

§ 2. Revealed Religion

1 {409} IN determining, as above, the main features of Natural Religion, and
2 distinguishing it from the religion of philosophy or civilization, I may be accused of
3 having taken a course of my own, for which I have no sufficient warrant. Such an
4 accusation does not give me much concern. Every one who thinks on these subjects
5 takes a course of his own, though it will also happen to be the course which others take
6 besides himself. The minds of many separately bear them forward in the same
7 direction, and they are confirmed in it by each other. This I consider to be my own case;
8 if I have mis-stated or omitted notorious facts in my account of Natural Religion, if I have
9 contradicted or disregarded anything which He who speaks through my conscience has
10 told us all directly from Heaven, then indeed I have acted unjustifiably and have
11 something to unsay; but, if I have done no more than view the notorious facts of the
12 case in the medium of my primary mental experiences, under the aspects which they
13 spontaneously present to me, and with the aid of my best illative sense, I only do on one
14 side of the question what those who think differently do on the other. As they start with
15 one {410} set of first principles, I start with another. I gave notice just now that I should
16 offer my own witness in the matter in question; though of course it would not be worth
17 while my offering it, unless what I felt myself agreed with what is felt by hundreds and
18 thousands besides me, as I am sure it does, whatever be the measure, more or less, of
19 their explicit recognition of it.

20 In thus speaking of Natural Religion as in one sense a matter of private judgment, and
21 that with a view of proceeding from it to the proof of Christianity, I seem to give up the
22 intention of demonstrating either. Certainly I do; not that I deny that demonstration is
23 possible. Truth certainly, as such, rests upon grounds intrinsically and objectively and
24 abstractedly demonstrative, but it does not follow from this that the arguments
25 producible in its favour are unanswerable and irresistible. These latter epithets are
26 relative, and bear upon matters of fact; arguments in themselves ought to do, what
27 perhaps in the particular case they cannot do. The fact of revelation is in itself
28 demonstrably true, but it is not therefore true irresistibly; else, how comes it to be
29 resisted? There is a vast distance between what it is in itself, and what it is to us. Light
30 is a quality of matter, as truth is of Christianity; but light is not recognized by the blind,
31 and there are those who do not recognize truth, from the fault, not of truth, but of
32 themselves. I cannot convert men, when I ask for assumptions which they refuse to
33 grant to me; and without assumptions no one can prove anything about anything.

34 I am suspicious then of scientific demonstrations in a {411} question of concrete fact, in
35 a discussion between fallible men. However, let those demonstrate who have the gift;
36 "unusquisque in suo sensu abundet." For me, it is more congenial to my own judgment
37 to attempt to prove Christianity in the same informal way in which I can prove for certain
38 that I have been born into this world, and that I shall die out of it. It is pleasant to my
39 own feelings to follow a theological writer, such as Amort, who has dedicated to the
40 great Pope, Benedict XIV., what he calls "a new, modest, and easy way of
41 demonstrating the Catholic Religion." In this work he adopts the argument merely of
42 the *greater* probability [Note 1]; I prefer to rely on that of an *accumulation* of various

43 probabilities; but we both hold (that is, I hold with him), that from probabilities we may
44 construct legitimate proof, sufficient for certitude. I follow him in holding, that, since a
45 Good {412} Providence watches over us, He blesses such means of argument as it has
46 pleased Him to give us, in the nature of man and of the world, if we use them duly for
47 those ends for which He has given them; and that, as in mathematics we are justified by
48 the dictate of nature in withholding our assent from a conclusion of which we have not
49 yet a strict logical demonstration, so by a like dictate we are not justified, in the case of
50 concrete reasoning and especially of religious inquiry, in waiting till such logical
51 demonstration is ours, but on the contrary are bound in conscience to seek truth and to
52 look for certainty by modes of proof, which, when reduced to the shape of formal
53 propositions, fail to satisfy the severe requisitions of science [Note 2].

54 Here then at once is one momentous doctrine or principle, which enters into my own
55 reasoning, and which another ignores, viz. the providence and intention of God; and of
56 course there are other principles, explicit or implicit, which are in like circumstances. It is
57 not wonderful then, that, while I can prove Christianity {413} divine to my own
58 satisfaction, I shall not be able to force it upon any one else. Multitudes indeed I ought
59 to succeed in persuading of its truth without any force at all, because they and I start
60 from the same principles, and what is a proof to me is a proof to them; but if any one
61 starts from any other principles but ours, I have not the power to change his principles,
62 or the conclusion which he draws from them, any more than I can make a crooked man
63 straight. Whether his mind will ever grow straight, whether I can do anything towards its
64 becoming straight, whether he is not responsible, responsible to his Maker, for being
65 mentally crooked, is another matter; still the fact remains, that, in any inquiry about
66 things in the concrete, men differ from each other, not so much in the soundness of their
67 reasoning as in the principles which govern its exercise, that those principles are of a
68 personal character, that where there is no common measure of minds, there is no
69 common measure of arguments, and that the validity of proof is determined, not by any
70 scientific test, but by the illative sense.

71 Accordingly, instead of saying that the truths of Revelation depend on those of Natural
72 Religion, it is more pertinent to say that belief in revealed truths depends on belief in
73 natural. Belief is a state of mind; belief generates belief; states of mind correspond to
74 each other; the habits of thought and the reasonings which lead us on to a higher state
75 of belief than our present, are the very same which we already possess in connexion
76 with the lower state. Those Jews became Christians in Apostolic times who were
77 already what {414} may be called crypto-Christians; and those Christians in this day
78 remain Christian only in name, and (if it so happen) at length fall away, who are nothing
79 deeper or better than men of the world, *savants*, literary men, or politicians.

80 That a special preparation of mind is required for each separate department of inquiry
81 and discussion (excepting, of course, that of abstract science) is strongly insisted upon
82 in well-known passages of the Nicomachean ethics. Speaking of the variations which
83 are found in the logical perfection of proof in various subject-matters, Aristotle says, "A
84 well-educated man will expect exactness in every class of subject, according as the
85 nature of the thing admits; for it is much the same mistake to put up with a

86 mathematician using probabilities, and to require demonstration of an orator. Each man
87 judges skillfully in those things about which he is well-informed; it is of these that he is a
88 good judge; viz. he, in each subject-matter, is a judge, who is well-educated in that
89 subject-matter, and he is in an absolute sense a judge, who is in all of them well-
90 educated." Again: "Young men come to be mathematicians and the like, but they cannot
91 possess practical judgment; for this talent is employed upon individual facts, and these
92 are learned only by experience; and a youth has not experience, for experience is only
93 gained by a course of years. And so, again, it would appear that a boy may be a
94 mathematician, but not a philosopher, or learned in physics, and for this reason,—
95 because the one study deals with abstractions, while the other studies gain {415} their
96 principles from experience, and in the latter subjects youths do not give assent, but
97 make assertions, but in the former they know what it is that they are handling."

98 These words of a heathen philosopher, laying down broad principles about all
99 knowledge, express a general rule, which in Scripture is applied authoritatively to the
100 case of revealed knowledge in particular;—and that not once or twice only, but
101 continually, as is notorious. For instance:—"I have understood," says the Psalmist,
102 "more than all my teachers, because Thy testimonies are my meditation." And so our
103 Lord: "He that hath ears, let him hear." "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the
104 doctrine." And "He that is of God, heareth the words of God." Thus too the Angels at the
105 Nativity announce "Peace to men of good will." And we read in the Acts of the Apostles
106 of "Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened to attend to those things which were said by
107 Paul." And we are told on another occasion, that "as many as were ordained," or
108 disposed by God, "to life everlasting, believed." And St. John tells us, "He that knoweth
109 God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth us not; by this we know the spirit of
110 truth, and the spirit of error."

111 1.

112 Relying then on these authorities, human and Divine, I have no scruple in beginning the
113 review I shall take of Christianity by professing to consult for those only whose minds
114 are properly prepared for it; and by being {416} prepared, I mean to denote those who
115 are imbued with the religious opinions and sentiments which I have identified with
116 Natural Religion. I do not address myself to those, who in moral evil and physical see
117 nothing more than imperfections of a parallel nature; who consider that the difference in
118 gravity between the two is one of degree only, not of kind; that moral evil is merely the
119 offspring of physical, and that as we remove the latter so we inevitably remove the
120 former; that there is a progress of the human race which tends to the annihilation of
121 moral evil; that knowledge is virtue, and vice is ignorance; that sin is a bugbear, not a
122 reality; that the Creator does not punish except in the sense of correcting; that
123 vengeance in Him would of necessity be vindictiveness; that all that we know of Him, be
124 it much or little, is through the laws of nature; that miracles are impossible; that prayer to
125 Him is a superstition; that the fear of Him is unmanly; that sorrow for sin is slavish and
126 abject; that the only intelligible worship of Him is to act well our part in the world, and the
127 only sensible repentance to do better in future; that if we do our duties in this life, we
128 may take our chance for the next; and that it is of no use perplexing our minds about the

129 future state, for it is all a matter of guess. These opinions characterize a civilized age;
130 and if I say that I will not argue about Christianity with men who hold them, I do so, not
131 as claiming any right to be impatient or peremptory with any one, but because it is
132 plainly absurd to attempt to prove a second proposition to those who do not admit the
133 first. {417}

134 I assume then that the above system of opinion is simply false, inasmuch as it
135 contradicts the primary teachings of nature in the human race, wherever a religion is
136 found and its workings can be ascertained. I assume the presence of God in our
137 conscience, and the universal experience, as keen as our experience of bodily pain, of
138 what we call a sense of sin or guilt. This sense of sin, as of something not only evil in
139 itself, but an affront to the good God, is chiefly felt as regards one or other of three
140 violations of His law. He Himself is Sanctity, Truth, and Love; and the three offences
141 against His Majesty are impurity, inveracity, and cruelty. All men are not distressed at
142 these offences alike; but the piercing pain and sharp remorse which one or other inflicts
143 upon the mind, till habituated to them, brings home to it the notion of what sin is, and is
144 the vivid type and representative of its intrinsic hatefulness.

145 Starting from these elements, we may determine without difficulty the class of
146 sentiments, intellectual and moral, which constitute the formal preparation for entering
147 upon what are called the Evidences of Christianity. These evidences, then, presuppose
148 a belief and perception of the Divine Presence, a recognition of His attributes and an
149 admiration of His Person viewed under them; a conviction of the worth of the soul and of
150 the reality and momentousness of the unseen world, an understanding that, in
151 proportion as we partake in our own persons of the attributes which we admire in Him,
152 we are dear to Him; a consciousness on the contrary that we are far from exemplifying
153 them, a consequent insight into our guilt and misery, an eager hope of reconciliation to
154 Him, a {418} desire to know and to love Him, and a sensitive looking-out in all that
155 happens, whether in the course of nature or of human life, for tokens, if such there be,
156 of His bestowing on us what we so greatly need. These are specimens of the state of
157 mind for which I stipulate in those who would inquire into the truth of Christianity; and
158 my warrant for so definite a stipulation lies in the teaching, as I have described it, of
159 conscience and the moral sense, in the testimony of those religious rites which have
160 ever prevailed in all parts of the world, and in the character and conduct of those who
161 have commonly been selected by the popular instinct as the special favourites of
162 Heaven.

163 2.

164 I have appealed to the popular ideas on the subject of religion, and to the objects of
165 popular admiration and praise, as illustrating my account of the preparation of mind
166 which is necessary for the inquirer into Christianity. Here an obvious objection occurs, in
167 noticing which I shall be advanced one step farther in the work which I have undertaken.

168 It may be urged, then, that no appeal will avail me, which is made to religions so
169 notoriously immoral as those of paganism; nor indeed can it be made without an

170 explanation. Certainly, as regards ethical teaching, various religions, which have been
171 popular in the world, have not supplied any; and in the corrupt state in which they
172 appear in history, they are little better than schools of imposture, cruelty, and impurity.
173 Their objects of worship were immoral as well as false, and their founders {419} and
174 heroes have been in keeping with their gods. This is undeniable, but it does not destroy
175 the use that may be made of their testimony. There is a better side of their teaching;
176 purity has often been held in reverence, if not practised; ascetics have been in honour;
177 hospitality has been a sacred duty; and dishonesty and injustice have been under a
178 ban. Here then, as before, I take our natural perception of right and wrong as the
179 standard for determining the characteristics of Natural Religion, and I use the religious
180 rites and traditions which are actually found in the world, only so far as they agree with
181 our moral sense.

182 This leads me to lay down the general principle, which I have all along implied:—that no
183 religion is from God which contradicts our sense of right and wrong. Doubtless; but at
184 the same time we ought to be quite sure that, in a particular case which is before us, we
185 have satisfactorily ascertained what the dictates of our moral nature are, and that we
186 apply them rightly, and whether the applying them or not comes into question at all. The
187 precepts of a religion certainly may be absolutely immoral; a religion which simply
188 commanded us to lie, or to have a community of wives, would *ipso facto* forfeit all claim
189 to a divine origin. Jupiter and Neptune, as represented in the classical mythology, are
190 evil spirits, and nothing can make them otherwise. And I should in like manner repudiate
191 a theology which taught that men were created in order to be wicked and wretched.

192 I alluded just now to those who consider the doctrine of retributive punishment, or of
193 divine vengeance, to be incompatible with the true religion; but I do not see {420} how
194 they can maintain their ground. In order to do so, they have first to prove that an act of
195 vengeance must, as such, be a sin in our own instance; but even this is far from clear.
196 Anger and indignation against cruelty and injustice, resentment of injuries, desire that
197 the false, the ungrateful, and the depraved should meet with punishment, these, if not in
198 themselves virtuous feelings, are at least not vicious; but, first from the certainty that, if
199 habitual, it will run into excess and become sin, and next because the office of
200 punishment has not been committed to us, and further because it is a feeling unsuitable
201 to those who are themselves so laden with imperfection and guilt, therefore vengeance,
202 in itself allowable, is forbidden to us. These exceptions do not hold in the case of a
203 perfect being, and certainly not in the instance of the Supreme Judge. Moreover, we
204 see that even men on earth have different duties, according to their personal
205 qualifications and their positions in the community. The rule of morals is the same for
206 all; and yet, notwithstanding, what is right in one is not necessarily right in another.
207 What would be a crime in a private man to do, is a crime in a magistrate not to have
208 done: still wider is the difference between man and his Maker. Nor must it be forgotten,
209 that, as I have observed above, retributive justice is the very attribute under which God
210 is primarily brought before us in the teachings of our natural conscience.

211 And further, we cannot determine the character of particular actions, till we have the
212 whole case before us out of which they arise; unless, indeed, they are in themselves

213 distinctively vicious. We all feel the force {421} of the maxim, "Audi alteram partem." It is
214 difficult to trace the path and to determine the scope of Divine Providence. We read of a
215 day when the Almighty will condescend to place His actions in their completeness
216 before His creatures, and "will overcome when He is judged." If, till then, we feel it to be
217 a duty to suspend our judgment concerning certain of His actions or precepts, we do no
218 more than what we do every day in the case of an earthly friend or enemy, whose
219 conduct in some point requires explanation. It surely is not too much to expect of us that
220 we should act with parallel caution, and be "memores conditionis nostræ" as regards
221 the acts of our Creator. There is a poem of Parnell's which strikingly brings home to us
222 how differently the divine appointments will look in the light of day, from what they
223 appear to be in our present twilight. An Angel, in disguise of a man, steals a golden cup,
224 strangles an infant, and throws a guide into the stream, and then explains to his
225 horrified companion, that acts which would be enormities in man, are in him, as God's
226 minister, deeds of merciful correction or of retribution.

227 Moreover, when we are about to pass judgment on the dealings of Providence with
228 other men, we shall do well to consider first His dealings with ourselves. We cannot
229 know about others, about ourselves we do know something; and we know that He has
230 ever been good to us, and not severe. Is it not wise to argue from what we actually
231 know to what we do not know? It may turn out in the day of account, that unforgiven
232 souls, while charging His laws with injustice in the case of {422} others, may be unable
233 to find fault with His dealings severally towards themselves.

234 As to those various religions which, together with Christianity, teach the doctrine of
235 eternal punishment, here again we ought, before we judge, to understand, not only the
236 whole state of the case, but what is meant by the doctrine itself. Eternity, or
237 endlessness, is in itself mainly a negative idea, though the idea of suffering is positive.
238 Its fearful force, as an element of future punishment, lies in what it excludes; it means
239 never any change of state, no annihilation or restoration; but what, considered
240 positively, it adds to suffering, we do not know. For what we know, the suffering of one
241 moment may in itself have no bearing, or but a partial bearing, on the suffering of the
242 next; and thus, as far as its intensity is concerned, it may vary with every lost soul. This
243 may be so, unless we assume that the suffering is necessarily attended by a
244 consciousness of duration and succession, by a present imagination of its past and its
245 future, by a sustained power of realizing its continuity [Note 3]. As I have already said,
246 the great mystery is, not that evil has no end, but that it had a beginning. But I submit
247 the whole subject to the Theological School.

248 3.

249 One of the most important effects of Natural Religion on the mind, in preparation for
250 Revealed, is the anticipation {423} which it creates, that a Revelation will be given. That
251 earnest desire of it, which religious minds cherish, leads the way to the expectation of it.
252 Those who know nothing of the wounds of the soul, are not led to deal with the
253 question, or to consider its circumstances; but when our attention is roused, then the
254 more steadily we dwell upon it, the more probable does it seem that a revelation has

255 been or will be given to us. This pre-sentiment is founded on our sense, on the one
256 hand, of the infinite goodness of God, and, on the other, of our own extreme misery and
257 need—two doctrines which are the primary constituents of Natural Religion. It is difficult
258 to put a limit to the legitimate force of this antecedent probability. Some minds will feel it
259 to be so powerful, as to recognize in it almost a proof, without direct evidence, of the
260 divinity of a religion claiming to be the true, supposing its history and doctrine are free
261 from positive objection, and there be no rival religion with plausible claims of its own.
262 Nor ought this trust in a presumption to seem preposterous to those who are so
263 confident, on *à priori* grounds, that the moon is inhabited by rational beings, and that the
264 course of nature is never crossed by miraculous agency. Any how, very little positive
265 evidence seems to be necessary, when the mind is penetrated by the strong
266 anticipation which I am supposing. It was this instinctive apprehension, as we may
267 conjecture, which carried on Dionysius and Damaris at Athens to a belief in Christianity,
268 though St. Paul did no miracle there, and only asserted the doctrines of the Divine
269 Unity, the Resurrection, and the universal judgment, while, on the other hand, it had had
270 {424} no tendency to attach them to any of the mythological rites in which the place
271 abounded.

272 Here my method of argument differs from that adopted by Paley in his Evidences of
273 Christianity. This clear-headed and almost mathematical reasoner postulates, for his
274 proof of its miracles, only thus much, that, under the circumstances of the case, a
275 revelation is not improbable. He says, "We do not assume the attributes of the Deity, or
276 the existence of a future state." "It is not necessary for our purpose that these
277 propositions (*viz.* that a future existence should be destined by God for His human
278 creation, and that, being so destined, He should have acquainted them with it,) be
279 capable of proof, or even that, by arguments drawn from the light of nature, they can be
280 made out as probable; it is enough that we are able to say of them, that they are not so
281 violently improbable, so contradictory to what we already believe of the Divine power
282 and character, that [they] ought to be rejected at first sight, and to be rejected by
283 whatever strength or complication of evidence they be attested." He has such
284 confidence in the strength of the testimony which he can produce in favour of the
285 Christian miracles, that he only asks to be allowed to bring it into court.

286 I confess to much suspicion of legal proceedings and legal arguments, when used in
287 questions whether of history or of philosophy. Rules of court are dictated by what is
288 expedient on the whole and in the long run; but they incur the risk of being unjust to the
289 claims of particular cases. Why am I to begin with taking up a position not my own, and
290 unclothing my mind of that large outfit of existing thoughts, principles, likings, {425}
291 desires, and hopes, which make me what I am? If I am asked to use Paley's argument
292 for my own conversion, I say plainly I do not want to be converted by a smart syllogism
293 [Note 4]; if I am asked to convert others by it, I say plainly I do not care to overcome
294 their reason without touching their hearts. I wish to deal, not with controversialists, but
295 with inquirers.

296 I think Paley's argument clear, clever, and powerful; and there is something which looks
297 like charity in going out into the highways and hedges, and compelling men to come in;

298 but in this matter some exertion on the part of the persons whom I am to convert is a
299 condition of a true conversion. They who have no religious earnestness are at the
300 mercy, day by day, of some new argument or fact, which may overtake them, in favour
301 of one conclusion or the other. And how after all, is a man better for Christianity, who
302 has never felt the need of it or the desire? On the other hand, if he has longed for a
303 revelation to enlighten him and to cleanse his heart, why may he not use, in his inquiries
304 after it, that just and reasonable anticipation of its probability, which such longing has
305 opened the way to his entertaining?

306 Men are too well inclined to sit at home, instead of stirring themselves to inquire
307 whether a revelation has been given; they expect its evidences to come to them without
308 their trouble; they act, not as suppliants, but as judges [Note 5]. Modes of argument
309 such as Paley's, encourage this state of mind; they allow men to forget that revelation is
310 a boon, not a debt on the part of the {426} Giver; they treat it as a mere historical
311 phenomenon. If I was told that some great man, a foreigner, whom I did not know, had
312 come into town, and was on his way to call on me, and to go over my house, I should
313 send to ascertain the fact, and meanwhile should do my best to put my house into a
314 condition to receive him. He would not be pleased if I left the matter to take its chance,
315 and went on the maxim that seeing was believing. Like this is the conduct of those who
316 resolve to treat the Almighty with dispassionateness, a judicial temper,
317 clearheadedness, and candour. It is the way with some men, (surely not a good way,) to
318 say, that without these lawyerlike qualifications conversion is immoral. It is their way, a
319 miserable way, to pronounce that there is no religious love of truth where there is fear of
320 error. On the contrary, I would maintain that the fear of error is simply necessary to the
321 genuine love of truth. No inquiry comes to good which is not conducted under a deep
322 sense of responsibility, and of the issues depending upon its determination. Even the
323 ordinary matters of life are an exercise of conscientiousness; and where conscience is,
324 fear must be. So much is this acknowledged just now, that there is almost an
325 affectation, in popular literature, in the case of criticisms on the fine arts, on poetry, and
326 music, of insisting upon conscientiousness in writing, painting, or singing; and that
327 earnestness and simplicity of mind, which makes men fear to go wrong in these minor
328 matters, has surely a place in the most serious of all undertakings.

329 It is on these grounds that, in considering Christianity, {427} I start with conditions
330 different from Paley's; not, however, as undervaluing the force and the serviceableness
331 of his argument, but as preferring inquiry to disputation in a question about truth.

332 4.

333 There is another point on which my basis of argument differs from Paley's. He argues
334 on the principle that the credentials, which ascertain for us a message from above, are
335 necessarily in their nature miraculous; nor have I any thought of venturing to say
336 otherwise. In fact, all professed revelations have been attended, in one shape or
337 another, with the profession of miracles; and we know how direct and unequivocal are
338 the miracles of both the Jewish Covenant and of our own. However, my object here is to
339 assume as little as possible as regards facts, and to dwell only on what is patent and

340 notorious; and therefore I will only insist on those coincidences and their cumulations,
341 which, though not in themselves miraculous, do irresistibly force upon us, almost by the
342 law of our nature, the presence of the extraordinary agency of Him whose being we
343 already acknowledge. Though coincidences rise out of a combination of general laws,
344 there is no law of those coincidences [Note 6]; they have a character of their own, and
345 seem left by Providence in His own hands, as the channel by which, inscrutable to us,
346 He may make known to us His will.

347 For instance, if I am a believer in a God of Truth and Avenger of dishonesty, and know
348 for certain that a {428} market-woman, after calling on Him to strike her dead if she had
349 in her possession a piece of money not hers, did fall down dead on the spot, and that
350 the money was found in her hand, how can I call this a blind coincidence, and not
351 discern in it an act of Providence over and above its general laws? So, certainly,
352 thought the inhabitants of an English town, when they erected a pillar as a record of
353 such an event at the place where it occurred. And if a Pope excommunicates a great
354 conqueror; and he, on hearing the threat, says to one of his friends, "Does he think the
355 world has gone back a thousand years? does he suppose the arms will fall from the
356 hands of my soldiers?" and within two years, on the retreat over the snows of Russia, as
357 two contemporary historians relate, "famine and cold tore their arms from the grasp of
358 the soldiers," "they fell from the hands of the bravest and most robust," and "destitute of
359 the power of raising them from the ground, the soldiers left them in the snow;" is not this
360 too, though no miracle, a coincidence so special, as rightly to be called a Divine
361 judgment? So thinks Alison, who avows with religious honesty, that "there is something
362 in these marvellous coincidences beyond the operation of chance, and which even a
363 Protestant historian feels himself bound to mark for the observation of future years."
364 [Note 7] And so, too, of a cumulation of coincidences, separately less striking; when
365 Spelman sets about establishing the fact of the ill-fortune which in many instances has
366 followed upon acts of sacrilege among us, then, even though in many instances it has
367 not followed, and in many instances he {429} exaggerates, still there may be a large
368 residuum of cases which cannot be properly resolved into the mere accident of
369 concurrent causes, but must in reason be considered the warning voice of God. So, at
370 least, thought Gibson, Bishop of London, when he wrote, "Many of the instances, and
371 those too well-attested, are so terrible in the event, and in the circumstances so
372 surprising, that no considering person can well pass them over."

373 I think, then, that the circumstances under which a professed revelation comes to us,
374 may be such as to impress both our reason and our imagination with a sense of its
375 truth, even though no appeal be made to strictly miraculous intervention—in saying
376 which I do not mean of course to imply that those circumstances, when traced back to
377 their first origins, are not the outcome of such intervention, but that the miraculous
378 intervention addresses us at this day in the guise of those circumstances; that is, of
379 coincidences, which are indications, to the illative sense of those who believe in a Moral
380 Governor, of His immediate Presence, especially to those who in addition hold with me
381 the strong antecedent probability that, in His mercy, He will thus supernaturally present
382 Himself to our apprehension.

384 Now as to the fact; has what is so probable in anticipation actually been granted to us,
 385 or have we still to look out for it? It is very plain, supposing it has been granted, which
 386 among all the religions of the world comes from God: and if it is not that, a revelation
 387 {430} is not yet given, and we must look forward to the future. There is only one Religion
 388 in the world which tends to fulfil the aspirations, needs, and foreshadowings of natural
 389 faith and devotion. It may be said, perhaps, that, educated in Christianity, I merely judge
 390 of it by its own principles; but this is not the fact. For, in the first place, I have taken my
 391 idea of what a revelation must be, in good measure, from the actual religions of the
 392 world; and as to its ethics, the ideas with which I come to it are derived not simply from
 393 the Gospel, but prior to it from heathen moralists, whom Fathers of the Church and
 394 Ecclesiastical writers have imitated or sanctioned; and as to the intellectual position
 395 from which I have contemplated the subject, Aristotle has been my master. Besides, I
 396 do not here single out Christianity with reference simply to its particular doctrines or
 397 precepts, but for a reason which is on the surface of its history. It alone has a definite
 398 message addressed to all mankind. As far as I know, the religion of Mahomet has
 399 brought into the world no new doctrine whatever, except, indeed, that of its own divine
 400 origin; and the character of its teaching is too exact a reflection of the race, time, place,
 401 and climate in which it arose, to admit of its becoming universal. The same dependence
 402 on external circumstances is characteristic, so far as I know, of the religions of the far
 403 East; nor am I sure of any definite message from God to man which they convey and
 404 protect, though they may have sacred books. Christianity, on the other hand, is in its
 405 idea an announcement, a preaching; it is the depository of truths beyond human
 406 discovery, momentous, {431} practical, maintained one and the same in substance in
 407 every age from its first, and addressed to all mankind. And it has actually been
 408 embraced and is found in all parts of the world, in all climates, among all races, in all
 409 ranks of society, under every degree of civilization, from barbarism to the highest
 410 cultivation of mind. Coming to set right and to govern the world, it has ever been, as it
 411 ought to be, in conflict with large masses of men, with the civil power, with physical
 412 force, with adverse philosophies; it has had successes, it has had reverses; but it has
 413 had a grand history, and has effected great things, and is as vigorous in its age as in its
 414 youth. In all those respects it has a distinction in the world and a pre-eminence of its
 415 own; it has upon it *primâ facie* signs of divinity; I do not know what can be advanced by
 416 rival religions to match prerogatives so special; so that I feel myself justified in saying
 417 either Christianity is from God, or a revelation has not yet been given to us.

418 It will not surely be objected, as a point in favour of some of the Oriental religions, that
 419 they are older than Christianity by some centuries; yet, should it be so said, it must be
 420 recollected that Christianity is only the continuation and conclusion of what professes to
 421 be an earlier revelation, which may be traced back into prehistoric times, till it is lost in
 422 the darkness that hangs over them. As far as we know, there never was a time when
 423 that revelation was not,—a revelation continuous and systematic, with distinct
 424 representatives and an orderly succession. And this, I suppose, is far more than can be
 425 said for the religions of the East. {432}

426 6.

427 Here, then, I am brought to the consideration of the Hebrew nation and the Mosaic
428 religion, as the first step in the direct evidence for Christianity.

429 The Jews are one of the few Oriental nations who are known in history as a people of
430 progress, and their line of progress is the development of religious truth. In that their
431 own line they stand by themselves among all the populations, not only of the East, but
432 of the West. Their country may be called the classical home of the religious principle, as
433 Greece is the home of intellectual power, and Rome that of political and practical
434 wisdom. Theism is their life; it is emphatically their natural religion, for they never were
435 without it, and were made a people by means of it. This is a phenomenon singular and
436 solitary in history, and must have a meaning. If there be a God and Providence, it must
437 come from Him, whether immediately or indirectly; and the people themselves have
438 ever maintained that it has been His direct work, and has been recognized by Him as
439 such. We are apt to treat pretences to a divine mission or to supernatural powers as of
440 frequent occurrence, and on that score to dismiss them from our thoughts; but we
441 cannot so deal with Judaism. When mankind had universally denied the first lesson of
442 their conscience by lapsing into polytheism, is it a thing of slight moment that there was
443 just one exception to the rule, that there was just one people who, first by their rulers
444 and priests, and afterwards by their own unanimous zeal, professed, as their
445 distinguishing doctrine, {433} the Divine Unity and Government of the world, and that,
446 moreover, not only as a natural truth, but as revealed to them by that God Himself of
447 whom they spoke,—who so embodied it in their national polity, that a Theocracy was
448 the only name by which it could be called? It was a people founded and set up in
449 Theism, kept together by Theism, and maintaining Theism for a period from first to last
450 of 2000 years, till the dissolution of their body politic; and they have maintained it since
451 in their state of exile and wandering for 2000 years more. They begin with the beginning
452 of history, and the preaching of this august dogma begins with them. They are its
453 witnesses and confessors, even to torture and death; on it and its revelation are
454 moulded their laws and government; on this their politics, philosophy, and literature are
455 founded; of this truth their poetry is the voice, pouring itself out in devotional
456 compositions which Christianity, through all its many countries and ages, has been
457 unable to rival; on this aboriginal truth, as time goes on, prophet after prophet bases his
458 further revelations, with a sustained reference to a time when, according to the secret
459 counsels of its Divine Object and Author, it is to receive completion and perfection,—till
460 at length that time comes.

461 The last age of their history is as strange as their first. When that time of destined
462 blessing came, which they had so accurately marked out, and were so carefully waiting
463 for—a time which found them, in fact, more zealous for their Law, and for the dogma it
464 enshrined, than they ever had been before—then, instead of any final favour coming on
465 them from above, {434} they fell under the power of their enemies, and were
466 overthrown, their holy city razed to the ground, their polity destroyed, and the remnant
467 of their people cast off to wander far and away through every land except their own, as
468 we find them at this day; lasting on, century after century, not absorbed in other

469 populations, not annihilated, as likely to last on, as unlikely to be restored, as far as
470 outward appearances go, now as a thousand years ago. What nation has so grand, so
471 romantic, so terrible a history? Does it not fulfil the idea of, what the nation calls itself, a
472 chosen people, chosen for good and evil? Is it not an exhibition in a course of history of
473 that primary declaration of conscience, as I have been determining it, "With the upright
474 Thou shalt be upright, and with the froward Thou shalt be froward"? It must have a
475 meaning, if there is a God. We know what was their witness of old time; what is their
476 witness now?

477 Why, I say, was it that, after so memorable a career, when their sins and sufferings
478 were now to come to an end, when they were looking out for a deliverance and a
479 Deliverer, suddenly all was reversed for once and for all? They were the favoured
480 servants of God, and yet a peculiar reproach and note of infamy is affixed to their name.
481 It was their belief that His protection was unchangeable, and that their Law would last
482 for ever;—it was their consolation to be taught by an uninterrupted tradition, that it could
483 not die, except by changing into a new self, more wonderful than it was before;—it was
484 their faithful expectation that a promised King was coming, the Messiah, who would
485 {435} extend the sway of Israel over all people;—it was a condition of their covenant,
486 that, as a reward to Abraham, their first father, the day at length should dawn when the
487 gates of their narrow land should open, and they should pour out for the conquest and
488 occupation of the whole earth;—and, I repeat, when the day came, they did go forth,
489 and they did spread into all lands, but as hopeless exiles, as eternal wanderers.

490 Are we to say that this failure is a proof that, after all, there was nothing providential in
491 their history? For myself, I do not see how a second portent obliterates a first; and, in
492 truth, their own testimony and their own sacred books carry us on towards a better
493 solution of the difficulty. I have said they were in God's favour under a covenant,—
494 perhaps they did not fulfil the conditions of it. This indeed seems to be their own
495 account of the matter, though it is not clear what their breach of engagement was. And
496 that in some way they did sin, whatever their sin was, is corroborated by the well-known
497 chapter in the Book of Deuteronomy, which so strikingly anticipates the nature of their
498 punishment. That passage, translated into Greek as many as 350 years before the
499 siege of Jerusalem by Titus, has on it the marks of a wonderful prophecy; but I am not
500 now referring to it as such, but merely as an indication that the disappointment, which
501 actually overtook them at the Christian era, was not necessarily out of keeping with the
502 original divine purpose, or again with the old promise made to them, and their confident
503 expectation of its fulfilment. Their national ruin, which came instead of aggrandizement,
504 is described in that book, in spite {436} of all promises, with an emphasis and
505 minuteness which prove that it was contemplated long before, at least as a possible
506 issue of the fortunes of Israel. Among other inflictions which should befall the guilty
507 people, it was told them that they should fall down before their enemies, and should be
508 scattered throughout all the kingdoms of the earth; that they never should have quiet in
509 those nations, or have rest for the sole of their foot; that they were to have a fearful
510 heart and languishing eyes, and a soul consumed with heaviness; that they were to
511 suffer wrong, and to be crushed at all times, and to be astonished at the terror of their
512 lot; that their sons and daughters were to be given to another people, and they were to

513 look and to sicken all the day, and their life was ever to hang in doubt before them, and
514 fear to haunt them day and night; that they should be a proverb and a by-word of all
515 people among whom they were brought; and that curses were to come on them, and to
516 be signs and wonders on them and their seed for ever. Such are some portions, and not
517 the most terrible, of this extended anathema; and its partial accomplishment at an
518 earlier date of their history was a warning to them, when the destined time drew near,
519 that, however great the promises made to them might be, those promises were
520 dependent on the terms of the covenant which stood between them and their Maker,
521 and that, as they had turned to curses at that former time, so they might turn to curses
522 again.

523 This grand drama, so impressed with the characters of supernatural agency, concerns
524 us here only in its bearing upon the evidence for the divine origin of {437} Christianity;
525 and it is at this point that Christianity comes upon the historical scene. It is a notorious
526 fact that it issued from the Jewish land and people; and had it no other than this
527 historical connexion with Judaism, it would have some share in the prestige of its
528 original home. But it claims to be far more than this; it professes to be the actual
529 completion of the Mosaic Law, the promised means of deliverance and triumph to the
530 nation, which that nation itself, as I have said, has since considered to be, on account of
531 some sin or other, withheld or forfeited. It professes to be, not the casual, but the
532 legitimate offspring, heir, and successor of the Mosaic covenant, or rather to be
533 Judaism itself, developed and transformed. Of course it has to prove its claim, as well
534 as to prefer it; but if it succeeds in doing so, then all those tokens of the Divine
535 Presence, which distinguish the Jewish history, at once belong to it, and are a portion of
536 its credentials.

537 And at least the *primâ facie* view of its relations towards Judaism is in favour of these
538 pretensions. It is an historical fact, that, at the very time that the Jews committed their
539 unpardonable sin, whatever it was, and were driven out from their home to wander over
540 the earth, their Christian brethren, born of the same stock, and equally citizens of
541 Jerusalem, did also issue forth from the same home, but in order to subdue that same
542 earth and make it their own; that is, they undertook the very work which, according to
543 the promise, their nation actually was ordained to execute; and, with a method of their
544 own indeed, and with a new end, and {438} only slowly and painfully, but still really and
545 thoroughly, they did it. And since that time the two children of the promise have ever
546 been found together—of the promise forfeited and the promise fulfilled; and whereas the
547 Christian has been in high place, so the Jew has been degraded and despised—the
548 one has been "the head," and the other "the tail;" so that, to go no farther, the fact that
549 Christianity actually has done what Judaism was to have done, decides the controversy,
550 by the logic of facts, in favour of Christianity. The prophecies announced that the
551 Messiah was to come at a definite time and place; Christians point to Him as coming
552 then and there, as announced; they are not met by any counter claim or rival claimant
553 on the part of the Jews, only by their assertion that He did not come at all, though up to
554 the event they had said He was then and there coming. Further, Christianity clears up
555 the mystery which hangs over Judaism, accounting fully for the punishment of the
556 people, by specifying their sin, their heinous sin. If, instead of hailing their own Messiah,

557 they crucified Him, then the strange scourge which has pursued them after the deed,
558 and the energetic wording of the curse before it, are explained by the very strangeness
559 of their guilt;—or rather, their sin is their punishment; for in rejecting their Divine King,
560 they *ipso facto* lost the living principle and tie of their nationality. Moreover, we see what
561 led them into error; they thought a triumph and an empire were to be given to them at
562 once, which were given indeed eventually, but by the slow and gradual growth of many
563 centuries and a long warfare. {439}

564 On the whole, then, I observe, on the one hand, that, Judaism having been the channel
565 of religious traditions which are lost in the depth of their antiquity, of course it is a great
566 point for Christianity to succeed in proving that it is the legitimate heir to that former
567 religion. Nor is it, on the other, of less importance to the significance of those early
568 traditions to be able to determine that they were not lost together with their original
569 store-house, but were transferred, on the failure of Judaism, to the custody of the
570 Christian Church. And this apparent correspondence between the two is in itself a
571 presumption for such correspondence being real. Next, I observe, that if the history of
572 Judaism is so wonderful as to suggest the presence of some special divine agency in its
573 appointments and fortunes, still more wonderful and divine is the history of Christianity;
574 and again it is more wonderful still, that two such wonderful creations should span
575 almost the whole course of ages, during which nations and states have been in
576 existence, and should constitute a professed system of continued intercourse between
577 earth and heaven from first to last amid all the vicissitudes of human affairs. This
578 phenomenon again carries on its face, to those who believe in a God, the probability
579 that it has that divine origin which it professes to have; and, (when viewed in the light of
580 the strong presumption which I have insisted on, that in God's mercy a revelation from
581 Him will be granted to us, and of the contrast presented by other religions, no one of
582 which professes to be a revelation direct, definite, and integral as this is,)—this
583 phenomenon, I {440} say, of cumulative marvels raises that probability, both for
584 Judaism and Christianity, in religious minds, almost to a certainty.

585 7.

586 If Christianity is connected with Judaism as closely as I have been supposing, then
587 there have been, by means of the two, direct communications between man and his
588 Maker from time immemorial down to this day—a great prerogative such, that it is
589 nowhere else even claimed. No other religion but these two professes to be the organ of
590 a formal revelation, certainly not of a revelation which is directed to the benefit of the
591 whole human race. Here it is that Mahometanism fails, though it claims to carry on the
592 line of revelation after Christianity; for it is the mere creed and rite of certain races,
593 bringing with it, as such, no gifts to our nature, and is rather a reformation of local
594 corruptions, and a return to the ceremonial worship of earlier times, than a new and
595 larger revelation. And while Christianity was the heir to a dead religion, Mahometanism
596 was little more than a rebellion against a living one. Moreover, though Mahomet
597 professed to be the Paraclete, no one pretends that he occupies a place in the Christian
598 Scriptures as prominent as that which the Messiah fills in the Jewish. To this especial
599 prominence of the Messianic idea I shall now advert; that is, to the prophecies of the

600 Old Scriptures, and to the argument which they furnish in favour of Christianity; and
601 though I know that argument might be clearer and more exact than it is, and I do not
602 pretend here to {441} do much more than refer to the fact of its existence, still so far
603 forth as we enter into it, will it strengthen our conviction of the claim to divinity both of
604 the Religion which is the organ of those prophecies, and of the Religion which is their
605 object.

606 Now that the Jewish Scriptures were in existence long before the Christian era, and
607 were in the sole custody of the Jews, is undeniable; whatever then their Scriptures
608 distinctly say of Christianity, if not attributable to chance or to happy conjecture, is
609 prophetic. It is undeniable too, that the Jews gathered from those books, that a great
610 Personage was to be born of their stock, and to conquer the whole world and to become
611 the instrument of extraordinary blessings to it; moreover, that he would make his
612 appearance at a fixed date, and that, the very date when, as it turned out, our Lord did
613 actually come. This is the great outline of the prediction, and if nothing more could be
614 said about them than this, to prove as much as this is far from unimportant. And it is
615 undeniable, I say, both that the Jewish Scriptures contain thus much, and that the Jews
616 actually understood them as containing it.

617 First, then, as to what Scripture declares. From the book of Genesis we learn that the
618 chosen people was set up in this one idea, viz. to be a blessing to the whole earth, and
619 that, by means of one of their own race, a greater than their father Abraham. This was
620 the meaning and drift of their being chosen. There is no room for mistake here; the
621 divine purpose is stated from the first with the utmost precision. At the very time of
622 Abraham's call, he is told of it:—"I will make of thee {442} a great nation, and in thee
623 shall all tribes of the earth be blessed." Thrice is this promise and purpose announced in
624 Abraham's history; and after Abraham's time it is repeated to Isaac, "in thy seed shall all
625 the nations of the earth be blessed;" and after Isaac to Jacob, when a wanderer from his
626 home, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed." And from
627 Jacob the promise passes on to his son Judah, and that with an addition, viz. with a
628 reference to the great Person who was to be the world-wide blessing, and to the date
629 when He should come. Judah was the chosen son of Jacob, and his staff or sceptre,
630 that is, his patriarchal authority, was to endure till a greater than Judah came, so that
631 the loss of the sceptre, when it took place, was the sign of his near approach. "The
632 sceptre," says Jacob on his death-bed, "shall not be taken away from Judah, until He
633 come for whom it is reserved," or "who is to be sent," "and He shall be the expectation
634 of the nations." [Note 8] {443}

635 Such was the categorical prophecy, literal and unequivocal in its wording, direct and
636 simple in its scope. One man, born of the chosen tribe, was the destined minister of
637 blessing to the whole world; and the race, as represented by that tribe, was to lose its
638 old self in gaining a new self in Him. Its destiny was sealed upon it in its beginning. An
639 expectation was the measure of its life. It was created for a great end, and in that end it
640 had its ending. Such were the initial communications made to the chosen people, and
641 there they stopped;—as if the outline of promise, so sharply cut, had to be effectually
642 imprinted on their minds, before more knowledge was given to them; as if, by the long

643 interval of years which passed before the more varied prophecies in type and figure,
644 after the manner of the East, were added, the original notices might stand out in the
645 sight of all in their severe explicitness, as archetypal truths, and guides in interpreting
646 whatever else was obscure in its wording or complex in its direction.

647 And in the second place it is quite clear that the Jews did thus understand their
648 prophecies, and did expect their great Ruler, in the very age in which our Lord came,
649 and in which they, on the other hand, were destroyed, losing their old self without
650 gaining their new. Heathen historians shall speak for the fact. "A persuasion had
651 possession of most of them," says Tacitus, speaking of their resistance to the Romans,
652 "that it was contained in the ancient books of the priests, that at that very time the East
653 should prevail, and that men who issued from Judea should obtain the {444} empire.
654 The common people, as is the way with human cupidity, having once interpreted in their
655 own favour this grand destiny, were not even by their reverses brought round to the
656 truth of facts." And Suetonius extends the belief:—"The whole East was rife with an old
657 and persistent belief, that at that time persons who issued from Judea, should possess
658 the empire." After the event of course the Jews drew back, and denied the correctness
659 of their expectation, still they could not deny that the expectation had existed. Thus the
660 Jew Josephus, who was of the Roman party, says that what encouraged them in the
661 stand they made against the Romans was "an ambiguous oracle, found in their sacred
662 writings, that at that date some one of them from that country should rule the world." He
663 can but pronounce that the oracle was ambiguous; he cannot state that they thought it
664 so.

665 Now, considering that at that very time our Lord did appear as a teacher, and founded
666 not merely a religion, but (what was then quite a new idea in the world) a system of
667 religious warfare, an aggressive and militant body, a dominant Catholic Church, which
668 aimed at the benefit of all nations by the spiritual conquest of all; and that this warfare,
669 then begun by it, has gone on without cessation down to this day, and now is as living
670 and real as ever it was; that that militant body has from the first filled the world, that it
671 has had wonderful successes, that its successes have on the whole been of extreme
672 benefit to the human race, that it has imparted an intelligent notion about the Supreme
673 {445} God to millions who would have lived and died in irreligion, that it has raised the
674 tone of morality wherever it has come, has abolished great social anomalies and
675 miseries, has elevated the female sex to its proper dignity, has protected the poorer
676 classes, has destroyed slavery, encouraged literature and philosophy, and had a
677 principal part in that civilization of human kind, which, with some evils, has still on the
678 whole been productive of far greater good,—considering, I say, that all this began at the
679 destined, expected, recognized season when the old prophecy said that in one Man,
680 born of the tribe of Judah, all the tribes of the earth were to be blessed,—I feel I have a
681 right to say (and my line of argument does not lead me to say more), that it is at the very
682 least a remarkable coincidence; that is, one of those coincidences which, when they are
683 accumulated, come close upon the idea of miracle, as being impossible without the
684 Hand of God directly and immediately in them.

685 When we have got as far as this, we may go on a great deal farther. Announcements,
686 which could not be put forward in the front of the argument, as being figurative, vague,
687 or ambiguous, may be used validly and with great effect, when they have been
688 interpreted for us, first by the prophetic outline, and still more by the historical object. It
689 is a principle which applies to all matters on which we reason, that what is only a maze
690 of facts, without order or drift prior to the due explanation, may, when we once have that
691 explanation, be located and adjusted with great facility in all its separate parts, as we
692 know is the case as regards the {446} motions of the heavenly bodies since the
693 hypothesis of Newton. In like manner the event is the true key to prophecy, and
694 reconciles conflicting and divergent descriptions by embodying them in one common
695 representative. Thus it is that we learn how, as the prophecies said, the Messiah could
696 both suffer, yet be victorious; His kingdom be Judaic in structure, yet evangelic in spirit;
697 and His people the children of Abraham, yet "sinners of the Gentiles." These seeming
698 paradoxes, are only parallel and akin to those others which form so prominent a feature
699 in the teaching of our Lord and His Apostles.

700 As to the Jews, since they lived before the event, it is not wonderful, that, though they
701 were right in their general interpretation of Scripture as far as it went, they stopped short
702 of the whole truth; nay, that even when their Messiah came, they could not recognize
703 Him as the promised King as we recognize Him now;—for we have the experience of
704 His history for nearly two thousand years, by which to interpret their Scriptures. We may
705 partly understand their position towards those prophecies, by our own at present
706 towards the Apocalypse. Who can deny the superhuman grandeur and impressiveness
707 of that sacred book! yet, as a prophecy, though some outlines of the future are
708 discernible, how differently it affects us from the predictions of Isaiah! either because it
709 relates to undreamed-of events still to come, or because it has been fulfilled long ago in
710 events which in their detail and circumstance have never become history. And the same
711 remark applies doubtless to portions of the Messianic prophecies still; but, if their {447}
712 fulfilment has been thus gradual in time past, we must not be surprised though portions
713 of them still await their slow but true accomplishment in the future.

714 Notes

715 1. "Scopus operis est, planiorem Protestantibus aperire viam ad veram Ecclesiam. Cùm
716 enim hactenus Polemici nostri insudarint toti in demonstrandis siugulis Religionis
717 Catholicæ articulis, in id ego unum incumbo, ut hæc tria evincam. Primo: Articulos
718 fundamentales, Religionis Catholicæ esse evidenter credibiliores oppositis, &c. &c. ...
719 Demonstratio autem hujus novæ modestæ, ac facilis viæ, quâ ex articulis
720 fundamentalibus solùm probabilioribus adstruitur summa Religionis certitudo, hæc est:
721 Deus, cùm sit sapiens ac providus, tenetur, Religionem à se revelatam reddere
722 evidenter credibiliorem religionibus falsis. Imprudenter enim vellet, suam Religionem ab
723 hominibus recipi, nisi eam redderet evidenter credibiliorem religionibus cæteris. Ergo illa
724 religio, quæ est evidenter credibilior cæteris, est ipsissima religio a Deo revelata,
725 adeoque certissimè vera, seu demonstrata. Atqui, &c. ... Motivum aggrediendi novam
726 hanc, modestam, ac facilem viam illud præcipuum est, quòd observem, Protestantium
727 plurimos post innumeros concertationum fluctus, in iis tandem consedissee syrtibus, ut

728 credant, nullam dari religionem undequaue demonstratam, &c. ... Ratiociniis denique
729 opponunt ratiocinia; præjudiciis præjudicia ex majoribus sua," &c.

730 2. "Docet naturalis ratio, Deum, ex ipsâ naturâ bonitatis ac providentiæ suæ, si velit in
731 mundo habere religionem puram, eamque instituere ac conservare usque in finem
732 mundi, teneri ad eam religionem reddendam evidenter credibiliorem ac verisimiliorem
733 cæteris, &c. &c. ... Ex hoc sequitur ulterius; certitudinem moralem de verâ Ecclesiâ
734 elevari posse ad certitudinem metaphysicam, si homo advertat, certitudinem moralem
735 absolutè fallibilem substare in materiâ religionis circa ejus constitutiva fundamentalia
736 speciali providentiæ divinæ, præservatrici ab omni errore ... Itaque homo semel ex serie
737 historicâ actorum perductus ad moralem certitudinem de auctore, foundatione,
738 propagatione, et continuatione Ecclesiæ Christianæ, per reflexionem ad existentiam
739 certissimam providentiæ divinæ in materiâ religionis, à priori lumine naturæ certitudine
740 metaphysicâ notam, eo ipso eadem infallibili certitudine intelliget, argumenta de
741 auctore," &c.—Amort. *Ethica Christiana*, p. 252.

742 3. "De hac damnatorum saltem hominum respiratione, nihil adhuc certi decretum est ab
743 Ecclesiâ Catholicâ: ut propterea non temerè, tanquam absurda, sit explodenda
744 sanctissimorum Patrum hæc opinio: quamvis à communi sensu Catholicorum hoc
745 tempore sit aliena."—Petavius de Angelis, fin. *Vide Note III.*

746 4. *Vide supra*, p. 302.

747 5. *Vide the author's Occasional Sermons*, No. 5.

748 6. *Vide supra*, p. 84.

749 7. *History*, vol. viii.

750 8. Before and apart from Christianity, the Samaritan Version reads, "donec veniat
751 Pacificus, et ad ipsum congregabuntur populi." The Targum, "donec veniat Messias,
752 cujus est regnum, et obedient populi." The Septuagint, "donec veniant quæ reservata
753 sunt illi" (or "donec veniat cui reservatum est"), "et ipse expectatio gentium." And so
754 again the Vulgate, "donec veniat qui mittendus est, et ipse erit expectatio gentium."

755 The ingenious translation of some learned men ("donec venerit Juda Siluntem," i.e. "the
756 tribe-sceptre shall not depart from Judah till Judah comes to Shiloh"), with the
757 explanation that the tribe of Judah had the leadership in the war against the
758 Canaanites, *vide Judges i. 1, 2; xx. 18* (i. e. after Joshua's *death*), and that possibly,
759 and for what we know, the tribe gave up that war-command at Shiloh, *vide Joshua xviii.*
760 1 (i.e. in Joshua's *life-time*), labours under three grave difficulties: 1. That the patriarchal
761 sceptre is a temporary war-command. 2. That this command belonged to Judah at the
762 very time that it belonged to Joshua. And 3. That it was finally lost to Judah (Joshua
763 living), before it had been committed to Judah (Joshua dead).