Only believe” (i.e., “believe me”). God says, “Believe me.” Is that the same? Yes, says Mr. N. He says God cannot speak thus. How else should He speak?

But it is merely this—God is excluded from his thoughts.

“A question of logic, such as I had here before me, was peculiarly one on which the propagator of a new religion could not be allowed to dictate.” (Ib. p. 147.)

What else could God do? He may afford proofs that it is He, and so He has; but if it be He, He must dictate.

But what is Mr. N.’s only idea? “Let Hindooism dictate our logic.” (Ib.) Think of such an idea as God dictating logic! You have the measure of the “moral dignity” with which Mr. N. measures miracles or any of God’s gracious dealings—that is, of God Himself. How dreary to the heart to deal with such reasoning! He has not a thought beyond logical notions. “If logic [he says] cannot be a matter of authoritative revelation [he cannot get beyond man’s mind], so long as the nature of the human mind is what it is,” &c. (Ib. p. 147.)

Now, even speaking logically, introduce God and it cannot be commensurate with the human mind, because God is not man; and reasonings deduced from what God is cannot be according to what man is. The premiss is an unknown one, and incommensurate; adapted in grace to

man, if you will; but grace is not logic. Thus Mr. N. reasons that it is not just one should surfer for another. Perhaps not; but if God becomes a man and gives Himself, what logic can solve this? There is no grace in mere justice, no love; and God is love, yet He is just. Paul's reasonings (that is, the Holy Ghost's) are drawn from what God is, and Mr. N.'s from what he is himself. Can we be surprised that they are different? From what else does Mr. N. derive them?

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all: how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" There is the glorious and divine logic which draws its reasonings from the actings of immeasurable divine love. So "if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." How do these truths come home with divine power to the heart, as founded on the bright and glorious display of what God is, and His ways, as interested in us! It is logic of invincible power, founded on what God is, known by faith. Mr. N. may tell me that it is not suited to man's nature as it is. Not to his evil to sanction it, but to his wants it is. It is suited to the knowledge of God: if he means, to man without it, no more is the light of the sun to some creatures; but this does not prove the daylight to be evil to those who have eyes for it; but that the animals are themselves owls or bats. They cannot see in the light while their nature is what it is. Be it so: I dare say it is so. Thank God, in man's case, we may hope for a change.

As regards the means by which Paul was convinced, which Mr. N. requires to know, it is to me, as to my own conviction of the truth, quite immaterial. The point for

me is, that I should have proof that it is a divine revelation. Supposing my conscience is reached by a word “sharper than any two-edged sword,” and all my secret thoughts revealed to myself, so that I see I am worthy of judgment, and in the presence of a holy judge —that I am conscious, as a defiled being, I am in the presence of God. Supposing I search long-known prophecy, and find it accomplished in what meets my moral need. Supposing the notorious facts of Christ’s life put the seal of truth and divine goodness on Him and His testimony, and make the allegation of imposture moral nonsense. Supposing this word, which searches my heart, accompanied by miracles which in their number and character leave no room for anything but an “antagonist will” to reject them—that I have seen a known blind man restored to sight, and a dead man raised. I get proof then, in every way, that God is now interfering and dealing with me, and that he who bears this message bears God’s message and commission. What is it to me, save as an interesting collateral subject, how he came by it, how he was convinced? I am by adequate evidence, and that is the point. It is not second-hand faith to me; it is I who believe a present word of truth, which I believe to be God’s.

I see, moreover, by the fruits when it is so received, that God’s power is in it. Lusts are overcome; habits, long cherished, are changed; peace given; the love of God shed abroad in the heart; joy, happiness, intelligence, moral capacity, the knowledge of God, flow in. Activity of love ensues; the whole man is morally a new creature, and knows God as love. Mr. N. may be without this evidence. Others are not. He is not without it in its external parts. The process of the teacher’s receiving

has nothing to say to the matter. The proofs with which he delivers it are what concern me. To set a number of sinners to analyze the manner of a divine revelation is certainly the last thing that God who gave it would set them to do; to give them the adequate proof to conscience that it is one to them, is worthy of Him, and it is what He has done. Nothing can be more absurd than Mr. N.'s reasoning here. In principle Mr. N. is only shewing what the Saviour tells us, that the mind and will, thus acting and criticising, can receive nothing from God. Mr. N., having refused all else besides this criticism, ends, as we have already seen, in this gross absurdity—the incompetency of God to communicate in any way with His intelligent creatures.

He then takes the visionary acts of prophets, used to represent the iniquity of Israel and God's patience, as an injunction to practise immorality (taking, moreover, his inward judgment as the only valid rule). Now there is a natural conscience, a knowledge of good and evil; but it is a gross mistake to suppose that it cannot be corrupted, or that it is, in fact, an adequate measure of it; which Mr. N. always assumes. But this point I reserve for the questions of objections to scripture.

I only remark in this part, as connected with my present subject, that, where he objects to Christ's making the whip of small cords, and asks, Would a miracle "authorize me to plait a whip of small cords, and flog a preferment-hunter out of a pulpit?" (Phases, p. 151.) The divine authority, and divine authority of righteousness which respected God's acknowledged house, is wholly overlooked. If a church or chapel were owned of God as His house, and men were making a riot in it in time of service, any one would be justified in arresting the

scandal with a high hand. But I notice here, that all this is leaving out God. Jesus did it with the declaration, that "One greater than the temple was there"; that if they destroyed "the temple of his body, he would raise it up in three days." He was Jehovah.

I will take up the grounds of faith farther on.

Mr. N. says, "The New Testament teaches that God will visit men with fiery vengeance for holding an erroneous creed." (Phases, p. 168.) One could understand his objection if God were but an opinion of the brain of man. But it does not teach any such thing; unless, as for Mr. N., God is nothing but an idea. It teaches that man will be condemned for rejecting God manifested in the most gracious way as the light itself, to which He had called man by every means grace could devise—prophecies, promises, John Baptist going as herald before to summon man's attention, miracles. It says they are condemned; or, to use the very words of scripture, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Christ says, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. If I had not done amongst them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father."

But God is a mere opinion in man's head, for Mr. N.; to reject Him, because we have an "antagonist will," is consequently a mere erroneous creed. God is not in all his thoughts.

Again, he says, "As for the Old Testament, if all its prophecies about Babylon, and Tyre, and Edom, and

Ishmael, and the four monarchies, were both true and supernatural, what would this prove? That God had been pleased to reveal something of coming history to certain eminent men of Hebrew antiquity. That is all. We should receive this conclusion with an otiose faith." (Ib. p. 170.) That is all! Is it nothing, then, that God does speak to man—interest Himself in his affairs? Had He no purpose in it? Is it connected with no moral relationship with these persons, with this people? Is it no proof that He meant men to give heed to the course of events He spoke of, the system in the midst of which the revelation was given, and to which it referred? Is "otiose faith" the suited feeling when God is admitted to have spoken? Is such stupid insensibility to such an immense moral principle as God's communicating His intentions or the future in any case to man, really "moral dignity?" God has spoken, and "that is all!" How does this betray the real state of mind—of what value God and His thoughts are to him who makes such a remark! What immense consequences flow from it!

God can reveal, it seems. Nay, He has revealed. He can demonstrate to the mind that it is He who speaks. It has been proved to be a revelation by the event. Then He interests Himself in man in the way of revelation. Is it with no purpose, no plan, no special thoughts as to man, his destiny, the world's destiny—which, without this, remains to us hid in dark enigmatical clouds—that He has made these revelations? Do God's thoughts confine themselves to some petty interest of Tyre or Edom, and leave all else to darkness or to fate? Is this logic? Were such a lightning-flash to shine in a sunless world, it would make a living mind desire a general permanent light. Does it not lead me to say, Can there be such

prophecies of private interpretation? or, if “holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” surely God’s thoughts, God’s interest, must go farther than this? Why to them, why to Hebrews, rather than to others? Has He no purpose in it? Is there no divine future? No; “that is all!”

Mr. N. will shut out God if he can; if he is forced to let Him in, he will make God’s own voice as unimportant to others, if he can, as it is to himself. “We should receive this conclusion with an otiose faith.” (Ib. p. 170.) That is, you would; but it proves far more of what your mind and heart and will are morally, than of the value of the fact that God has spoken to man. If He has, O what a field is open to the heart of those who have any! He does come in to speak to us. He has spoken. He can prove it is He who has spoken. What has He said?

In speaking of John’s Gospel, he assumes this absence of God’s inspiration. “Is it possible for me to receive them [the miracles] on his word?” (Ib. p. 175.) Perhaps not; perhaps yes. But the question is, Is it God’s word? I am not here saying it is God’s word (though I need hardly say I fully and thankfully believe it, and bless God for it, as the best treasure of my soul); but I say that is the question, and asking “How can I believe on his word?” is begging the question. You are seeking to prove it cannot be inspiration; the reason you give for it is, that you cannot believe it on his word. But the whole question is, Is it on his word? That is, you exclude God. And I here recall to the reader that what Mr. N. calls faith at second-hand is alone faith at all, unless each person is to receive a message from God immediately.

Again, Mr. N. says, “It is with hundreds or thousands a favourite idea, that they have ‘an inward witness of the truth of [the historical and outward facts of] Christianity.’ Perhaps the statement would bring its own refutation to them, if they would express it clearly. Suppose a biographer of Sir Isaac Newton, after narrating his sublime discoveries, &c.… to add that Sir Isaac… was himself carried up to heaven one night while he was gazing at the moon; and that this event had been foretold by Merlin: it would surely be the height of absurdity to dilate on the truth of the Newtonian theory as ‘the moral evidence’ of the truth of the miracles and prophecy.” (Ib. p. 199.) Now, what does the reader think of this argument? That Mr. N. is ignorant of all internal evidence of Christianity we may alas! take on his own word. But I avow my esteem for logic is not heightened, if Mr. N. is to be taken as a specimen of what it is. The history and facts of Christianity are identified with a public claim, that the subject of them was God manifest in the flesh. Have the doctrines and truths, of which He was the revealer, nothing to do with the proof of that historical fact? Supposing the case of a wife; that is a mere historical fact, a legal question. Does the husband merely know by the register that it is his wife? Is relationship with God less real, less known, less important? Doubtless they are to Mr. N., but not to those who enjoy them. But he leaves God out. He is not in his thoughts, however he may commend his present state of piety, which, he tells us, is as bright and real as ever.

The logic is no better. Sir Isaac’s going up to heaven has no connection with the truths he has discovered; one does not depend on the other. They remain true whether Sir Isaac be in the moon or not. And if Sir Isaac be in the

moon, it does not depend on the attraction of gravitation. Is that so of Christ? If He be not ascended up on high, if His miracles are all wilful impostures, does not that affect His doctrine? And is not the revelation of relationship with God such as none else ever made, a "speaking that He knew?" Has not His "testifying of what He had seen" a discovery, in a word, of things belonging to God which none other even approached—something to do with His coming from God? Does it not tend to validate His declaration that He was going there? Where is the absurdity? In the Christian who sees the connection, or in Mr. N. who sees none?

The Christian has an inward witness (not of the historical facts of Christianity, as Mr. N. says, but) of "eternal life" in his own soul, "and that life is in Christ." He knows it in daily enjoyment, and knows Him better than Mr. N. knows his best friend. How does Mr. N. know the sympathy of God he speaks of? Is it a sympathy never exercised? If it be exercised, God can make Himself known to the soul. The Spirit, he says, is God in the heart. Well, the Christian so knows Christ. Does that afford no proof of the truth of what is said of Christ (and what is said of Him constitutes the important historical facts of Christianity) when he finds Him in the record given of Him— when every feeling of his soul is identified with the Christ he sees there? The facts, in a great measure, make the Christ he knows, because they are the revelation of Him—the expression of what He is. Mr. N. sees "historical and outward facts," because he leaves God out. God's presence would be an historical and outward fact. Would His words, doctrines, revelation of what He is, action on the heart, unfolding

relative truths, have nothing to do with the proof that it was He? What is Mr. N.'s argument, but a total insensibility as to what God is, a leaving Him out in his own mind?

To say no more, is this logical, when the whole question is, Is it a true revelation of God?

It is the logic to which nothing can be compared in absurdity, because nothing can be God but Himself; and to leave Him out when I am inquiring after Him, is to leave all void of the only thing I am looking for. How should I find Him then? This only is an infinite mistake, an infinite absurdity.

A child would settle the duties to parents in the world by denying there are any; because, if there are, the child could not reason for himself to know what he owes them. Man reduces himself to his own measure to judge if there be a God, because letting God in would not be logical—would not leave it in the measure of man's competency, which must be allowed if a man is to judge. And having made this famous step, he discovers that on this ground God cannot be known; and then writes a book to shew this, and calls it logical, and thereupon rejects revelation, and says it is only a question of history and outward facts.

But if the outward fact, or pretended fact, be that God Himself was manifested among men, he who would say that the truths taught—sublime discoveries of God, remarkable doctrines —were no proof of this fact (this great miracle unfolded in a thousand others) would prove—whose absurdity? The word is not mine; I borrow it from Mr. N. What I am shewing is, that Mr. N.'s book is a mere universal leaving out of God, when the

revelation of Him is the matter in hand. Could there be a plainer proof of it? Nor can you separate the claim of the divine Person from the whole miraculous history. “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” What does the Lord here make of His resurrection —the grand fundamental miracle of Christianity? His body is a temple. God is there, and He will raise it up again. “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,” when He had healed the paralytic. So in Matthew, He is “Emmanuel” (that is, “God with us”). He is called “Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.”

Again, when Mr. N. was a Christian by profession, his belief “assigned an intellectual creed as one essential mark of this people” (ib. p. 202), the people of God. Is it simply a question of an intellectual creed when the subject-matter of the creed is a person, our relationship with whom involves the highest obligations? Supposing I were to say, that Mr. N.’s wife being such was a question of historical facts, proofs in a church register, and legal definitions—that the possibility of any owning her as such must depend on the historical proofs of the celebration of his marriage; would it remain an intellectual creed, his believing that fact? Yet there are these proofs. Now, whenever a fact implies an obligation, the acknowledging the fact is not intellectualism; it is morality. If Christ is my Saviour, if the Holy Ghost the Comforter be sent, if the Father has not spared His Son, who is one with Himself—to own all this is not a mere intellectual creed (though, of course, anything may be held intellectually); it involves the highest obligations—obligations paramount to all others. Everything is changed relative to goodness and piety themselves, unless God have nothing to say to either:

and this is really the force of the argument of Mr. N. “To judge rightly about it is necessarily a problem of literary criticism” (ib. pp. 202, 203); “to judge wrongly about it may prove one to be a bad critic, but not a less good and less pious man.” (Ib. p. 203.)

Mr. N. may state it in the lowest way as a question, whether Jesus, the Jewish teacher, be the Messiah; but every one knows that the question reaches to what I have said, and much farther too. Infidels are as pious as Christians, according to Mr. N. But if they are, the knowledge of God has nothing to do with piety—a very singular proposition, at any rate, which cannot exist where God is known. But Mr. N. leaves Him always out. Even supposing the Christian is got into an entire delusion about God; that his notions of God’s justice have destroyed a right estimate of His goodness; that his thoughts of Christ’s expiation have nurtured a cruel idea of God; that mediation has done him much mischief, as Mr. N. tells us; will his piety remain uninjured? Is it a mere affair of literary criticism, all this? But surely it is the question in scripture. No, no; Mr. N. would not have written his book—nay, his books—if it had been a problem of literary criticism. Does he not think it more than that? Does he wish for energy while life lasts to expose its deeds as a problem of literary criticism? Does he believe what he says? No; he knows that if Christianity be true, he has lost a Saviour; if it is false, I am leaning on a false one, on an impostor, for my soul’s salvation.

I am well aware that Mr. N. thinks that piety may be nourished by an imposture; nay, that in them that believe in it as the true revelation of God piety is found; nay, that this imposture itself, the Bible, “is pervaded by

a sentiment which is implied everywhere, viz., the intimate sympathy of the pure and perfect God with the heart of each faithful worshipper," and that this is found "in christian writers and speakers," and "is wanting in Greek philosophers, English deists [except, of course, his own school], German pantheists, and all formalists." (Phases, p. 188.) But this intimate and exclusive connection of deep piety and imposture, though of course logical and beyond criticism, seems singular to some; or how so monstrous an imposture as pretending to be Messiah and the Son of God is pervaded by the sentiment of the sympathy of the pure and perfect God. Is it not the time to say, "he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

The next discovery Mr. N. made, as to the happy effect of the "positive disproof" of Christ's claim, was that of being delivered from the selfish theory "that his first business must be to save his soul from future punishment." (Ib. p. 203.) Now, here again, I find God really left out. Is the sense that I have so sinned against God, that I have ruined myself, that, like a prodigal, I have turned my back on my Father to have my own way more comfortably, and have perhaps been eating husks with the swine, so that I am no more worthy to be called a son— is the sense that I am lost by this, and that at all cost I must get back to God, if only there be such goodness that I should be admitted on any terms—is this (though in it I am dependent on God for salvation, and fly to His mercy from the everlasting ruin I have brought upon myself), is this, I say, a bad selfish feeling? Such is the view Christianity gives us—I do not pretend to say what Mr. N.'s thoughts may have been—of the prodigal's

return to God. It is very right that it should be felt as mercy to oneself. It puts one in a low, helpless, guilty position. The sense of this is right, and really known in no other way. It is not all we shall attain to when we have peace, but we begin rightly there. A child who has grievously sinned against his father ought to feel that he wants mercy for himself. If he does not, he has not found his right lowly place.

Now, what hinders Mr. N. from seeing this? He sees only man in the matter; and hence it is only, to him, the selfishness of the man who wishes to be saved. God is not in his thoughts. But Christianity brings Him in. “I have sinned against heaven and before thee.” There is the sense of guilt, of having deserved to be shut out from the Father’s house, in the soul come to itself. This is perfect, infinite misery; when God’s presence is come into the thought, it is perfect infinite misery to be shut out of it. The knowledge of what sin is makes us see that we ought not to be let into His presence. One says while falling in apparent inconsistency at His feet, not “God is good!” though he would not fall at His feet without some (no doubt, imperfect) feeling of it; but “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” He is jealous for what God is, because he knows Him. If I know God, I must desire to be saved from being shut out from His presence for ever, and I know that I have been morally unfitted for it. Mr. N. excludes God, and, therefore, has no other thought but safety from future punishment.

Again, in p. 206,14 the Bible is an evil, because it professes to reveal the will of God, and leaves our own inward powers unexercised. Is conscience, then, never to look to God? never to get light from Him? Is He to be excluded even from declaring His will? from even

teaching us what is right? Is doing right to have no reference to God? With Mr. N., going into God's presence to know His will is like going into a priest's. He objects to both alike. "The Protestant principle of accepting the Bible as the absolute law acts towards the same end." I thought a priest mischievous, because he came in between us and God; and that getting into His presence was getting into the light, and that which did exercise the soul and conscience. Mr. N., of course, is independent of any such presence or direction of God. His anjtarceia is morally absolute. Obedience is no part of morality with him. But others find that that word pierces "to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart;" and that when they found "all things naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom they had to do," they found themselves much morally exercised—could not deny it was right, though in many things it condemned them. Yes, I rejoice in this light; I love to obey it. It is my meat to do the will of Him I serve, and I am glad to know it because it is His—glad He has deigned to communicate it to me—glad to have it perfect as He gives it. Light does not hinder the eye from working, nor is groping without it (though there may be more exercise, in a certain sense) a better position to him who knows what eyes are worth, and what it is to see. I am not exercised in the same way; I walk in happy unconsciousness of difficulty, where without it I should be tormented to find my way; but it leaves me free for a thousand exercises, full of joy and worthy of an intelligent being, which groping in the dark would deprive me of.

Assuming the Bible to be the revelation of God's will (and Mr. N. assumes it here), the possession of it is a singular evil. Besides, an antagonist will, a thousand temptations, and the absence of the circumstances in detail in which I am placed, leave abundant room for the exercise of the spiritual powers. Only they are exercised in God's light, instead of in darkness. Mr. N. prefers being without God, and to trust his moral powers. But what does this love of God's absence while he finds his way, and confidence in himself, shew? That he does trust his moral powers. But the discovery that conscience will be benumbed by being brought into God's light which manifests and judges everything, and thus fall into disuse, is not such a result of trusting in them as would lead others to do so—at least, it would not me.

Besides, Mr. N. is wrong when he says, that "so long as an opinion is received on authority only, it works no inward process upon us." (Ib. p. 206.) First, as to God, it is wholly false, because all morality is judged of responsibly in His sight. Thus, if I receive on God's authority the opinion that I am to be judged for all I do, will that work no inward process upon me? (a singular phrase, by the by; but let that pass.) But even as to man's, it is not true. It supposes no previous inward process perhaps. I say "perhaps;" for often there may have been very great exercise which seeks a revelation, i.e., another's light when the mind is at fault, the communication of the mind of Him who has light as well as authority. And Mr. N. has no right to separate them even in man: for in submitting to authority (not force), I suppose light may just give that thought which sets the whole confused elements of thought in perfect order, though I receive it—i.e., depend for the certainty of its

truth—on the authority which affords it me. Whoever has put in the keystone, the arch is solid when it is there. Yet I may receive it only on the authority of my teacher; not to say that the bowing of will by it is an inward process.

Thus, suppose the case of a converted heathen from among those who used to get rid of their fathers when too old to be useful; and one working in thought as to the foundations of a parent's position and a child's obligation. A missionary, whom he has learnt to trust, tells him that God has told us to honour our fathers and mothers. He receives this solely on the authority of the teacher; he has no other reason to believe God does command it but the teacher's authority over his mind. Does the introduction of the idea of God's authority and will into the relationship not produce an immense result, and alter all his feelings towards his father? Ask him why he has received this idea. He can only tell you that the missionary, whom he believes God sent, told him so. Here a vast process is the result in his mind: all his thoughts are fallen into order. God Himself has become the keystone of his whole moral condition in this respect. Yet the opinion is received on authority only. Put the Bible in the missionary's place—he is more directly in contact with God, no doubt. The authority is in God Himself in his mind; and great good results from this; for whatever brings us near God is a good, even though we should own authority as well as find light. But in both cases it is authority. The mind may be profited by light as well as by exercising itself on it, and more too. But the use of the word authority here leads by its equivocal force to a sophism. Authority in this argument merely means the certainty of something being the

revelation and will of God—that is, puts me directly in presence of His will and authority. It is absurd to say this does not work a moral process on man. It is exactly what does. But again we arrive at the same point in Mr. N.'s system: God must be excluded. That I am right in my estimate of the argument is evident from what follows just after.

I have already remarked on Mr. N.'s absolute exclusion of all possibility of God's ever communicating anything knowable by man. I now only refer to it as shewing how even here the idea of God is excluded from his mind. "All that we can possibly discover is the relative fact, that another is wiser than we." (Ib. p. 213.) Can anything more entirely exclude God from all teaching? "There is no imaginable criterion by which we can establish that the wisdom of a teacher is absolute and illimitable." (Ib.) Now, supposing it be God who teaches, would not this establish it ? Could there be a comparison of wiser, if He whom God had sent spoke the words of God, as John actually says of Christ? No; this is merely saying, à priori, that it is impossible for God to communicate anything to man. If He can, Mr. N.'s statement is nonsense. The moment I ascertain He has, I have a teacher whose wisdom is absolute and illimitable. But Mr. N. will not have God, nor allow Him to come in.

Again, in the same page, Mr. N. says, "If we are to submit our judgment to the dictation of some other, whether a church or an individual, we must be first subjected to that other by some event from without, as by birth, and not by a process of that very judgment which is henceforth to be sacrificed." I have already noticed this, to shew that Mr. N.'s whole book is fallacious. I do so now for another purpose. Why

“whether to a church or an individual?” Why shut out God totally? Will Mr. N. not allow God to “dictate” to him? That is, is God’s word, if He speaks, not to have authority with him? Again, in the most open way, he excludes God out of his supposition: he assumes that it is a church or an individual—that God never can. If he reply, “I only assume so on the supposition of a man’s reasoning;” then I recur to what I said before: “Your reasoning assumes the thing not to be possible which we are reasoning about, and therefore is good for nothing:” or, as applying it to our present point, he assumes as data the exclusion of God, as if His speaking were an unsupposable case. Besides, Mr. N.’s reasoning is itself fallacious. I may ascertain a document to come from a person who has authority, and consequently the document itself as coming from him. Hence a critical examination can result in the ascertained authority of the instrument, though it could never give it. Mr. N.’s argument confounds giving authority, and ascertaining the fact; if this were true, I must abrogate my criticism, because the person has authority. I may criticize the proofs whether it is He, but not Him when it is proved to be so.

Again, “He will feel that the will cannot, may not, dare not, dictate whereto the inquiries of the understanding shall lead.” (Phases, p. 219.) Surely not. That the will does is one of the evident moral disqualifications in the case of Mr. N.’s book. But is there nothing but will and understanding? Is there no God at all? Can the knowledge of Him or His mind never close an inquiry? Not for Mr. N. He does not suppose such a case. Is it the wise man who has said in his heart, “There is no God? “This absence of all thought of God from his mind shews

itself in a curious shape in page 223. “The law,” he says, “of God’s moral universe, as known to us, is that of progress. We trace it from old barbarism to the methodized Egyptian idolatry; to the more flexible polytheism of Syria and Greece; the poetical pantheism of philosophers, and the moral monotheism of a few sages.” God’s moral universe, methodized Egyptian idolatry, and flexible polytheism! Does Mr. N. think this God’s moral universe? This is what logic and philosophy afford us, and on which the Bible is to be set aside—a standard of moral judgment in man, which can call the worshipping an onion or a bull, or the making prostitution worship, to be part of a law of God’s moral universe! Ohe, jam satis! Can any one sink lower in mental perception than this? But if the true God be lost, can we be surprised at anything?

I leave Mr. N.’s analogous arguments from the Bible; because, he says elsewhere, he believes the most important part of it invented, or, at least, first authoritatively promulgated in Josiah’s reign; and that when he says, “Jesus was needed to spur and stab the conscience of his contemporaries, and recall them to more spiritual perceptions” (ib. p. 223), he has by the force of habit forgotten that he is speaking of an impostor, of whose teaching “it is certain that we have no genuine and trustworthy account,” and whose authoritative dicta God never intended us to receive. (Ib. p. 213.)

In pages 228, 229, we have, perhaps, the most complete exclusion of God anywhere. After bringing in the church of the Romanist, and the spiritualist who judges it as erroneous; and then the Bible, in which also Mr. N. alleges there are contradictions and immoralities; and

the Protestant who claims submission to it, while he joins the spiritualist in judging Rome; he in result declares that “in principle there are only two possible religions: the personal [i.e., the inward law] and the corporate; the spiritual and the external.” And is God to have none? Is there only man’s or the church’s? So it is according to Mr. N. Church or man, God can have nothing to say to it, but as an otiose object, if He be one, of what man may find proper to think about Him, if Him it really is; for, false or true as it may be, man’s thought only is possible, whether it be old barbarism, or flexible polytheism, or the moral monotheism of a few sages, in whose number Mr. N. of course ranks himself. God must not interfere in religion or communicate a single truth; it is “an unplausible opinion, that God would go out of His way to give us anything so undesirable.” (Phases, p. 212.) It “would paralyse our moral powers exactly as an infallible church does.” (Ib. p. 213.) Is not God excluded?

I have omitted an example of this which has its importance. “Each established system assures its votaries; that now at length they have attained a final perfection, that their foundations are irremovable: progress up to that position was a duty, beyond it is a sin.” “The arguments of those who resist progress are always the same, whether it be Pagans against Hebrews, Jews against Christians, Romanists against Protestants, or modern Christians against the advocates of a higher spiritualism.” (Ib. p. 224.) Now what does this really mean? “The advocates of a higher spiritualism” mean persons who exclude revelation, because man is superior to any need of a revelation of God. Now the progress of man, as a means of knowledge, has nothing to do with a revelation, however the latter may cause

progress. A revelation may be partial or complete; but it always, as such, has the absolute authority of God, in which there can be no progress, though there may be a further and clearer revelation of His will. But Mr. N. shuts out God, and hence only speaks of progress in man's condition—progress up to man's condition. It is evident such a statement has no place at all, if there be a revelation. This brings in God. Mr. N. simply excludes Him. Such, then, is the sum of all Mr. N.'s reasonings: God must on no account interfere or reveal Himself in any way.. It is un-plausible and mischievous. That, after all, there were only a few sages who arrived at monotheism without it; that those who believe in this revelation have alone the principle of the sympathy of a pure and perfect God with the sincere worshipper, to the exclusion of all others—this is no matter. Mr. N. will use the wisdom he has acquired from it to pronounce it an imposture, and to decide that, though an imposture has produced this blessed result, yet a real revelation of God would be very mischievous; and he would engage us to believe his logic and respect his moral judgment—the inward law or spiritual man—as the competent judge of the whole question.

2 "Canst thou by searching find out God?" Job 11:7.

3 I find the remark has been made elsewhere, that the only moral part of heathen mythology was the infernal part of it. What a tale that tells! Conscience will tell its tale, whatever lusts may seek; but it will never draw to God.

4 Mr. N. teaches that man cannot grow up sinless, but must be a sinner (pp. 100, 101).

5 Yet, in fact, men not having desired to retain God in their knowledge, they were received as gods, because man's passions, and habits, and imaginations, and associations of country, of the religion of his fathers, wants connected with his passions, are stronger in the immense mass of mankind than any calm reasoning about God from the display He has made of Himself in nature, or the workings of man's natural conscience. The Socrateses would be treated as atheists and the despisers of their country's gods, till an indifference which demoralises everything made polytheism ridiculous, and independence of God as convenient for men's passions as imaginative gods that favoured or thwarted him.

6 I must be allowed to put the reader here ori his guard against misapprehension, as if highest conceptions were the same thing as highest qualities. The expression does limit God's perfections to man's conceptions. All the poison of such a thought is there in full. But most of men's good qualities are inapplicable to God, as belonging to a creature: awe, reverence, gratitude, admiration, love to a superior, all that concur in adoration are necessarily excluded from the notion of God. When we partake of the divine nature, through a grace which has set us in perfect peace as to ourselves, we can love in a divine way, and love righteousness in a divine way. Otherwise we cannot. We must have a justly lovable object to call out a correspondent affection, or it will be an idolatrous passion towards an unworthy one. To love, in supreme sovereign goodness, is an absolutely divine quality. "God is love." Hence, at once, the apostle says, "He that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God"; he derives this from Him, and He is the supreme object

of it. This characterizes the divine nature as communicated to us. I can also understand and delight in righteousness in itself and holiness, being made partaker of His holiness, and renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created me in righteousness and true holiness. But while conscience has anything to say, I cannot love them simply, though that conscience may see them to be right and good, because I cannot and ought not to love to be condemned, nor be content to be defiled, supposing goodness to be as great as may be. But righteousness condemns me, and holiness shews me to be defiled.

The truth is, all this attempt to project God out of our conceptions is confusion, just because we are creatures, and excellence in a creature is a different thing. And hence there is incompetency to see what God ought to be or must be; though I may in a measure know what He may approve in me, which is another thing, but which will never carry us up to the being which approves. Secondly, we are sinful creatures; hence what God can be to us ought not even to be estimated by us. And lastly, no conception of mind can estimate love. “He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.” It never can be said, Man is love. A creature cannot be; he is bound to something else which bars him from supreme love. He may know it in supreme love to him as a sinner, and thus, but thus only, rise to its source. He knows it supreme and infinite, because it reached him: supreme, because there was nothing lovely in its effect; infinite, for nothing is so far from supreme love as enmity against it, and this was the condition of his proud heart. So even Mr. N. confesses, for he admits an antagonist will. And what else is that but open moral opposition

against supreme good, and a refusal to bow to it? How is that to be loved5 and if loved, is it to be sanctioned? or how reconcile entire condemnation of it, and yet perfect love to him that is in it? This the cross has solved, but not Mr. N. He has known too much of Christianity not to make all his system absurd by that which he has introduced into it, as it was, without this, by all it left out.

The cross, Mr. N. will tell us, is not just. No; it is love. But it is love exercised in such a condemnation of sin as makes its exercise consistent with righteousness, that is, the necessary and desirable display of God's opposition to evil. Christ was willing to offer Himself up, that God might be thus known and man saved.

7 "How could I believe in that painful and gratuitous imagination— the devil?" (Phases, p. 189.) Mr. N.'s assertions in that place will be considered elsewhere.

8 How much is known of God, on Mr. N.'s principles, is avowed by himself: "It is axiomatic, that man can no more understand the mind of God than a dog that of his master." (Soul, p. 119.)

9 Mr. N. admits "that the God of nature is the God of our consciences, and that all wrong doing is frowned on by Him." (Soul, p. 65.)

10 I was going to give the old attempt to define a straight line, namely, "the shortest between two given points," which, evidently, is no definition at all. It is a mere quality of a straight line. But I judge something of an accurate definition may be given, as being that described by "a point moving always invariably towards, or in the direction of, the same point." A curve is a line described by a point which always leaves the direction it

last followed. But this attempt does not affect the proof, that a true and even powerful impression may be produced by an idea not defined. Neither truth nor power is in definition, important as this may be in its place. Moral power and truth are in the bringing home to the soul the real relationship in which we stand to anything, and the obligation resulting from it, in the way of revelation of the character and conduct of that to which we are related, and hence the motives which flow from it. How this is brought home is another question. As a Christian, I believe it will only be by a new nature and divine grace. But this is not my subject here. Christianity reveals enough of God to make Him known to us in this way, and elevate us to Him by it. It does not pretend to define Him as He is. Creeds may be useful as contradicting false notions, but are, to say the least, most imperfect and unsatisfactory as communications of truth. I judge the matter of the Athanasian to be, perhaps, the least objectionable.

11 This is far from having been really the case] for he used the word “Jehovah” then, and does that of “God” in the book I am answering— important terms, I apprehend —in quite different senses as applied to Christ or the Father.

12 His words are “Religion and fanaticism are, in the embryo, but one and the same; to purify and elevate them, we want a cultivation of the understanding.”

13 I take it a circle is the line described by a point which always varies exactly equally from the last direction it followed: the radius would depend on the degree of variation.

14 “In former days, if any moral question came before me, I instantly turned it into the mere lawyer-like exercise of searching and interpreting my written code. Thus, in reading how Henry the Eighth treated his first queen, I thought over scripture texts in order to judge whether he was right, and if I could so get a solution, I left my own moral powers unexercised.” (Phases, p. 206.)

Objections Considered

I now turn to some details. For, while the pride of man's heart would have no God (at least, not one who should interfere with him or reveal Himself), he is very anxious really to get rid of One which besets him, which exposes his lusts and his pride, closes in his conscience on every side, and bars his will, and tells him that God does concern Himself in his thoughts, words, and actions, yea, though He do it in love. I turn, then, now to Mr. N.'s objections to scripture. In treating of objections made to the word of God, it is well to consider what is objected to.

General Principles

I cannot here, of course, write a book on the positive evidences of Christianity. But no one is ignorant that there are such, and that the positive proofs of it—proofs such as no event, no system, no person on earth has for itself—have been detailed in the language of every civilized people. Now particular objections leave this all out of sight; yet, where anything has been largely, positively proved, the dwelling on the objections that may be raised, without estimating the positive proofs of the whole system, is a totally unsound mental process. It is a way of judging of the truth of anything which would be admitted in no other case whatever. I do not object to the examination of every difficulty in detail.

In the case of scripture, the positive proof is that of the divinity of the system as a whole. If the system at large is positively proved, a difficulty attached to it which I cannot solve is a demonstration, not of the falseness of

the system, but of my incompetency to deal with the difficulty. In such a case, a sound minded man is content to say, “I do not know.” The historical facts and documents of Christianity are proved, with an evidence, such as no other universally believed event or acknowledged book has any evidence to be compared with, and if proved shew that it is divine. It has met with an opposition which made every document and fact to be scrutinized with a closeness which left only what was incontestable uncontested. This was to be expected, because it presented the claims of a holy God, to which the antagonist will of man never would submit. Hostile heathens, philosophical adversaries, heretical corrupters, foolish advocates, elaborate historians, voluminous commentators, every kind of author and character has been occupied with it from the time of its promulgation, and authenticated its history and its doctrines even when opposing them; and this in the presence of the hostility of religions divinely established or nationally and deeply enracinated on the one side, and sceptical scorn on the other. The books on which the smallest doubt could be cast, doubts were cast upon; and their authenticity made a subject of question as they are by objectors now.

The internal difficulties by which Mr. N. seeks to invalidate the inspiration of the New Testament, or at any rate the greater part of them, were noticed already in the second century and answered. The Jews were as desirous to prove Jesus was not the Messiah as Mr. N. could be now. In a word, we are on ground travelled over for eighteen centuries. Old infidelity dressed up in a new form, to be met by increasing light and increasing

proofs, which God in His goodness affords, both internal and external.

The history of Christianity no one attempted to deny when any denial of it would have been of the smallest value. They hated it, opposed it, sought to destroy it by force, and to subvert it by argument and ridicule; but it was there to be hated. No man thought of denying that. The documents were reasoned against, and objections made to them; but they, and they only, were received, by friends and foes, as the authentic documents of the religion professed by Christians. This is beyond all question. The Jews exist to this day the living witnesses of the truth of this history. They possess the books of the Old Testament, which we do. Their state confirms the Christianity they deny. It is well known that the Talmudists15 confirm the history of Christ's death, His flight into Egypt, and His miracles (though attributing them to sorcery He had learned when there, or, as some say, He wrought them by the means of God's ineffable name, which He stole).

If we turn to the internal testimony, there is no book in existence to be compared to the New Testament scriptures. Nothing in the least degree approaches its simplicity, power, moral depth and moral purity, profound knowledge of God, adaptation of His love to the heart of man; none that displays God so much, brings Him forward so constantly, without ever committing itself by anything unworthy of Him; brings Him down so near man, and yet only more fully to shew Him always to be God; reveals Him in person, in doctrine, in precept, in His ways, in prophecy; and by Mr. N.'s own testimony, it alone has produced the sense of the sympathy of a pure and perfect God with the

sincere worshipper. It has done more; it has manifested Him as the Friend of publicans and sinners—a way of which Mr. N. has no idea. For them (and how many are there!) he has no God; and yet He is never more evidently God than when we see Him thus.

If, with a God of law, the unclean leper must stand off from man as well as God, Jesus will touch the defiled one with a holy power that dispels the evil by which it cannot be contaminated, while perfect suited love is revealed in the act.

But, further, take in general the account given of this manifestation of God in flesh. There is a divine infinitude in the relationships revealed and developed. We can feel, if indeed we can discern God, that we are occupied with what is infinite. Yet he who speaks is so at home in what is infinite, that the expression of it is simple, as God is to Himself—as everything is to Him. There is no bombastical effort to elevate expressions to what one's heart does not reach; no enlarged and laboured periods to unfold what remains secret and unknown after all, if indeed all be not in expression. What produces the inexpressible feeling is stated; but the statement has the simplicity of known ani perfect truth. When Paul would sometimes express his feelings as to it, you may see him labouring beyond the bounds of human language, to give vent to the thoughts of a heart which possesses what is too great for it to contain. Yet this is only feeling produced by it.

Take the revelation of the facts, and all is simple. Read the scene with the shepherds, when that great event is announced which brought in reconciliation and the bringing together of a fallen world and God by the

incarnation. Can anything exceed its simplicity? Yet what thoughts are unfolded in a few words: “Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will towards men!” What accomplishment of promises—what revelation of grace—what an untold and ineffable mystery—what a God is revealed in love! Men, angels, Israel, the world, are all concerned. Where is there a word that is not characteristic of simple divine revelation? where is there an epithet seeking to elevate what such working of the human mind can only lower? Read all through the New Testament: never will you find an epithet attached to the name of Jesus. He carries His own beauty: others may talk about it, express their feelings about it; it is very right; it has its just and holy place. But Jesus is to be the thing revealed, if it be a revelation, not the expression of man’s feelings about Him. What a testimony is this, that the Holy Ghost, and not Luke, or John, or Mark, or Matthew, was the real writer of these histories of Jesus! There is a divine stamp on the whole history, the not discerning of which proves, not the failure of the evidence, but the incompetency of him who is insensible to it to perceive that which is of God.

Again, take the whole body of scripture, a collection of books written by various persons during a period of fifteen hundred years—of about eight hundred, by Mr. N.’s admission. All these develop an immense system. The sacrifices of the old are far the fullest development of every moral truth contained in the great historical fact and doctrine of the new, yet comparatively without meaning, till that fact appeared and that doctrine developed its bearing—circumstances and histories, full of instruction for our present walk, which in themselves

are simple histories of patriarchs or of Israel (the application of them being totally unknown to those who wrote)—a unity of design, a completeness of structure (yet written when the connection of the subsequent part with the former was impossible to be known to man), which proves the unity of the mind of the Being whose revealing power and controlling thought and knowledge run through it all from beginning to end.

It may be said that this is natural, where one people has been the scene of the development. But the fact is not so. This people rejected, and has been totally set aside by this development. The law in its own proper nature does not admit the gospel; and the gospel sets aside as a system in toto the law, and yet confirms it all as divine, as the law and the prophets all prove the gospel when it arrives.

The doctrine of the Church is brought out, of which there is no mention in the Old Testament whatever, yet it alone fills up the gap, and satisfies what these prophecies have revealed. Without it the world would have remained without any direct revealed association with God. This the revelation of the Church affords, for it is heavenly, which the world and Jewish government cannot be; yet these were to be set aside for a long while, and nothing earthly could fill up the gap.

It is revealed when the time is come and not before, because it sets aside the whole previous system of Jew and Gentile, a revelation which, if made before, would have destroyed all the authority of what existed. Yet it is necessary, when it does come, to the whole order of God’s ways, as revealed in the system it sets aside. Now it is alleged, there are difficulties in detail as to this vast

and wonderful system, externally authenticated as nothing else in the world is, which has internally the impress of its divine authorship in its whole character, morals, doctrine, and structure. If I lose the effect of the positive evidence, I prove my incapacity of estimating the value of the revelation of God, instead of simply my incompetency to solve the objection, as is the case if I accept the whole thus proved, and avow I cannot explain the difficulty, supposing such to be the case; as a man who reasoned what the sun was from an eclipse, and could not see when it shone. Suppose some phenomenon in nature which I cannot explain. That there are such, and even monsters, every one knows. I find around me (Mr. N. will not deny it) proofs of divine operation, and of a constant law (which is the strongest proof of divine operation) and power—a vast universe bearing (as a whole and in the minutest part) the proof of the power of God as having created and as sustaining it. If it be indeed God, nothing can be hid from this power; the very proof it is His is its universality, infallibility, and constancy, and that what grasps the whole cannot let the minutest part escape its attentions. It is not an outward show. That man could produce in his little measure. Go search within: see the springs, the details. Man’s work is but the scene of a theatre, a fair show by dim light, and it is moved by what may fail at any moment. Follow God’s into detail. See all His works in scratinizing light. Does He fail anywhere? Has anything escaped Him? Nothing. How came the monster there then? Is there some Arimanes, some evil Demiurge, that has had at least his share in the work? One failure proves that God is not there! Such is logic—at least the logic of objections. I find some inexplicable phenomenon, some lusus naturae *** as it is called, some monstrous birth. It

is a proof that there is no God, no perfect Creator and Sustainer of the universe! Is this sound reasoning with the proofs I have of it? No, the wise man, sure of the former by irrefragable proofs, says, I do not know why this is. He knows indeed, if taught of God, that evil is come in, and that sorrow and confusion is the fruit of it —evil which he does not attribute to God, save as permitting it externally for correction.

It is in vain to say, I can shew by the order of physical laws how it must have happened. Who made physical laws necessarily producing monstrosities? The sense that it is a monstrosity, moreover, is proof of the conscience of a universal order. Why then is a particular inexplicable difficulty adduced as an objection to revelation, and urged as a proof that the whole is false? There is but one reason. Revelation controls the passions, which creation does not. A judgment to come, sin, having to answer to God—these are what revelation treats of; and they are what man does not like. A God of providence he will have and reason about, because he wants Him, and he prides himself on having to say to the Almighty as he (man) likes to have to say to Him. But to be judged by Him, or even to own himself a sinner, and to be in so humble a condition as to be loved by Him and to need it—ah! that is another matter. The principle then on which the reasoning drawn from objections goes is a false and hollow one. Still, as they trouble the mind, I shall refer to them, without pretending to solve every difficulty that can be raised. That is merely a question of my competency, not of the truth of scripture. To judge of these we must advert to another principle which affects directly the whole force of any objection to any writing whatever, and that is the object of the writer. If my

object is to shew the spirit and bearing of a course of action in which many isolated facts have the same moral force, I may neglect chronological order without anything being changed by it. If I were shewing the progress of an individual mind in them, chronological order would be everything. Again, if I am shewing that a person's public life had a given aim or object, I select the facts proving it, and neglect a multitude of others, without which, as a personal history, it would be necessarily imperfect and disconnected; but it is not incomplete in the view in which I have written it. If I were shewing the filial piety of the same person, and the way he kept up the ties of family to the end, only such parts of his public life would be related as might shew, that, in spite of its importance and activity, this tie was always felt and acted on. And so on.

Take again, as an example, the Code Napoleon. Did I speak of it as a monument of his genius, I might select particular parts in which the bearing of law on society, an intuitive perception of just results in details, and the vast scope of design were manifest, and shew that these originated in his mind. Did another history seek to shew his power in employing instruments, it might shew the very same parts drawn up by men able in their vocation; and a caviller might find difficulty to reconcile the drawing up of all by these instruments with the originating mind which had set all agoing and directed it throughout. Were I shewing the progress of legislation in the world, I might allege these very same parts as the necessary consequence of the progress of society, and that they flowed as the evident consequences from the preceding steps in this process, as one idea leads on to another; and, in appearance, Napoleon's originality

would disappear. All these histories might be true—nay, we may suppose, absolutely true—yet impossible for one who had only these to reconcile them in everything, because he has not the additional elements and a knowledge, which would be really divine, of the whole order of man's mind and history, which would be absolutely necessary to put them together. Is God's history of His Son in the world less vast in conception, less multifarious in the relationships it speaks of, than Napoleon and a code of laws?

Take, again, a scriptural example: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear him." If I quote this desiring to rest His claim to be heard on His being Son, in contrast, say, with Moses or Elias, I may quote it: "This is my beloved Son, hear him." If I were shewing the delight of God in Him, I might quote the former part, leaving out "hear him." If I refer to His Father's perfect approbation of Him as a reason why He should be the expression of His mind, I should quote the whole passage. These different citations, instead of being contradictions or mistakes, are proofs of the intention with which the statement is quoted.

Now, if God gives us a history, He must have an object. He cannot write a history even of His blessed Son merely to amuse man with a history of true facts. Hence He will, in a revelation, give what may be quite disconnected as a history. Thus, if God be unfolding the character of Christ as Son of man, He will select what does reveal Him in that character, not what presents Him simply as Messiah come on earth among the Jews. Consequently, in selecting the facts, large gaps may be found in the history. The connection will be the character of Son of man and facts really connected

together historically in moral consequence, which are not in mere chronological order.

So of other great principles developed in the history of Christ. Many facts may be common to different features of His character, or necessary to the whole history. Thus grace in every case will shine forth; but not perhaps in the same application. No one can, in fact, read the gospels, without seeing that Jesus is presented in different characters in them. Matthew gives us His connection with Israel in His coming; that is, with the promises made to Israel: hence the constant quotation of prophecy. In John He is God Himself come down from heaven. In the beginning He was with God, and was God. Then the Word was made flesh. There is no manger of Bethlehem here. His genealogy is divine, so far as there is any. The Abrahams, the Davids, and the Adams have no place here, save so far as Christ takes one among their posterity by being a man. The Jews are treated as rejecting Him in this character from the first. Luke has his point. The Son of Adam is at once on the scene, though His connection with the Jewish people be historically given. Mark gives us the gospel-service of Christ, and we have nothing before John Baptist's ministry.

Now I say not that God has given a revelation, however truly I believe it; but that if God does give a revelation, He must have an object, and hence that the revelation must have a character suited to that object, or it would be imperfect and inefficient; the work would be that of an incompetent workman. The objection must lie, if valid, against such a work as pursues thus its object; for God must surely accomplish His purpose in this manner, if He does give revelation: and hence, to prove He has

not, the objection must shew that the passage objected to is contrary to a purpose so pursued. God's revelation will not seek the satisfaction of man's curiosity in another way, nor to satisfy man at all (save so far as, in grace, not to turn him aside), but to instruct him. Did it do so, it would prove it was not God who wrote it.

15 These testimonies are of comparatively late date. They are in the Gemaras, not the Mishna; but this rather confirms the truth. If we receive the christian records, the Jews were forced to own notable undeniable miracles done before the eyes of the multitude. Comparatively speaking, contemporary hostile accounts are silent on the subject (I speak of Jewish doctors), and later ones do not dream of denying them, admit the facts, and attribute them to magic. Celsus (a heathen author, who lived some fifty years after St. John, as quoted by Origen) does not deny the miracles, but ascribes them also to magic. The Talmudists speak of instantaneous cures wrought by the name of Jesus. The passages are quoted by all the authors and commentators who have treated this subject at any length. Lightfoot is the usual book of reference for the English reader.

Grounds Of Faith Proposed In Scripture

Another general point now opens before us, though some particular objections connect themselves with it. The grounds of faith proposed in scripture. Is moral truth to be received in obedience to an apparent miracle of sense, or are we to believe in sensible miracles because of their recommending some moral truth?130 Such is the way in which Mr. N. approaches the question. He proceeds to accuse the Bible of great inconsistency on this point. “In one place Jesus reproves the demand of a miracle, and blesses those who believe without miracles. In another, He requires that they will receive His doctrine (and submit to it as little children), because of His miracles.” (Phases, pp. 145,146.)

The Testimony Of Christ

Now, before going further, I would remark that that to which Mr. N. objects here carries the moral evidence of its justice in itself in the simplest and plainest manner. If the moral excellence took effect on the conscience, so much the better. It ought to have done so: man was in an evil state if it did not. But then, with such miracles as Christ did, men were left without excuse in not receiving such a doctrine. Thus Christ says, “Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works’ sake.” What can be simpler? Again, “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin.” “If I had not done among them the works which none other

man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father."

Mr. N. has, however, stated a question which, as to the matter in hand, is perfectly absurd and irrelevant. Is he to believe miracles on account of morality, or doctrine on account of miracles? Neither. No doubt immorality of doctrine would tend to discredit a miracle, and if the miracle were certain, it would not accredit what was certainly wrong; and purity of doctrine helps to accredit a miracle, as a miracle confirms the authority of a teacher. But we are not called on to believe a doctrine because of a miracle, or a miracle because of a doctrine; we are called on to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, because He offered both these proofs together; so that all Mr. N.'s abstract reasoning on the difficulty of arriving at truth, or the grounds of truth, is an irrelevant question of his own mind. Christ appeals to both kinds of proof as evidence of who He was, and of the truth of what He said: "Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" Again, "I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." Mr. N. then is astray as to the whole matter in hand.

But there is another thing which Mr. N. of course keeps entirely out of sight; he continues, after what I already quoted, "Now this is intelligible, if blind external obedience is the end of religion, and not truth and inward righteousness, an ambitious and unscrupulous Church that desires by fair means or foul to make men's minds bow down to her, may say, Only believe; and all is right. The end being gained—obedience to us—we do not care about your reasons. But God cannot speak thus to man… It peculiarly vexed me to find so total a

deficiency7 of clear and sound instruction in the New Testament, and eminently in the gospel of John, on so vital a question. The more I considered it, the more it appeared as if Jesus was solely anxious to have people believe in Him without caring on what grounds they believed, although that is obviously the main point." (Phases, p. 146.) Indeed! Is the logic, which is to govern their principles of reasoning about it, the main point, when God is there? For we are supposing (Mr. N. as well as myself) the case to be that of God speaking to man, and our enquiry is, How is He to speak? He is mainly (says Mr. N.) to explain to them the logical grounds on which they ought to go! This is quite worthy of Mr. N.; but I avow I know not of whom else. The Lord does give them clear grounds of faith. (See the close of John 5.) John Baptist's testimony—the Father's testimony—His works' testimony—the scripture's testimony. But as to teaching them logic, I must leave it to infidels to count it the worthy occupation of God teaching in the world. Yet why He should teach this is hardly apparent on Mr. N.'s shewing, for "a question of logic, such as I have had before me, was peculiarly one in which the propagator of a new religion could not be allowed to dictate." (Phases, p. 147.) But a man's reasoning cannot rise above what is in his mind. Think of God being in the world to give "clear views" on "a question of logic," which is yet so the province of man's mind that He "could not be allowed to dictate!"—and this man is to tell us the just grounds of faith!

Now I leave to every honest-minded reader, how much the life and words of the blessed Jesus resembled the conduct of "an ambitious and unscrupulous Church." It is a great thing, when we have to do with the vaporous

reasonings of infidels, to get at things as they are—man as he is—history as we have it— Jesus as He was. They cannot bear facts; and if an “unscrupulous Church” is not to be trusted, I avow (and Mr. N.’s book has not enfeebled my conviction) scrupulosity is not the burden that weighs down an infidel.

But I say, that if God do come into the world, or if He send even a revelation into the world other than a claim of law, His great end must be to reveal Himself. He has to do so because men have departed from Him, or (for whatever reason) are ignorant of Him; were it not so, there would not be place for the revelation. Now He is the source of all blessing. He knows it; He would make man happy by it. The knowledge of Him, as the Lord states it, and of Jesus whom He has sent, is eternal life. But He will have this, of course, real, moral, in the soul —hence by faith. He is not thus revealed as God exacting, though He will judge all, but acting for us so as to take away every “obstacle, while maintaining fully the highest standard of conscience—existing, in order to bless us in Himself, for He is love. Thus, believing in Him, I have perfect peace and living joy in Himself. Now, if He thus come to bless, and by such a knowledge of Him, what can He do but engage men to believe in Him? His words and ways are the revelation of His so coming. In mercy to men He appeals to them; and, seeing how many obstacles there are to the simple perception of what is good and the embracing of it, we can understand that goodness adding sensible proofs by the exercise of power to overcome those obstacles and to shew by that power who it is that is really come. No doubt men ought to see the grace and truth in itself. So the Lord says; but He adds condescendingly external proofs to confirm the

testimony and help man's mind. On the other hand, if the conviction as to the glory of the messenger and truth of the message be produced merely by the miracles, the Lord rejects such faith because there is merely a conviction of the mind; the moral perception is wanting, which really recognizes His person and receives the power of the truth. "When he was in Jerusalem… many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them … for he knew what was in man." (John 2:23-25.)

In fine, the ground Mr. N. takes is this, that the question is, Are we to believe miracles for doctrine's sake, or doctrine for miracles' sake?

I say that Christ calls us to believe in His person and revelation by reason of both; and that the question Mr. N. puts on the matter is absurd. The doctrine and works confirm each other. Which of these two statements is according to fact? For it is a question of fact.

Revelation Of God

Next Mr. N. says (I would repeat it with reverence), that when God teaches He should explain the logical grounds of faith to man without dictating; as that could not be allowed in the propagator of a new religion.

I say, that if God reveals Himself, He would give all that love could of the display of Himself, in nature, conduct, word, and work, which would not destroy the responsibility of man131—that He would give the display of His nature in act, doctrine, and power. He would give, in a word, the grounds for faith in its object, not the logical grounds of faith. He would present what the conscience, heart, and intelligence of man ought to

recognize as a revelation of who was there. That was what He, He alone, could do for man—what would be a revelation—what man wants; not an humble conversation on what grounds a man might believe; carried on by one not allowed to dictate. That He condescended, as we have seen, to plead with man on the grounds he had for faith, is most true. Nothing was too low for His love, if it might be a blessing to man; but that is another thing.

If Mr. N. merely means that he is quite ignorant of what the grounds of faith are, and wants instruction as to them—that I believe is true. He does not even know what the question is. But that is a strange reason for writing a book on it. His theory is, There can be no possible grounds for believing. Let me suggest, that when we seek a ground for faith, we must look for it in the proofs given of the thing proposed to us to be believed, not in discussing the abstract principles in which the human mind can believe, and neglecting the proofs of what it is called upon to believe; for the grounds of divine faith can be given only by divine testimony, by what God reveals (and hence known only in looking at that), not by settling whether one kind of proof is to be believed on account of the other, where both are direct proofs of something else—proofs which confirm each other.

But further, if God presents Himself as the object of faith — He who is the sole and perfect source of blessing, our alienation from whom is our ruin, can He do anything else than call on men to believe on Him? Can He give reasons for doing it other than the adequate display of Himself? Having given them to believe in Himself is everything as to human responsibility, and the necessary

pursuit of divine love. He could do nothing but call men to this faith if He meant to bless. And what shall we say of the reasoning of one who compares God calling unhappy man to come to Himself for blessing, to the act of “an ambitious, unscrupulous Church, that desires, by fair means or foul, to make men’s minds bow down to her?” It may be said that I am begging the question in saying “God calling.” But this is a mistake, because we are enquiring what is suitable if God does address Himself to man. Mr. N. says, “But God cannot thus speak to man.” I reply, He must thus speak to man. He must claim obedience as necessary in virtue of the revelation of Himself. He must call men to believe on Him if He means to bless. The Church’s pretension to do it sets aside God—God’s pretension to do it brings Him in. He must shew that the rejecting of Himself will be everlasting ruin.

If He be really God, it cannot be otherwise. If it be He, He cannot claim less than absolute obedience, nor do otherwise than call to believe in Himself. The taking any other ground would prove it was not He, however He may condescend in grace as to the means of display and proof. Mr. N. is blaming the character of address, as not suiting God if He does speak. Hence His speaking is necessarily assumed. If God speaks, He must do what Mr. N. blames; and what Mr. N. requires is the most unfitting and monstrous thing possible (that is, that if God reveals Himself, He is to discuss the logical grounds on which men are to receive evidence, instead of giving adequate evidence, and throwing upon them the responsibility of receiving Him). The evidence God has graciously offered, in contrast with that afforded by false religions or corrupt systems, is here avoided by Mr. N.;

and he puts in his argument “an ambitious Church—Hindooism —Mahommedanism”—on the same ground as God, excluding the only real question (that is, the evidence attached to each), iri order to discuss the human grounds of judging, without introducing the object about which he is to judge. Now, though God in grace can afford every kind of evidence, and has done so, He cannot subject Himself to man’s à priori judgment, but must place man under responsibility to Him, and call him to come to Him, if He means to bless him. And this is what we find in the gospel. God, by positive truth, has met every kind of working in the human mind, groping after means of truth. He has, working in men, adapted His reasonings to their condition. But the thing revealed is always itself, and in its own divine perfection. The manner of revealing and teaching is grace; the thing taught is truth itself, and (blessed be God!) is grace also.

Paul’s Reasonings Like Gamaliel’s—Plato, Philo, The Targums

This is my answer to what Mr. N. says of Paul’s reasoning like Gamaliel, and talking of subjects such as Philo reasons about.132 I have no doubt that glimmerings of needed truth were apprehended through the wants of the natural mind. The mind of man (through some traditional rays of light, affected by the creation through which it moved, by its conscience, by its sense of the want of something to meet a thousand questions which arose out of all this, and the heavings of an immortal soul within) felt that something was wanted to answer a craving, a void, which gave no clearness or certainty of what that answer would be. The revelation

given in the Old Testament, the secondary effect of which was undoubtedly widely spread, furnished some clue to a large apprehension of the divine nature— opened up enquiries to the mind which it did not satisfy either. These floated about in various forms, and may be resumed in the western world, in Plato and the Targums, or perhaps Philo. The revelation of God in the New Testament met all these by the perfect revelation of God Himself, in His own being, and in every relation in which He stood with creation. Hence, while it gave the whole positive truth as to God, it left no room for the inadequate or erroneous views current on the same subjects in various forms. It took all the elements of truth which floated in men's minds and systems— rati nantes in gurgite vasto—and connected them in their true place with the centre of all truth. Chaos became perfect order, and associated with the vast expanse of heaven, with which it took its true place and relationship; while it left no room for the pride of man to pretend to have stores of wonderful knowledge (for he is proud of everything he discovers himself); for all true knowledge was a matter of revelation, and who can boast of that? Hence we find the hazy notions of the Platos, Philos, and Tar-gums, absorbed into perfect truth, and the gnostic reveries and pretensions anticipated and judged. We get the lovgo" with divine certainty and clearness, the plhvrwma in all its simple, divine, clearly defined truth and perfectness. We get the fw'" and ajlmvweta, everything that man might indulge his imagination and his pride about, in the form of real truth. We get infinitely more knowledge, and certain, yea, divine knowledge, but no room for speculation; and (the perfection of the Godhead being revealed in Christ) all the development of ancient or modern gnostics is

shut out by that all-important divine word—“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life. For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.”

Either the living person of the Son of God is not the object of faith, and the perfect revelation of God and the Father in Him not the subject matter of those who speak of development; or the pretence to add anything to it is the blasphemous denial of His perfectness. Infidelity is openly the latter; Puseyism and Popery have their choice to make between the two. In either case they are not Christianity. That which was from the beginning is the superscription of that book of scripture which, above all, especially guards us against seducing spirits. Modern infidelity professes to be development; so does modern Popery and Puseyism; and, strange to say, when Mr. N. renounced Christianity and became a developed infidel, he renewed, he tells us, happy intercourse with Mr. J. H. Newman, who is a developed Puseyite or Roman Catholic. Let the saint remember, that if he will be a Christian, he must hold to that which was from the beginning—the truth once delivered to the saints; and he may know, if he trusts an apostle, that he “has everlasting life,” 1 John 5:13.

Faith At Second Hand

But it is well to remark some other points on which the chapter we are occupied with depends. Its title is, “Faith at second hand found to be vain.” Now the reader will observe that, though “second-hand faith” seems to be a

very uncertain ground of confidence, the real meaning of the phrase is this, that there can be no faith at all except by a revelation made to the individual who receives it; and that it can never pass any farther. That is, that as regards the revelation of truth, or any revelation for men in general, none such can exist; for, if Peter or Paul have received a revelation, it is for me a revelation at second hand. That is, all revelation of truth must be a perpetual personal miracle, and exercise of God's power, without, consequently, any exercise of responsibility whatever in its reception. The scripture presents revelation as given, in order to be communicated for the good of others. Which is most rational (I go no farther here), if there is any real blessing—to give a revelation so as to produce absolute divine certainty in the mind, with no possibility of communicating it so as to put man under the responsibility of receiving it, and thus, if a blessing, to require a renewed miracle to each person,— or to communicate divine truth by a chosen instrument, with sufficient evidence to place men under responsibility of bowing to it when it is presented to them? But, further, Mr. N.'s reasonings on it are nothing whatever to the purpose. He requires to be informed how Paul got it. The question is not, What has been the means of assuring him? but, has he given adequate evidence of the truth he preaches, so as to bind me to receive it? It is evident that this last is the whole question with me. If any one has got possession of my father's will leaving me an immense fortune, the question is, not by what means he was convinced it was his, so as to keep it safe and communicate it to me; but whether I have, and can produce in court, adequate testimony that it is my father's, now it is in my possession. Mr. N.'s reasonings

here are totally irrelevant. It is merely a denial of any revelation, and discrediting all by a point, difficult perhaps to solve for any of us whom God does not employ as instruments of communicating one, but perfectly irrelevant when the question is, Am I bound to receive it? If I prove my father's signature, and that of the witnesses, how the finder was convinced is all one to me.

Divine Truth Communicated By God. Adequate Proofs

The meaning of any one's having a divine revelation is very simple. It is divine truth directly communicated to him by God, with divine certainty, whatever the means of such communication (and they were various) may be. With Moses it was face to face; with prophets, a vision or dream; in the New Testament, often, evidently, the Holy Ghost acting on the intelligence; in certain cases, though the coming of the word of the Lord was certain in the Old, the full bearing was not understood at the time of revelation. This difference may have its interest to the believer. It is nothing to an unbeliever; with him the question is, With what evidence is the truth presented to him? To say that God cannot communicate His thoughts to man, giving certainty to the mind that it is Himself, is to say that He cannot do what man is perfectly capable of. To say that He cannot afford certainty when the truth is communicated to a third person, by adequate evidence accompanying it, is an absurdity worthy of an infidel only. But if he can, "faith at second hand" is not vain. It is founded, or may be so, on adequate proofs. Yet this is the proposition of the chapter. Whether there are such proofs is a question of

fact which Mr. N. leaves aside to enquire how Paul received the revelation,133 and knew it to be such, which has nothing whatever to say to the matter. Supposing prophecies clearly accomplished, and even finding a meaning by the event, while otherwise inexplicable:—supposing, in him who is the subject of revelation, a perfection of individual walk wholly without parallel, the invention of which, even as a tale, would have been a greater miracle, man being what he is, than its existence, if a divine Person was really there:—supposing this person, after accomplishing prophecies and working notorious miracles, publicly and undeniably over the whole country, promises to communicate, when gone, to others who had it not, a power more conspicuous than that exercised by Himself—that a doctrine and practice, entirely beyond their age and country, characterize these persons, their whole tone and conduct being founded on the communication they impart, and that they perform publicly, in view of their enemies, notable miracles, which there is no gainsaying—that with a few words these men, once ignorant, confound all their adversaries, not by contentious learning, but by the power which, in the plainest terms, guides and fills their speech—that the promise of power from Him gone away is thus demonstrably fulfilled—that ignorant fishermen, whose provincialisms betrayed their country, now suddenly speak many tongues, so that men brought up in each understood them:—supposing all this true, should I not have proof that the testimony about this admirable and unequalled Being was true? That is, I should have proof, moral, prophetic, miraculous, in my conscience, my understanding, that their testimony was divine—that it was a revelation, though many historic points otherwise cognizable might confirm it; for I

suppose the thing not done in a corner. In what manner this wonderful Being, now absent, has communicated to them What they preach about Him, does not touch the question whether I am bound to receive it. That depends on the evidence offered to me, not on that afforded to them. Now, it may be said, “You are supposing all this.” I am: because the question is not whether Christianity is true, but whether, as a general proposition, faith at second hand is vain; that is, whether a denial of all revelation to man, as being an impossibility, can be reasonably maintained. Secondhand faith is the best and highest kind. It has an amazingly higher moral character, and so the Lord assures us in the case of Thomas, John 20.

I do not again go over in detail the case of Abraham, here again referred to. Mr. N.’s argument is of no use whatever here, because Abraham went on the supposition of having a direct command from God; and St. Paul and St. James reason on that supposition as to the proof of faith contained in it, and on nothing else. He reckoned on God’s restoring him his son, says St. Paul. He shewed this faith in his act, says St. James. But Mr. N. is unreasonable, even as to that by which he seeks to act on the feelings of men to set them against the true God, the God of the Bible. There are cases, he tells us, elsewhere, in which it is a mere “morbid notion,” to complain of men’s being put to death. Men are to be put to death; and it is counted useful and proper as an example for the good of society. That is, there are motives which make it right that man should dispose of human life for the good of others. Mr. N. must think it to be approved of God —not perhaps as absolute good, but as needed and useful to man as he is; and life is taken

away accordingly. Now, if there are reasons why we should, there may be reasons why Abraham should have been ordered to do it. There was no malice: it was done because God commanded it,, in perfect obedience to Him. Now I believe (indeed no person can deny) that more good, incomparably and beyond all question more good, and of a more positive excellent kind, has been done by the example of Abraham's faith in this, and that for ages, than by the execution of a criminal for the space of a year after his suffering. No one ever had the idea, or could draw it from the history, that it was right or allowable for a man to kill his child of his own will—quite the contrary. The sovereign claim of God, who forbids it to man, was enforced by it. There is this difference, that men cannot restore the life of a man whom they sacrifice to the good of society, whereas God could that of Isaac; and so Abraham believed. And, indeed, He could hinder his being even put to death, and did so as soon as Abraham's faith was fully proved in the way presented by Paul and James.

Many prophetic accounts which Mr. N. refers to are, evidently to me, visions only, and demonstrably so meant, to represent the character of Israel to the prophet's mind. I shall again omit noticing particularly some of the miserable insinuations which are worthy only of an infidel, or of a corrupt mind, if, indeed, they are to be distinguished, a conclusion to which, certainly, this book would not lead us.

130 "Ought we in any case to receive moral truth in obedience to an apparent miracle of sense? or, conversely, ought we ever to believe in sensible miracles because of their recommending some moral truth?" (Phases, p. 145.)

131 The question of the grace that overcomes an “antagonistic will” in quickening power, is not what occupies us here, but the revelation of the object of faith.

132 “Paul’s reasonings are those of a Gamaliel, and often are indefensible by our logical notions. John also (as I had been recently learning) has a wonderful similarity to Philo.” (Phases, p. 147.)

133 “What does he mean by saying that he has had a ‘revelation?’ Did he see a sight, or hear a sound? or was it an inward impression? and how does he distinguish it as divine? Until these questions are fully answered, we have no materials at all before us for deciding to accept his results.” (Phases, p. 148.) Paul did see a sight—did hear a sound—and tells us he did receive things from the Lord, which I suppose produced impressions. But leaving this, which was the ground of his faith properly speaking (and unless I had an equally strong impression on my mind with himself, it would be impossible for me to know how he discerned its divine character, and then I should not want his reception of it at all)—leaving this entirely illogical and irrational ground taken by Mr. N., I would ask, what he means by—“Until these questions are fully answered we have no materials before us for deciding?” Suppose Paul had opened my eyes, I having been born blind, or any one else’s, and had so reached my conscience that I could say, Here is a man who has told me all that ever I did, and shewn me a God that indeed searches the heart and tries the reins, and yet is perfect love—should I have no materials for judging whether he taught the truth and was sent of God—supposing too, in all his life he approved himself as a minister of God—until I knew, to satisfy my curiosity,

how he had got it? Was ever more consummate nonsense?

Historical Objections

Conquest Of Canaan

Some historical objections remain to be noticed.

First, the well-known one of the conquest of Canaan. That, in the public government of the world, men have dealt thus and worse with conquered people, is certain; so that what Mr. N. considers as man as God made him has so acted—and God's government has so ordered it. This is Mr. N.'s notion. The fact of similar conquests is notorious in history. The only difference between Mr. N. and me is, that I hold, though such inroads may be used for judgment, as is shewn in Habakkuk, Joel, and frequently in the prophets (the book of Job explaining, so to speak, the secret springs of all this), yet that it is the sin of man which has given such a character to the government of God.

Now in Israel's history God did not go out of this character of government. He merely took a nation in which He shewed its direct operation and the motives of it, so that that government should be learned by a law. So that man should say, "Verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth." Israel, therefore, is put in relationship with God as a nation, and national laws given to them. As a whole, the law given to them was not a code of everlasting righteousness with a fully revealed God. Christ declares even the contrary. God was hidden behind the veil, and said that He would dwell in the thick darkness. Hence those who walked really with God suffered in Israel, as now in the world—a riddle too hard for them till in the

sanctuary they learned the way of God in judgment. Grace, though secretly working and shewn in daily mercy, was unrevealed. Judgment and government were the principles on which God dealt, though patient goodness marked this government. The basis of it is laid in Exodus 34:6-9; 32:33. No doubt individuals saw beyond this to eternal things, as the Abrahams, the Davids, and a crowd of holy men in whom real faith was. But the principle brought out in God's dealing with the nation was God judging in the earth.

This it is that has produced confusion in the minds of many with such a book as Warburton's "Divine Legation of Moses". They could not but feel that they are not to be heard who feign that the fathers did look for mere transitory promises; while, on the other hand, the argument of Bishop Warburton's book is, in the main idea, incontestable. But all is simple if we see that the earthly government, carried on under Moses, did find its public sanction in present earthly judgments, while individual saints (suffering under the sin of others, and even plunged in deep sorrow because God's people were under judgment for their sins, and the public glory of God and His worship cast down through it) still looked, by present personal piety in which their hearts were elevated to God, beyond it all, and became more heavenly by this very means and the non-accomplishment of earthly promises. At the same time the great principles of everlasting righteousness were interspersed through the national enactments of the law, so that they who had hearts to perceive them should learn and be imbued with them; and they are brought out as such by the divine and perfect wisdom of the Saviour, while faith, as to the nation as the vessel of

promise, was sustained by the assurance of the coming of a Messiah, who, executing judgment against every oppressor and bringing in everlasting righteousness, would also accomplish, in grace on God's part, the hopes of faith and the infallible promises of God in favour of the residue of the people whom He had called. This is entirely to come: for now God is calling the Church exclusively to a heavenly place, "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," that the purpose of God for the administration of the fulness of times might be accomplished, that is, to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and on earth, Eph. 1:8-10.

This is not the time of judging the earth in connection with His people (though providentially, of course, all is under God's hand), but of grace, heavenly hopes, and suffering with Christ. Nothing can be clearer in scripture than this. Christ did not judge the earth when He came; He refused to do it in the least thing. He was condemned by its judges, wielding externally God's power and authority in the place of judgment, Jewish and Gentile. All judgment was set aside, and the Just One was the victim of man's judgment and the bearer of God's wrath. This was indeed, morally, the judgment of the world, and of its prince the enemy of man. But the execution of judgment is yet wholly future, and so is the resulting accomplishment of divine purpose; and this is the true answer to Mr. N.'s cavils against a second fulfilment. The purpose of God declared in prophecy has never been fulfilled at all. Christ's sufferings have been, no doubt, but nothing else, save the consequent dispersion of His earthly people; but this is not God's purpose properly speaking. Particular local judgments

have been executed, but neither are these His purpose. That remains wholly unaccomplished. God has not yet shewn Himself, according to His purpose, the Judge of the earth. When the wicked shall be cut off, who are open adversaries of His power, a King will reign in righteousness, and the Prince of Peace will exercise His dominion in the world. Christ, at His first coming, declares that it was not to bring peace on the earth, but a sword. Shall then this blessed character of Prince of Peace remain unfulfilled? Certainly not. For the moment sin had the upper hand in the world, because God was graciously doing a still greater work, and shewing Himself above all man's futile sin in making it the instrument of an eternal and heavenly salvation. But this earth will be the scene of peace and blessing under the government of God wielded by the hand of the Son of man, whom He hath set over the works of His hands. Grace has made us His joint-heirs.

Having given this general view of the connection of the whole subject, I return to the conquest of Canaan. The scriptures are express in presenting it as an example of God's positive judgment after all patience had already been shewn to be useless (as in the case of Sodom and Gomorrha); of His power against the enemies of His nature, purposes, and people; and of His faithfulness to these last. Abraham was told that his descendants must go down and dwell in Egypt for a long period, for the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full; and this took place. Israel was clearly informed of the cause why they were thus judged: "Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, but for the wickedness of these nations, the Lord doth drive them out before thee," Deut. 9:5; 18:12. This truth is expressed in the

strongest possible manner (Lev. 18) in warning Israel not to fall into the like abominations. “And the land is defiled, therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes … that the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you.” Thus a people, allowed to ripen up to their full height of wickedness, are taken as the occasion of shewing God’s righteous wrath and power. Israel is fully warned and apprised of the principle on which it was done. It is a great public sample of God’s full judgment in the earth. They were to be destroyed by the judicial power of God. It was also (as the case of Achan fully shews) the occasion of shewing God’s power and faithfulness, but His strict judgment of evil in the midst of His people.

In the case which Mr. N. cites, he carefully omits that, outside these specially guilty people, peace was to be offered to every city, and not one was to be touched if accepted. If they preferred being adversaries, then of those who were thus hostile they were not to make slaves (which would have been their desire and profit), but to slay them as adversaries; the women and spoil, who were not in this case, were given them. But this was totally forbidden as to the seven wicked nations. All, as a judged race, were to be dealt with in God’s name. Now this imprinted a clear character on the act; for it is quite certain that, as to national habits and personal interests, they would have made slaves of them all. That these national habits were according to the rude feelings of that age, there is no doubt; and God deals with them nationally according to their state. But He leads them on in various parts of it far beyond all surrounding nations,

checks their will and passions by the sense of responsibility, encourages them by the favour of their God, and gives (enchased in their external and passing ordinances) the great principles of everlasting righteousness—love to God and one's neighbour, and maintains the great landmarks of society and family, as men speak now.

All this, I say, is not to be confounded for a moment with the eternal ground of man's relationship with God. The moral law, as far as it went, availed to shew that man as a sinner could have no such relationship on that ground. It convinced man of sin, and revealed nothing else of God but that He was a just Judge who condemned it. For the wisdom of the infidel, all this is jumbled together without distinction.

Purification Of The Temple

We have a singular example of the perfect absence of all moral discernment in the reasoning of Mr. N. in his reference to the Lord's conduct in purifying the temple. A father chastises his child, and the profound wisdom of the infidel discusses whether it is a warrant for its brother to beat it. "Could it authorize me to plait a whip of small cords, and flog a preferment-hunter out of the pulpit?" (Phases, p. 151.) How sovereignly ridiculous such a remark in a moral point of view! Yet Mr. N. is treating it as a moral question. Now there are cases where the offensive character of an act puts the scourge in everybody's hand; and it was really such in this case. The men whom Christ drove out were making God's temple and God's worship an occasion of trafficking extortion as to the poor who had victims to buy. But this is by no means all. The Lord distinctly presents Himself

as Jehovah; and (in one of the instances in which He thus cleared the temple) as at the same time the King, the Son of David, the Messiah, to whom such an office belonged. In the early case in John He says “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” “He spake of the temple of his body.” In the other, He sends for the ass, to accomplish the prophecy of Zechariah, saying “The Lord hath need of him,” and enters publicly into Jerusalem as the King Messiah. Think of Mr. N. asking if it would authorize him so to act! He must forgive me saying “such questions go very deep into the heart” of the moral (perhaps I should say, common) sense of the writer.

Assumption Of God Speaking From Without

I may now come to the second part of Mr. N.’s chapter—the discussion of the grounds of faith as he views them. Many general principles have been discussed in my introductory portion, to which they properly belong; but some details and the answers to some objections and difficulties find their place here. Nothing can be more supremely absurd than one remark which is made as to the knowledge of God—a remark, however, which is the sum of Mr. N.’s book.

“But next the analogy assumes, most falsely, that God, like man, speaks from without; that what we call reason and conscience is not His mode of commanding and revealing His will, but that words to strike the ear, or symbols displayed before the senses, are emphatically and exclusively revelation. On the contrary, of our moral and spiritual God we know nothing without, everything within. It is in the spirit that we meet Him, not in the communications of sense.” (Phases, p. 152.)

Was ever anything more futile, to say nothing of assuming the whole question, and deciding it with an aujtoV" e[fh—”We know nothing without, everything within?” A Pythagorean bean-worshipper could not be more certain of truth. But let that pass here, as well as the use of the scripture language to a very different purpose from scripture truth.

What is the sense of this contrast of without and within? “words to strike the ear,” or “symbols displayed before senses,” in contrast with thoughts within? If words strike the ear, are they not then in an intelligent human being thoughts within? Has not God, by a most wonderful process, which no man can fathom, made the moving of the air by my lungs and lips the producer of the highest and most wonderful thoughts in another man’s mind? Senses, no doubt, are in exercise; but is that all? Are not minds and thoughts in communication? yea, these thoughts created in me by this communication from another? This is really too futile, too absurd for a reasonable man.

But further: if God does not speak from without but from within, on Mr. N.’s theory, reason and conscience must be God (for otherwise He must speak somehow to reason or conscience); and they must be God in the highest way, for they have God’s thoughts (have they all of them?) without His communicating them. This is just the grossest form of the desolating Pantheism from which Mr. N. pretends to deliver us. For, either God is without, i.e., outside reason and conscience, and communicates to them thoughts which they have not within them; or if they have them within themselves without God’s communicating them, they are God in the highest sense; they think the thoughts of God

themselves without His communicating to them. Good reason had the apostle to say, “No man knoweth the things of God but the Spirit of God.” Now if these things are communicated to reason and conscience by the immediate action of the Spirit of God, that is just inspiration. And when speaking of intellectual subjects, that is from without, though not by the senses and not within. The use of anything which may act on the senses is a mere question of means, by which God, in His wisdom, may see fit to act and produce impressions, man being so framed as to receive them in this way. But without the inward power of the Holy Ghost there would by this be no certain revelation. One must be able to add, “I was in the Spirit— immediately I was in the Spirit.” Reason and conscience are man—a part of his being. Hence, if they cannot have a revelation (i.e., knowledge which it requires a communication from God to possess), that is, unless it be really from without; or, in a word, if it be, as Mr. N. alleges, from within, uncommunicated, man is God. But then what he says is a contradiction; for it is not then a revelation at all. But to talk of the communications of sense, as if ideas were not conveyed, feelings not produced by words spoken without, is a communication not indeed of sense but of nonsense. If God speaks at all, He must speak from without, in any real sense of the word; if not, man is God, and to talk of revelation is absurd. The employment of the senses as a medium is the merest question of means. Immediate communications (i.e., from God) are inspirations.

Faith is within, but not “from within,”134 for it must be in a revealed object, the evidence of which is adequate to convince. For I do not here speak of the effectual

working of grace in life-giving power overcoming the "antagonist will," which produces faith. Faith ought to flow from adequate testimony. The reception of this is a moral question, because the will and passions indispose to receive such a testimony. Further, as to our responsibility, the evidence ought to be adequate and cannot be overpowering, though grace may lead the heart to receive it, the will being otherwise opposed. Hence, "to try people's faith,"135 though we may all understand it, is an incorrect expression; and Mr. N.'s reasoning on it is playing on words. For if faith is there, there is nothing to try. It is the heart that is put to the test. Adequate evidence is offered, and man will not believe. That is the state of his will: the state of his heart is shewn, because, though the thing to be believed be perfectly certain, and adequate evidence be offered, he will not receive it; and when it is said, "overpowering evidence is not given," it merely means such is given as is sufficient if the will be not opposed, and hence detects its opposition if it is. To give what would destroy this test would take away its moral character. Grace does not change this. It acts in disposing the heart; but this is not my subject now. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

Simon Magus And Demas

Mr. Newman then puts the case of two men, J one simple-hearted and thus easily deceived, the other acute and shrewd, being exposed to the juggleries of a Simon Magus. Now I do not answer here, that this, as Mr. N. always does, excludes God's care altogether. But I take the mere human ground, and I say an humble godly mind would, in such a very serious matter, wait till it got

clear light—would seek for God's guidance. Such a mind has principles to guide it, which the shrewd Demas has not. There are tests of holiness, of truth, of respect for the word of God, which enable "a sheep" to discern the voice of the Good Shepherd. It may not be able to say what another's voice is; but till it recognizes the voice of the Good Shepherd, it fears to follow. A stranger will they not follow, because they know not the voice of strangers.

Demas has no such safeguard; he must judge the thing himself, for himself, by his own acuteness. If the pretender is cleverer than he, he is deceived. How often is this the case! Nay, in many cases he is pre-disposed by false motives towards error and deceit; for unholy motives and deceit coalesce. At any rate he has no safeguard but his own acuteness; and he may easily fall. Now the godly, serious, simple-hearted man has. If it is not what his soul knows as truth, or according to it, he does not receive it. No new truth ever upsets old truth, but builds upon it—they mutually confirm each other. How many shrewd ones, like Demas, received false Christs and Barchochebahs! How many simple ones refused the Judases and Theudases, and received Christ! How many clever shrewd men have received the most monstrous imposture ever palmed on infatuated man — that of Mormonism! A simple-hearted believer escapes, because he has got what guards him from the motives which lead a man to receive it. Mr. N.'s estimate of the capacity of shrewdness to escape is not borne out by a just moral estimate of what places a soul in safety, nor by facts.

A miracle is a confirmation of truth in scripture —"confirming the word by signs following." Men are not

called on to beheve the miracle, but to beheve because of the miracle, though not for its sake alone. Now this is a very different thing; because, to be useful as a miracle, it must in general be incontestably self-evident to the persons to whom it is presented. This was the case with all scripture miracles. I may have to judge an apparent miracle136 in certain cases, and shew that it is only apparent. That which has to be proved does not serve as a proof—as a sign given. On the other hand, I do not deny that professed religion may sink below the standard of natural conscience—the case supposed by Mr. N. in Spain.137 When it does, natural conscience will judge it—perhaps be driven into infidelity by it. What then? I admit it freely and fully—have seen it in thousands myself. A strange phenomenon to employ to accredit Mr. N.'s competent human nature, that of pleasure-hunting infidels, or communists and deceiving religionists! I, who believe in the power of sin and Satan, am not at a loss here, though I bow my head in sorrow. How Mr. N.'s "good God," or even his law of progress, has ordered all this, he must explain. But this fact has nothing whatever to do with the concurrent testimony of incontestable miracles wrought on thousands who profited by them and saw them—of doctrines of the simplest truth, and the most elevated knowledge of God, and of a life of perfect holiness, which, if it were imposture, would prove an imposture to be better than all the realities that ever were. This is the case Mr. N. has to deal with. "He healed them all." Would this, repeated over and over again, not prove the existence of power? If not, what would? It was not a case of miracles arranged among favouring people, isolated instances, or pre-arranged individual cases. They were public, when men pleased, where men pleased, and as often as they

pleased. Along with this power, truth, and goodness were there. If deceit can do these two things, it is not deceit at all, but the truest mercy that can be. If juggleries accompany conduct which shocks natural conscience, let natural conscience judge it. It is, as we have said, a sad case if there be but that natural conscience to judge deceit, for it is but negative. It rejects, but possesses nothing. Our case is with positive holy truth which judges conscience, confirmed by signs which none could counterfeit.

Christians Under Constantine

Mr. Newman's historical reasoning only condemns his system. The positive and superior instructions of Christianity were soon, he tells us, corrupted and polluted.138 How then is man able to get at truth for himself? He corrupts, on the contrary, what he has got. As to his account of Judaism,139 the only thing to be said is, that it is as untrue as can possibly be, as every tolerably instructed person knows.

He tells us that "before Constantine Christians were but a small fraction of the empire." (Phases, p. 161.) In the East this certainly was not the case, nor, indeed, in the West, though it had not prevailed as in the East. But how did the christian soldiers conquer the empire, if Christians were only a small fraction? Constantine was able to found his pretensions to empire on the strength of the christian party. No doubt, as Mr. N. says, he conquered the empire for Christianity, but whence came the Christians who conquered it140 if they had made no more progress than Mr. N. states? Mr. N.'s assertions are not to be trusted. "There is nothing in all this to distinguish the outward history of Christianity from that

of Mohammedism." (Phases, p. 162.) Now I ask any one in the smallest degree acquainted with history, if this is true? Christianity, unarmed and persecuted for three hundred years, had increased to such a degree that an ambitious chieftain could take up the profession of it to secure the empire for himself. No one can contest this, whatever judgment he may form of Constantine's sincerity, or Eusebius's account of his vision of the cross. Everyone knows that all the progress of Mohammedism was by arms. In the thirteenth year of Mohammed's setting up for prophet (that is, the very year of the Hegira, or flight from Mecca to Medina), he and his friends entered into a covenant engaging themselves to fight, and paradise was promised to those who were killed. Six years after this his public warfare began by the attack on Mecca. Indeed, he began in a small way at once, and a battle gained in the second year of the Hegira was (according to Sale) the foundation of his greatness. A person who can say that the first three hundred years of Christianity are not different from this does not deserve to be listened to. He who begins to consider its means of progress only three hundred years after it was established is not much better entitled to attention.

Prophecy

Prophecy, St. John's Gospel, tongues, and St. Paul's conversion, are next considered as to the evidence afforded by them —for this is our subject now.

It is well, as to prophecy, to notice a great principle called in question by Mr. N.—what he calls "double interpretation." "No one dreams of a 'second sense,'" he tells us, "until the primary sense prove false." Now I

meet this assertion by saying, that there cannot be a doubt that from the fall of Adam there was one grand subject of promise and prophecy, of hope and expectation—the seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head—the seed of Abraham—the seed of David. To say that this was not produced in the universal mind of Israel, at all times with which we are acquainted (and with no nation are we acquainted so long, or so well at this early date), would be to deny the most certain fact, sustained by the most incontrovertible evidence. It is much more certain than that Mr. N. is author of "Phases of Faith," and was once a Fellow of Balliol. The testimony of Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius concur, it is well known, as stating that through all the East a notion prevailed, that, at the time Christ arose, He should arise who would possess the empire of the world. In a word, so strong was the testimony and the expectation, that all over the East it had reached the Gentiles, and was well enough known in the West to be recorded by the two Gentile historians of those times. All prophecy must (if God's promise was-such and true) have centred here; and so, in fact, it does—sometimes clearer—sometimes more obscure—sometimes given as a relief and encouragement to oppressed saints—sometimes breaking through the dark cloud of judgment, like the sun in a stormy day; but, from Genesis 3 to the last chapter of Malachi, beginning, middle, and ending, every ray of light converged to this point, that Messiah was to come. This is the first enduring sense, the key and object of all prophecy. All the rest is subordinate to, and conduces to this.

I have no doubt myself that this leads us to the sense of "private interpretation" in 2 Peter 1:20. We have not

God’s mind in it unless we take His scope in the whole. No prophecy of scripture is ijdiva" dialuvsew", of its own interpretation. It must have its meaning as part of a great whole. Now, no doubt, partial temporal judgments were announced, which were parts of this great whole; and the prophetic word passed on to the grand summing up at the close, when all the parties to the wondrous drama that is enacting will meet in its eventful denouement on the stage of this world. In this way only is there a double sense. That partial displays (of the spirit of that which is to be judged in its full manifestation) may be dealt with as anticipative of the great final event, is an unquestionable scriptural principle. “Ye have heard,” says St. John, “that antichrist shall come, and even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time.” Here the manifestation of the same spirit is taken as indicating the epoch, and accompanied by the clearest testimony that it is not the fulfilment. I believe that various passages, applied by some to previous events, are spoken of final ones: others, completely fulfilled in previous ones, have been applied to ultimate ones.

Prophecy is much simpler, in general, than is supposed. But that characteristic evil may be partially, as well as fully developed, is undoubted; and as prophecies have generally a moral character, and those in whom the character is judged, a local habitation and a name, the principle of application to characteristic things or events, while fulfilment is to be sought at another time, is perfectly sound and easily intelligible. There has been mischievous spiritualizing. But no one can doubt that Jerusalem, Babylon, and even Egypt, embody certain

great principles and systems, which may be variously developed, and judged according to this development.

Now, this is not a question of a “second sense”; it is a sound and enlarged view of what is undeniable in principle, and unquestionably true in its application to scripture. What the believer has to do is to ascertain the principle involved, and the facts referred to in connection with it. The actual accomplishment of the prophecy is to be sought according to the plain testimony of the passage.

And here I would add a remark or two. Nothing can be simpler or more natural than that some great characterizing principle should be embodied in some system, and this have its centre in some place or people where it finds its development and full maturity, as we speak of Rome being this and doing that, meaning the corporate system of papal power. Now scriptural statements, as to these systems and places, are most useful, as guiding the mind in its judgment of the principles embodied. Prophecies declare the ultimate judgment of God on these systems, shewing out the principles judged therein. When Christians apply these prophecies to partial developments of the principles, it is not morally false, although as an interpretation it is inadequate, and may be mistaken as to the letter. But the soul is guided in the judgment of the real principles by the actual judgment of it at the end. It does morally what God will do in power; and while there may be mistakes in interpretation, there is moral rectitude of judgment. The ultimate judgment of God is the application of power to the judgment and removal of the whole system, which is justly judged meanwhile morally in all its partial manifestations. Of course it is important,

in interpretation, to keep to what is really and fully meant; without this, even our moral judgment will not be correctly formed.

The addresses to the seven churches call for even individual application and use of the judgment pronounced on what was locally verified in certain places, as to which the Lord declared His mind, and the results which would follow from the neglect of it.

Acts 13:33-35

I may now turn to some particular assertions. “The three prophecies quoted (Acts 13:33-35) in proof of the resurrection of Jesus are simply puerile, and deserve no reply.” (Phases, p. 169.) I doubt the application of Acts 13:33 to the resurrection. Raising up Jesus is in the same sense as raising up a deliverer. Why “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hades, nor suffer thy Holy One to see corruption” does not mean resurrection, I do not know. Mr. N. should shew us the puerility of it. In reading the psalm (the application of which to Messiah is, in my judgment, incontestable) we have the plainest evidence that it is the resurrection. What should make flesh rest in hope, and lead to the presence of Him in whom is fulness of joy, “and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore,” if it be not the resurrection? The words themselves also depict it, and that it should take place without His seeing corruption, in the clearest way. A man’s soul not resting in hades, and his body not seeing corruption, can only be by a speedy resurrection. I am aware of the difficulties raised as to Shachath (tjv), one of the words here used, but I see nothing in it to shake the certainty of the Septuagint, Vulgate, English, and other translations (maintained by the soundest Hebrew

authorities). The context makes the meaning certain, and the whole psalm treats of the humiliation of Jesus in the most beautiful manner possible. The beginning of it is cited by Paul, as containing, among many other psalms, the great leading principle of this humiliation. Though a divine Person, He took upon Him the form of a servant. Messiah takes a place in which He calls Jehovah His Lord, and declares all His delight to be in the godly remnant of Israel.

Isaiah 55, 50, 53; Psalm 22 1 Zechariah 12, 13

I turn next to the quotation from Isaiah 55, and its application to the resurrection of Christ. This also is objected to in the supercilious language above quoted. If the sense and meaning of a prophecy is to have any influence on the interpretation of it, we are led here at once to the subject of which the apostle speaks. The chapter is a summons, in the fullest largeness of grace, addressed first to the Jews, but so as to open it out to all by the terms of the invitation “every one that thirsteth”—to all who sought after righteousness from God. Thus in principle, though not in immediate address, it lets in the Gentiles, so that, according to the whole tenor of scripture, we must look for Messiah, and for a change in the relationship of God with Israel. Still the address is to Israel. Thus it is the apostle Paul constantly draws out this class of passages, shewing the address to the Jew first, and yet a principle contained which let in the Gentile if he had faith and spiritual need. This is further developed in the following verses. Verses 4 and 5 proclaim some remarkable personage, who is not named, but who is supposed to be known by the previous testimonies of God, who is to be a witness and

a leader of the nations—translated people, in English, but which is in the plural le-ummim (<ymwal)—and then the call and influx of the nations through his means is announced. But then in verse 3 this includes an everlasting covenant to be made, particularly with the people of God (the Jews), that is, the assured mercies of David. These mercies of David are incontestably the establishment of permanent blessing in the promised seed of David, in whose time the righteous should flourish (in a word, in Messiah, the Christ). Hence the existence of Messiah in the power of an endless life is most certainly announced here. Nor is this a new thought. The Jews say, “We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?” Yet, if it were Messiah (as a Jew under the law), known, as the apostle calls it, “after the flesh,” the Gentiles could not have thus been let in in common with the Jews. Indeed, we who know the need of redemption can say “the corn of wheat” would have abode alone. Thus we get elements in the passage which shew that, for their accomplishment, Christ must have been raised. An everlasting covenant in the accomplishment of the sure mercies of David, and Gentiles called, supposed (when duly weighed) a closing of the strict Jewish system, and yet a Messiah who was to abide for ever—a difficulty felt by the Jews in the question above referred to when our Lord alludes to His rejection. Now Christ was rejected and put to death. Hence the apostle introduces to the Jews (objects of this everlasting covenant and holding themselves to be such) the resurrection, as alone accomplishing, or securing the accomplishment of, the sure and abiding mercies of David.

Nothing could more largely and perfectly bring together all the elements of dispensational truth, and give the key and keystone of the manner of their accomplishment. It is nothing but the miserable narrowness of mind of those who can see nothing of God's ways out of their own petty circle of ideas, which could make the objections which German sceptics, and their imitators, do. They comment on a book of which they know nothing, the object and import of which they have not even studied—an immense scope of connected thought and system, reaching from Genesis to the melting away of time into eternity—all its parts hanging together, and developing every form of relationship between God and man, historically pursued, yet morally and individually realized—in which each part fits into the other, like the pieces of a dissected map, proving the perfectness and completeness of the whole—all this system, I say, making a complete whole, in absolute unity, yet written (for written it was, as the best testimony proves) at long intervals, over a space of some fifteen hundred years, pursued through every various condition in which man can be placed, of ignorance, darkness, and light, with principles brought out into intended contrast, as the law and the gospel, yet never losing its perfect and absolute unity or the relationship of its parts—all this is passed over by these sceptics. They are not conscious of the existence of it. They have about as much knowledge of the Bible as a babe who took the dissected map and would put together two parts from the antipodes, because they were coloured red and would look pretty.

That Mr. N. (who does not believe it himself, and evidently did not at the period of his history) should have found difficulty in pointing out the sufferings of

Christ in the Old Testament, is very natural. Had he as much faith as a Jew in the Bible, he would have had none. Let the reader turn to Isaiah 50, 53; Psalm 22; Zechariah 12,13, and indeed a crowd of other passages, which, having cited these, it is needless to enumerate, and he will be at no loss to find a suffering Messiah. Besides, a crowd of sacrifices (for, as I said, all the parts of scripture unite in one whole) shewing atonement for sin, which certainly the blood of bulls and goats could not effectuate, pointing to a suffering Messiah; the portion of Joseph and David (which, though not direct proofs, all confirm by analogies which shew the mind of God in quite as strong a way when we have the facts and doctrines as direct proofs); the universal position of the saints; the expression of sentiment provided in the Psalms for those who were associated with Messiah, and for Himself, and so used in many instances by Him—all, as does the whole tenor of the Old Testament, point to the sufferings of Him who was to be “exalted and extolled, and very high,” but had “his visage so marred more than any man, and his countenance more than the sons of men.” I am not aware what Isaiah 53 has to do with a double sense.141 I know that the Rabbis have sought to apply it to Israel, to avoid its application to Christ; but this is a simple sense, and, to any one who reads the chapter, simply absurd. To make of “He” in the phrase, “He was wounded for our” &c. to be a personification of “our,” both meaning Israel, and so on, is an effort worthy of the natural opposition of a Jew in raising an objection, and of a German sceptic to be stopped by.

Daniel 9

As to Daniel 9142 some terms may fairly be contested in the English translation. The only just change, however, in the words which affect this point, confirms their application to the death of Christ. “Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself,” goes, I apprehend, beyond the force of the words of the Holy Ghost. It should be “Messiah shall be cut off, and shall have nothing” —that is, shall then possess nothing of the kingdom and glory which belongs to Him in Israel. For the prophecy relates to Israel, and the accomplishment of prophecy as to that people, and the taking away their iniquity and re-establishing them in peace. Consequently, after this, the wars and troubles which are to come on till that which is determined be poured out are announced. Daniel never goes on to the time of peace, but only to the putting an end to evil.

De Wette’s translation is “An anointed one shall be snatched away, and no one is there [or existing] who belongs to him.” Now wl /ya is simply “there is nothing to him.” De Wette’s is a paraphrase which, while giving the sense, fixes it to a person, “no one,” and adds “there” (or existing). With this difference, it gives the sense so as to afford us the clear certainty of the grand meaning of the passage. His translation (it is a learned and rationalist one) is, wird ein Gesalbter weggerafft, und keiner ist vorhanden der ihm angehört. The Hebrew is yekarith Mashiach (jyvmtdby), “Messiah shall be cut off,” as simply as possible; Messiah, as all know, means anointed; ve-aen lo (wl /ya/) “and there is nothing to him,” i.e., He has nothing. Now take this plain and simple passage in the best German renderings, and what has “evaporated?” Something perhaps of an effort to

undo the application to Messiah; only that the text was so plain and strong that the Anointed One's cutting off is impossible to be got rid of; and we have the fact of bis having nothing as the consequence—His labouring in vain, as He says (Isa. 49), with regard to His then taking the kingdom and glory in Israel. That He will have it, Isaiah 53 and Daniel 7 tell us plainly. We know (as Daniel 9 teaches us) that He was cut off and that He got nothing. No one can deny that De Wette's is a paraphrase, and that "ve-aen lo" means "and had nothing." Interpreters have confined the passage to Christ's death, and its application to the Church now; whereas I have not the least doubt (whatever the present efficacy of His blood) that the passage applies to Israel, their establishment, their treatment of Messiah, and their consequent sorrows, which we have before our eyes, till God takes them up again in grace. But the cutting off of Messiah is as plain as words can make it. The word employed is that always used for "that soul shall be cut off from his people," or from Israel—just what happened to Messiah. De Wette elsewhere always employs another word for the Hebrew one than that which he has used here.

I may just add, that Messiah (translated an anointed one by De Wette here) is not used with an article in Hebrew, as far as I can find; and, when used without a possessive pronoun, is elsewhere always translated by De Wette with the article (der Gesalbter, the anointed). Here, as it must be applied to Messiah if so translated, he puts ein Gesalbter, an anointed.

In fine, the passage of Daniel is as clear as language can make it of the cutting off of Messiah.

Matthew 24:32 To 25:30; And Daniel 12

I turn to Matthew's prophecy chapter 24.143 The Lord gives in this chapter down to the end of verse 31, the position of the testimony of His disciples, and in general of the elect remnant in Israel; their position in the exercise of their testimony down to the end of verse 14; from verses 15-28, the position of the faithful remnant during the tribulation, when testimony was useless, and they were to flee; and then, from verses 29-31, the coming of the Lord and the gathering of the scattered elect of Israel from the four winds. I beg the reader to mark, I am stating the contents of the passage, and not interpreting them. That this applies to Jews is on the face of the passage from the reference to Jerusalem, and Daniel, the holy place, the sabbath, &c.

From Matthew 24:32 to 25:30 the Lord gives a practical comment on this solemn subject, and in these parables instructs the disciples as to their just position as Christians during His absence; verses 31 to the end take up the consequence to the Gentiles of His coming to judge the earth. Thus we have, in connection with the Lord's going away, what concerned the Jewish people, christian responsibility, and the judgment of the Gentiles in connection with their responsibility as to receiving the messengers of the kingdom, Christ's disciples (His brethren, as He calls them here), when sent to them.

Daniel 12

To return to the prophecy which regards the Jews, the testimony of the disciples was to be carried on in the midst of difficulties and reach out to all the world for a witness to all nations, and then the end should come. This was the general history of their position. Whatever

we may gather of dates from comparison of other passages, which is not my business here, it reached down from the time of Christ to the end of the age. Remark here that the end of the age is not only not the end of the world, but it is not the age of Christianity, but the end of the age of the temple standing under the law till Messiah came. This was the object of the question. Of this, whatever light may be given by the Lord, there can be no question if we read the passage. But in verse 15 a specific definite time is marked out by a particular event—the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet. This leads us at once, and in a positive manner, to the subject of which the Lord speaks. His own words, moreover, establish in the most complete and evident manner, that He is speaking of Jerusalem and Judea. Of this there can be no question.

Now Daniel (chap. 12, where the abomination of desolation is spoken of) speaks of twelve hundred and sixty days and twelve hundred and ninety days, at the end of which the Lord would interfere in favour of Israel, dating them from that to which the Lord here referred. Let the reader pay attention to this. Daniel declares that from the time the abomination is set up, there shall be twelve hundred and ninety days, and the blessing in thirteen hundred and thirty. Further, he connects this—indeed it is the grand subject of the last three chapters of his prophecies—with the closing history of Israel. He speaks of a king who will prosper till the indignation be accomplished at the time of the end.

It is indeed the grand topic of the book, and must have been: for the ultimate fate of Israel would have been the thought which governed the prophetic writing, whether it was God’s love to Israel, or Daniel’s which was in

exercise; and it was undoubtedly both. Hence we have the last beast destroyed in chapter 7; the image ground to powder in chapter 2, and the kingdom of blessing set up and filling the world. So, in the details in chapter 8, the prophet is shewn what is to happen in the last end of the indignation, when the king of fierce countenance is to stand up against the Prince of princes, and be broken without hand. He gives the series of Gentile monarchies from the first of them, which was set up in his days, and set aside the throne of God at Jerusalem, established in the family of David, to which all the promises were attached; and he pursues these Gentile monarchies in two symbolical prophecies, which gives the whole series (chapters 2 and 7) on to the end, and the setting up of the kingdom of the Son of man.

Nothing can be clearer than what the prophecy thus professes to do. Objections to the execution of it will be considered hereafter, when we meet with them. This is not the point now. Then, in some particular prophecies, the grand crisis which settles the fate of Israel is discoursed of in connection with particular nations and events (besides facts then happening), which realized and at the same time foreshadowed the principles which would characterize the apostate Gentiles, who were the possessors of power, and the adversaries of Israel (for all in Daniel relates to Israel). Now the particular prophecies which relate to the ultimate fate of Israel, though they may be linked on to those among the beasts which had their power established in the countries in which Palestine is situated, yet necessarily speak of and have for their object what closes the scene. That close is yet future, as is seen, not only by the plain testimony of scripture, but in the fact that we have the Jews yet as a

nation with their ultimate fate unsettled. This is a living fact around us.

That Daniel does go on to the end is unquestionable, whatever ideas we may have of the time he expected it to happen. We have alluded to the proofs, which indeed lie on the surface of his writings. His book closes with a promise that he shall stand in his lot at the end of the days—a promise which leaves no obscurity as to the period which he was looking for and referring to in his prophecy, be he right or wrong. The difficulty of interpretation arises precisely from the circumstance we have mentioned—i.e., that Daniel links (chapters 8 and 9) the state of things at the end with the Grecian monarchy which possessed the East, where all was certainly to happen, for that was where Canaan was situated; but he as certainly teaches that another monarchy was to arise which would take a great, and even principal, share in these events. When we set about to interpret the prophecy, the difficulty is to allot its proper share to each of these powers. His introduction of the one certainly does not exclude the other; and many other prophecies declare that all the heathen shall come up against, or be in possession of, Jerusalem in the latter day. We have now, however, to do with the particular prophecy of chapter 12.

In the beginning of that chapter Daniel speaks, just as the Lord does, of the time of trouble such as never was; when Michael shall stand up for the Jews. So that we have the grand final desperate trouble of Daniel's people; and yet at a time when the power of God interferes to deliver them. Just as Jeremiah also represents it: "Alas, for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall

be delivered out of it. For. it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: but they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up to them." This last prophet declares, moreover, that it shall embrace the whole nation of Israel, as well as Judah in a very particular manner; and that it shall be by a new covenant and not by the old; and that, as sure as the heavens stood, Israel should be a special nation, and Jerusalem be restored. All this, observe, refers to God's government of the earth and the nations. The heavenly blessing of the Church in no way meets it.

That is, we have in Matthew, in Daniel, in Jeremiah, a time of unparalleled trouble at the close of Judah's history; and Judah delivered out of it, and full blessing brought in (the Lord declaring in Matthew that He referred to what Daniel spoke of; and all in their prophecies, not merely in this, but in other prophecies, professedly referring to this closing scene, declaring that it would be brought to an issue by the raising up of the seed of promise in David's family by the coming of the Son of man, by God's interference in favour of His people, whom He never would give up). With this all prophecy, from Moses downwards, coincides; and in many all the details are entered into. It is the grand subject, though many events leading to it, or illustrative of the principles and motives of God's government which is to be fully displayed in it, are noticed for the instruction of the people in them, and as samples of God's ways.

Now what Daniel spoke of in chapter 7, as arriving at this epoch of divine judgment, when the saints would have the kingdom (namely, that the Son of man would come in glory), the Lord also expressly declares; referring, in a positive and most remarkable manner, to another prophecy of Daniel, relating to the same epoch, and unfolding the special tribulation of which He spoke, and His coming in glory, which would be consequent on it. Every statement of scripture, in various parts of it, and by different prophets, concurs in this, and concurs in placing these events in the grand closing scene of God's government of the earth, viewed as the scene of man's national responsibility, Israel being the centre, in God's view of it (see Deut. 32:8), of all this government. The Lord (or Matthew, if Mr. N. pleases), so far from confounding anything, gives warnings for the conduct of the disciples in their testimony in the midst of Israel, while that testimony should be carried on there; adding that the testimony of the kingdom should go out to all nations, and that then (not before) the end of the age (not of the world, as every scholar knows) should come. Then, with verse 14, He closes His general history and directions. This is beyond controversy; because the question of the disciples was as to the end of the age; and He says (ver. 14), "Then shall the end come." Then He takes up a very particular point, which He definitely connects with Daniel's prophecy of what was to happen at this "end of the age" (that is, that at that epoch, or twelve hundred and sixty days before the end, it would not be a time of testimony, but that they were to see). The sign would be an idol set up in the holy place, which idol was to cause the desolation of Jerusalem. Now this has never yet taken place at all. Titus did destroy Jerusalem, but no idol was set up in the holy place,

which caused the desolation. Michael, the prince, did not stand up for Daniel's people—and to this the New Testament writer refers; nor was any deliverance of Jacob wrought, nor did Daniel stand in his lot, nor did the sign of the Son of man appear, nor did thirteen-hundred-and-thirty days bring any blessing. That is, to the believer there certainly was not the accomplishment of the prophecy. But what is the conclusion we must draw? No person writing, as Mr. N. supposes, after the event, would have written an account, of which the contradiction and falseness was in the hands of all, and of public notoriety. He could not pretend that the Son of man had appeared, and that the elect Jews were gathered—that the blessing of Daniel was arrived. If he lived after the event he might have given a flaming description of Titus's siege, which history would have furnished him with; but at this point it becomes (to use Mr. N.'s phrase) "clearly and hopelessly false" in Mr. N.'s application of it. That is, it certainly was not written after the event. No man would write, in forging a prophecy, what was already clearly and hopelessly false at the time he wrote it. For, as Mr. N. justly insists (by putting it in italics), it is stated that "immediately after that tribulation," &c. So that nothing but the utter nonsense of infidel credulous invention could have explained Matthew 24 as Mr. N. does. That infidels should be ignorant of the abundant confirmation given in the prophets of the real force of the passage, was only to be expected. They have never really examined the contents of the book. They are not capable, by their position, of getting beyond literary speculations. Perhaps we must also expect from them that they should seek to persuade us that a rational account of the passage is, that the writer composed, to deceive them,

an account of what was happening among themselves, which was notoriously false at the time he wrote it, to gain the credit of a true prophet for his master!

It may be asked by some, if I give no place here to the destruction of Jerusalem. I think it had a very important one. It closed altogether for the moment the application of the passage we are considering, and of all such, to the testimony in the midst of Israel, to which it referred. God's ways were then to be looked for solely in the Church, whose portion is in heavenly places; and hence (though Providence ever governs all things) not the proper occasion of the display of God's government of the earth. It was, as Paul says to the Ephesians, the proof to principalities and powers in heavenly places, that the wisdom of God was "polupoivcilo"" very various in its character.

This interruption, as regards God's ways on the earth, is developed in Luke, who looks at all these dispensational questions in a Gentile point of view, when he says, Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled—exactly the general instruction we have found in Daniel. Jerusalem would be set aside, and all God's dealings consequently with it, till the period allotted in the decrees of God, for the Gentile supremacy was closed. Then the signs and judgments should take place. So Paul, in Romans 11, "blindness in part" happened unto Israel till the "fulness of the Gentiles be come in"—till, during this time of dealing specially with Gentiles (though every Jew is equally received) all that have ears to hear were brought into God's fold. And then God would begin again with His earthly people in exercise, judgment, and deliverance, and so accomplish all His promises (on earth) in a

restored people. The broken-off branches would be grafted in again into their own olive-tree, the fruit-bearing tree of promise springing from Abraham—of course, in the highest sense from God Himself.

Mr. N. may seek, perhaps, to escape from the absurdity of supposing that a forger would invent a prophecy, proved (to be false) by well-known public events, though he does not dare to say it very clearly,144 by supposing that though it be said "immediately after the tribulation," yet that the author would have time between the tribulation and the "immediately after" to compose and publish his book, that thus he could give a history up to that, and to be mistaken as to what followed. Now, to say nothing of the universal testimony to the contrary (because suppositions are always more attractive to an infidel than history, because they are the fruit of one's own mind, which is a great point with them), the supposition is of this probable character, that a forger would commit himself to a very full and clear statement of what was immediately to occur; and thus determine his book to be a forgery as soon as it should be read! And this is only a trifling part of the difficulty; for we must also suppose that the book was received and read as true, without its being found out that it was falsified by facts—that such a thing as the coming of the great day of judgment should be announced and not arrive, and nobody suspect that the announcement of it was false. That is, he leaves us with the choice of two cases: either that he forged a prophecy, false upon the face of it, and publicly known to be so, in respect of such an event as the non-arrival of Christ for the grand judgment; or, that the pretended prophecy, published "very soon after," preceded what was to happen

“immediately after,” and committed itself to what would immediately prove it false in the most public way, and yet that thousands, who, by their existence, proved it was false, and knew that the great day of judgment had not arrived, immediately after believed it to be true all the same.

And mark this. All testimony is directly contrary to the date necessary to Mr. N.’s system. He has nothing for it but its own probability. Yes, I am wrong there: there is his assertion, and yet scarcely that—it is insinuated. To insert the publication of the gospel between the destruction of Jerusalem and “immediately after,” would have suggested the enquiry for some proof— a thing not to be had. Hence, where it suited him, there “it is unreasonable to doubt that the detailed annunciations of Matthew 24 were first composed very soon after the war of Titus” (Phases, p. 170), after the siege. When a dream is in question— it is written by an unknown person seventy or eighty years after the nativity. The former date would be either the year of the siege, according to the vulgar era, or (by the correction of chronology, generally received) four, or according to others, five years before it; but then seventy or eighty left margin for that, if the four years’ error was known by the reader; and a loose period of five or six possible years after left it possibly just at the critical moment, without too much danger of interfering with “immediately after.” It is very nicely arranged.

One point remains—the expression “this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.” Now the whole state of things did, for the time, close some forty years after; and Israel no longer existed as the place of testimony. Still I have no doubt that the word has

another force than this. “Generation” is habitually used in scripture otherwise than for the period of human activity, or from the birth of a son to the birth of his son —the length of a man’s active life; and it is peculiarly used in reference to Israel in the other sense, which the following quotations present—“the generation of the wicked shall never see light”—“a crooked and perverse nation [the word is the same] among whom ye shine”—“this is the generation of them that seek him.” So, many others. That is, it is a class of persons having a given character, as well as those who have their common period of life together. If the reader turn to Deuteronomy 32, he will find, in verses 5 and 20, the word used in this sense in immediate reference to Israel during its protracted rejection up to the end. “They are a perverse and crooked generation.” “And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be; for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.” And then Moses speaks of the bringing in of the Gentiles, in a passage which Paul quotes, in reference to the very time we are treating of: the Lord declaring that that generation should not pass —a declaration of which we see the accomplishment to this day. God has hid His face from them to see what their end shall be; yet they have not passed away. There they are till every jot and tittle of Christ’s word be accomplished.

The objections, then, to what Matthew says are without foundation; the prophetic declarations in chapter 24 are distinctly referred to Daniel (the application of which leaves no doubt as to the sense and application of Matthew), and clearly establish its reference to the end of the age, of which indeed the Lord was speaking. On

the other hand, the suppositions advanced to prove it forged are the most absurdly improbable that can possibly be, besides being contrary to all historical evidence.

The Apocalypse

We have already seen the value of Mr. N.'s objections to the prophecies in the Apocalypse, to which he again briefly refers without adding any new matter. That not "one of these can be interpreted certainly of any [past] human affairs" may be granted without the least detriment to the book; for (while I doubt not that some have had accomplishment by systems, the principle of which judged in the book was partially developed, and that certain objects of the prophecy have appeared—though not full grown—on the scene) I myself believe that its proper accomplishment has not yet arrived. I think the language of the Apocalypse proves it is not, because we have what the prophet had seen— the things that are—and the things after them. It is to my mind certain, that "the things that are" are not yet passed; and hence the prophetic part, beginning chapter 4, has not yet begun to be accomplished, though many things symbolized in it exist more or less.

Coming Of The Lord

As regards the coming of the Lord, the purpose of God is evidently to make saints always wait for it as a present expectation; and this is shewn in never telling them the moment. Nothing can be more explicit than scripture on this head. St. Paul then made no mistake in expecting "the speedy return of Christ from heaven."145 He waited for God's Son from heaven and taught others to

wait for it continually. He never prophetically announced the time. In each he was perfectly guided by the Spirit of God. That this was the Lord's mind as presented in scripture, the following passages shew: But "let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that… they may open unto him immediately… And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants… Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." So again, "If that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite… the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him… and shall appoint him his portion with the hypocrites." Yet in the very same discourse, directly after, the Lord says, "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made," &c. That is, if the heart counted on delay, it betrayed its wickedness; yet the Bridegroom would delay, so trying the faith of His own. Yet, adds Peter, "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish… the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation." That is, the delay is not slackness in His promise to us, but God's patience with men prolonging the time of grace and salvation. But the same apostle warns us that there would be scoffers, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" The apostle, then, taught of the Holy Ghost, acted in the spirit of Christ's direction to His disciples in holding and nourishing the lively, and joyful, sanctifying, yea, energizing constant hope of His coming, and yet never predicted the time, which He had put in His own

power who had said “Sit on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool.”

Mr. N., pressed by proofs, seeks to avoid the effect or what he does not dare deny, while shewing his unwillingness to admit it, “That God has been pleased to reveal something of coming history to certain eminent men of Hebrew antiquity,” adding, “That is all.”146 Now I call this profoundly immoral, and an absurd state to be in. Because, to say of divine communications to man, and in mercy, “That is all!” is, in the worst sense, immoral. And it is absurd; because, to suppose that God should have revealed something about Moab, and Ishmael, and Tyre, and Edom, to some eminent men of the Hebrew monarchy, and nothing at all else, is unreasonable. To have given some local facts about some petty nations, and to have concealed everything about all the temporal and eternal interests of men, His own government and salvation, is an absurd supposition.

But, further, these eminent men to whom God has been pleased to give this, have said a great deal more on more important subjects, and give the particular revelations spoken of as minor parts of a vast scheme of government, ending with Messianic glory, with the same evidence of truth—the same power of testimony. As to the former, according to Mr. N., they are the confidants of God, and as to the rest impostors and deceivers; yet such as God chose as eminent men, to make them the special confidants of these particular revelations: and all this is logic and philosophy! But this is not our subject now. Mr. N. “receives this conclusion”—i.e., of their inspiration on these points—”with an otiose faith.” But his logic has failed him here; because then, at any rate, second-hand faith is not vain. Mr. N. may be indifferent,

“otiose;” but that is not the point. Here is faith at second-hand—real and convincing to those concerned—of vast importance to sustain their hearts, to encourage them to trust in God, and to avoid the powerful current of all which was set in, through the assurance of divine interference in favour of the faithful, and the powerlessness of human resources; in a word, through the assurance that God governed and was to be trusted. This was the effect of faith, secondhand faith (i.e., the truly excellent kind of faith subjectively). For while, for the purpose of testimony to others, eye-witness was the just means employed; yet, eyen as to the eye-witnesses, it was the spiritual sense of the value of these things that was real, moralizing, efficacious faith before God. Even as to Israel, they happened to them for figures, and are “written for our admonition on whom the ends of the world are come.” That is, the admission of this one paragraph totally sets aside the whole chapter. It is not true; it is totally untrue (evidently untrue for one who has examined scripture) that these prophecies have nothing to do with Christianity.147 They are part of one vast scheme. They are not Christianity of course. We have the true light; but the first fresh dawn of mercy, and God’s patient ways with ignorant man—always His ways—have not lost their interest for those who can see clearer.

Daniel, And Desolation To The Time Of The End

We now come to the Book of Daniel in general.148 The reader will remember the positive and direct proofs, from different parts of the book, of the fact that Daniel distinctly refers to God’s final dealing with the Jews. He

must do so, if shewing God's ways as to them in government. For what else should definitely display these? All the prophets who so take them up do so; indeed, all do when rightly understood. Daniel positively declares it. And remark here, that we have positive historical and ocular testimony that he who does this must (whatever the final result be with this people) leave an immense gap unfilled up, because they have been set aside as a people for a long period. Hence, again, Daniel gives us specifically the "times of the Gentiles," whether it be the apostate principles on which they would govern,149 or general historical views on to the end;150 or particular prophecies connected definitely with the end, which was the grand epoch in view, as the Spirit declares to the prophet. These particular prophecies (i.e., chap. 8:10-12, the last three chapters being one prophecy) refer to the Eastern or Grecian kingdom; for there the final scene was to be unfolded. Not that the Western power would not come in —that was the grand general power at the close; but another local one was also to be depicted.

We may now examine chapter 11, to which Mr. N. objects. Here we shall find exactly what I stated—a particular prophecy, as to the Eastern or Grecian power, taken up from its commencement and pursued quite to the end. The king of the north comes to his end, and none helps him; and Michael stands up at the same time, in the time of trouble which has no parallel—of which the Lord speaks in Matthew. Further, in chapter 10, the messenger of God declares, "Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for [many] days"; and in chapter 12:4, "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words

and seal the book, even to the time of the end." So also in chapter 11:40—exactly the prophecy in question: "And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him," &c.—that is, at the king who does according to his will. So that we have in the writer's mind details down to Amiochus Epiphanes, as I agree; and afterwards, right or wrong, other details as to what is to happen at the end in the latter days—those days in which Michael was to stand up; and at the close of thirteen hundred and thirty days blessing comes in, and Daniel stands in his lot. But this, it will be said, leaves a great gap. No doubt. To be exact, it must do so, because, as we know, the Jews have been set aside for centuries.

But let us see with greater exactness, how and where the gap comes in, and is introduced. The prophet does, as alleged, pursue the history down to one who, I doubt not, is Antiochus Epiphanes—that is, the last king of any importance of Grecian Syria, and the great persecutor of Israel, who profaned the temple, and destroyed, or at least sought to destroy, all the books of the law, and prohibited the Jewish worship. The ships from Chittim are then introduced upon the scene, that is, the Romans —the power under whom the whole Jewish system was to remain in abeyance. But another important element was still more in the mind of the Spirit here (that is, the alliance of the local Gentile power with the apostates of the Jews). This, and the profanation of the temple, were to be, and will yet be, the special characteristics of the last days. A full picture151 of this state of things is drawn so far as the elements go which characterize it (that is, the intervention of the Western Roman power, apostasy among the Jews, profanation of the temple, and interruption of Jewish worship, and of all service

rendered to the true God). This will be the final state of the Jews, as presented in scripture, till delivered by the coming of the Lord. Hence the elements and vivid picture of it in these comparatively early days is given to us.

But there will be a remnant active and energetic then, but having also another general character, instructors of the people of the Jews in the truth. Still the people shall fall under their enemies [many] days. God shall permit even those who, having been faithful to God, might have hoped to escape, to be cut off also by their enemies: but it is for purifying and making white even to the time of the end. That is, we have just the gap onward from the introduction of the Romans at the close of the Syro-Grecian kingdom, and that up to the very end.

We have not here the Roman destruction of the Jewish polity in detail: that had been given at the end of chapter 9, and could not be the anticipative picture of the latter days, because the Jewish affairs are to take the form they had in Antiochus Epiphanes' time, that of the apostasy of the Jews, and their being linked up with the heathen. This was in no way the case in the time of Titus. The unclean spirit of idolatry was not entered in with seven others more wicked than himself, so as to make their last state worse than the first. They were empty, and swept, and garnished. They stumbled on the stumbling stone and were broken: in the end it will fall on them.

But we have the general desolation to the time of the end. Then, when that has been shewn, we get a king doing according to his will, setting up idolatry, rejecting the God of his fathers, which Antiochus never did,

disregarding all Jewish hopes as something which is supposed to belong to him, exalting himself above every god, and distributing the land among his chiefs. The king of the south pushes at him at the time of the end (that is, he who shall be in Ptolemy's geographical place); and the king of the north comes against him (that is, he who shall have Antiochus's geographical place); so that the wilful king cannot be Antiochus Epiphanes. Yet it is a full and minute prophecy of what is to be at the time of the end, when the great gap is over; and it goes on to state the course of the king of the north, and his ruin; and in chapter 12 the trouble that accompanies this period, the duration of the trouble, and the deliverance of Israel —the contrast of the wicked and the wise; all of which would come out at the time of the end, not before; when Daniel also, as we have seen, would have his share in the blessing in the end of the days.

This part it is which the Lord also quotes as to be fulfilled at the end of the age. There is, then, as much particularity as to the events at the end as there is to those previous to, and during, the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. With the speculations of interpreters in applying it I have nothing to do, with Mr. N.'s objections I have; and they, as to the facts of the chapter, are totally groundless. As to the enduring days of desolation and captivity, we are witnesses of its truth, that is, of the truth of the very part where Mr. N. says it breaks down. The fulfilment of all the rest cannot yet be proved, because it is at the time of the end, which we all know is not yet come. No one can say it becomes false. The triumphs of the Maccabees, and the long period of

desolation and captivity, are true; and that is what is stated.

As to chapter 7, Mr. N. informs us that “the four monarchies in chapters 2 and 7 are the Babylonian, the Median, the Persian, the Macedonian. Interpreters, however, blend the Medes and Persians into one, and then pretend that the Roman empire is still in existence.” “Chapter 7 also is confuted by the event; for the great day of judgment has not followed upon the fourth monarchy.” (Phases, p. 171.) There is nothing like being bold enough: somebody will believe it, or at least, somebody will doubt; and nothing will be certain. “Interpreters, however, blend the Medes and Persians into one.” Indeed! It is not very extraordinary; because, though distinct nations, they are blended in history, though “the highest came up last.152” But is it only interpreters who do this? What does Daniel do? He says, in interpreting Upharsin, “Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” That is, he brings them in on the scene together. It may be said, “But Darius, who was of the seed of the Medes, was set over the realm of the Chaldeans.” One “interpreter” has used this to prove that it was still the Babylonish empire. Where was this distinct empire of the Medes to which the Persians succeeded as another?153 Cyrus, king of Persia, takes Babylon, and the temple is built by his orders. Darius may have ruled in Babylon till Cyrus had finished his conquests and had settled the empire; but the Persians were, at the epoch of the fall of the Babylonish empire, joint possessors with the Medes of the imperial power as a people.

Mr. N. says, consequently, on his Median scheme, that the last empire is the Grecian. The ten horns have no

kind of analogy with the Grecian kingdom, which Mr. N. supposes the prophet to be describing as a thing past. But not only so: Daniel himself most positively describes (for, unhappily, he is, as to this point, one of the "interpreters," or, at least, the angel who explained the vision is) the Medo-Persian empire as one beast, and by the well-known Persian emblem: "The ram which thou sawest, having two horns, are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia." That is, it is absolutely certain (for he says so) that Daniel considers the Medo-Persian as one empire, or beast; and that, consequently, the whole of Mr. N.'s argument is not worth a straw, unless it be to shew that the prophet does really give ampler details of what was future, and is so yet, on to the day of judgment, than he does of what Mr. N. would make historical. For, if the Medo-Persian empire be one empire (that is, the second), then the Roman is confessedly the last—that with the ten horns. Now, even supposing the unfounded assertion to be true, that the author of the book ascribed to Daniel wrote in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, yet still the Roman empire (that which is given with far the greatest detail, and whose division into divers kingdoms is a matter of history) was future. That is, he acts, wherever you put him as to date, as a prophet, and commits himself fully to the details of future events, such as the subdivision of the Roman empire into ten kingdoms, its final blasphemous character, and judgment. Not only so; but the fact of the declaration of the writer, that the Medo-Persian kingdom is one only, considered as a beast, destroys the whole foundation of Mr. N.'s reasonings. He states that "he [Daniel] gives the Grecian kingdom, under which he lived, as the last, and then passes to the general judgment," "the great day of judgment has not

followed upon the fourth monarchy."154 Now, if the Medo-Persian be one only, then he gives a beast or empire after the Grecian, and that with very much greater detail than as to those which preceded; and the allegation is so far from having any foundation, that we have historical proof that he is right; for another kingdom has succeeded the Grecian, divided into many horns—that is, he is a prophet. I need not say, that I agree with all existing testimony, that it was Daniel the prophet, the captive in Babylon, who wrote it.

In fine, Mr. N. says the book of Daniel cannot be proved to have existed earlier than the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, that is, than the last events it describes. The reader will remember that this is casting off the New Testament altogether—that is, really, Christianity—because the Lord there cites his book as that of a prophet. But, as to other proofs, it is beyond all controversy that, at all times of which we have any evidence, this book has been received by the Jews as Daniel's, written during the captivity. The Talmud has put it among the Cherubim, or Hagiographa, with Chronicles, Psalms, Proverbs, &c. But none has called its inspiration in question. Josephus is very particular; he gives the number of the books of the Old Testament, and refers to Daniel as the most renowned of prophets. He moreover declares, that the Jewish canon was closed in the reign of Artaxerxes, that is, with Malachi; so that he bears the strongest possible testimony to the date of Daniel as an authentic book.

It may be asked, "On what are the assertions founded of the regent date of the composition of the book?" The answer is, "On nothing." The objectors think there cannot be prophecy: hence, they argue, there is not.

Hence, when an era is spoken of, the book must have been written after it. In this case, indeed, the book of Daniel must have been written after the division of the Roman empire; for he speaks of that; and the history of Josephus must have been also written subsequent to that division into two kingdoms, for he speaks of the book of Daniel which refers to it. But Mr. N. cuts this all short by saying nothing about the passages which speak of the end; and by making (contrary to history and the positive assertion of the book itself) the Median and Persian two consecutive empires, and maintaining a profound silence on the ten horns.

Not only does Josephus present the number of the books of scripture as composing a whole, divided into three parts, and Daniel as one of the most admirable among them, thus assuring us the Old Testament such as we have it was a known volume, but the Wisdom of Jesus, the son of Sirach, refers to this volume, though not distinguishing the books, in the same threefold division —the law, the prophets, and the other books. That is, he shews the body of scripture complete. Not only so, but he refers to these being translated, declaring that the law, the prophets, and the other books had not the same force in the Greek tongue. That Daniel lived in the time of the captivity, we have proof from Ezekiel, who names him by name, and who wrote at that period. The book of Daniel, moreover, had its place in the Septuagint translation. It is not, indeed, the one we have, which is Theodotian's; but there was one, of which fragments are now extant in the Chisian MS. Now this translation was probably as early as the beginning of Antiochus's reign, that is, B.C. 175,155 Mattathias's revolt being in B.C. 167. The book of Maccabees, probably from the contents

dating about B.C. 130, refers to Daniel. In sum, if we receive the New Testament, we have the authority of the Lord Himself for Daniel's being a prophet. Further, we have (for the historical truth of his existence as a remarkably well-known man at the period the book of Daniel refers to) the testimony of his contemporary, Ezekiel. We have Josephus, thoroughly versed in Jewish lore, bearing witness that Daniel was of special eminence among the prophets, and the complete volume of the books of scripture specifically noticed, saying that they had not a multitude of books, but twenty-two (now made twenty-four by the separation of Ruth from Judges, and Lamentations from Jeremiah); that they were all completed by the reign of Artaxerxes, thus letting in Malachi and Esther, and no more; that there were indeed other books among them, but that they had not the same authority because there were no prophets to authenticate them.

Nothing can be simpler than this. Without entering into details which change nothing of the substance, we have, on clear and intelligible grounds, the canonical scriptures and the Apocrypha. The canonical books are divided into three parts: the law, prophets, and hymns; or, as the Lord says in Luke, the law, prophets, and psalms. But this is not all. The first book of Maccabees refers to Daniel, and no doubt to the LXX translation. This book was written some hundred and thirty years before Christ. Jesus, the son of Sirach, refers to the canonical books, by their well-known tripartite division, and to a translation of them; that is, Daniel existed then, and was translated into Greek. The lowest date for this is B.C. 130. Some place the son of Sirach B.C. 200. The Septuagint translation, of which Daniel formed a part,

was made from B.C. 280 by degrees. The revolt of Mattathias was more than a hundred and ten years after it commenced to be made. It is supposed by some that Esther was translated in the reign of Ptolemy Philometer, and this would tend to shew that the translation was complete earlier. Now we have no authorities whatever to refer to during the interval between Malachi and the Septuagint translation. But we have the concurrent voice of all the authority we possess that Daniel is authentic; and the fact of its being part of the Septuagint makes it to the last degree improbable that its date could be any later one; while the Jews, who certainly knew their own canon, most undoubtedly received it as the book of the prophet (Josephus also, who was thoroughly versed in the question, giving, not his opinion, but clearly and elaborately the Jews' judgment upon it, and the very intelligible grounds of it). All other authorities agree, not merely as authorities, but refer to these very books as the books known (settled by authority) and received of the nation. We have not an earlier testimony than the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, for none exists; but we have a testimony to the earlier and universal reception of these books as scripture. Hence, it can be proved to have existed earlier, for it was then fully received by all as an authentic book, and translated as a part of scripture, probably some time before the period referred to, certainly then as being fully acknowledged, which is exactly the same thing as to our present question (that is, that it was not written for the occasion, for it was then translated as a well-known book).

Prophecies Of The Pentateuch

In order to connect the Pentateuch with the time of Hezekiah, Mr. N. declares the first reference to be in Micah 6:5.156 The reader may remember that in another part of the book Mr. N. declares that it was never given out as an authentic book till found in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, that is, it is referred to by Micah about seventy years before it was brought out, and referred to as well known to the people. But Mr. N. is on slippery ground here. His friend, Mr. Theodore Parker, the translator of De Wette, thus gives his author in English (vol. 2, p. 154, second edit. Boston, 1850): "About B.C. 790 we find that Amos unites the Elohistic and Jehovistic fragments in Genesis 19:29. Therefore he must have had the book of Genesis in its present form (see chap. 2:9), he says, 'Yet I destroyed the Amorite before them.' Accordingly, he seems to have been acquainted with the book of Numbers. About B.C. 785 Hosea affords us a trace of its existence. (Chap. 12:3-5.) Here the allusions are obvious to the story of the birth of Esau and Jacob in Genesis 25:26… Again chapter 9:10. This refers to Numbers 22:3." I do not go any farther. He refers to Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, whose "acquaintance with our present Pentateuch," he says, "is pretty clear." Moreover, I apprehend no unprejudiced, intelligent person can doubt the reference of Joel 2:1, 15, 16, to Numbers 10:1-10. Now De Wette, as do many others, places him in B.C. 810; some so far back as B.C. 870, 865; Mr. N. (in his Hebrew Monarchy) between B.C. 840 and 818. That is, mark, that the Pentateuch is quoted as soon as there is a prophet to quote it. But to apply these facts to Mr. N.'s statements; if we take in Joel, we have prophecies referring to the Pentateuch about a hundred

years before Hezekiah's reign, and nearly two hundred years before Josiah's. Omitting Joel, we have, at any rate, prophecies in B.C. 790 and 785, which, according to De Wette, prove that these prophets had two books at least of the Pentateuch in its present form.

Josiah, according to Mr. N., mounted the throne in B.C. 640. The law was found in his eighteenth year: that gives us B.C. 622. That is, according to De Wette and Parker, the prophets had the Pentateuch, as we have it now, about a hundred and seventy years before it was composed as it is now, and published, according to Mr. N. And the proofs of Dr. De Wette are founded on the newest and most accurate discoveries of Elohistic and Jehovistic documents afforded us in the book which Mr. N. himself refers to. I should add, perhaps, to make every allowance, that Mr. N. places Amos in B.C. 770; so that, according to his shewing, the Pentateuch, as we have it now, would have been quoted only a hundred and fifty years before it existed!

This paragraph of Mr. N.'s has puzzled me a little: "Next, as to the prophecies of the Pentateuch, they abound, as to the times which precede the century of Hezekiah; higher than which we cannot trace the Pentateuch." (Phases, p. 171.) He adds, in a note, "The first apparent reference is by Micah 6:5, a contemporary of Hezekiah." The object of this is obvious: it is to prove that they were composed just then, and gave out history for prophecy. That is plain enough—a very strange thing to urge, when they were most certainly, as he tells us elsewhere, compiled and published in Josiah's days, and never before. "As I considered the narrative, my eyes were opened. If the book had previously been the received sacred law, it could not possibly have been so

lost that its contents were unknown, and the fact of its loss forgotten. It was, therefore, evidently then first compiled, or, at least, then first produced and made authoritative to the nation." (Phases, p. 137.) But the former was a discovery. His eyes were opened. But I pass from this now: it lasted thirty-three pages; and that is something for a German, discovery—provided, that is, that it suffices to raise a doubt. But now why this singularly vague expression—"as to the times which precede the century of Hezekiah?" They contained accurate accounts, it is to be supposed, as to the times preceding his century. Now we have found from De Wette that these books existed, and were referred to as well-known public documents nearly seventy years before Hezekiah's accession, about eighty years before his sickness in the middle of his reign. Now where are we to begin "Hezekiah's century?" If we set fifty years before and fifty years after him for his century, then we have prophecies existing twenty or thirty years before it, and so clear that Mr. N. takes them for histories. If we take B.C. 800 to B.C. 700 as Hezekiah's century, we have, according to De Wette and Parker, prophecies proving the Pentateuch to be well-known public books, appealed to by prophets in Judah and Israel in the first ten years of his century; and Joel, whom De Wette does not mention, but in whose prophecy the reference is equally clear, proving their existence before Hezekiah's century some thirty years, perhaps many more. That is, the Pentateuch, according to Mr. N., is full of prophecies as to the times in which it is proved to be publicly referred to as a well-known authentic book already in existence. What does this prove? And why all this vagueness as to times in Mr. N.? Why this omission of the testimony of the book he recommends, in which

passages are given as a certain proof that the Pentateuch existed long before Hezekiah's reign, Micah alone being referred to by Mr. N.—a book, too, as infidel as Mr. N. could wish—nay, which is his grand armoury?

Of course, Mr. N. is not bound to adopt the opinion of the author he recommends; but is it quite candid to say the first apparent reference is Micah without alluding to the citation of passages of the Pentateuch in Amos and Hosea, in the book he himself uses and recommends? But a doubt upon a doubt is a shocking thing when all depends on boldness of assertion to create one in the mind of the reader. But to return: it is true that, vague as it now is, the passage in the "Phases of Faith" will, if not closely examined into, disarm the testimony of De Wette and Parker of its effect, because their proofs of the existence of the Pentateuch are within the century preceding Hezekiah; and the note, if we do not compare it with the text, will bring proofs, down to Hezekiah's own days, and cut off, for him who does not pay attention, about another century of proof. But this is, to say the least, a strange passage, not helped out by a declaration elsewhere, that they were compiled in Josiah's days, and could not at any rate have been known before. The fact is, the Pentateuch is referred to most distinctly in the earliest of the prophets, whom Mr. N. puts about B.C. 830, so that the only thing Mr. N. proves here is, that the Pentateuch abounds in accurate prophecies, written, at any rate, a good while before the event.

The Old Testament A Continuous History

But if the Old Testament be attentively examined, we shall soon see that it is a continuous history, whoever

was the means of making it so (God, as its divine Author, I doubt not), with moral and prophetic addresses joined to it, beginning with the creation and ending with the re-building of the temple and city, after their destruction by Nebuchadnezzar; not setting aside, however, the Gentile dominion, which had taken the place of God's throne in David's family in Jerusalem—a dominion which will continue till Christ takes His, and that at Jerusalem again, as David's son. But this continuous history is in each successive book carried on, with just so much reference to the previous parts, and especially to the Pentateuch, the foundation of all, as was real and true in the state of the time they refer to; the last verse of Malachi throwing back (while announcing the coming of the great day of the Lord) the thoughts of the hearer to the days of Horeb and of the law. In first Samuel we have seven references to the Pentateuch, one to Joshua; in the second, two. That the law was forgotten in practice is most certain. But the whole of the Old Testament has the character of a successive history stamped on it in the very plainest possible way. This is its clear, natural, intrinsic character.

Mr. N. states that "no prophecy of the Pentateuch can be proved to have been fulfilled, which had not been already fulfilled before Hezekiah's day." (Phases, pp. 171,172.)157 This assertion is so flatly contradicted by the contents of Leviticus 26, and the well-known public history of the Jews, that it is needless to go farther. It is quite clear that Israel had not been scattered among the heathen before Hezekiah's reign, and quite clear they have since, and that God's sanctuary has been destroyed.

The Gospels

We now come to the Gospels. In the first place, though there is a remarkable similarity of spirit and doctrine in the gospel and epistles of John, they are very easily distinguished by any attentive reader. The presenting of the person in the way of historical fact in the one, and the deduction of the nature of God, Christ, and the new man, from that manifestation in the other, are respectively the characters of the gospel and epistles. This renders the epistles much more abstract; and hence the connection of the reasoning is known only where the inward thread of divine life, which links it, is known; whereas Christ in the gospel is clearly and definitely presented, though the divine glory of His person is brought out.

I do not in the least agree with the assertion, that the divine nature of Christ is not clearly taught in the first three gospels.158 Take the word Emmanuel, “God with us.” Again, “Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.” I cite these as examples which present themselves at once. A multitude are found at the beginning and end of the gospels, if we except the beginning of Mark, which commences with His service; and the same truth is found there in the course of that service—as for example, the comparison of the healing of the paralytic with Psalm 103, and of the feeding of five thousand with Psalm 132. That the Holy Ghost selected for its communication by John what related to the Lord’s person is beyond controversy: that, with the sending of the Holy Ghost, is the grand object of the book. Hence he has given what John Baptist taught his disciples, and not merely his public testimony. Moreover, there are but two verses in what John Baptist says,

which can give occasion to any remark (chapter 3:35, 36).159 The rest is a touchingly beautiful comparison by John of himself with Christ. Otherwise there is nothing like John the Baptist's testimony. The testimony that he that believes has everlasting life is the only thing that passes in its character the general spirit of John's teaching, that is, the witness to the person of Christ. But it is not in elevation of doctrine more than being Son of God—Lamb of God—Baptizer with the Holy Ghost—and this last is even more remarkable because it belongs to the display of Christ's power after His departure, as much and more than as having eternal life by Him, and is immediately connected with the Father's having put all things into His hand. There is one thing very clearly proved by Mr. N.'s remarks in this page—his insensibility160 to divine things; for it is notorious that John's gospel has delighted, fed, drawn out, and comforted the hearts of thousands, perhaps more than any other book of scripture—for a simple reason, that it presents more of Christ Himself, and more immediately Christ Himself. Mr. N. finds it "monotonous."

The Discourses Of The Lord

I recall to the reader the very convenient form of Mr. N.'s book for administering doses of infidelity: as he is merely recounting the course of his own mind, he can give a conviction as it formed itself, without the least proof. Thus he has a "high sense of the lucid force with which he [Strauss] unanswerably shews that the fourth gospel is no faithful exhibition of the discourses of Jesus." (Phases, p. 174.) What has produced this conviction we are left to imagine; of course it is supposed to be something. Before this, however, Mr. N.

says, “It had become quite certain to me that the secret colloquy with Nicodemus, and the splendid testimony of the Baptist to the Father and the Son, were wholly modelled out of John’s own imagination.” (Phases, p. 174.) How did it “become quite certain?” It is left to be supposed because it is “quite certain.” One can only, to such kind of assertions, answer in the negative—that it is not “quite certain.”

Such assertions have this immense difficulty standing in the way:—that it is a “splendid testimony” on subjects which Alexandrian philosophers have essayed to teach—that this testimony contains the holiest and truest teaching on man’s real condition, and what he needed—the profoundest knowledge and application of the Old Testament, and the connection between the universal principles it contains and the particular application in which a Jewish doctor ought to have understood them—and yet the clear distinction as to how, in their universality as applied by God in grace, they would reach to all (besides the positive revelation of what introduced the heavenly development of the character to which these general spiritual principles lead), and that connected with what we know to be historically true, and prophetically announced, though contrary to all Jewish thoughts, and in its actual form only discoverable in prophecy by the key which the person of Christ gave to it—yet, with that key, “as simple as possible. All this, and much more than this, in the compass of a few verses (and such is John 3), we are told, is the invention of an impostor, and quite certainly such. It is a pity Mr. N. does not tell us why. If imposture be such, and so true, and has such a stamp of divine knowledge on it, what is truth? And what must the original living witness and

exhibition of this truth have been? And besides, however profound, nothing can be simpler. There is nothing obscure and mythically mysterious about it.

Special Views Of Christ's Person

It may be well here to say a few words on the manner in which the discourses of the Lord would be given to us, assuming the Holy Ghost to record them. For it is the character which would result, not the proof of the fact by evidence, that I now seek. First, it is perfectly certain, that we have a very small portion indeed of the discourses of Jesus. The Holy Ghost would give us those which divine wisdom considered permanently useful to the Church in all ages—that which brought out great principles and abiding doctrines; and such is in fact the case. Take the sermon on the Mount, Matthew 13/Luke 15, 16, and the discourses in John, and the like: all bring out some special view of Christ's person, God's ways with men, or the principles of His rule as Father. Even in the same discourse He would give us, according to the connection in which it was recorded, that part which applies to the subject treated. Thus, supposing it had been said, "They killed at Jerusalem the Son whom the Father had sent," I might say, if the guilt of favoured Jerusalem was in question, "They killed the Son at Jerusalem;" if the mere extent of their guilt in respect of the dignity of His person, "They killed the Son." If I sought to shew the slight of the Father and the contempt of His love, I might say, "They killed the Son whom the Father had sent." And all these representations would be perfectly true; and in the pursuit of an object, such as God must have in recording these things, my leaving out a part which did not immediately bear on the purpose of

God in the revelation would only give a truer force to the words—more of the sense and meaning, according to the mind and teaching of God. Now each gospel might give only one of these (much more pertinent and instructive, but) incomplete citations; and hence there would be a difference. But so far from there being an inconsistency, there would be a great help to understanding the mind of God in the word.

Would any man say of these, that any one was not a true account? It would be a great deal truer if the object be to communicate God's mind in the discourse to me; and what else can it be if God inspired the account of it? I repeat, we have not a hundredth part of Jesus's discourses. We have what the Holy Ghost was sent to give for the permanent good of the Church— the very words Jesus used, if needed, for the divine teaching, perhaps the substance perfectly fitted for future ages, or some of the words which had a permanent application.

Again, suppose there were a question of blaming me for taking some one to a distance, and it were affirmed that I had, on the contrary, said to him," Come into the next room;" whereas I had said, "The next room is airy and will suit you: come into it." The report made to justify me is not literal, but it is exactly true. Now I do not doubt that the Holy Ghost, by the apostle, has given the discourses of Jesus, not necessarily in every case literally, but in the way alluded to in the example I have given, so as that they exactly communicate the mind of God in them which He meant to be preserved in writing, and word for word when that was needed so to do. Many things may have been said, and undoubtedly were, by which what He said was adapted to the persons and circumstances which surrounded Him, but made no part

of the truth to be conveyed. These would be only so far preserved as would be needed to give a perfect idea of what He said to them, and how. Hence the force of the discourse would be, as the Holy Ghost used the mind and pen of John, or any other writer, exactly what the Holy Ghost meant to communicate.

Now this is much more really a divine communication by the Holy Ghost, than a mere repetition by human memory of what the Lord meant only for the good of the individuals at the moment, or forms of expression adapted to suit what He said to them, and not for the permanent good of the Church, and the full revelation of Himself. I have His instructions with divine perfection, as He meant them to be given for the permanent use of the Church, written by the power of the Holy Ghost. If the Holy Ghost employed John or Matthew to convey a particular part of the truth as to Jesus, as He undoubtedly did, their writings would necessarily take the form of the particular truth or aspect of Christ they were employed to set forth. Thus Emmanuel shines through Matthew, and Jehovah King in Zion; in John, the Son's relationship in every way with the Father, both in nature and mission: Judaism is quite set aside. The vessel used was fitted for its use, but conveyed exactly what it was meant to convey. The form, as we have said, of the jet was according to the fountain-maker's design, but the water which took that form was unmixed and pure.

John's Account Of The Raising Of Lazarus, And Of The Healing Of The Man Born Blind

Mr. Newman objects to John's account of the raising of Lazarus, and of the healing of the man born blind,161 on

the ground of their not being mentioned by the other evangelists, and John's writing long after. Now the miracles Mr. N. objects to were immediately in connection with the subject the Holy Ghost employed John to treat of. One was in demonstration of His Sonship in the direct way of power; and the other, of the light-giving power which accompanied the recognition of His mission, leading to the owning of Him as Son. Now I repeat here what I have already said, that the Holy Ghost must have an object in writing such histories. He is not—could not be—a biographer, to write a life with circumstances which there was no divine reason for communicating. He was revealing Christ under various characters of glory, Son of God, Son of David, Son of man, Emmanuel.

Now let us examine whether there is not such a definite bearing of the two miracles referred to as is to be expected in a history given of God; whether they do not bear the stamp of a divine revelation of Jesus. From chapter 4, John's Gospel had systematically unfolded the new thing in contrast with Judaism. Spiritual worship of the Father instead of at Jerusalem or on Gerizim. (Chap. 4.) Life-giving power, instead of human strength using ordinances; judgment executed to secure Christ's glory in those who rejected Him: here He is the life-giving Son. (Chap. 5.) Next, He is the humbled Son of man instead of King Messiah in Israel, the spiritual food of faith while away, having come down from heaven and been crucified. (Chap. 6.) Then, the time for His glory before the world being not yet come, the Holy Ghost is to be given to believers, witnessing His heavenly glory as Son of man. (Chap. 7.) Then He is the light of the world in contrast with the law; but His word is rejected

(chap. 8); as is the evidence of His works (chap. 9), of which hereafter. He will at any rate have and save His sheep. (Chap. 10.) That closes the direct revelation of Christ in the gospel.

From chapter 11 we have the public testimony given by God to Him who was rejected:—first, as Son of God, life-giving, resurrection-power was His proper glory; and Lazarus is publicly raised.162 This sickness was not unto death, but for the glory of God, and that the Son of God should be glorified thereby. Hence all say, “If thou hadst been here, he had not died.” They knew His miraculous power of healing; but now close to Jerusalem, the most public testimony possible is given to His life-giving power as Son of God. How truly this is in its place is seen by this, that after this we have His glory as Son of David publicly proclaimed by His entry into Jerusalem, and the time come for His glory as Son of man marked by the Greeks coming up; and then the Lord shews that to this the cross is necessary, and looks in spirit at the coming hour. Thus the peculiar bearing of this remarkable miracle is clearly seen—the public indication of Christ as Son of God who raises the dead.

Now Matthew is employed by the Holy Ghost to present Christ in another way—that of Emmanuel, Messiah. Hence the Spirit does not give what was specially used to prove another point; but He does give with much more detail the riding in as Jehovah, the King Messiah, with all that followed on it—in the judgment of Israel, chief priests, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians —every class, in a word, and the whole moral position of those who rejected Him; and then shews from Psalm no that the Messiah ought to leave them, and to ascend up on high, because He was David’s Lord as well as David’s

Son. That is, he gives in greater detail what was suited to his subject.

Again in the case of the blind man, the same considerations apply. We have the contrast between the blind receiving sight from Him who is the true light of the world, and the judgment of those who set up to be lights, and that by the most ignorant believer who finds his place with the rejected Son of God. And mark the process. First, in the typical act, He puts clay on the man's eyes—a figure (I doubt not, from what the apostle says) of Christ come in the flesh. But this operation in itself produces no effect; but the moment he washes in Siloam (which, says the apostle, signifies "sent"), he sees. That is, the moment he, by the purifying word and Spirit, recognizes that Christ is the sent One, all is clear. In result, the poor man, the subject thus of the delivering power of Christ, honest of heart, bears witness to the power of which he had experienced the effect, knowing Jesus only as a prophet; but, having received in his heart the authority of His word and mission, he immediately receives Him as Son of God, and prostrates himself before Him. The rest are blinded; for the effect of His mission is, that they that see not might see, and that they that see might be made blind.

Characteristics Of John's Testimony

Now this unfolding of particular testimony to Sonship, in contrast with the bunding of the Jews, is John's subject all through. Matthew's, as we have seen, is different; as is Luke's, who gives us the Son of man, and what is suited to the display of that truth. But there is such total and profound ignorance in all these infidel writers of the purpose of the author, that they do not understand the

scope of a single passage. How should they? It is as if some wise housemaid should clean out a powerful voltaic battery, because dirty wire and plates and useless water were in it.

And I beg the reader to call to mind, that if God was writing a book, He must have such objects. Adequate evidence of the facts proving His mission in Israel among the Jews was given in Matthew's Gospel among themselves, and I suppose (it is hardly to be doubted from the evidence we have) in their own tongue as well as in Greek, before the destruction of Jerusalem. John was employed (when Christianity was now, in one sense, established, and no longer in the cradle of Judaism) to give the great leading truths concerning the person and glory of Jesus, and the presence of the Holy Ghost needed for its building up and consolidation, and the guarding it against the inroads of heretical pravity. Could anything be more suitable, more timely, or more gracious on God's part? He preserves also an apostle himself, that, as external proof, we might have an eye-witness, and one most especially intimate with Jesus—one we may reverently call His bosom friend—to shew what really was the true doctrine of Christ when there was danger of departure from it, and need of building up in it; when it was no longer sufficient to believe that Jesus was the Christ in order to be preserved from the machinations of the enemy. And this is what we have in John. He is occupied entirely about the person of Christ, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost operating in the saints, whether to convict the world by, or to build up the Church in, the glory of that Christ. Meanwhile, if God chose fitting instruments, the Holy Ghost Himself, as Christ had promised, was the Author and Inspirer of

all, whether in Matthew or in John, or any other. Now John was just the person fitted for this. The time was the time it was required, the thing done exactly what was called for: just as the general course of Christ's working was recorded by Matthew; but in Matthew, hundreds of miracles in a verse or two, to introduce the true character of the kingdom of heaven, which was his subject (all his detailed miracles bearing on his subject, as the few John relates do on his; and Luke's in an equally remarkable manner on his—the healing, cleansing, forgiving, and quickening of man lost in sin).

Observations On Miracles

Hence nothing can be more out of the way than Mr. N.'s remarks. If John had in Asia Minor (if he was there), after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews, given the general history of miracles and acts as a proof of the truth of his mission as Messiah to the Jews, then, though it would not hinder one taught of God from believing, there would be something plausible in what Mr. N. says, in objecting to a new history of miracles at so late a date.163 This was already done; and that John should then develop Christianity doctrinally and in its spirit, relating only two or three miracles of Jesus, specially connected with this, is exactly in place and keeping. John's testimony as eye-witness was just as valid. These events must have been much more vividly impressed upon him than more recent ones. The Holy Ghost, while acting suitably as to His instruments, and for His purpose, always acts in His own divine power.

Mr. N.'s low and disgusting introduction of John as a witness is without sense or force. He puts a question164

which only shews his ignorance of the matter. The Holy Ghost acted on his memory, “He shall bring to your remembrance.” Does he mean to say that God cannot call to a man’s memory what He thinks fit? Such a notion is ridiculous—a man can do it. But He puts the memory into activity, and recalls to it the images of what had passed before it. How many scenes and thoughts has the sight of a person called back to our minds! How well does the sinner know that when God acts convertingly on his conscience all his sins come up fresh into his memory! Could God not do as much as to the life of His blessed Son, and control the memory in its activity so as to give what He wished, if He purposed to give a revelation by eye-witnesses? This is what Jesus said the Holy Ghost should do. Hence it is not a “romance,” but a history— a real history by eye-witnesses, and a real history by God Himself through their instrumentality. It is much more incredible that He should have sent and given His Son, and not given such a history of Him, but left it unknown, or only traditionally guessed at in after ages.

Further, I repeat, miracles may arrest and draw attention to truth; and truth may arrest and fix attention on divine power shewn by miracles; but the fact is, both were concurrent testimonies to the person and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.165 On this point also Mr. N. only shews he is far from the plain and very simple state of the case. Suppose the anxious father, who entreated deliverance for his son, found that the fever left him exactly at the moment that Jesus said, “Go thy way, thy son liveth”; and thus, giving ear to Jesus, found that truth, the entering in of which gives light and understanding to the simple, would an infidel’s

scepticism or the parent's conduct be more just?166 In the main, the Gospels just give us an authentic history of those things, and of plenty of scepticism too, which has not happily succeeded in anything save confirming, in the state of the sceptic Jews, the prophecies and warnings which they disbelieved and rejected.

Suppose, on the other hand, one heard Him who spake as never man spake, and received precious truth in his soul, yet remained pondering as to who He should be who spake, and whether all His claims were real, and, as John's messengers, saw that the blind received their sight, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, the dead were raised, and, in the absence of all the pride and selfishness of religious grandeur, the poor had the gospel preached to them; was it not a just means of receiving Him who spake grace and truth itself, and confirmed the word by signs following? Or must he have settled the knotty, logical point whether miracles were to be believed on account of doctrine, or doctrine on account of miracles, before he did; or remained in torturing doubt if the Saviour he wanted was there, or in proud and indifferent ignorance? He had nothing to settle. Truth and power concurred in assuring his soul that Jesus was the Christ the Son of God. If he did not believe it, it was that his heart was so hard that it resisted both. We have lost the sight of the miracles and possess the truth more complete as a whole, and an historical testimony which nothing but folly and self-will can dispute: an historical testimony which makes the whole course of miracles more powerful morally, though less impressive to the senses. Christianity exists. It arose from something. What it did arise from is believed by all the world except voluntary

sceptics and mythical dreamers like Dr. Strauss, who will serve for a nine years' wonder for the Germans, as the Paulus school did before them.

It will be said, "But people believe Mohammedanism too": so do I historically, though far less fully authenticated in detail than Christianity. The difference is this, that if the history of Mohammedanism be true, it is an imposture. If that of Christianity be true, it is incontestably divine, But you might better deny the history of Mohammedanism than of Christianity. I turn to the examination of St. Paul's testimony.

Mr. Newman's Remarks On Tongues

I think I never read more thorough nonsense than Mr. N.'s remarks on the tongues. The Irvingites were a convenient loophole of escape, indeed, as regards the remarkable testimony afforded by the tongues; but I cannot say that Mr. N. has managed it well, though in some respects subtilely enough. Indeed it was a difficult task. St. Paul's speaking tongues more than they all is slipped in at the end as "hallucination." It was an awkward fact to deal with. And now let us examine Mr. N.'s dealing with the facts of the case. They were the same, he says, as the Irvingite tongues. St. Paul's "moral sobriety of mind was no guarantee against his mistaking extravagances for miracles." So that the tongues which Paul spoke were extravagances like the Irvingite tongues. And "Luke (or the authority whom he followed) has exaggerated into a gift of languages what cannot be essentially different from the Corinthian, and in short from the Irvingite, tongues." (Phases, p. 179.) So that Paul, in speaking the tongues he boasted of, was never

understood. They were mere extravagances, “hallucination!”

He, whether through delusion or imposture, encouraged others in the thought that they had these tongues, and only boasted of having more “extravagances” than they, and of course different kinds of extravagances; for he spake several tongues—a thing hard to conceive, that he should speak several kinds of jargon as if they were languages, and yet remain an honest man. Did he mistake his own diversified extravagances for miracles? It is very credible for a sceptic, but for no one else, I should think. If it comes under the class of logic or philosophy, I know not; but it certainly seems an “extravagance” to a plain mind that a man should speak a number of tongues which were no tongues at all, and never find out he was deceiving himself, nor think of deceiving others; but appeal to others who indulged in like extravagances, and without smiling, like Cicero’s augurs, when they met each other. I have known some who held that Paul’s tongues were simply languages that he had learnt and was thankful to use. Mr. N. treats this notion as cheaply as it deserves, by not noticing it, and distinctly declaring the tongues to be an extravagance; whereas it is clear enough there is no extravagance at all in speaking a language we know to those whose language it is. Nothing more wise or simple. I say as cheaply as it deserves; because to suppose that people’s speaking a language they had learnt at school was a proof that the Holy Ghost had come upon them, is really not worthy of consideration. And not only on the day of Pentecost, but at Samaria, and at the reception of Cornelius, the speaking of tongues is advanced in a very specific and distinct way as a proof of the descent of the

Holy Ghost, and in the last case as a warrant for receiving the Gentiles into the Church of God (God having given them the like gift as to the apostles). Now, that a man's speaking a tongue he had learnt in an ordinary way should be a warrant for so doing, is too absurd an idea to entertain for a moment. No: they were extravagances or a miracle.

But there is this untoward difficulty in the way of their being fancied tongues, that all the different nations to whom the tongues belonged understood them. "Are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born?" And then Peter speaks to the Jews in theirs. Now this fact is the substantial point of the whole affair. It was that which struck the multitude. Three thousand people were converted by it. The Church begins its existence, and was formed in virtue of this multitude understanding what was said. Christianity was planted and rooted in the world by it.

It was this was the proof that the Holy Ghost was indeed come down. It marked and characterized the day of Pentecost. Mr. N. says, it "cannot have been essentially different from the Corinthian." Surely not; but there was this difference, that there was nobody at Corinth who understood the strange tongues. It was not needed, and it was not for edification; and, therefore, with his usual "moral sobriety," Paul forbade the exercise of this gift unless there was an interpreter, because then, as is evident, it would edify.

He would not preclude its use, as it was a sign of divine power, provided it was for edification: all was to be subservient to that.

Thus all was the very opposite of extravagance. An immense aid was given to the propagation of the gospel, obvious to all, as. well as a sign of divine power accompanying it.

Now it seems to me, not only was such a miraculous aid peculiarly appropriate for a religion propagated by preaching; but, besides that, there was a very special and gracious meaning in this gift.

In Babel, where man had once been of one lip, and one language, God had confounded their pride, and men were shut up into a dissociable condition, used of God for providential purposes, but which set up barriers which precluded common communications. Israel had one of these tongues perhaps, and, probably, the original one; and the true knowledge of God was confined to them. When Christianity came in, power was not yet going to set the world right, but grace was overstepping these barriers, and the over-flowing love of God saluting the heathen where they were, in their darkness and misery, without compelling them to bend their neck under the galling yoke of Judaism. What could be more expressive of this than speaking to every one of them in their own tongue? The barrier was gone—at least God's love had over-stepped it, and visited every heart where it was at home, where judgment, indeed, on man's pride had placed it. Was there not something most beautifully significant in this? Surely there was. Hence it became a kind of distinctive miracle.

So when Samaria was received, they spake with tongues. When God would outstrip man's tardy love, and He visited the Gentiles in the person of Cornelius, He put His seal on the Gentiles before the Church had put

hers—an unusual act. Yet surely the first place in grace belonged to Him; and how could the apostle refuse those to whom God had given the same seal as to the Jews and the apostles themselves? But when they were used for personal vanity, and not for edification—for of what is not man capable?—then they are restrained; not absolutely, which would have taken away a just testimony to the Holy Ghost's presence, but unless there was an interpreter who could turn it to edifying, which was certainly the Holy Ghost's purpose. With Mr. N. this is the same thing as Irvingite extravagances. What profound moral judgment, and estimate of facts!

But I must here (without any reproach to Mr. N., as it is a matter of memory) recall some facts, and rectify some statements. At Pentecost the languages were universally understood by those who spoke them; the Irvingite tongues never by any one: a notable difference. And this is so true, that after first trying their hand at making Chinese of it, it was suggested among them that it might be the tongue of angels, as it was said, "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels"—delightful idea!

Mr. N. is not quite exact in his account of the report of the "Irish Clergyman," or at least of what the "Irish Clergyman" saw and heard. There was a pretended interpretation. Two brothers (respectable shipbuilders at Port Glasgow, of the name of M'D—), and their sister, were the chief persons who spoke, with a Gaelic maid-servant, in the tongues, and a Mrs. J—, in English. J. M'D— spoke, on the occasion alluded to, for about a quarter of an hour, with great energy and fluency, in a semi-latin sounding speech—then sung a hymn in the same. Having finished, he knelt down and prayed there might be interpretation; as God had given one gift, that He

would add the other. His sister got up at the opposite side of the room, and professed to give the interpretation; but it was a string of texts on overcoming, and no hymn, and one, if not more, of the texts was quoted wrongly. Just afterwards there was a bustle; and apparently some one was unwell, and went into the next room; and the gifted English-speaking person, with utterances from the highest pitch of voice to the lowest murmur, with all strange prolongation of tones, spoke through (if one may so express oneself, as if passing through) the agony of Christ. Once the Gaelic servant spoke briefly in “a tongue,” not, if the “Irish Clergyman” remembers right, the same evening. The sense he had of the want of the power of the Holy Ghost in the Church made him willing to hear and see. Yet he went rather as deputed for others than for himself.

The excitement was great, so that, though not particularly an excitable person, he felt its effects very strongly. It did not certainly approve itself to his judgment; other things contributed to form it. It was too much of a scene. Previous to the time of exercising the gifts, they read, sung psalms, and prayed, under certain persons’ presidence (one of diem a very estimable person, whom he has since seen free from all this, and a minister of an independent or some dissenting church in Edinburgh, then a church-elder). This being finished, the “Irish Clergyman” was going away, when another said to him, “Don’t go: the best part is probably to come yet.” So he stayed, and heard what has just been related. He was courteously admitted, as one not believing, who came to see what was the real truth of the case. The parties are mostly dead, or dispersed, and many freed from the delusion, and the thing itself public; so that he

does not feel he is guilty of any indiscretion in giving a correct account of what passed.

It may be added, without of course saying anything that could point out the persons, that female vanity, and very distinct worldliness, did not confirm, to his mind, the thought that it could be the Spirit's power. The M'D—s were in ordinary life, quiet, sober men, and, he believes, most blameless. Their names were so public that there is no indelicacy in alluding to them, but the "Irish Clergyman" did not think they had that kind of peace and deliverance from legal thoughts, which is a sign in another way of the Spirit's power. They never received the apostolic pretensions of London and Albury, but repudiated, in the strongest way and on full enquiry, the blasphemous doctrine of the Irvingites as to the person of the Lord. Mr. N.'s reporter, the "Irish Clergyman," doubts that they were in the least aware of it at the time they professed to receive the gifts; but they certainly entirely repudiated it when he saw them afterwards.

It may not be generally known that the "gifts" among the Irvingites were founded on this doctrine of Christ's being a sinner in nature like ourselves. Mr. Irving's statement was, that he had long preached the "gifts," but there were none, because there was nothing for the Holy Ghost to testify to; but that when he preached this doctrine, they came as a witness to it. His teaching moreover on the subject was confirmed by what was received as the prophetic power amongst them. I am afraid the tongues are not quite "exploded" yet, as they have allied themselves with other influences suited to the world (that is, the spirit of Romanism and Puseyism). At any rate, there is one consoling fact, that as yet, in God's patient mercy, in spite of efforts from without and

provocations of many Mr. N.’s from within, the lapse of eighteen hundred years, instead of three, has not “exploded” the effect of Paul’s “extravagances” and “hallucinations,” and Luke’s “exaggerations.” We possess the blessed testimony that the Holy Ghost has given to the glory of the person of the Lord Jesus; and, despite their many sins, mercy is yet extended to the Gentiles.

The rest of Mr. N.’s remarks on the tongues are not worthy of an answer. The term “barbaric jargon” is avowedly used because it was not understood by the hearers. He that spoke was “as a barbarian.” The rest is composed of a kind of sneer, which, in the presence of the proofs and facts, throws scorn on the sneerer, not on the things sneered at.

Paul’s Preaching of a Glorified Christ, Peter’s Witnessing

The next point noticed is St. Paul’s preaching a glorified Christ, not a lowly One. It is quite true: and equally true that he was not called to be a witness of Christ’s oral teachings. So it is declared in his mission as distinguished from that of the twelve. He was to be the great witness of that part of truth which put Jew and Gentile on the same footing in a heavenly way, which could only be in connection with a glorified Christ. But if that be supposed to mean, that he attached no importance to the history of Christ’s humiliation,167 nothing can be more false; only he takes it up, as he does all else, as a part of the vast counsels and plans and purposes of God.

The following passages, not to speak of unnumbered ones which speak of the cross, will prove what I say. In

John 15:26, 27, it is said, “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.” They were eye-witnesses of His life down here. As to Paul’s ministry, it is said, Acts 26:16, “But rise and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee.” Here we have the two commissions clearly stated.

So Peter calls himself a witness of Christ’s sufferings, and a partaker of the glory to be revealed. Paul not only speaks of “the gospel of the glory,” but says, “for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus” his Lord; and, instead of speaking of himself as a witness of the sufferings and partaker of the glory, seeks “the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings.” He descends, so to speak, into the sufferings, because of the glory, and as the way to his high calling above. He does not speak of waiting for its revelation. And this was so very distinct, that Peter proposes, in Acts 3, to the Jews repentance, that Christ may return to them; Paul never. Peter’s testimony had been rejected, and Stephen killed and received on high; and there was no thought then but receiving Jew and Gentile through the ministry of him whom grace had called away from Stephen’s martyr-ground, and from the apostleship of Jewish hatred, to Christ, to be the witness of heavenly things connected with that glorious Christ, by the vision of whom on the way to Damascus he was arrested, and his pride laid low. The Holy Ghost also opened his spiritual

eye on the Lord, leading him to preach Him whom once he destroyed.

Hence he boldly declares, after speaking of the “gospel of the glory,” that he does not know Christ in the former or Jewish way, after the flesh; and that if any man was in Christ, there was a new creation—he belonged to what took him out of Jew and Gentile; as it had been said to him by Christ, when He appeared to him by the way, “Delivering thee from the Gentiles, to whom now I send thee.” But this only fills up the perfectness of the gospel revelation in its place. And the humiliation of Christ takes, in Paul’s view, all its immense and vast importance in the counsels of God, and is not a mere personal history, perfectly interesting and divinely instructive as that is in its place; for the gospel has a thousand aspects in one divine truth.

Paul was eminently the vessel of the counsels of God in Christ. Does that make the personal history of Jesus less interesting, less profoundly, divinely, though humanly, instructive? No; the heart goes back to study in every detail, One who in every detail was divine love and holiness, near enough to man’s eye to study it for himself. But how does Paul speak of this? See the sweep of truth with which he brings Christ’s humiliation in: “Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.” What a place does His humiliation fill here! Again, take His, so to speak, official exaltation: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the

form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."

Thus the history of Christ's humiliation was looked at by Paul, through the Holy Ghost, not in the touching detail of Christ's individual life, of which he was not witness, but as one immense fact, and a cardinal one, in the vast scheme of God. This was exactly in its place, and in keeping with the service for which he was employed. John gives us the divine nature; Paul, the divine counsels; Peter, the walk of him who has a lively hope through the resurrection of One whose walk he had known and followed in its bright display on earth, towards the heaven into which resurrection is meant to introduce us (all founding the accomplishment of blessing on the redemption which He has wrought out for us).

Mr. N. next complains of Paul not affording us the grounds on which he believed the facts as to Christ's resurrection.168 I have, in principle, answered this. The business of a revelation is to afford the objects of faith in such a full display as makes the evidence of it, not to discuss the logical grounds of its reception. Nothing can be more absurd, more demonstrative of the petty narrowness of mind which cannot discern the true character of what is before it, than the claim of such a logical discussion in scripture. Moral appeals of the most touching character to all, the evidences given and slighted, are indeed found. That we can understand. But I venture to say, there is not a right-thinking man in

existence, who would not (if he had found in the New Testament a discussion on the logical grounds of evidence) have at once concluded that it was not, or at least that such a portion formed no part of, a revelation of God.

Even as to logic,169 I must beg to be entirely exempted from partnership in that of Mr. N. “Our” is a very comfortable, comprehensive word; as if his reasoning were the universal grounds of enlightened modern conviction. I must beg to think, poorly as I esteem men’s competency in such matters, that is far from being the case. Take the example Mr. N. appeals to— Paley. He has examined all these subjects with a clear and accurate mind; he has come, and written to shew why he has come, to the full conviction of the authenticity and divine authority of that to which Mr. N. denies both. What kind of logic had he?

But let us ourselves examine the evidence St. Paul affords in writing to the Corinthians. The question was, Will the saints rise again? The proof of the resurrection, insisted on as evidence, is the fact of Christ’s resurrection; for if there be no resurrection, then Christ is not raised; and the whole gospel, which is really founded on it, falls to the ground. Besides, therefore, a doctrinal statement (to which the evidence of his own mission, already afforded, gave authority), he appeals to historical proofs. And what are they? Some one apparition to an excited individual, whose imagination may have misled him? No; different and repeated manifestations of Himself by Christ to persons who very well knew Him. The apostle states (besides these manifestations of Christ taking place often to those who were intimate with Him) on one occasion He appeared

to some five hundred persons, of whom the apostle takes care to say that the greater part are still living to testify, if needed, to the truth of the statement. Now what so good evidence can you have of a person being actually there, as being repeatedly seen by those who knew him well, his daily companions; and (if prejudice or feeling may be alleged as leading a dozen of them to concur in and continue a most elaborate falsehood, and suffer for it) having the certainty of the truth confirmed by His being seen by above five hundred persons at once, who were then most of them living to tell the story? It is difficult to imagine what "our logic" could have, in the way of evidence, more convincing.

St. Paul, it is true, does not discuss its validity; but he produces what is valid; and that is just what he had to do. We are discussing it now; we do not want St. Paul for that. When he wrote, they were living to be examined who had seen Him. What other kind of evidence would Mr. N. require? What other could he have? Would he require some palpable proof of its being real? Christ eats and drinks with them after He arose from the dead. Is he still unbelieving? Thomas, happily for us, had the same scepticism; and Christ's wounded side and pierced hands extorted the acknowledgment of the fact, and of the divine person to whom such a fact testified.

And remark here, we are discussing the nature of the evidence afforded.170 It will be said, "You should bring the proof of enemies as well as friends." Were such adduced, it would have been equally alleged, they would not have known Him; and if convinced, were they to be excluded as witnesses, because they were honest enough to become friends? Must a man be necessarily a sceptic to have truth and sense? I judge a man more

honest who avows his convictions and suffers for them. I can produce thousands, ay, millions, of sceptics, who are constantly making profession, for their ease' sake, of this and many things besides, which they do not beheve. This was certainly not the course of those who received and professed the testimony of Jesus. But I do bring the best proof of that kind (that is, of thousands of enemies thoroughly convinced by the evidence they had where the facts occurred, so that they embraced and suffered for the truth of it).

Among them was St. Paul, who, not for his conviction but that he might be an eye-witness, did see Him when he was an enemy. He very modestly introduces this, with the expression of the sense of his own unworthiness, but declares expressly here in Corinthians, as he does elsewhere, that he saw the Lord. St. Paul then produces five hundred witnesses, and declares they are alive. The simplicity of the proof needed no comment. It has the dignity of a plain, unanswerable testimony. It wanted no "extravagating,"171 no "revelling" in it. It carried its own weight. He adduces his own testimony in the same simple way—"Last of all he was seen of me also."

Mr. N. asks, "Did he see Him as a man in a fleshly body, or as a glorified, heavenly form?" (Phases, p. 182.) There was such a manifestation of glory as left no mistake with any present, though they were not intended to be eye-witnesses of Jesus, nor to hear His voice. The general blaze of glory and the sound from heaven confounded them, and they fell to the earth. Paul, to whom the Lord meant to reveal Himself, then saw the glorified Lord, and heard His voice speaking to him—answered Him, received His reply at large and in detail. He made no mistake as to the glorious light; and when One who gave

such plain proof of glory, and whom he saw in a glory which surpassed the sun's brightness, declared to him Himself that He was Jesus, Paul believed the glorious One he saw from heaven. Perhaps Mr. N. might not have done so, might have been "disobedient to the heavenly vision;" but I know not that he would have proved his wisdom in his disobedience. And, though Mr. N. does not like threats, there certainly is a day which will declare it, or the grace (as the Lord grant it may be!) which has forgiven it.

But this was not all the evidence Paul had, nor all he refers to. A godly, sober man, well reported of by his enemies and the truth's, but whom he did not know, comes to him unsent for, and declares to him that he has had a vision, and that he has been sent to him by the same Jesus who had appeared to him by the way; and not only this, but that he had been sent to give him back his sight, which accordingly took place, and moreover that he should receive the Holy Ghost. Accordingly we find Saul, previously astounded by the vision, and the immense revolution it must have produced in his mind to find he was fighting against the Lord of glory, and that all the heads of his religion were the bitter enemies of the glorious Christ of the God they professed to serve—we find him, I say, boldly, with great force and conviction, proving that the Jesus whose disciples he persecuted was indeed the Christ, and soon naturally becoming himself the object of persecution, but persevering to the end.

Now was the glory seen by all—the confounding voice from heaven—the vision of His person by Saul—the detailed conversation in which he was convinced and his mission given to him, confirmed by the independent

evidence of Ananias the righteous Jew—his receiving his sight and such spiritual power as confounded the Jews that dwelt at Damascus—all confirming the reality of the positive declaration of One whom he saw in glory, that He was Jesus—evidence which changed the man's whole life —of such a character as proved a man had "lax notions of evidence,"172 because he was convinced by it? I apprehend that when he had himself seen the Lord, talked with Him, received from Him sight and power, he did not think much about notions of evidence, because he had a full revelation for himself. He might leave it easily to sceptics, and wonder at their notions, well convinced that "if his gospel was hid, it was hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them." He had seen that Just One and heard the words of His mouth. He had told him who He was. All was confirmed by signs of power and holiness and truth. What needed he more?

And remark here, that all the testimony of the apostle bears the stamp of this for some thirty years after. His gospel is "the gospel of the glory of Christ." He knows Him only in this way, knows Him for himself—his doctrine, the union of the Church with Him who said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest"—the deliverance from Jewish habits of thinking in so remarkable a way—the very hatred of the Jews perpetuated to this day—all bear the stamp of the origin of his mission by this vision of Christ. As to the character of his testimony, Mr. N. does not deny it; but effects shew, more or less, their cause. And then here it was exactly what was needed, if it be true; just the point of progress at which Christianity had

arrived. The Jews who sent Saul had denied and rejected it. The time was come to bring out the Church as such, and the Gentiles into a place common to them and to the Jews, dropping the privileges of the Jews (forfeited by rebellion persevered in against mercy); for they had "filled up their sins, and wrath was come upon them to the uttermost." The doctrine of Paul (of the reception of the Gentiles, and the building of the Church in union with its Head, Christ in glory) all flows naturally and necessarily from the vision on the way to Damascus; the sovereign grace which gave it to a Saul, stamped its character throughout.

My business is not with the logic of the apostle, but with his truth, with his testimony. I may look for it in Mr. N.; and his reasonings, which expect logic from a witness instead of his testimony, are as illogical as they are narrow and petty in their scope of apprehension of the character and effect of the evidence.

Mr. N. says, "Peter does not attest the bodily, but only the spiritual resurrection of Jesus." (Phases, p. 184.) I can only say to this, that Mr. N.'s views of Greek are as narrow as of logic. Indeed, he must be a hardy man, and have very "lax notions of evidence," who could allege Peter as one who attested only the spiritual resurrection of Jesus. He it is who declared the twelve were witnesses or it, having eaten and drunk with Him after He rose from the dead. They preached Jesus and the resurrection— that neither did His soul remain in Hades, nor His flesh see corruption. He it was who proposed that one of those who had constantly accompanied Jesus should be with them—a witness of His resurrection.

But will Mr. N. say that zwopoihbeiV" preuvmati or tw'/ p. means simply that His spirit was raised and not His body? Is that the simple force of the dative in Greek (viz., to be the direct object of the active power of the verb)? Mr. N. knows just as well as I do that it is not; and that his remark has no solid foundation whatever. For if Mr. N.'s remark has any weight, it is that z. p. meant that His spirit was made alive. On the face of it this would be absurd, because the only thing put to death, if we so take it, was the flesh; for it is said, qanatwqeiV" meVn sarciv. The enquiry as to the Messianic prophecies remains.

134 "All pious Christians feel, and all the New Testament proclaims, that faith is a moral act and a test of the moral and spiritual that is within us… faith therefore is essentially from within." (Phases, pp. 153, 154.)

135 "It had always appeared to me very strange in these divines to insist on the convincing and stupendous character of the christian miracles, and then, in reply to the objection that they were not quite convincing, to say that the defect was purposely left to 'try people's faith.' Faith in what? Not surely in the miracle, but in the truth as discernible by the heart without aid of miracle." (Phases, p. 154.)

136 There is this evident distinction between a mass of pretended miracles and scriptural ones, that these were to convince where men were strangers to the doctrine, the others to confirm existing prejudices. Besides this, I may remark that in many instances there was no room for the power of the imagination in the patient—the cure being wrought by Christ's word when He was at a distance.

137 “Suppose him to be a poor Spaniard, surrounded by false miracles, false erudition, and all the apparatus of reigning and unopposed Romanism… ‘You bid me not to keep faith with heretics: you defend murder, exile, imprisonment, fines, on men who will not submit their consciences to your authority: this I see to be wicked, though you ever so much pretend that God has taught it you.’” (Phases, p. 155.)

138 “Hardly was it started on its course when it began to be polluted by the heathenism and false philosophy around it… It became more and more debased… It sank into deep superstition and manifold moral corruption.” (Phases, pp. 159, 160.)

139 “It began in polytheistic and idolatrous barbarism, it cleared into a hard monotheism, with much superstition adhering to it. This was farther improved by successive psalmists and prophets until Judaism culminated.” (Phases, p. 160.)

140 “They [Christians] had made no such rapid progress in numbers as to imply that by the mere process of conversion they would ever christianize the empire. In fact, it was the christian soldiers in Constantine’s army who conquered the empire for Christianity.” (Phases, pp. 161, 162.)

141 “I still rested on Isaiah 53, as alone fortifying me against the Rabbis, yet with an unpleasantly increasing perception that the system of ‘double interpretation,’ in which Christians indulge is a playing fast and loose with prophecy, and is essentially dishonest.” (Phases, p. 169.)

142 “The prophecy in Daniel 9 looks specious in the authorized English version, but has evaporated in the

Greek translation, and is not acknowledged in the best German renderings." (Phases, p. 168.)

143 "The prophecies of the New Testament are not many. First, we have that of Jesus in Matthew 24, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. It is marvellously exact, down to the capture of the city, and miserable enslavement of the population; but at this point it becomes clearly and hopelessly false." (Phases, p. 169.)

144 Page 109. He cannot shake off the suspicion that Zacharias son of Barachias, was Zacharias son of Baruchus, slain in the courts of the temple during the siege of Jerusalem by Titus. (Phases, p. 129.) The dream of Joseph is "reported to us by a person wholly unknown, who wrote seventy or eighty years after the fact." This (seventy or eighty) would leave, at all events, several years' margin for the immediately after. The taking of Jerusalem was a.d. 70. If the reader asks what authority there is for this date of Matthew's gospel, the reply is, There is none: but universal testimony to the contrary. Matthew is quoted by Barnabas just after the siege of Jerusalem. But we must not expect any authority for sceptical statements. I opened Parker's "De Wette," to see why he rejected Daniel. I find "It appears Daniel is not the author of the book." How? "From its legendary contents it is full of improbabilities." Other reasons, of which a word hereafter, about as solid are given. It is merely an idle opinion given as a proof.

145 "There is nothing in them to countenance the theory of super-naturalism in the face of his great mistake as to the speedy return of Christ from heaven." (Phases, p. 170.)

146 “As for the Old Testament, if all its prophecies about Babylon, and Tyre, and Edom, and Ishmael, and the four monarchies, were both true and supernatural, what would this prove? That God had been pleased to reveal something of coming history to certain eminent men of Hebrew antiquity. That is all.” (Phases, p. 170.)

147 “With Christianity they have nothing to do.” (Phases, p. 171.)

148 “At the same time I had reached the conclusion that large deductions must be made from the credit of these old prophecies. First, as to the Book of Daniel: chapter 11 is closely historical down to Antiochus Epiphanes, after which it suddenly becomes false… Hence we have a primâ facie presumption that the book was composed in the reign of that Antiochus.” (Phases, p. 171.)

149 That is, these are idolatry (chap. 3.); blasphemous insults against God (chap. 5); and setting up to be God Himself, as far as pretending to exclude all other. (Chap. 6).

150 As the statue (chap. 2), or the beasts (Chap. 7).

151 I say picture; for I have no doubt that chapter 11:30, 31, 32, applies to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Maccabees, &c.

152 Sculptured heads of rams have been found at Persepolis, with one horn higher than the other.

153 I do not doubt that the Median branch had the supremacy at first. The prophecy so states it, as does profane history; “the highest came up last.” And Cyrus succeeded to a Median prince, though as to this, there is some confusion; but that is not the question here, because Cyrus took Babylon; and the Medes and

Persians were, undoubtedly, at that time a united empire. Evil-Merodach was slain by Cyrus before the close of the Babylonian empire.

At any rate, as the kingdom, according to Daniel, was given to the Medes and Persians, his four monarchies cannot be made out by making of the Medes and Persians successive kingdoms.

154 “The four monarchies in chapter 2 and 7 are the Babylonian, the Median, the Persian, the Macedonian.”

155 It is generally agreed now that the Septuagint was made at different epochs: the law, in the reigns of Ptolemy Soter and Philadelphus, or during their joint possession of the throne (according to Hody, about B.C. 280, in the reign of Ptolemy Evergetes). The son of Sirach seems to speak of an existing translation; and if so, of this, about B.C. 130. The other books we have no positive date for, unless it be Esther in the reign of Ptolemy Philometer.

156 “Next as to the prophecies of the Pentateuch, they abound, as to the times which precede the century of Hezekiah. Higher we cannot trace the Pentateuch.”

“The first apparent reference is by Micah 6, 5, a contemporary of Hezekiah, which proves that an account contained in our Book of Numbers was already familiar.” (Phases, p. 171, and note.)

157 Here we have slipped on from the times before Hezekiah’s century to Hezekiah’s day; that is, a margin of about a century is left. We have the Pentateuch cited 830, or at any rate 800, years before Christ, according to De Wette. Hezekiah’s accession was, say, B.C. 725. Now suppose a prophecy in the Pentateuch was fulfilled

in 750 before Christ, it was twenty-five years before Hezekiah's day, and yet fifty years after the prophecy was certainly in existence. Hence it was better to leave the date as vague as possible. The consequence is, Mr. N.'s statement proves nothing—a hundred years is rather a long epoch to leave out and pass sub silentio, in order to escape the necessity of proving one's point. We have Hezekiah's day bold enough in Phases, p. 172; the times which precede his century (ib. p. 171), as if it were the same thing; and in the note (ib. p. 171), the first reference to the Pentateuch is in Micah, his contemporary (leaving out Joel, Amos, and Hosea, preceding prophets by whom it is quoted), and that makes a bridge from the times preceding his century to his day. Had I not looked into De Wette, who proves in due form that the Pentateuch, as we have it, is cited "in the times preceding Hezekiah's century," I could never have discovered what this singular phrase was worth; or why Hezekiah's name was introduced for dating quite a different epoch from his own. But then it glides, with Micah's help, much easier into "Hezekiah's day" in Phases, p. 172.

I take the opportunity of this note to insert a statement from Lightfoot, in reference to the period at which the Magi came up, the sheet to which it properly belongs being already printed off. He supposes, as I have done, that the Magi came up some time after the birth of Christ, making the interval at least a year.

"Since, therefore, only fourteen years passed from the nativity of Christ to the death of Augustus, etc., we must reckon that Christ was not born but in the last years of Herod. Thus we conjecture:

“In his thirty-fifth, Christ was born.

“In his thirty-seventh, now newly begun, the wise men came: presently after this, was the slaying of the infants —and after a few months, the death of Herod.”

158 “That the divinity of Christ cannot be proved from the first three Gospels was confessed by all the early Church, and is proved by the labouring arguments of modern Trinitarians.” (Phases, p. 173.)

159 “I saw it infallibly to indicate that John had made both the Baptist and Jesus speak as John himself would have spoken; and that we cannot trust the historical reality of the discourses in the fourth Gospel.” (Phases, p. 173.)

160 “The monotony also of the Gospel had also excited my wonder.” (Phases, p. 172.)

161 “How was it that the other writers omitted to tell of such decisive exhibitions?… When, where, and in what circumstances did John write? It is agreed that he wrote fifty or sixty years after the events, when thejother disciples were all dead.” (Phases, pp. 174, 175.)

162 There is no “Tell it to no man” here.

163 Note, here, infidel candour. It suits Mr. N. to accept the usually received date of John’s Gospel; and he says, “It is agreed that he wrote fifty or sixty years after the events;” but it is much more universally agreed, that Matthew and Luke wrote much earlier, though the precise year is not known. But this has no weight with him.

164 These are the words: “O aged sir, we understand that you have two memories: a natural and a miraculous one… Be pleased to tell us now, Is it from your natural

or from your supernatural memory that you derive your knowledge of the miracle wrought on Lazarus?" (Phases, p. 176.)

165 Compare John 6:14; 7:40.

166 Note, here, the clear proof of power in miracles done on one at a distance unconscious of what was said.

167 "Paul shews total unconcern to the human history and earthly teaching of Jesus… The Christ with whom Paul held communion was a risen, ascended, exalted Lord… He surely therefore must have been wholly and contentedly ignorant of the oral teachings of Jesus." (Phases, pp. 180, 181.)

168 "But I now saw that this independence invalidated his testimony… It avails not to talk of the opportunities which he had of searching into the truth of the resurrection of Christ; for we see that he did not choose to avail himself of the common methods of investigation." (Phases, p. 181.)

169 "How different was the logic [Paul's] from ours! To see the full force of the last remark, we ought to conceive how many questions a Paley would have wished to have asked Paul; and how many details Paley himself, if he had had the sight, would have felt it his duty to impart to his readers." (Phases, pp. 181, 182.)

170 Mr. N. says, "He does not afford to us the means of sifting and analyzing his testimony;" but he did, in the fullest way, to those to whom he wrote—giving the names of those well known, and adducing five hundred others who were, he declared, mostly then alive; so that there was the fullest means afforded to sift his

testimony. As far as the lapse of eighteen hundred years allows, there is the amplest opportunity given now.

171 “Conceive, farther, how a Paley would have dealt with so astounding a fact, so crushing an argument, as the appearance of the risen Jesus to five hundred brethren at once! How would he have extravagated and revelled in proof! How would he have worked the topic! … Yet Paul dispatches the affair in one line.” (Phases, pp. 182, 183.) What is so crushing? If it be the effect, we have it. What more does Mr. N. want? If it be crushing, it is all we want. Why is Mr. N.’s reasoning crushed by it?

172 “How can I believe, at second hand, from the word of one whom I discern to hold such lax notions of evidence?” (Phases, p. 183.)

General Remarks

Modern Logic

One or two general remarks may be in place here.

The rationalists, having not the least idea of God's thoughts and plan in scripture, never of course can weigh the bearing of its parts in reference to it. Hence their comments are the most childish things imaginable.

Their system—"our logic"—is this: They first settle that there can be no prophecy nor miracle. Consequently, when certain facts are prophetically stated, it is an evident and necessarily conclusive proof that the book containing them was written after the event referred to. Then they discuss all the possible events alluded to, and each has his notion, so that you are in a sea of conjectures. Divers documents are discovered; good Hebrew and bad Hebrew—at any rate contradictory Hebrew is set in movement to settle the dates; and Jewish malice against the Gentiles, and every other notion imaginable, is referred to, to explain what Hezekiah's or somebody else's prophets mean. The false prophets were as good as their neighbours; only, not supporting the Levitical priesthood, they went to the wall. In my judgment, it is impossible to conceive anything more puerile.

But there is one thing in "modern logic" that I confess is a riddle to me, i.e., why such amazing time and labour is spent— why year after year some new Einleitung appears, so that a man must have a good constitution to "keep up" with the ephemeral systems which teem from German imagination, and a memory (hopeless in

attainment for most) to keep in all he gets through—why, I say, all this labour should be spent upon a book, of which the contents are but the lucubrations of a very ignorant age, a very prejudiced people, and upon productions which are the grossest impostures, pretending to be prophecies, but written après coup.

Think of persons writing long introductions to the Sibyl oracles, which they believe to be a fabrication, or even on the Koran, which is only an imposture!

Mohammedans, no doubt, discuss this; but at least they believe it. Targums and Talmuds expound or add to the law, add to the prophets; but their authors own what they comment on to be divine. It was reserved for rationalists to exercise their laborious ingenuity, one after another, in expounding and discussing the merits, dates, circumstances of publication, character, object, intentions, style, and import of what they believe to be a priestly and prejudiced imposture.

How mighty is the word of God! It not only flows deep, clear, fructifying, gladdening, saving, for him who drinks its exhaustless waters, but extorts the inevitable homage of those who deny it.

If I must go to Germany, I would say we had thought that our Rhein Ström was ours; but if its Wegthal serves as a barrier only between us and our enemies, our stream shall excite their wonder and admiration; and they will seek to profit for themselves and their glory of what they would deprive us of. Though dwelling on the other side of the barrier, they must still speak the language of this. If the wickedness of Ashdod is come in, they half speak the Jews' language.

But another difficulty presents itself here to our reception of Mr. N.'s and the rationalists' view of the origin, character, and authorship of the prophecies of scripture. The prophets delivered their prophecies to the people. They were published prophecies. "Hezekiah's prophets prophesied publicly in Hezekiah's time." Is it not a singular thing that they should have been able to impose histories as prophecies on those who heard them? They must have written them afterwards, we are told; because, after all, they do not speak of certain events. But then how could they appear to be prophets to persons who knew the history, and who must have been glad enough to have shewn that they were not prophecies, on account of the way in which these prophets denounced their conduct? Either the events are not so spoken of as to prove they wrote after them, or it is for rationalist credulity alone to suppose that they could present them at the time as prophecies of the future.

Messianic Prophecies

But I turn to what is more important. The result of the rationalist system is, that they never examine the prophetic scriptures as a whole, and hence are totally incapable of estimating the value or real bearing of the parts. Mr. N. has had greater advantages than they, and often seeks to use them against the christian faith. It is a painful thing to see how often he speaks the language of Canaan, while he labours in the spirit of a Philistine. Still he has chosen to take up the rationalist system. Now, I affirm, that according to its own clear contents, be they true or false, all scripture is Messianic from Genesis to Revelation. From the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head—yea, from "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (for according to scripture all things were created by Him and for Him),—until "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"173—"the first and the last," the testimony as well as the purposes God refer to (have as their object) Him who, the Wisdom of God before the worlds, was all His delight in this, who first descended and then ascended that He might fill all things.

Now there are two great subjects of scripture besides. That is, first, it speaks of man's sin, the change in him needed to enjoy the blessing, and the redemption accomplished, that we may be with God, with all its varied effects and glories; and, secondly, of the government of this world. Some true and devoted Christians have looked only at the first, as being the great vital necessity (as it is), but, having thus dropped the other when the scriptures which applied to it were

before their minds, they were bewildered as to the interpretation of them. There are the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow. These glories include many parts, inasmuch as God, for the administration of the fulness of times, will head up all in Christ, of things in heaven and things on earth. Every family174 in heaven and earth comes under the name of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, no doubt the Lord Jesus suffered amongst the Jews; and this made one ground of Jehovah's judicial dealings with them, as Isaiah and Zechariah and the Psalms abundantly testify. But the government of the world is the great subject treated of in the prophetic books. And we are expressly told in Deuteronomy 32:8, that "when the Most High divided unto the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel." God made Israel the centre of His earthly government. The profane history of nations, in fact, centres round it; Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, all contend for it; are known in connection with it, or actually get their full imperial possession and character at the time they acquired possession of it—I do not say by gaining possession of it, but at the epoch at which they did. Clouds of dark traditions, scarce pierced by modern researches, hang over all the rest, and obscure the history of nations, while they reveal their existence.

In the neighbourhood of Israel all is light. Prejudiced, ignorant, barbarous as they may have been, they possess and shed the light of their history on all the nations around them. It is preserved almost with modern accuracy, when a few fragments scarce rescue from

entire oblivion other ancient histories. We must disentomb the remains of Thebes and the Ninevehs to get at the history of their ancient monarchs, to know their dynasties, and say even if there were two Assyrian empires or one, while, by God's providence, that which gives some historic data to the glories of Mizraim and Asshur confirms in its detail that of which we have already the minutest particulars in Israel's authentic history. We find, in pictures yet fresh on the lore-covered walls of the country of the Pharaohs, the very kinds of overseers over the Jews making their bricks, of which Moses speaks in the Book of Exodus. Modern research alone has given the place and importance to these countries which the scriptures had already assigned them.

Now, when is this great drama of this world's history to find its denouement and its close, according to the scriptures? Not clearly till the end. It would be an absurdity to suppose such a thing—a denial of the terms in their proper meaning. Scripture places it at the end—speaks of the Lord coming in glory, of the destruction of the Assyrian, of the beast, of the false prophet, of Gog, and that by a grand day which should "burn as an oven" —a day in which the glory of the Lord should be revealed, and all flesh see it together, in which by fire and sword the Lord would plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord should be many—a day when a man should be more precious than the fine gold of Ophir; when God would punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; when the Lord would come forth out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; when the earth would uncover her blood, and no more cover her slain. Is it not equally

declared that when He came there was no man, when He called there was none to answer—that He should give His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, nor hide His face from shame and spitting—that His visage should be so marred more than any man, and His countenance more than the sons of men, even that Servant who was to be exalted and extolled, and be very high—that He was to be despised and rejected of men, to make His soul an offering for sin, and bear their iniquities— that they should look on Him whom they had pierced, and mourn for Him? Accordingly we find in the Psalms the expression of the deep sense of these sufferings, as Psalms 22, 69,102, and others.

Do not these scriptures, in their general tenor—confirmed as they are by hundreds of others and the constant course of God's moral ways in putting suffering on the path of glory—do they not most clearly point out two distinct scenes: a time when the great subject of prophecy, the Son of man, the Son of God, should suffer; and a time when glories should follow, in respect of the government of this world, and that by judgment being in His hand?

See Psalm 2, compared with the general expression of feeling in the Psalms. Is not the first a declaration of Messiah, He who is King in Zion, and Son of God, set as God's King in spite of all enemies—Adonai laughing to scorn their efforts in the day of His wrath? Yet are not the Psalms, as a whole, the expression of the sorrows and sufferings of the righteous, and of Messiah with them? Is He not David's Lord, called to sit at God's right hand, till He makes His foes His footstool, and the rod of His power goes forth from Zion, ruling in the midst of

His enemies? Such is the uniform tenor of scripture in every part. The first song we have after the exodus (Hannah's, in the beginning of Samuel) sings with a heart confiding in goodness, after its sorrows, the same truths as to Christ, naming Him as the object of hope.

Now, I ask, Is the destruction of the Assyrian connected with deliverances in power and judgment, or with the suffering of Christ?175 No one who has read scripture can hesitate for a moment as to the answer. The destruction of this powerful enemy, no doubt, will be connected with Him who suffered, but not with the time of His suffering. The two parts of His history (not the length of the interval, because that did not belong to Israel, but to the Church) are as clear and distinct as possible. The argument, therefore, of Mr. N. that Messiah could not be Jesus, because the prophecies relating to Messiah are connected with the destruction of the Assyrian (Phases, pp. 192, 193), is worse than worthless. I am persuaded he knows better than his pages bear upon their face. That these testimonies of future glory and deliverance then given were comforts to the souls of believers, and sustained their faith in the midst of evil, and the consequent judgments which fell on the beloved people, I do not doubt; and they were, I doubt not, meant to be so; but the things they prophesied of were different from the present comfort conveyed, though rationalists cannot distinguish these things, nor suppose, with the evident reason for it in the history before them, that God was merciful enough thus to consider the brokenhearted faithful whom He had taught to confide in Him.

They understood it; and, though with much obscurity of mind and many prejudices, gracious confidence in God

was maintained; and, through all their darkest times, there were those who feared the Lord and spake often one to another, and who waited for redemption in Israel. I do not spiritualize it; I believe it. I do not believe Jesus has fulfilled the prophecies which speak of the revelation of His glory in judgment and government; but I am sure that that Stone on which those who stumbled have been indeed broken, as we know, will grind to powder those on whom it shall justly fall—that "Stone which the builders rejected, and which is become the head of the corner"—when Hosanna shall be sung, not only by babes and sucklings, to confound the adversary, but by a people to whom every promise shall be fulfilled, and by a world dwelling in peace under the blessing of Him for whose law the isles shall wait, and whose sceptre shall be their confidence and their blessing—the King of righteousness and King of peace.

I will now show that on this point Mr. N. is as incorrect in detail, as he is narrow and superficial in his apprehension of the whole—more than narrow; for he connects parts of which the least attention or understanding would shew the distinctness. Indeed, his remarks prove, either that he has not attended to what he is talking about, or that he is incapable of seizing its bearing. Not a prophecy connects the Assyrian with the sufferings of Christ. But Mr. N. refers particularly to a passage in Micah, which he declares cannot apply to Jesus: "The Messiah of Micah however was not Jesus; for he was to deliver Israel from the Assyrians, and his whole description is literally warlike." (Phases, p. 192.)

We had better have the passage: it will help to shew the value of "our logic," and of rationalist comments in general. It is as follows:—"Now gather thyself in troops,

O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet-out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaiteth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land," &c. Then we have victories attributed to the Jews; and they become the source of blessing to the earth—are as a lion and yet as a dew among many people. (Micah 5.) Now, whatever the explanation of the details, which I do not think indeed exceedingly obscure, it is quite clear that the smiting of the Judge of Israel on the cheek is followed, not by the destruction of the Assyrian, but by being given up for a period designated by "until she which travaileth shall have brought forth." Whatever may be in the womb of God's purposes, till it be accomplished the Jews will be given up. There is, first, one period or order of things; the Judge of Israel not warlike, but smitten, and they given up in consequence. Then we have another, He stands and feeds in the majesty of the Lord, for now shall He be great to the ends of the earth; and when the Assyrian comes into their land, this Man—this same Jesus—will be the peace, and Israel great and glorious. Can anything be plainer than the distinction of these two conditions of the Judge of Israel, and of the two states of Israel—given up at one

time; and at another defended, in peace, victorious, and a blessing?

And this is adduced to shew “that the Messiah of Micah was not Jesus, because he was to deliver Israel from the Assyrians, and his whole description is literally warlike”—“and Micah conceived of a powerful monarch on the throne of David.” But it is a singular sign of power that He should be smitten on the cheek, and Israel given up, none could say till when—till the birth of the fruit of some great purpose of God! Such interpretation entitles us to lay aside the conclusions and the judgment of him who has pretended to speak of the passage, and to put no further confidence in anything he alleges about the scriptures.

The same train of reasoning applies to Isaiah 8 in even a stronger way. “Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.” And then he goes on to describe the misery of the great and final vexation of Israel, after He had already arrived, and then (by Messiah) their deliverance from every yoke, and His glorious reign, through this battle, not like that of ordinary warriors, but of fuel and fire. Can anything more clearly distinguish the two dates—one, God’s hiding His face from stumbling Israel; and another, the glorious subsequent deliverance by the Lord?

But it is well to pursue the spirit of rationalism into some further details.

I admit that Psalm 72176 has never yet been fulfilled. The Son of David has never yet sat on the throne of His glory as such. We may leave it; as Mr. N. himself must be a prophet to say that this prediction never will be fulfilled.

Isaiah177 11 “may be verified by Jesus hereafter.” Well, I believe the greater part will; so here we have not much to contend about. Still Mr. N. repents of the seeming candour of his acknowledgment, and so says it cannot be, for Judah and Israel had been reconciled long before the time of Augustus. When? A few of the ten tribes had from the beginning thrown themselves into the kingdom of Judah; but when were the ten tribes reconciled? I never heard of it; I thought they were carried away captive by Shalmaneser and others. That faith always owned them as a whole, from Elijah on his Carmel to Paul and James, is true; but that is nothing to the purpose. Besides, the prophet is speaking of what they will do, when as tribes they are restored in blessing and power to their land. Then will there no more be these quarrels. The distinctions of Philistines, Moab, and Ammon are lost to Mr. N.: they are not to this day by the Jew; and such distinctions are much more preserved than people suppose, and will, I doubt not, re-appear, and Israel will dispossess the people inhabiting these countries. These testimonies, as to the future, must have their credit, it is perfectly evident, from the general proof of the authority of the prophecy: no one can, as to the future, have any other proof, unless he sets up to be a prophet himself.

Zechariah And Jeremiah

I will not here discuss whether Zechariah 9-11 be really the prophecy of him whose name it bears. Many sincere Christians have doubted it, though not doubting its inspiration, partly on account of the word “Jeremiah” in Matthew. Mr. N. says it is agreed to be really from a prophet of unknown name, contemporaneous with Isaiah. But we must never trust these kinds of statements of rationalists. “It is agreed,” means merely, “it suits our views,” or “our logic.” Thus De Wette himself, in his last edition, translated by Theodore Parker—an authority logical enough, I suppose, for Mr. N.—after stating the opinion alluded to, re-examines the language and allusions to previous prophets, and concludes, “These circumstances shew that it could not have been written before the exile … therefore it may seem the most advisable to suppose that those parts which seem to belong to an earlier period were written with reference to the future, and that the form of a prediction was adopted in part.” I have nothing to do with what it is “advisable to suppose,” which is generally the just measure of rationalist proof. But the statement of De Wette gives a just measure of another thing; that is, the value of such phrases as “it is agreed.” Nor is this all. “The genuineness has been defended by Carpzov, Beckhaus, Jahn, Rosen-miiller, Koester, Hengestenberg; Blayney also attempted it,” so says Theodore Parker. It may be said, “Yes; but there are some of them at least twenty or thirty years past, some more.” But then we have the awkward fact, that De Wette, in the fifth (and, I suppose, even in the fourth) edition, more modern, and, we must suppose, more mature than the first three, undoes the previous theory started originally by Mede—

not from orthodox prejudices, certainly; but, it must be supposed, from his more exact enquiry. Koester, others think, has demonstrated the genuineness of these chapters; that is, their being the work of Zechariah.

One thing is certain, that those who do not receive it as genuine not only do not agree with one another, and demonstrate, each to his own satisfaction, what upsets the opinion of his neighbour (such as Flugge, Berthold, Hitzig, Credner, referred to by T. Parker), but they do not agree with themselves. De Wette, we have seen, concludes he was quite wrong in referring it to an earlier date. So Hitzig once placed the whole in the time of Uzziah, but is now compelled to place it after that time. In a word, it is a mere collection of guesses, without any real foundation to build a sober judgment upon. For my own part, I have not a doubt on the subject. The mention of Jeremiah,178 in Matthew, creates a critical difficulty as to the quotation; but the solution which refers Zechariah to some unknown prophet of Isaiah's time—with the convenient formula "it is agreed," when nothing at all is agreed about among themselves—is, of all solutions, the most unfounded. Very few of the boldest agree in this. The proofs that Zechariah wrote after the captivity are, to my own mind, decisive—I mean, wrote these chapters; for none question his prophesying after it. In the first place, they have always been received by the Jews as his prophecy. They form part of the Septuagint translation, which, allowing the Prophets to have been translated even a hundred years after the Pentateuch and Joshua, yet gives us Zechariah as we have it, more than a hundred and fifty years before Christ.179 Hody supposes the Prophets translated in the reign of Philometer, that is, it

was then publicly and universally received by the Jews, as we have it. But the internal evidence is to my mind demonstrative of its being written after the captivity. Chapter 10:6 to the end clearly shews the condition of Judah and Ephraim. The catting off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, connected with the dominion of Messiah, is the taking away war from the earth when the universal dominion of Messiah is established. The prophecy applies to the time “when the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be toward the Lord,” that is, to a time when the glory and dominion of the Lord, yet future, shall be completely established. The conflict of all Israel would be with Javanor Greece; astatementwhichwouldhaveno kind of sense on Mr. N.’s rationalist theory. What had Greece to do with the times of Shalmaneser?180 Indeed, as to his account of the prophecy, the best answer is to ask my reader to read it through; the flippancy of Mr. N.’s assertions will be apparent to every one who does. Obscurity we may doubtless find; but that it has “no remote or imaginable similarity to the historical life of Jesus,” is an assertion which no reader of chapter 11 would have ventured, unless one who counted on the credulity of his readers, or upon, what is always an unwise thing, their confidence in the assertions of a rationalist. The accomphshment of the prophecy in its main intent is, I have no doubt, future, as is that of all which completes and makes good God’s government of this earth; and necessarily so, for the result of that government we all know is not yet come.

I turn to Isaiah 50, 53.181 Mr. N.’s “pseudo-Isaiah,” a tide than which there cannot be a greater absurdity imaginable.

These famous rationalists, because the prophet places himself as if in Babylon,182 or at least speaks of it as a present thing, have “agreed” that the author must have lived there (as if it were not the style of the prophets in unnumbered other instances), and thus one of the most complete, perfect, and connected prophecies in existence (developing the present relationship of Israel with God, God’s intentions as to their restoration; the witness against idolatry to which they were called; rejection of Messiah; return in the latter days to idolatry; the Lord’s judgment; and their final glory unfolded in incomparable language, which does not for a moment, in point of style, admit the supposition of the Babylonish captivity as a date) has been foisted by some unknown author on the Jews, as that of Isaiah! The prophecy is the noblest incomparably of all scripture. It is very little matter, to us who believe it to come from God, whether Isaiah or any other prophet be its author, save collaterally, as shaking the general credibility of all testimony; but to suppose that nobody ever heard of the real writer, though his prophecy entitled him to the very first place, and hence that it was ascribed to a more obscure one, is perfectly incredible. Supposing I were to say Isaiah was the author of chapters 40-66, and that men have ascribed the former part to him, that it might get the credit of the great name of the author of the latter part, the only answer would be, “You may say anything.”

The reader may judge of the candour of rationalist arguments from the following: “The one continuous prophecy of Isaiah 40-66 has given a colour to the style, which is unique. Some expressions, such as ‘burden of the Lord’ are not found in it.”183 This could not be

otherwise if the subject be considered. It is a long moral reasoning with Israel on idolatry (they being witnesses of Jehovah), in contrast with Babylon—Messiah's rejection—their state in the end of time—the admission of the Gentiles—and their future glory. The burdens on particular places had no application here whatever. They would have been wholly out of place. This is a proof it is not Isaiah's! But there are peculiarities of Isaiah's language which are found to be such as are connected with essential and permanent subjects. How are these to be got rid of? "But these peculiarities, which it has in common with the genuine portion, and others adduced by Jahn and Muller, prove nothing." Will the reader guess why? "Their agreement in this respect cannot have been accidental, and must be explained as an imitation of the genuine, or in some other way."184 Our logic! Here are the reasons given by the chief of the learned rationalist school: "There is a difference in style." Of that in a moment. "There is a difference in the political relationship of the people." This is because restoration is predicted as if Jerusalem were already desolate. Were it even so, it would not be less prophecy; but the fact is, it proves nothing. The prophet, as is so constantly the case, transports himself into the times he speaks of. He does so as to John Baptist; he does so as to the times of Christ (chap. 53)—as to the times of the Jews owning Christ, in the same chapter. They say, "He was wounded," &c. So chapter 65 the admission of the Gentiles, "I am sought," &c. So in what is confessed to be Isaiah, "To us a son is born, to us a king is given." This, therefore, proves just nothing. "The internal condition of the nation is different." The proof of this is Isaiah 56:10-12: "It has only overseers or watchmen to govern it." But in Babylon it had not even these, nor is

there a word about government. Besides, we have already seen the prophet himself in the scene he describes, only that this proof contradicts the theory, because in Babylon they had nobody to govern them but Nebuchadnezzar and his successors. Moreover, the reader may see that the prophet refers to quite a new dispensation, in which those excluded by the law, and the Gentiles, would be admitted into God's house. (Chap. 56:3-7.) His house is to be called a house of prayer for all people.

It is said, that the idolatry mentioned "chapter 57:3, seqq." may very properly be ascribed to the Babylonian Jews. In verse 3 there is no idolatry mentioned at all; but this "seqq.," thus slightly passed over, has something rather awkward in it. In verse 5 it is said, "Enflaming yourselves under every green tree." It is hard to suppose that the hanging gardens made for Nebuchadnezzar's queen were the resort of the "Babylonian Jews." But, further, we have "slaying the children in the valleys under the clifts of the rocks." I am afraid this was beyond even the royal imitation of Median mountains, and that this "seqq.," if we look beyond the four letters, is a very serious obstacle to this Babylonian "internal condition of the nation." But the writer slips off with an "especially" to Isaiah 65:3-11. But here other difficulties arise. Verses 1, 2 give the call of the Gentiles, which hardly suited Babylonish times. Not only so, but verses 6, 7 declare that the Lord is going to judge them and recompense them for their iniquity—a singular threat, if they were already Babylonish Jews. We are told that in Isaiah 66:1-3, "it is not supposed that there is an actual temple existing, where service is performed." "Where is the house that ye build me?" is the word. Not in

Babylon, I suppose. But we have not our “seqq.” here; which, however, I must beg leave to introduce, as having something to say to the point in hand. “A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple”—I suppose that implies “an actual temple existing.” And yet we have the Lord coming to judgment and to plead with all flesh, yet rejecting the mass of the Jews, and only sparing a remnant; destroying these idolaters, Jew or Gentile, yet at a time when all flesh come up to worship Jehovah, and bring Israel as a clean vessel unto the house of the Lord; and the carcases of the transgressors are found in the neighbourhood, as a spectacle to them who come up.

Now what has all this to do with writing in captivity in Babylon, or even a return at that time from thence? Why do I cite these things? To shew that rationalist statements must never be credited without examining for oneself; to shew that they are most excessively “superficial,” and their authors totally ignorant of the scope of scripture, and indeed of the contents of the books on which they pretend to comment.

“There are references to earlier prophecies.” God challenges the idolatrous prophets to utter a prophecy which should shew their divine knowledge. He declares that He knows the end from the beginning—that His former words had taken effect. Well, I believe that; but how it proves that it was written when the Jews were in Babylon, or why Isaiah could not have said it, I am, I avow, unable to discover. The reader has only to examine the passages, to see that there is a general statement of the certainty of God’s word, and the folly of idolaters. No particular prophecy is referred to, though there were such, and had been many in Israel’s history. Not a word of Samuel’s fell to the ground; and a multitude of others

had appeared, noticed in the historical books, to say nothing of Joel, Amos, &c; so that this reference to God's prophetic word does not prove much.

Lastly, "there are predictions of a splendid future uttered with as much distinctness as if it were present, and not in harmony with the state of things in Isaiah's time and the actual result." Well, "there are predictions of a splendid future." But how does that shew the Jews were in Babylon? "They are uttered with great distinctness." But why could not Isaiah, the son of Amoz, do that in Jotham's, Ahaz's, or Hezekiah's reign? But they are "not in harmony with the state of things in Isaiah's time."185 What are not? The "predictions of a splendid future, uttered with as much distinctness as if it were present?" But I suppose they were "not in harmony with the state of things in Isaiah's time," or it would not have been "a splendid future" at all.

You have now, reader, all the reasons alleged by the most learned rationalists—those Mr. N. particularly refers his readers to—for stating, without leaving room for a question, that the last twenty-seven chapters of what we beheve to be the word of God by the mouth of the prophet are the production of a pseudo-Isaiah. As to the style, which does resemble in many peculiarities, and must be disposed of by supposing imitation, or in some other way, the following is the judgment of one who has examined it with the help of all the rationalist writers and the answers to them: "The argument has been completely taken out of the hands of those who regard the latter part of" his [Isaiah's] prophecies as unauthentic."186 I turn to what Mr. N. says of the contents. We have more rationalist logic here, but which I shall notice without dwelling upon. "Still," says Mr. N.,

“I could not conceal from myself that no exactness in this prophecy, however singular, could avail to make out that Jesus was the Messiah of Hezekiah’s prophets. There must be some explanation.” (Phases, p. 196.) That was settled, at any rate: the only business was to find it. Let me suggest one here to Mr. N., which he need not have been very long looking for. He had told us in the page before, that it is a pseudo-Isaiah; so that he was not one of Hezekiah’s prophets at all. How hard to remember one’s own system, if it is only made up!

Mr. N. says that the prophet “introduces to us an eminent and ‘chosen servant of God,’ whom he invests with all the evangelical virtues, and declares that he is to be a light to the Gentiles. In chapter 44 (ver. 1: also ver. 21), he is named as ‘Jacob my servant’… chapter 49:1-12 is eminently Messianic to the christian ear, except that in verse 3 the speaker distinctly declares himself to be (not Messiah, but) Israel… It is essential to understand the same ‘elect servant’ all along.” (Ib.) The word “servant” does give the running key to all this part of Isaiah. In chapter 42 the servant is described as one in whom God’s soul delighted, on whom He would put His Spirit, and He should shew forth judgment to the Gentiles. It is the well-known passage universally applied to Christ, in which Israel is not mentioned; but some one on whom the Spirit should be to shew judgment to the Gentiles. In general, in this part of the prophecy, Israel is called God’s “servant,” though in this description Christ is introduced. From chapter 42:19, Israel, “the people robbed and spoiled,” is repeatedly referred to as Jehovah’s servant in contrast with the worshippers of idols; thus in this verse (19), then all through chapter 43 (see ver. 10, 44:1), “Israel my

servant." All here is controversy with idols. Cyrus is introduced by name. (Chap. 45:1.) Jacob is God's servant. (Ver. 4.) Babylon is judged. (Chap. 46, 47.) Rebellious as Israel is, the Lord hath redeemed His servant Jacob. (Chap. 48.) This closes that part of the prophecy, with the word repeated at the end of chapter 57, "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." Jew or Gentile (for in this part of the prophecy the Spirit opens out into larger spiritual views, without departing from God's actual government in Israel), he must come under God's moral judgment.

Chapter 49 introduces an entirely new ground of controversy with Israel—their refusing to listen to and receive the Christ. Hence chapter 49 drops the question of idolatry. It introduces Israel, in a formal way, as God's servant on the scene. "Then," if Israel is he in whom Jehovah is to be glorified, "I," says some one, "have laboured in vain." If Israel is the one, my labour is fruitless. That this "I" is not Israel, as Mr. N. would make it,187 is beyond all controversy. It is easy to say, after speaking of the servant of chapter 42. "In chapter 44 he is named as 'Jacob my servant, and Israel whom I have chosen.'" (Phases, p. 196.) He is not named at all. It is easy to say, "The speaker distinctly declares himself to be (not Messiah, but) Israel, in verse 3." Yes, the speaker in verse 3 is Israel undoubtedly, and says so; but that is what makes the speaker in verse 4 say, that he has laboured in vain; and if my reader desires a proof that it is so, he has only to read verse 5—"And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength… Thus saith the

Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth," &c. Is this speaker Israel? Is it "in vain to call rationalists superficial?" I find them astonishingly so; that is all I can say.

We have, then, clearly some one substituted in the place of Israel as the servant of God in testimony, and the rejection of Him (for He was Jehovah, though He had got the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season to him that was weary, and hid not His face from shame and spitting), assigned as the reason for Jehovah's divorcing Israel. This is the subject of chapter 1. The full result in final blessing for Zion and Israel is pursued to chapter 52:12 (the remnant who listen to the servant, at the end of the age, being marked out in the midst of the sorrow in chapter 1:10). In chapter 52:13 the servant is introduced again; and it is shewn that He whose visage had been marred more than any man's shall in that day be acknowledged by Israel with profound and touching repentance, which referred itself to Him and to His rejection. He had, indeed, in His rejection, borne their iniquities. Then some truths in general terms are introduced, to allow of the bringing in of the Gentiles; and Israel, as a whole, is judged for its moral state at the end—as, indeed, in the prophet's day. This is the general character of the prophet's reasoning to the end of chapter 57. In a word, Gentiles can come in; all will be judged by their works.

Chapter 57 addresses itself specially to Israel, and goes on, after denouncing their sin, to their final glory, to the end of chapter 60. In chapter 61 Christ appears as coming in His grace, as when on earth; but His character is pursued until He executes judgment,

chapter 63:6. From chapter 63:7 to the end of chapter 64 is a touching pleading of the prophet with God for the people of His holiness. In chapter 65 we have the answer of the Lord, unfolding the letting in of the Gentiles, His patience with the Jews, their return to idolatry and extreme wickedness in the latter days, the sparing of the remnant, the rejection of the temple they would build, and their sacrifices, but the taking possession of it by the Lord in judgment, the full blessing of Jerusalem, the judgment of all flesh, and the bringing in of the whole dispersion of Israel to worship, all flesh coming up, but recognizing the judgment. In this we find the servants definitely distinguished—the remnant who hear and obey, and are faithful amid unfaithfulness (chap. 65:8, 9, 13, 15); who are then manifested as the elect people in joy, prolonging their days under the government of Him who will then no more allow evil to abide on the earth. If any one be surprised that the Jews should turn to idolatry again, I reply, The Lord declared that the unclean spirit, which went out and had left the house empty, swept, and garnished, would return with seven others worse, and the last end be worse than the first. Daniel 11 teaches, I doubt not, the same truth.

Thus we have, first, Christ set forth as the true servant of Jehovah; then, in the order of God's dealings, Israel is found to be so. Christ takes their place, they refusing to hearken; He is rejected; and then, redemption being accomplished, and Gentiles let in, the remnant of Israel in the latter day enter into the position of servants.

Mr. N. borrows the views by which infidel Jews seek to meet Christians; but the examination of the chapters leaves no ground for the argument to stand upon. "He

was wounded for our transgressions," meaning "we were wounded for our own," may suit a Jew or a rationalist, but I know not whom else. Still Mr. N. is forced to admit, "It still remained strange that in Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22, 69 there should be coincidences so close with the sufferings of Jesus;" for, after all, whenever it was, they were written centuries before that great event. No doubt. "But I reflected, that I had no proof that the narrative had not been strained by credulity, to bring it into artificial agreement with these imagined predictions of his death." (Phases, p. 197.) Had he any proof that it had? Not a trace of one. We have Mr. N.'s own answer to this question in the preceding page: "There must be some explanation."188 Quod volumus facile credimus. "And herewith," says Mr. N., "my last argument in favour of views for which I once would have laid down my life, seemed to be spent." Accordingly, he turns to arguments against these views. He continues: "Nor only so; but I now reflected that the falsity of prophecy in Daniel 7 (where the coming of a Son of man to sit in universal judgment follows immediately upon the break up of the Syrian monarchy), to say nothing of the general proof of the spuriousness of the whole book of Daniel, ought long ago to have been seen by me as of more cardinal importance. For if we believe anything at all about the discourses of Christ, we cannot doubt that He selected 'Son of man' as His favourite title, which is a direct annunciation to us that He based all His pretensions on Daniel 7 from which that title is adopted. On the whole, then, it was no longer defect of proof which presented itself; but positive disproof of the primitive and fundamental claim." (Ib. pp. 197, 198.) This is a startling leap indeed;

but I confess I am at a loss here to know the ajformhVn, the starting point of this amazing result.

In vain I look for some proof here. “Our logic” does not condescend to give a hint here of any proof of what is asserted as to Daniel 7, that the fourth beast is the Syrian monarchy. I turned to De Wette: “Chapter 7,” he tells me, “in Chaldee contains Daniel’s vision of the four beasts, which signify so many kingdoms. They are the same as in chapter 2; but their meaning is contested.” Then the note tells us “the first is Babylonian. Secondly, doubtless the bear means the Medo-Persian kingdom, though some think only the Median; in which case the three ribs are only emblems of frailty(?). Then some think the third Alexander and his successors; some, only Alexander. By the fourth beast some understand the Roman empire [a good many, no doubt]; some Alexander’s successors; some, Alexander and his successors.” In conclusion, we are told, since the last explanation is necessary in chapter 7:7, therefore those which harmonize with it are the true ones (that is, the third beast is Persia). “Necessary” it is, no doubt, to the system—there must be “some explanation.” Because, as there cannot be prophecy (for a Jewish prophet cannot, even like an oracle, hazard a mistake), therefore the last event spoken of must be in the time Daniel lived (that is, as he certainly speaks of Antiochus Epiphanes, in the days of that king). But then, if we examine the passage (which, indeed, for a theory which has settled all by begging the question, is not “necessary”), there seems to be no sort of applicability of the fourth beast to the Syrian monarchy. Four wings on a Grecian beast every one would understand. The division of the Grecian empire into four is given by Daniel himself in chapter 8.

What had they to do with Persia? Then, how does chapter 7:7 go on? It describes a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it, and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. What has this really to do with the Grecian empire, Alexander and his successors? What are the ten horns? "Four" is intelligible; but who are the ten? But with Mr. N. it is the break up of the Syrian monarchy; but there is no break up here at all—quite the contrary. The other beasts broke up; their dominion was taken away, but their lives prolonged; but this was slain, destroyed, and given to the burning flame. And this, mark, is the judgment. There is no "break up," and then the judgment. The Son of man, then, takes not the judgment, but the kingdom. The ten kings were ten kings that shall arise. So that they were future in Daniel's time, which in the rationalists' theory they were not. And who were the ten up to Antiochus Epiphanes? There had not been even ten kings of Syria. In a word, the moment the passage is looked at, there is not the smallest possible ground for Mr. N.'s assertion.

The examination of the explanation in the latter half of the chapter makes it still more absurd; for the fourth beast entirely occupies the scene. To make Alexander's successors a fourth kingdom, Alexander being the third, and to leave out Egypt, Thrace, and Macedon, is itself an absurd idea for one who is supposed to have the history before him. Again, in what were Alexander's successors more destructive, more powerful, more all-subduing than Alexander? Did the Syrian monarchs stamp with their feet more than the mighty conqueror of the East?

Who is the little horn who subdued three others? If it be Antiochus Epiphanes, how did he do that? If not, what are the three and a half times? But the fact is, there is no breaking up of a monarchy.

Christ's Ascension

I have already answered the rest of Mr. N.'s chapter. His supposition, as to Newton's system of physical truth not being alleged as a proof of his going up to heaven one night, is too absurd to refute; because the ascension of Christ is the proof and basis of all that morally affected man in His religion. It was the accomplishment and proof of the glory of His person as Mediator, on which the whole religion was founded. If that is not true, none is; it is all an imposture. This is not the case in what Mr. N. supposes. There is no analogy whatever. "Our logic" is no great thing here either. Besides, a heavenly priest, a man always in heaven, gives its character to the whole moral system. The person of the Lord Jesus Christ claims the adoring recognition of the soul; it is entitled to it as divine—as human by His work of love. This is neither history nor a proposition. Owning Him for what He is, is the first of all affections, the highest of all moral claims. Thus God Himself is known; to this He claims subjection. One thing is clear from Mr. N.'s statements as to himself—that he never knew the gospel. Indeed, he says, "Undoubtedly, I cannot prove that I ever felt as they now feel." (Phases, p. 201.)

Faith And Conscience

He adds, "My first business must be to save my soul from future punishment."189 That this may awaken the soul is quite true; but our first business is to believe that

Jesus is the Son of God. Once known, we bless God for present enjoyment, and for present sorrow; for we know He loves and has saved us, and we rejoice in hope of His glory. But Mr. N. knew nothing of this love to Jesus. Hence the doctrine of the coming of the Lord only "awoke now and then, to reproach and harass me for my unfaithfulness to it." (Phases, p. 204.) What a wretched state! instead of looking for that Bright and Morning Star, the loved object of one's soul, and saying "Even so; come, Lord Jesus," while sure, if He tarries, it is His love, His long-suffering, not willing any should perish; so that we heartily acquiesce in the delay which His love counts as long as does ours. It is the word of His patience we keep.

Mr. N. trusts much his moral powers; but he mistakes astonishingly when he talks of "conscience being benumbed by disuse," because scripture is used.190 Does a holy rule benumb conscience? It awakens it from its torpor, and, "sharper than any two-edged sword," it brings it into the presence of God. That is not the way to "benumb the conscience, by disuse"— it is its only quickener.

173 "The really Messianic prophecies appeared to me to be far fewer than is commonly supposed." (Phases, p. 192.)

174 In the English translation it is "the whole family; "but pa'sa patriav, I apprehend, is "every family" (not "the whole family"). It is in contrast with the idea "Thee only have I known of all the families of the earth," addressed to Israel.

175 "The Messiah of Micah however was not Jesus; for He was to deliver Israel from the Assyrians, and His

whole description is literally warlike… This undeniable emptiness of Micah's prophecy extends itself also to that in chapter 9 of his contemporary, Isaiah—if, indeed, that splendid passage did not really point at the child Hezekiah. Waving this doubt, it is at any rate clear that the marvellous child on the throne of David was to break the yoke of the oppressive Assyrian with a battle of confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, with burning and fuel of fire. This has nothing at all to do with Jesus." (Phases, pp. 192, 193.) The statement is incorrect. It is said, "Every battle of the warrior is … but this shall be," &c. I need not dwell on this; but it shews that an ordinary battle was not in view.

176 "Psalm 72, by the splendour of the predictions concerning the grandeur of some future king of Judah, earns the title of Messianic, because it was never fulfilled by any historical king. But it is equally certain that it has had no appreciable fulfilment in Jesus." (Phases, p. 194.)

177 "A paradisiacal state is to follow. This general description may be verified by Jesus hereafter… Indeed the latter part of the prophecy is out of place even for so late a time as the reign of Augustus… Take all these particulars together [verses 13-16], and the prophecy is neither fulfilled in the past, nor possible to be fulfilled in the future." (Phases, p. 194, 195.) "Philistines, Moab, and Ammon were distinctions entirely lost before the Christian era." (Phases, p. 194.)

178 It is well known, that Lightfoot, and other learned men, as Suren-husius, consider this as a well known formula of Jewish citations, that is, using the first book as the title of the part of scripture, as the Lord does the

Psalms—the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. It appears that, in the Talmudist's age, Jeremiah had this place; sundry reasons are given for its being there, as on account of kings ending in sorrow, and Jeremiah taking his sorrow up, while the Talmudists say Isaiah was put after the historical prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel in order to comfort the reader, &c. I am aware Stuart and others say this was only so in the Talmudist's age, not so early as Christ. Gesenius argues that it was much earlier the case, and states that Jeremiah and Ezekiel come before Isaiah in the German and French MSS; after in the Spanish. I do not pretend to decide this question; but the expression, "Jeremiah or one of the prophets," certainly tends very strongly to confirm the idea that it was so in Christ's age.

179 The postscript to Esther, in the Septuagint translation, has led authors to ascribe this date to it. Hody refers to other circumstances in his account.

180 "The prophecy which we know as Zechariah 9-11 is agreed to be really from a prophet of unknown name, contemporaneous with Isaiah. It was written while Ephraim was still a people, i.e., before the capture of Samaria by Shalmaneser, and chapter 11:1-3 appears to howl over the recent devastations of Tiglath-pileser. The prophecy is throughout full of the politics of that day." (Phases, p. 195.)

181 "Chapters 50 and 53 of the pseudo-Isaiah remained; which contained many phrases so aptly descriptive of the sufferings of Christ, and so closely knit up with our earliest devotional associations that they were the very last links of my chain that snapt. Still, I could not conceal from myself, that no exactness in this prophecy,

however singular, could avail to make out that Jesus was the Messiah of Hezekiah's prophets.

There must be some explanation; and if I did not see it, that must probably arise from prejudice and habit." (Phases, p. 196.)

182 "This prophet writes from Babylon." (Phases, p. 196.)

183 This, according to Gesenius5 is no proof of genuine writings of Isaiah (indeed the word "burden "is not in the first treatise which in the main is owned to he Isaiah's): he says that many of the collection with "burden" are not genuine, and notably the first, which has the name of Isaiah attached to it; cannot possibly be his, but belongs to the Babylonish captivity. Gesenius says that the word "burden" is added by the collector of these prophecies, not Isaiah's. Such is the certainty of these critics: one tells us chapter 40-66, cannot be Isaiah's, because the word "burden" is not there; another, that the word "burden" is not Isaiah's at all.

184 Parker's De Wette, second edition, chap. 2, p. 368, note.

185 I dare say many of my readers will be utterly at a loss to understand the meaning of this argument. I must remind them that rationalist writers always assume what they have to prove; namely, that there cannot be prophecy. Then, in order to prove that this part of Isaiah was not written by him, they allege that the description of blessing does not suit the time of Hezekiah, when such could scarcely be expected. It is clear, if it is a prophecy of Israel's portion at the end of time after Christ's rejection it is all one whether it is written in Hezekiah's time, or at some other moment. Having

assumed that it is not, the rationalist seeks about to find some time when an impostor was likely to have spoken in this way, and to try to deceive the people with similar hopes— a notable employment for time and learning, and a convenient land of logic, which assumes, without a blush, what the whole argument depends upon.

186 Davidson on Biblical Criticism.

187 “The appellations recur in chapter 45:4, and in a far more striking passage, chapter 49:1-12, which is eminently Messianic to the christian ear, except that in verse 3, the speaker distinctly declares himself to be (not Messianic, but) Israel. (Phases, p. 196.)

188 The italics are Mr. N.’s own.

189 “Secondly, Its theory was one of selfishness. That is, it inculcated that my first business must be to save my soul from future punishment, and to attain future happiness.” (Phases, p. 203.)

190 “The Protestantism which forbids us to trust our moral faculties, and pities those as ‘ without chart and compass ‘who acknowledge no infallible written code, can mean nothing else, than that’ the less occasion we have to trust our moral powers, the better; that is, it represents it as of all things most desirable, to be able to benumb conscience by disuse, under the guidance of a mind from without.” (Phases, p. 207.) Did the doctrine which “awoke only now and then, to reproach and harass me for my unfaithfulness,” benumb his conscience?