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ART. I.—*Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity, before the Lowell Institute, January, 1844.* By Mark Hopkins, D. D., President of Williams College. Boston: Published by T. R. Marvin. 1846. Svo., pp. 383.

WE fully agree with the learned author, that the evidences of our religion are exhaustless. Though truth is one, as the centre of a circle is one, it may be viewed from as many points as are to be found in the circumference. Every comparison of revealed truth, with all other truth, tends to show the harmony of the whole. According to the cast and temper and discipline of individuals, different minds will view the subject differently; and hence the body of evidence may be expected to accumulate as long as the world lasts. There are kinds of proof which are fitted to certain states of society and human opinion, and which, after serving their purpose, cease to be regarded. Thus, for example, the reasonings of the early Fathers, in their apologetical treatises, which seem to have been sufficiently cogent in their day, exhibit arguments on which we should scarcely rely in ours. Every student of theology has been struck with the very different points of view assumed on this subject, by the Germans and the English, respectively. And, with the progress of science, the increase of exegetical research, and the mutual reflections of prophecy and history, we may expect a series of devel-

opments in Christian evidences, which cannot now be so much as imagined. Because these methods of illustrating the harmony of the great central truth with the frame of nature and the constitution of man, are diverse, it does not follow that they are self-contradictory, or that any of them are untrue. To repudiate all but our own methods of proving a great moral system is a token of idle conceit or egregious ignorance. Yet this tendency has been strongly manifested in the very department which we are now considering; and the friends of Christianity have been almost ready to quarrel about the methods of defending it. The time was when great stress was laid on a class of arguments which have now been laid on the shelf, as savouring of the Peripatetic school. Then came the middle era of apologetical theology, in which the whole weight of the argument was made to rest on the historical testimony. Even Chalmers, in his earlier publications, was disposed to slight the internal evidences. At the present time, unless we mistake the signs, there is a tendency to the other extreme, in compliance with the breeze of ill-comprehended German metaphysics which has come over a certain description of minds in our colleges. This likewise manifests itself in a willingness to undervalue all arguments for the Being of God, from final causes, or the teleological mode in general, and to rely on ideas of the Reason. In regard to the Evidences of Christianity, the same persons would draw away our observation from miracles, and all historical proof, and confine us to arguments purely internal.

The fragments of Coleridge have not been without their influence, in furthering the disparagement of the methods of English theology. To all the school, with whom the very mention of the phrase 'common-sense' is as a fatal Shibboleth, and who ever seek the 'high priori road,' the shadow of this great man has been a singular defence. For he held that "all the (so-called) Demonstrations of a God" are failures; and that books like those of Derham, Paley, Nieuwentyt and Lyonet, only prove what we have already pre-supposed. In like manner, the place occupied by miracles, in the Evidences of Christianity, is much lower and less indispensable, if we may believe Coleridge, than we have usually been taught. We name him, because he has been the chief authority, or at least the earliest favourite, with those in our country who have most derogated from the credit

of the common books on this subject. Yet we have never joined in the outcry of those who would make this gifted but erroneous man an infidel; and we shall do him the justice to cite his own language on this very point, namely the true evidences of Christianity, which he makes to be these. "1. Its consistency with right Reason, I consider as the outer Court of the Temple, the common area, within which it stands. 2. The Miracles, with and through which the Religion was first revealed and attested, I regard as the steps, the vestibule, and the portal of the temple. 3. The sense, the inward feeling, in the soul of each Believer of its exceeding *desirableness*, the experience that he *needs* something, joined with the strong foretoking that the Redemption and the Graces propounded to us in Christ, are *what* he needs; this I hold to be the true FOUNDATION of the Spiritual Edifice." To this statement, in its obvious sense, we yield our full assent, and yet there are other expressions of the author which look very much like a sitting in judgment upon all that is revealed, inspired, and attested, at the tribunal of mere human reason. And this has been seized upon, by sundry in our day, who unite with it many contemptuous words in regard to all that may be denominated historical testimony. We rejoice at the absence of such one-sided predilections in Dr. Hopkins, and can therefore find no fault with the prominence which he has given to the Internal Evidence.

These Discourses, we suppose, were delivered before many who are Socinians. So we understand the author, when he says, in the Preface, that he was embarrassed in presenting the argument, since to do so fully he should have dwelt on the Atonement and the Divinity of Christ. "I should be unwilling," he says, "to have it supposed that I presented anything which I regarded as a complete system of the Evidences of Christianity, from which that argument," namely the adaptation of Christianity as providing an atonement, "was excluded." We have no doubts as to the author's opinions; we even discern them in his work; but we are sorry that he should have taken a position of defence which is so immeasurably below the true vantage ground. Especially as he has laid out his chief strength on the internal evidence, is it to be regretted, that the very portion should be excluded in which that evidence is most convincing. Yet we know such a method was not his own choice and it is

possible that the argument may prove the more useful to those in the latitude of its origin, by reason of its reticency on these very points.

At a very early stage of the discussion, the author finds himself engaged with those who object that the belief of a man is not within his own power. The reply of Dr. Hopkins is worthy of insertion, and we shall give it entire :

“ In this case, as in most others of a similar kind, the objection involves a partial truth, from which its plausibility is derived. It *is* true, within certain limitations, and under certain conditions, and with respect to certain kinds of truth, that we are not voluntary in our belief; but then these conditions and limitations are such as entirely to sever from this truth any consequence that we are not perfectly ready to admit.

“ We admit that belief is in no case directly dependent on the will; that in some cases it is entirely independent of it; but he must be exceedingly bigoted, or unobservant of what passes around him, who should affirm that the will has *no* influence. The influence of the will here is analogous to its influence in many other cases. It is as great as it is over the objects which we see. It does not depend upon the will of any man, if he turns his eyes in a particular direction, whether he shall see a tree there. If the tree be there, he must see it, and is compelled to believe in its existence; but it was entirely within his power not to turn his eyes in that direction, and thus to remain unconvinced, on the highest of all evidence, of the existence of the tree, and unimpressed by its beauty and proportion. It is not by his will directly that man has any control over his thoughts. It is not by willing a thought into the mind that he can call it there; and yet we all know that through attention and habits of association the subjects of our thoughts, are to a great extent, directed by the will.

“ It is precisely so in respect to belief; and he who denies this, denies the value of candour, and the influence of party spirit, and prejudice, and interest, on the mind. So great is this influence, however, that a keen observer of human nature, and one who will not be suspected of leaning unduly to the doctrine I now advocate, has supposed it to extend even to our belief of mathematical truth. ‘Men,’ says Hobbes, ‘appeal from custom to reason, and from reason to custom, as it serves their turn, receding from custom when their interest requires it, and setting themselves against reason as oft as reason is against them; which is the cause that the doctrine of right and wrong is perpetually disputed both by the pen and the sword; whereas the doctrine of lines and figures is not so, because men care not, in that subject, what is truth, as it is a thing that crosses no man’s ambition, or profit, or lust. For, I doubt not, if it had been a thing contrary to any man’s right of dominion, or to the interest of men that have dominion, that the three angles of a triangle should be equal to two angles of a square, that doctrine should have been, if not disputed yet by the burning of all books of geometry, suppressed, as far as he whom it concerned was able.’ ‘This,’ says Hallam, ‘from whose work I make the quotation, ‘does not exaggerate the pertinacity of mankind in resisting the evidence of truth when it thwarts the interests or passions of any particular sect or community.’* Let a man who hears the forty-seventh proposition of Euclid an-

* Literature of Europe, vol. iii.

nounced for the first time, trace the steps of the demonstration, and he *must* believe it to be true; but let him know that, as soon as he does perceive the evidence of that proposition so as to believe it on that ground, he shall lose his right eye, and he will never trace the evidence, or come to that belief which results from the force of the only proper evidence. You may tell him it is true, but he will reply that he does not know, he does not see it to be so.

“So far, then, from finding in this law of belief, the law by which it is necessitated on condition of a certain amount of evidence perceived by the mind, an excuse for any who do not receive the evidence of the Christian religion, it is in this very law that I find the ground of their condemnation. Certainly, if God has provided evidence as convincing as that for the forty-seventh of Euclid, so that all men have to do is to examine it with candour, then they must be without excuse if they do not believe. This, I suppose, God has done. He asks no one to believe except on the ground of evidence, and such evidence as ought to command assent. Let a man examine this evidence with entire candour, laying aside all regard for consequences or results, simply according to the laws of evidence, and then, if he is not convinced, I believe God will, so far forth, acquit him in the great day of account. But if God has given men such evidence that a fair, and full, and perfectly candid examination is all that is needed to necessitate belief, then, if men do not believe, it will be in this very law that we shall find the ground of their condemnation. The difficulty will not lie in their mental constitution as related to evidence, nor in the want of evidence, but in that moral condition, that state of the heart, or the will, which prevented a proper examination. ‘There seems,’ says Butler, ‘no possible reason to be given why we may not be in a state of moral probation with regard to the exercise of our understanding upon the subject of religion, as we are with regard to our behaviour in common affairs. The former is a thing as much within our power and choice as the latter.’

“And here, I remark, incidentally, we see what it is for truth to have a fair chance. There are many who think it has this when it is left free to combat error without the intervention of external force; and they seem to suppose it will, of necessity prevail. But the fact is, that the truth almost never has a fair chance with such a being as man, when the reception of it involves self-denial, or the recognition of duties to which he is indisposed. Let ‘the mists that steam up before the intellect from a corrupt heart be dispersed,’ and truths, before obscure, shine out as the noonday. Before the mind of one with the intellect of a man, but with the purity and unselfishness of an angel, the evidence of such a system as the gospel would have a fair chance.”

The author next proceeds to inquire what *kind* of evidence that is, by which Christianity is supported; and he defines it to be moral, as opposed to mathematical, and probable, as opposed to demonstrative. In these expressions, and in the exposition which follows, we find that refreshment of soul which arises from regaining one's own country and hearing one's own dialect; for we have become somewhat weary of new metaphysics. Of this we perceive, from the beginning to the end of this work, not the faintest trace, if we may except an occasional use of the term Reason, to which we make no objection. Most cordially do

we assent to the elucidation which is given, and which is full of graceful simplicity and unassuming strength.

The *grounds* of our certainty in regard to revelation next engage the author's notice, and, according to his enumeration, they are six. The first is what he calls the Reason, or what has been more familiarly known as Intuition. The second is Consciousness. The third is the Senses. The fourth is Memory. The fifth is Testimony. The sixth is Reasoning. We give these, chiefly that the reader may be impressed, as we have been impressed, with the clear, safe, tried, *British* mode of thought which he may expect in our author; an expectation moreover, in which he will not be disappointed.

As a very necessary appendage to this statement, Dr. Hopkins proceeds to inquire how far one of these sources of evidence may come into conflict with another. This leads him to state and answer Hume's famous argument; as he aptly and wittily says, "because it is still the custom of those who defend Christianity to do so, just as it was the custom of British ships to fire a gun on passing the port of Copenhagen, long after its power had been prostrated, and its influence had ceased to be felt."

The idea suggested by Dr. Hopkins, in opposition to Hume's definition of a miracle, as being a violation of the laws of nature, that for aught we know, miracles may be as truly natural events as any other, is not a new thought. It was brought forward by Bonet, the philosopher of Geneva, in his excellent work on the Evidences of Christianity. As far as we recollect, for we have not looked into the work for some years, Bonet maintains, that in the comprehensive plan of Providence, provision was made for miracles; so that they are produced by natural causes, as truly as other events. And he seems to teach, that the proof derived from a miracle in favour of the inspiration of any person arises from his previous knowledge that such an event will take place at a certain time. An opinion of the same kind seems to have been entertained by Mr. Babbage in his ninth Bridgewater Essay. But we confess, that we are by no means satisfied with this view of the subject. If it be correct, then there never has been a miracle since the beginning of the world. It is not that an event rarely happens, or that it is of a wonderful nature which renders it miraculous, it may possess both these characteristics, and yet be entirely natural.

Nor is it necessary to suppose, that in the production of a miracle a greater power is exerted, than in the production of common events. Sometimes, a miracle is effected by the mere cessation of a power which acts uniformly, unless interrupted. Common events take place according to established laws, but a miracle is produced by the operation of a new cause which does not commonly act. It is the immediate interposition of the Deity, to produce an effect, which would not be produced, unless this extraordinary power were exerted. For a man to be born and to be sustained by food, is natural, but for a man to be raised from the dead is miraculous. The author justly observes, "That if man rose from the dead as statedly, after a year, as they now do from sleep in the morning, one would be as natural as the other." But this is only to say, that the established laws of nature might have been different from what they are. Taking these laws as they exist, the rising from the dead is miraculous, not natural.

There seems to us to be danger in this concession. One of the most plausible objections to the argument from miracles is, that we are not sufficiently acquainted with the laws of nature, to be certain that any event which seems miraculous is not produced by some natural cause not before observed, or only developed in some peculiar circumstances. "That miracles were provided for, in the vast cycles of God's moral government," as our author expresses it, is a matter not disputable. As they are important events, no doubt provision was made for them, but that does not make them natural events. They were decreed to come to pass as *miracles*, and not by pre-established laws, but by the exertion of the power of God at the time, distinct from his operations in nature. It does not appear to us, upon this theory, how what is called a miracle, can furnish any conclusive proof of a divine revelation. If the event be *natural*, that is in accordance with the laws of nature, how can it furnish evidence that the man who declares that it will occur at a certain time is commissioned of God. When Christopher Columbus predicted an eclipse of the sun to the savages of America, they were induced to believe that he acted by supernatural authority; yet there was no miracle. And now, if some person should predict that a comet which had never been observed before, would appear on a certain day, this would be no more a miracle

than an eclipse of the sun. The best method of bringing this opinion to the test, is to consider it in application to some of the miracles recorded in the Bible. When Moses, by divine command, struck the rock in Horeb, the water gushed out in such abundance as to form a river. If no water existed in the rock before, here was a striking miracle, requiring the immediate exertion of omnipotence. How could this be considered a natural event? It was contrary to nature, and therefore miraculous. Again, when our Lord called Lazarus from the tomb, there was an exertion of omnipotence, and an event was the consequence which was contrary to the common laws of nature. In what sense then could this event be considered as a *natural* event?

The argument from miracles, in proof of a divine revelation, is perfectly simple. Some person declares that he has received a certain communication from God, and as a proof of it works a manifest miracle; and this evidence all impartial persons consider conclusive, because God is a God of truth, and will never exert his power to confirm the pretensions of an impostor. By enabling the individual to counteract the established laws of nature, in a case where these laws are well understood, he sets to his seal the declarations which are made by the person endowed with this miraculous power. Strictly speaking, however, the power of working miracles never resides in any creature, but is truly the power of God exerted in connexion with the word or command of a prophet or apostle. Thus the matter has always been understood by the soundest theologians; and nothing can be gained by any new hypothesis on this subject.

Hume's great mistake is, that he takes no account of God's moral government, which is in a movement always onward towards a grand consummation, in which the principles are ever the same, but the developments always new, and therefore not to be measured by experience.

When Dr. Hopkins says that *most* of those who have opposed Hume have erred, by permitting him to assume a sort of divine sacredness in the permanency of nature, we feel as if a just discrimination were needed, among his opponents. Such is not our conviction in regard to that class of arguments to which we have yielded our respect; these have uniformly regarded the question as one of pure evidence. It is not so much whether a miracle could be, as whether it could be verified. We therefore assent

to our author's views, when he proceeds to say, that all the testimony, which Hume would fondly employ against miracles, is merely negative; and when he asserts that an alleged intervention of new causes, disturbing the apparent uniformity of nature, is open to proof from testimony, like any other fact.

In common with the soundest writers on this subject, Dr. Hopkins maintains triumphantly, that Hume's principle would make it unreasonable to believe a miracle on the testimony of the senses; secondly, that he uses the term *experience* in two senses, for personal and for universal experience; thirdly, that it would exclude the belief of any new fact in scientific discovery; and fourthly, that Hume yields the ground, by admitting himself that there may be miracles of such a kind as to allow of proof from human testimony. These are the suggestions of our author, in which, as we think, the true strength of his reply to Hume resides.

Before leaving this point, we beg leave to state in a few words the ground which we have long since been taught to take, and which is therefore by no means new. The grand defensive position is this: whatever could be verified by the senses, can be verified by testimony. So far as Hume's argument is concerned, notwithstanding his pretended distinction between the marvellous and the miraculous, no strange phenomenon in physics could ever be verified; a marvel is as much against his vaunted *experience* as a miracle. Testimony avails to produce the belief of the events called miraculous. And this faith in testimony is as natural as faith in the senses. That the alleged fact is *unusual*—and Hume's argument, when stripped of its appendages, imports no more—creates no such improbability as may not be removed by observation of the senses; and that which the senses observe, may be verified by testimony.

The second lecture is on the antecedent probability of a revelation, on the probability of miracles as the attesting means, and on the connexion between the miracle and the doctrine. It is an able and ingenious chapter of the argument, but does not admit of abridgment. We especially admire the dense and beautiful conclusion, in which the author shows that the question is plainly between the Christian religion and none at all.

In the third lecture, the field of positive argument is more clearly laid out, and the question raised, whether God has in fact

made a revelation. The author most justly separates himself from those who regard it as presumptuous to study the internal evidences at all, as well as from those who think it preposterous to study them first. At the same time, he has not gone the length of Jenyns, in undervaluing the external evidences. With these, however, he does not begin. Leaving for a time the historical witnesses, he proposes to come directly to Christianity itself. The method confers a novelty on his discourses, and is exceedingly well fitted to impress the minds of such an auditory as enjoyed them. Indeed, we are disposed to believe, that this is the order of inquiry, which has existed in most instances of conversion from Deism. If we can induce an unbeliever to make himself familiar with the Bible, we have gained half the battle. Thus beginning, our author proceeds to place the alleged revelation in the centre, and to compare it, in respect to its adaptation, successively with Natural Religion—with Conscience, first as a perceiving power, and then as a power capable of improvement—with the Intellect, the Affections, the Imagination, and the Will. He next considers Christianity as a restraining power. Then follow the Experimental Evidences of Christianity, its tendency to become universal, and the impossibility of its originating with man. The Internal Evidence is then closed with a lecture on the Condition, Claims, and Character of Christ. We have here indicated the contents of eight lectures, or more than half of the work.

So much of the excellency of this treatise lies in the closeness and logical elegance of its statements, that we deliberately abstain from any attempt to epitomize. There are portions which we would gladly give entire, if it were proper so to do. For example of what we admire, we would refer to the third lecture, where the analogy is pointed out between Christianity and the works and government of God. In speaking of revelation as a 'mediatorial system,' the author feels the restraints of his position, and as we think foregoes the opportunity of bringing out the strongest internal evidence which the case admits.

In treating of natural religion, we are highly gratified to observe that Dr. Hopkins pursues a happy line between the extremes of those on the one hand who almost deify reason, and those on the other hand who deny that any thing is discoverable

in morals and religion without the Bible. So, in respect to ethics, we equally rejoice in his clear assertion, that "the utility of an action is one thing, and its rightness another," and in his teaching that "the affections are not under the immediate control of the will." Indeed, we cannot recall an instance, in which this profound thinker and accomplished scholar has vented a paradox, or given forth a single oracle which can be relished by the recent boastful improvers of our philosophy. In such a station as that which he adorns, a severe reserve of this nature is of good augury for the coming race of scholars. The remarks on experimental Evidence are excellent and striking, but we can give only the concluding part, and we ask attention to the peculiarity of the manner: it is a lesson to the ever-straining ambition of false taste.

"But the unbeliever may say, this may be all very well for the Christian himself, but it can be no evidence to me. Let us see, then, whether it would be no evidence to a candid man; whether an attempt is not made in this, as in so many other cases, to judge of religion in a way and by a standard different from those adopted in other things. To me it seems that the simple question is, whether this kind of evidence is good for the Christian himself; for if it is, then the candid inquirer is as much bound to take his testimony as he is to take that of a man who has been sick, respecting a remedy that has cured him. If a large number of persons, whose testimony would be received on any other subject, should say that they had been cured of a fever by a particular remedy, there is no man who would say that their testimony was of no account in making up his mind respecting that remedy, though he had not himself had the experience upon which the testimony was founded. If it is said that the evidence to the Christian himself is not well founded, and is fanatical, very well. Let that point be fairly settled. But if it be a good argument for him, then we ask that his *testimony* should be received on this subject as it would be on any other. The testimony is that of many witnesses; and I am persuaded that a fair examination of facts, and a careful induction, after the manner of Bacon, would settle forever the validity of this argument, and the proper force of this testimony. Every circumstance conspires to give it force. It is only from its truth that we can account for its surprising uniformity, I may say identity, in every age, in every country, and when given by persons of every variety of talent and of mental culture. Compare the statements given, respecting the power of the gospel, by Jonathan Edwards, by a converted Greenlander, a Sandwich Islander, and a Hottentot, and you will find in them all a substantial identity. They have all repented and believed, and loved and obeyed, and rejoiced; they all speak of similar conflicts, and of similar supports. And their statements respecting these things have the more force, because they are not given as testimony, but seem rather like notes, varying, indeed, in fulness and power, which may yet be recognized as coming from a similar instrument touched by a single hand. If I might allude here to the comparison, by Christ, of the Spirit to the wind, I should say that in every climate, and under all circumstances, that divine Agent calls forth the same sweet notes whenever he touches the Æolian harp of a soul renewed. And this uniform testimony does not come as a naked expression of mere feeling;

it is accompanied with a change of life, and with fruits meet for repentance, showing a permanent change of principle. This testimony, too, is given under circumstances best fitted to secure truth; given in affliction, in poverty, on the bed of death. How many, how very many, have testified in their final hour to the sustaining power of the gospel! And was there ever one, did anybody ever hear of one, who repented, at that hour of having been a Christian? Why not, then, receive this testimony? Will you make your own experience the standard of what you will believe? Then we invite you to become a Christian, and gain this experience. Will you be like the man who did not believe in the existence of Jupiter's moons, and yet refused to look through the telescope of Galileo for fear he should see them? Put the eye of faith to the gospel, and if you do not see new moral heavens, I have nothing more to say. Will you refuse to believe that there is an echo at a particular spot, to believe that the lowest sound can be conveyed around the circuit of a whispering gallery, and yet refuse to put your ear at the proper point to test these facts? Put your ear to the gospel, and if you do not hear voices gathered from three worlds, I have nothing more to say. Will you refuse to believe that the colors of the rainbow are to be seen in a drop of water, and yet not put your eye at the angle at which alone they can be seen? Or, if you think there is nothing analogous to this in moral matters, as there undoubtedly is, will you hear men speaking of the high enjoyment they derive from viewing works of art, and think them deluded and fanatical till your taste is so cultivated that you may have the same enjoyment. Surely nothing can be more unreasonable than for men to make their own experience, in such cases, a standard of belief, and yet refuse the only conditions on which that experience can be had.

"I have thus endeavored to show, first, that there is in Christianity a self-evidencing power, and that the experimental knowledge of a Christian is to him a valid ground of belief; and, secondly, that a fair-minded man will receive his testimony respecting that knowledge as he would respecting the colors in a drop, or the echo at a particular point, or the pleasures of taste, or any other experience which he had not himself been in a position to gain."

There is not in this work, according to our estimate, a more masterly portion than the lecture on the Character of Christ. We have met with a large part of the propositions before, but the connexion, the light and shade, and the *callida junctura*, make them exquisite and new. The colours on the canvass are the same with those on the palette; but what wonders are wrought when these familiar hues proceed from the pencil of a master. A nobler subject cannot occupy the pen of man; and President Hopkins has treated it with the care and delicacy of an affectionate sculptor, whose well-chiseled contour is as chaste as it is graceful. It is, after all, but a sketch; it is one, however, which makes us willing to see something more extended from the same hand, and something in which he shall give unrestrained utterance to the fulness of his belief respecting the adorable person of Christ.

In the historical department of the Evidences, Dr. Hopkins contends, we have simply to determine facts. Was there such a person as Jesus? Was he crucified? Did he rise from the dead? And he declares, most justly, that no man has a right first to examine the facts, and determine beforehand whether they are improbable. It is a striking peculiarity of the Christian religion, that its truth and power are inseparably connected with certain facts which might originally be judged of by the senses, and which are confirmed to us by testimony. And our author says with a warmth which we approve, as against the Strauss and Parker school, "I believe in no religion that is not supported by historical proof; unless Jesus Christ lived, and wrought miracles, and was crucified, and rose from the dead, Christianity is an imposture—beautiful, indeed, and utterly unaccountable, but still an imposture." In considering the external evidence, he begins with the fact, *Christianity exists*. We cannot follow him in his very beautiful amplification. To account for it, without assuming the truth of the system, is shown to be impossible. The strength of the arguments of Leslie and of Whately is here given in a succinct and convincing manner. Dr. Hopkins truly says, that, over and above testimony, the facts of Christianity are sustained by every species of evidence by which it is possible that any past event should be substantiated.

Upon the authenticity and credibility of the New Testament books, the author does not appear to have bestowed that concentration of original thought, which is manifest in the earlier lectures. This part of the discourse, though judicious and useful, bears marks of compilation, rather than resort to the sources; and this he very frankly and fully avows. He expresses likewise his embarrassment in attempting to present in a single lecture the evidence from Prophecy. Though the statement is brief of course, and by no means novel, it is interspersed with observations which betray the master's hand. He shows that this species of evidence is peculiar, conclusive, grand, and growing. The following remarks are a characteristic specimen of the author's striking way of presenting bold thoughts in modest language.

"Some are more struck with one species of evidence, and some with another; and it seems to have been the intention of God that his revelation should not be without any kind of proof that could be reasonably demanded, nor without proof

adapted to every mind. To my mind, the argument from the internal evidence is conclusive; so is that from testimony; and here is another, perhaps not less so even now, and which is destined to become overwhelming. These are independent of each other. They are like separate nets, which God has commanded those who would be 'fishers of men' to stretch across the stream, that stream which leads to the Dead Sea of infidelity, so that if any evade the first, they may be taken by the second; or, if they can possibly pass the second, that they may not escape the third.

"This evidence, so striking and peculiar, it has generally been supposed it was the object of prophecy to give. That this was one object I cannot doubt. It may even have been the sole object of some particular prophecies, as when Christ said to his disciples, respecting the treachery of Judas, 'Now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe.' But, important as this object is, it seems to me to be only incidental. Prophecy seems, like the sinlessness of Christ, to enter necessarily into the system, to be a part, not only of the evidence of the system, but of the system itself. I speak not now of this or that particular prophecy; but I say that the prophetic element causes the whole system to have a different relation to the human mind, and makes it quite another thing as a means of moral culture and discipline. It is one thing for the soldier to march without any knowledge of the places through which he is to pass, or of that to which he is going, or of the object of the campaign; and it is quite another for him to have, not a map, perhaps, but a sketch of the intended route, with the principal cities through which he is to pass dotted down, and to know what is intended to be the termination and the final object of the campaign. It is evident that in the one case a vastly wider range of sympathies will be called into action than in the other. In the latter case, the soldiers can co-operate far more intelligently with their commander-in-chief; they will feel very differently as they arrive at designated points, and far higher will be their enthusiasm as they approach the end of their march, and the hour of the final conflict draws on. And this is the relation in which God has placed us, by the prophetic element in revelation, to his great plans and purposes. He has provided that there shall be put into the hands of every soldier a sketch of the route which the church militant is to pursue in following the Captain of her salvation; and this sketch is continued all the way, till we see the bannered host passing through those triumphal arches where the everlasting doors have been lifted up for their entrance into the Jerusalem above. This is not merely to gratify curiosity; it is not merely to give an evidence which becomes completed only when it is no longer needed; but it is to furnish objects to faith and affection, and motives to effort, and to put the mind of man in that relation to the great plan of God which properly belongs to those whom he calls his children and his friends."

The closing lecture presents the evidence derived from the propagation of Christianity and its effects and tendencies. But this is preceded by a series of observations, which, however brief, are in our judgment, second in value to none in the volume. He is speaking of honest inquirers, who are vexed with doubts, and his counsels to such are most wise. "If," says he, "I may be permitted to drop a word in a more familiar way in the ear of

the candid and practical inquirer, referring to my own experience, I would say, that I have found great benefit in being willing—a lesson which we are all slow to learn—to wait.” His enlargement on this is very noble, but we leave it for the enjoyment of the reader. He proceeds to administer these cautions. First, we are not to have our confidence in the Christian religion shaken, from the mere fact that objections can be made against it. Secondly, we must distinguish between objections which lie against Christianity as such, and objections which lie equally against any scheme of belief whatever. Thirdly, we must distinguish between objections against Christianity and objections against its evidence. Fourthly, we are to observe that Christianity is not the only scheme against which objections can be made. “I have seen those to whom it never seemed to have occurred that we were thrown into this world together with great and common difficulties, and that other people could ask questions as well as they.” We owe it to the author to subjoin his own lucid summary.

“We have seen that there was nothing in the nature of the evidence, or in any conflict of the evidence of testimony and of experience, to prevent our attaining certainty on this subject. We have seen that there was no previous improbability that a Father should speak to his own child, benighted and lost; or that he should give him the evidence of miracles that he did thus speak. We have heard the voice of Nature recognizing, by her analogies, the affinities of the Christian religion with her mysterious and complex arrangements and mighty movements. We have seen the perfect coincidence of the teachings of natural religion with those of Christianity; and, when Christianity has transcended the limits of natural religion, we have seen that its teachings were still in keeping with hers, as the revelations of the telescope are with those of the naked eye. We have seen that this religion is adapted to the conscience, not only as it meets all its wants as a perceiving power, by establishing a perfect standard, but also as it quickens and improves the conscience itself, and gives it both life and peace. We have seen that, though morality was not the great object of the gospel, yet that there must spring up, in connection with a full reception of its doctrines, a morality that is perfect. We have seen that it is adapted to the intellect, to the affections, to the imagination, and to the will; that, as a restraining power, it places its checks precisely where it ought, and in the wisest way; so that, as a system of excitement, of guidance, and of restraint, it is all that is needed to carry human nature to its highest point of perfection. We have seen that it gives to him who practises it a witness within himself; and that it is fitted, and tends, to become universal, while it may be traced back to the beginning of time. Such a religion as this, whether we consider its scheme, or the circumstances of its origin, or its records in their simplicity and harmony, we have seen could no more have been originated by man than could the ocean. We have seen the lowly circumstances, the unprecedented claims, and

the wonderful character, of our Saviour. Around this religion, thus substantiated, we have seen every possible form of external evidence array itself. We have seen the authenticity of its books substantiated by every species of proof, both external and internal. We have seen that its facts and miracles were such that men could not be mistaken respecting them, and that the reality of those facts was not only attested, on the part of the original witnesses, by martyrdom, but that it is implied in institutions and observances now existing, and is the only rational account that can be given of the great fact of Christendom. We have seen, also, that the accounts given by our books are confirmed by the testimony of numerous Jewish and heathen writers. And not only have we seen that miracles were wrought, and that the great facts of Christianity are fully attested by direct evidence, but we have heard the voice of prophecy heralding the approach of him who came travelling in the greatness of his strength, and saying, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord.' We have seen this religion, cast like leaven into society, go on working by its mysterious but irresistible agency, transforming the corrupt mass. We have seen it taking the lead among those influences by which the destiny of the world is controlled; so that the stone which was cut out without hands has become a great mountain; and, finally, we have seen its blessed effects, and its tendency to fill the earth with righteousness and peace.

"These things we have seen separately; and now, when we look at them as they stand up together and give in their united testimony, do they not produce, ought they not to produce, a full, a perfect, and abiding conviction of the truth of this religion? If such evidence as this can mislead us, have we not reason to believe that the universe itself is constituted on the principle of deception?"

This has been to us a delightful book. There is a simplicity and a freshness about it which, in our overwrought age, produce a sort of surprise; as if a Grecian girl should come among a modern bevy of curled and painted madams. It is inartificial and modest: *nudaque simplicitas, purpureusque pudor*. This is however not the naïveté of unaccomplished wondering rusticity, but the quiet ease of high culture. Every page bespeaks the thinker and the scholar. Dr. Hopkins is altogether full of the thought, which is let alone; and the result is a translucent style, such as one admires in Southey's histories. If we were desired to characterize the work in a single word, that word should be *clearness*. We have never hesitated for an instant as to the meaning of a single sentence. In saying this, we say enough to condemn the book with a certain school. It is however the highest praise we can give to logic or to rhetoric. The author has so cultivated the habit of looking at things in broad daylight, that his representations offer nothing to divert or distract the mind. The necessary result is beauty of diction; the style is achromatic. There is reason to fear that a way of writing, exactly the reverse of this, will become that of our day. Here we al-

lude not merely to the contortions and high-tumbling of Carlyle and Emerson, but "pace horum virorum" to the splendid vices of Chalmers, Melvill, and (shall we confess it?) of our favourite Hamilton. The bane of each and all is desire for *instant effect*. The holding forth of a great truth in clear light does in the end insure more beauty and more force; but it is not every one who knows this. We deck and bedizen the object, lest the hasty crowd should pass it by. The ancients, and especially the Greeks, understood this better, as is evinced by every poem, statue, and gem. The paintings which have been restored to us by the excavations in Italy show an analogy which may be applied to ancient and modern composition. "The pictures of the ancients," says a great judge, "produce a pleasing effect when only surrounded by a simple line of red; while the very best of modern paintings is very much indebted to the carver and gilder for its gorgeous and burnished frame."*

We will not conceal our conviction, that the genius of the author is chiefly exhibited in the former part of the work. The same reasons which led him to begin with the Internal Evidence, cause him to treat that portion with higher relish and greater flow of native vigour. In the latter part, he is more like other writers. But where any philosophical inquiry opens its path, he pursues it with a manly force which is unusual. Dr. Hopkins is not born to be a quoter of other men's words, and in several instances he makes respectful citation of authors who are unworthy of the honour. In the true acceptation of the term, he is an original writer. Not that his propositions are always new; but that they are so *set*, and the trains of thought are so thoroughly elaborated in his own mind, that the grand result is one of surprise and high gratification. In reading the better parts of the work, for it has its inequalities, the image which oftenest strikes us is the marble of the statuary. Lest we be thought to dwell unduly on this, we take leave to say that we fully adopt the maxim, *the style is the thought*; and that we hail with the warmth of hope an example of elegant and strong simplicity, in a day when we are dazzled by the glare and inflation and spangle and false-point of a Rhodian and almost African mannerism. The secret of such writing is unattainable: what-

* Pompeiana, second series, vol. i. pp. 106, 7.

ever the imitative herd may get, they cannot get the main thing—*good sense*. Such argumentation as this rises infinitely above the vulgar attempts of many among us, who stake everything on a reputation for profundity, and who procure the proper opacity of the shallow stream by troubling the mud at the bottom.

With such a judgment as this of the author's powers, we have but one regret in regard to his performance; and this we have already hinted. It is that he should have essayed this high argument on terms which seemed to shut him out from a full unbosoming of his intimate and warm belief with respect to the doctrines of grace. So great is our satisfaction in what is present, and so earnest our desire for what is absent, that we could even wish he might consent to re-cast his system of internal evidence, in such sort as to incorporate the striking and affecting proofs derived from the doctrine of Immanuel, the incarnate God, our Saviour.

In conclusion, we think it proper to observe, that our knowledge of the author is derived almost solely from the book before us. Of his person, or his peculiar opinions, we know nothing, and we have therefore written without predilection or any incidental bias. If, however, he can give us such works as this, we would fain hope that his appearances before the public may be frequent and long-continued.

ART. II.—*Sermons and Discourses*, by Thomas Chalmers, D.D., and LL.D. First complete American Edition. In 2 vols. Robert Carter. New York, 1844.

WE propose to notice two or three of these sermons in connection with the subject of the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. This is one of those troublesome points in theology which are ever rising up to give trouble and perplexity to the anxious inquirer, and to occasion sore distress to the advanced and experienced Christian. But we are persuaded, that it is troublesome only because it is misunderstood; and we cannot allow the sentiments in the sermons on this subject, in these vol-