

# **SCEPTICISM AND REVELATION**

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Scepticism and Revelation by Henry Harris

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**HENRY HARRIS**

**SCEPTICISM AND  
REVELATION**



SCEPTICISM AND REVELATION.

BY

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TUTOR OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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" Il faut savoir douter où il faut, assurer où il faut et se soumettre où il faut ; qui  
ne fait ainsi n'entend pas la force de la raison."—PASCAL.

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## PREFACE.

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**T**HE chief aim of the following treatise is to point out the exact position occupied by the Bible in the system of God's dealings with man ; a position which appears to me to have been the subject of frequent and serious misunderstanding both amongst impugnors and defenders of Revelation.

As introductory to this my main object, I have attempted a brief sketch of the different sources and forms of scepticism, with especial reference to those particular tendencies of it which are peculiarly characteristic of the present age, and which, as I believe them to have arisen, in great measure, out of the misunderstanding just alluded to, so they will be best counteracted by its removal.

If in the course of my argument on behalf of Revelation I should occasionally make concessions which may seem liable to be laid hold of and turned against her, let me, in answer, call attention to the fact, that precisely in the same degree that Revelation presupposes a state of candour

and of freedom from prejudice in those to whom she makes her appeal, so she necessarily, and may we not add purposely, lays herself open to misconstruction and rejection at the hands of the uncandid and prejudiced.

The concluding chapter, entitled "The Future Retrospect," contains the substance of a sermon on 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, preached by me before the University of Oxford, in Magdalen College Chapel, on the Festival of St. Mark, 1858.



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## CHAPTER I.

### SCEPTICISM: ITS SOURCES AND FORMS.

**T**H**ERE** is a scepticism of the head; there is a scepticism of the heart; there is also a scepticism of the head and of the heart combined; and combined it may be in any proportion of the one to the other.

Heart scepticism originates in an instinctive aversion to the contents of the form of belief offered to its acceptance.

Head scepticism originates in the natural tendency of the expanding and reflecting mind to test everything by a standard of its own. It is thus led on to ask question after question respecting the belief in which it has been trained, or which is proposed for its acceptance, and to withdraw or withhold its assent from it, in proportion as it fails to receive what it considers to be satisfactory answers.

(a.) In its commonest perhaps, certainly its least justifiable form, scepticism of this latter kind is the result of an exaggerated idea of the amount of wisdom and knowledge placed at the disposal of mankind in general, and appropriated in its own individual case in particular. Whilst revelation, from the variety and abstruseness of her contents, as well as from the immense importance universally attached to them, offers the most inviting of all scenes to a disposition of this