

**HISTORIC ASPECTS OF THE À PRIORI
ARGUMENT CONCERNING THE BEING AND
ATTRIBUTES OF GOD. BEING FOUR LECTURES,
DELIVERED IN EDINBURGH IN NOVEMBER 1884
ON THE HONYMAN-GILLESPIE FOUNDATION
WITH APPENDICES AND A POSTSCRIPT**

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JOHN GIBSON CAZENOVE

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WITH APPENDICES AND A POSTSCRIPT

BY
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PREFACE

FIFTY-THREE years ago, that is to say in A.D. 1833, a Scottish gentleman, Mr. William Honyman Gillespie, published a work on the *à priori* argument for the Being and Attributes of God—a work of which some account will be found in the following pages.

The widow of this gentleman, who died in A.D. 1875, being anxious to promote what her husband had so much at heart—the sacred cause of Belief against Unbelief—is desirous of instituting a Lectureship connected with his name, as a means of good, and as a fitting tribute to his memory. The Foundress of the Lectureship hopes to endow it in such wise as that a course of four or six Lectures may be delivered at intervals of four or five years. The Lectures are to treat of such themes as the Being and Attri-

butes of God; the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ; the truth of Christ's Religion; or other cognate subjects, on which there is, in the main, an agreement among the vast majority of those 'who profess and call themselves Christians.' The tenure of the Lectureship is to be undenominational.

Those with whom the Foundress took counsel agreed in thinking it desirable, that the first course should have some immediate relation to that particular phase of Apologetics in which Mr. Gillespie took so deep an interest.

I need not detain the reader with any account of the circumstances which have induced me, with much diffidence, to occupy the unsought-for position of the First Lecturer on this foundation. The objects at which I have aimed are explained in the Lectures themselves. But I should like here to add one or two other considerations.

I am not without hope that the limitation and narrowness of the range of these Lectures may to some readers prove rather an advantage than the reverse. It is possible that the outlines of at least one portion of an abstruse question

may thus be more easily grasped, and that the study of more exhaustive treatises (such as, for example, those of Professor Flint on Theism and anti-Theistic theories) may be facilitated. It is also, I trust, conceivable that the quotations given in the Lectures, the *Mottoes*, and the *Appendices* may be found to present a body of information, such as is not elsewhere readily accessible within the same compass, and which may prove both helpful and suggestive.

My very special thanks are due, in the first place, to the Foundress for the great kindness and liberality displayed throughout our intercourse. Secondly, to the Rev. William Adamson, D.D., Minister of the Evangelical Union, who not only encouraged me in this undertaking (to which he had previously contributed a very able and useful pamphlet), but who generously relieved me from all trouble connected with the arrangements for the delivery of the Lectures. Thirdly, to the Rev. Robert Flint, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Theology in the University of Edinburgh. Besides my indebtedness to his volume on Theism (which may have influenced me unconsciously, even where I believe my conclusions

to be independent of it), I owe gratitude to Dr. Flint for kind encouragement and suggestions in the way of study, and for my introduction to the work of M. Bouchitté. One other friend of long standing must not be passed by. The Rev. David Greig, M.A. of Aberdeen, and Rector of Addington in Buckinghamshire, is possessed of a large share of that metaphysical acumen for which his native land is celebrated. He has supplied me with much in the way of instruction and of suggestion, especially as regards the Fourth Lecture. But Mr. Greig must not be held responsible for any of my statements or arguments, with some of which he may, I fear, be found to disagree.

Despite these aids I claim to have made an independent study of all the leading authorities on the subject of these Lectures, with most of whom I possess an acquaintance of many years' standing.

The Lectures are now published in the form in which they were originally composed. In delivery, however, illustrations, particularly of the shorter Lectures, were freely supplied from passages which are now relegated to the Appen-

dix. An epitome of the volume was also given in two Lectures delivered in Glasgow in January 1885.

I am very conscious of the value of the kind patronage bestowed not only by an audience both larger and more attentive than I ventured to anticipate, but specially also by those gentlemen who on successive nights very generously accompanied me to the platform. That body included, I believe, representatives from among those engaged in the Ministry of all the leading Christian communions in this city—Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and Roman Catholic. To each and all of them I beg to return my cordial thanks.

J. G. CAZENOVE.

EDINBURGH, 6th March 1886.

NOTE.—As it is just possible that a perusal of this volume may be attempted by some readers unversed in mental science, it may be well for their sakes to give a brief explanation of the terms *à priori* and *à posteriori*, as applied to the process of reasoning.

These words were suggested by the Aristotelian philosophy, and were originally applied as follows.

When we reason from cause to effect, we are said to argue *à priori*. Thus, for example, a farmer casting his glance upon