

**THE BIBLE OF NATURE; FIVE
LECTURES DELIVERED BEFORE
LAKE FOREST COLLEGE ON THE
FOUNDATION OF THE LATE
WILLIAM BROSS**

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The Bible of nature; five lectures delivered before Lake Forest college on the foundation of the late William Bross by J. Arthur Thomson

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J. ARTHUR THOMSON

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BY

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THE BROSS FOUNDATION

THE Bross Lectures are an outgrowth of a fund established in 1879 by the late William Bross, Lieutenant-Governor of Illinois from 1866 to 1870. Desiring some memorial of his son, Nathaniel Bross, who died in 1856, Mr. Bross entered into an agreement with the "Trustees of Lake Forest University," whereby there was finally transferred to them the sum of forty thousand dollars, the income of which was to accumulate in perpetuity for successive periods of ten years, the accumulations of one decade to be spent in the following decade, for the purpose of stimulating the best books or treatises "*on the connection, relation and mutual bearing of any practical science, the history of our race, or the facts in any department of knowledge, with and upon the Christian Religion.*" The object of the donor was to "*call out the best efforts of the highest talent and the ripest scholarship of the world to illustrate from science, or from any department of knowledge, and to demonstrate the divine origin and the authority of the Christian Scriptures; and, further, to show how both science and revelation coincide and prove the existence, the providence, or any or all of the attri-*

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butes of the only living and true God, 'infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.'"

The gift contemplated in the original agreement of 1879 was finally consummated in 1890. The first decade of the accumulation of interest having closed in 1900, the Trustees of the Bross Fund began at this time to carry out the provisions of the deed of gift. It was determined to give the general title of "The Bross Library" to the series of books purchased and published with the proceeds of the Bross Fund. In accordance with the express wish of the donor, that the "Evidences of Christianity" of his "very dear friend and teacher, Mark Hopkins, D.D.," be purchased and "ever numbered and known as No. 1 of the series," the Trustees secured the copyright of this work, which is now numbered as Volume I of the Bross Library.

The trust agreement prescribed two methods by which the production of books and treatises of the nature contemplated by the donor was to be stimulated:

1. The Trustees were empowered to offer one or more prizes during each decade, the competition for which was to be thrown open to "the scientific men, the Christian philosophers and historians of all nations." In accordance with this provision, a prize of \$6,000 was offered in

1902 for the best book fulfilling the conditions of the deed of gift, the competing manuscripts to be presented on or before June 1, 1905. The prize was awarded to the Reverend James Orr, D.D., Professor of Apologetics and Systematic Theology in the United Free Church College, Glasgow, for his treatise on "The Problem of the Old Testament," which was published in 1906 as Volume III of the Bross Library. The next decennial prize will be awarded about 1915, and will be announced in due time.

2. The Trustees were also empowered to "select and designate any particular scientific man or Christian philosopher and the subject on which he shall write," and to "agree with him as to the sum he shall receive for the book or treatise to be written." Under this provision the Trustees have, from time to time, invited eminent scholars to deliver courses of lectures before Lake Forest College, such courses to be subsequently published as volumes in the Bross Library. The first course of lectures, on "Obligatory Morality," was delivered in May, 1903, by the Reverend Francis Landey Patton, D.D., LL.D., President of Princeton Theological Seminary. The copyright of these lectures is now the property of the Trustees of the Bross Fund. The second course of lectures, on "The Bible: Its Origin and Nature," was delivered in May, 1904, by the Reverend Marcus

Dods, D.D., Professor of Exegetical Theology in New College, Edinburgh. These lectures were published in 1905 as Volume II of the Bross Library. The third course of lectures, on "The Bible of Nature," was delivered from September 24 to October 3, 1907, by Mr. J. Arthur Thomson, M.A., Regius Professor of Natural History in the University of Aberdeen. These lectures are embodied in the present volume.

JOHN SCHOLTE NOLLEN,

President of Lake Forest College.

LAKE FOREST, ILLINOIS,
NOVEMBER, 1907.