

CHRISTIANITY

THE

LOGIC OF CREATION

BY

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"THE CHURCH OF CHRIST NOT AN ECCLESIASTICISM," ETC.

"Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari."

VIRGIL.

LONDON

WILLIAM WHITE, 36 BLOOMSBURY STREET

1857

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PREFACE.

THE following Letters were actually written to a friend in London, and are published at his suggestion. They are themselves but a preface to a larger discourse upon the same theme, which the writer hopes some day to accomplish. Christianity was the revelation of an utterly unsuspected life of God within the strictest limits of human nature; and, like all true revelation of spiritual things, was an inverse form of its own interior substance. For this is the distinction between revelation, properly so called, and information, that the one constitutes an inverted image of the truth, the other a direct image; or that the one is symbolic and speaks mainly to the soul, while the other is purely statistical and addresses chiefly the senses. Hence it is that revelation has always shielded and fostered human freedom, while mere information is sure to crush it. None of the sects exhibit so servile a temper as those who pretend to the most authoritative information about spiritual things. Look at the Swedenborgians, for example. And *Mediumship*, as it is called, is growing to be the aspiration and profession of thousands, who are

not ashamed to depose their proper human force and faculty, in order to become the unresisting puppets of a remorseless spiritual jugglery.

The life which Christ revealed has of course always been operative in the unseen depths of human experience, or in what we call the spiritual world. But it is now becoming, if not sensibly, at all events scientifically, discernible in the astonishing phenomena of man's æsthetic or spontaneous action. This is the momentous lesson with which all history is fraught: yet none are so utterly inattentive to it as our ecclesiastics and politicians, who, of all living persons, should be the most interested to give it diligent heed and furtherance. The theory of their eminent place binds them fairly to interpret history: if they persistently fail to do this, it is only because history has escaped from their keeping, and is transacting itself in far more hopeful and veracious quarters. Only the craziest scaffolding of ecclesiastical and political routine still hides from our gaze the majestic human house God has been silently building up from the beginning: doubtless some sharp revolutionary jolt will ere long prostrate that crazy scaffolding, and bring us face to face with the kindly and eternal reality.

Paris, July 1, 1857.

LETTER I.

Paris, Sept. 17th, 1856.

MY DEAR W.

I AM obliged to you for the pamphlets in relation to the doctrine of Christ's glorification; but it is very clear to me that the disputants have no just conception of the spiritual scope of Christianity. They appear both alike immersed in the clouds of the letter, and obviously regard Christianity as concerned—even as to its spiritual contents—only with certain *personal* facts about Christ. The letter of revelation is of course constituted by those facts: but unless I am greatly deceived, our disputants view its substance or spirit as somehow subject to the same limitation. If I should ask them what the Lord is according to the spiritual sense of the word, I fear that they would feel logically bound to answer that "He is a finite person like you or me, only inconceivably elevated and glorious, existing in the spiritual world as a monarch exists in his kingdom, and thence ruling the natural world."

But this is a total misconception of the true