

**OLD AND NEW
CERTAINTY OF THE
GOSPEL: A SKETCH**

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Old and New Certainty of the Gospel: A Sketch by Alexander Robinson

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ALEXANDER ROBINSON

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GOSPEL: A SKETCH**

Old and New
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LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND OXFORD.

Old and New
Certainty of the Gospel

A Sketch

BY

ALEXANDER ROBINSON, M.A., B.D.

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"A STUDY OF THE SAVIOUR IN THE NEWER LIGHT"

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INDEPENDENT CONGREGATION AT CRIEFF

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1900

Dedicated to

MY CONGREGATION AT CRIEFF

*Without committing any of them to any views here
expressed, but gratefully appreciating their eminent
openmindedness, and their readiness to recognise
honourable intention in those who are eager on
behalf of truth.*



PREFACE.

THIS sketch-presentation of the gospel message and of kindred subjects is a second contribution which I respectfully offer to that reconstructive theological study of which many earnest persons find a need in the present day. While seeking to take account of the undeniable discoveries made by modern investigation and reflection, it claims to be in union with the true essence of the traditional doctrine, and is, generally, conservative in attitude. It is thus in agreement with its predecessor, which was first published with the claim of being admissible within the national Church of Scotland, after I had been for nine years a preacher in the service of that Church.

An explanation—possibly an apology—is due for the sense in which the word ‘Literalism’ is used in my pages here. ‘Literalism’ is approved as indicating, and perhaps most naturally indicates, a particular method of interpreting an author’s meaning. Here, however, it is used to indicate a particular presupposition applied to the search for truth itself. More exactly, it is here used to denote a certain thought or belief in relation to the Bible and the traditional creeds, as vehicles of sacred truth. What that thought or belief is, I explain in the first chapter. It is a serious force in human life, and requires a name. If it has yet no name in universal acceptance, that in no way disproves its importance, any more than is the case with certain forces which

are now acknowledged as affecting our bodily lives, and yet until recently were neither named nor recognised. Whatever is the proper word to use, there is no denying the existence of the thing itself. I have tried to find an accepted word that is better than the one which I have adopted; and, while I have found none that seems to me so good, I am ready to receive thankfully any better that may be suggested. 'Literalism' has this advantage, that it implies no want of loyalty, on the part of those who use it, towards the Bible, or even, in proper degree, towards the historical creeds, but only deprecates a particular thought as to the way in which these possess their sacred element.

A question of inestimable gravity confronts every thoughtful person in the present day, namely, whether Literalism is indeed the infallible guide to sacred knowledge; in other words, whether it has indeed the right to humiliate faith and hope, stretch and grow as they may. That question is noticed in the following pages, in subordination to the main questions of the book, namely, What is the Gospel? and, How is it assured to us?

The justification for the public appearance of this little work is that those who have learned of a great deliverance are bound to spread the knowledge of it. The writer is as keenly alive as any critic is likely to be, to the sublimity of the subject and to suggestions of presumption in attempts to deal with it; but in the setting forth of the truths with which these pages are concerned, an author is himself of no more account than is the clinging figure that calls out to others eagerly and joyously in discovery of a firm rock of safety.

July 1900.

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