

BR 85

.B415

1875a

Copy 1



Class BR85
Book B415
1875a



A. E. CRANFORD CO. WASH. D. C.

SOME MODERN DIFFICULTIES:

NINE LECTURES.

BY THE REV.

S. BARING-GOULD, M.A.,

AUTHOR OF 'THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF,'
'LIVES OF THE SAINTS,' ETC.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

W. SKEFFINGTON, 163, PICCADILLY.

1875.

BR85
BA15
1875a

By Transfer
D. C. Public Library

JUN 7 1938

47113881

BR 85
BA 15
1875a

P R E F A C E .



SIX of the following lectures were delivered "ad Clerum" in the Trophy Room of S. Paul's Cathedral, by kind permission of the Dean and Canons, in the week before Advent, 1874.

They were listened to with attention and interest, and I was requested to publish them.

Their object is to draw the attention of the Clergy to some of the difficulties which beset minds at the present day in the matter of Christian belief; and to show that, granting nearly everything established by natural science and Biblical criticism, our Faith in God the Creator, and in Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, need not be shaken.

I desire also to protest with all my heart against the attitude assumed by so many of the Clergy towards science and Biblical criticism. It seems amazing that it should be necessary for one to utter a word of warning on such a subject, but the following extract from the 'Times' of December 1st, 1874,

which came into my hands whilst these pages were passing through the press, proves that such a protest is not uncalled for.

“The Bishop of ——¹ preached on Sunday evening at the first of a series of special Advent services, held in the nave of —— Cathedral. The Bishop took his text from the 11th verse of the 18th chapter of S. Matthew—‘For the Son of man has come to save that which was lost.’ His Lordship compared the history of the four Gospels with the ‘Gospel of Science,’ which had now so many prophets and apostles, and asked what the latter Gospel was. Was it even good news for man? In it there was no eternity or hereafter; no Divine life, and, properly speaking, no humanity; that all that was within us was bestial, and we shared it with the brutes—no virtue, no vice, good nor evil. It made us mere automatons, mechanically moved according to our molecular structure—moved by atoms coming none knew whence and going none knew where. He should not stop to ask whether it were a true or false Gospel or true or false news. He would only ask if it were good news? That Gospel of Science, if a Gospel at all, was a Gospel for the strong and the clever, but not for the poor, the weak, the sick, or the suffering. It was a Gospel which taught mankind to live as the brutes, in which the strong trampled down the weak and the poor; it was a Gospel according to which the institutions and hospitals for the sick and the incurable were a scientific mistake. It taught us to fight, to trample, and push our way in the world, no matter what we fought with or what we trampled down, and if we succeeded we could eat, drink, and be merry, for nothing was to come hereafter; and if we did not succeed, why should we lead a useless life? for we should be no longer in the fore-front of humanity. Society had no need of us, and we could take ourselves out of the way—crawl into a hidden place as a sick or wounded animal did into some deep thicket to die away from its fellows. That was the Gospel that in this our day was set up against the grand old story—‘The Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.’ The Gospel for the lost was what humanity needed, not the Gospel for the strong—the Gospel for the weak, for the poor, for the dying, for the outcast, for the suffering. That was a Gospel that no

¹ I omit the designation purposely.

human philosopher had ever discovered, and that no natural science could ever reveal to mankind. Thank God for the old story in our Bible Gospels—that which philosophers had not yet robbed us of. As we stood by the sick beds and looked at the dying, as we ministered to the sick and the suffering, we thanked God we had the old story still to prove that the Son of man came to seek and save that which was lost. That was the only safe foundation on which human society could securely rest.”

Is it not piteous to see science thus misrepresented, science which labours night and day to alleviate the maladies of human nature! It is necessary for the Bishops, as well as our inferior Clergy, to learn that the Gospel of Science is as Divine as any historical Gospels of Christ ; that one is as much a revelation as are the others, that rightly understood there can be no antagonism between them. To pit the canonical Four against the Gospel of Science is like the work of those critics who pit S. John against the Synoptics.

Such a passage as that quoted reads like an extract from the ‘*Osservatore Romano*’ on Protestant civilization. The same ultramontane virulence, misrepresentation, injustice. If to the Ultramontane we say, “Render unto Cæsar the things that be Cæsar’s,” we may say to our divines, “Render also to God the things that are God’s;” for the truths disclosed to science are as certainly Divine as are the truths revealed to Apostles and Prophets, only, the truths belong to a different order.

The Gospel of Science without Christianity is

false because one-sided. And Christianity without science is also imperfect. God has many aspects ; the Church reveals one, science reveals another.

For myself, I can truly say that with every fibre of my soul I cleave to the Catholic faith, and to the Gospel of Science ; that with quiet composure I can hold simultaneously the truths revealed to the Church and revealed to science, and patiently wait till apparent contradictions shall be solved by the outpouring of more abundant light.

Philo says that the Word, which is the manna feeding the soul of man, is made into two cakes, tasting of honey and of oil, and that the one is the Word revealed through science, and the other is the Word in religion.

CONTENTS.



	PAGE
LECTURE I.	
<i>THE ASPECT OF MODERN THOUGHT</i>	I
LECTURE II.	
<i>ON MYSTERIES</i>	22
LECTURE III.	
<i>THE MYSTERY OF CREATION</i>	38
LECTURE IV.	
<i>THE MYSTERY OF MAN</i>	56
LECTURE V.	
<i>PRIMEVAL MAN</i>	71
LECTURE VI.	
<i>BIBLICAL INSPIRATION. 1. THE OLD TESTA-</i> <i>MENT</i>	93

	PAGE
LECTURE VII.	
<i>BIBLICAL INSPIRATION. 2. THE NEW TESTA-</i>	
<i>MENT</i>	116
LECTURE VIII.	
<i>THE MYSTERY OF EVIL</i>	145
LECTURE IX.	
<i>THE INCARNATION</i>	161

I.

THE ASPECT OF MODERN THOUGHT.

WHEN Peter Abelard appeared before the Council of Sens, he found Bernard of Clairvaux occupying a pulpit in the midst, with a string of extracts culled, or pretended to be culled, from Abelard's writings, which he called on the assembled prelates to condemn.

The reading of the passages was demanded, passages of deep philosophic thought in long succession, involving propositions and deductions which the bishops and abbots present had not received mental training to grasp and understand.

It was a hot June day; one after another, the listeners, the judges, fell asleep, or drowsed, with their heads on their knees or uneasily reposing on their palms. Others were only kept awake by the fear lest their nodding should be interpreted as consent to the incriminated doctrines.

"Damnatis?" cried S. Bernard after each passage. "Damnamus," muttered the sleepy prelates, and some feebly mumbled only "—namus."

Abelard turned on his heel and left the Council. He refused to argue his case before such an assembly.

And what was the ground taken up by Abelard, against which Bernard called down the thunders of the Gallican hierarchy? That to believe aright, it is necessary to have an intelligent conception of the objects of faith; that the powers of the mind should be called in to show that Christianity is not an incoherent jumble of dogmas, but a rigidly co-ordinated system of truths, such as the reason can admit without abdicating its throne.

After a long winter, minds were bursting from sleep, were expanding, and stretching towards light and air. The time was come for the Church to throw herself into the heart of this young, vigorous life, and if she were divine, to direct its aspirations. Bernard's horizon was too narrow for him to admit the possibility of such a course. It never overleaped his abbey walls. When, at the exhortation of his friends, he entered the Paris schools, it was only to preach with fervid eloquence to the assembled scholars to fly the tree of knowledge—a serpent was coiled about it—to come forth out of Babylon, and bury the new-found talent in the heavy clay of monastic routine.

If I do not mistake, we stand at a period in the history of intellectual development not unlike that of the twelfth century. There were daring

speculators then ; there is no lack of audacity in speculations now.

The Church, forgetting the shriekings of the Clairvaux prophet, accepted the task Abelard claimed for her, and produced Albert the Great, Aquinas, Bonaventura, who led the swollen stream of thought into sober channels.

It may be that we are dazzled with the flash, and stunned with the explosion of new ideas falling round us on every side ; that our old landmarks seem to be made the butts at which modern speculation is hurled.

But this is no excuse for our remaining idle, stark, wincing, sighing at every plunge of the iron hail.

We are often vastly in error if we conclude that because new opinions by their explosion shake our towers, that therefore they are levelled against them.

To shut our eyes to the questions searching hearts and racking souls around is selfish and cowardly ; yet, alas ! it is the most common refuge. Is our only attitude to be one of flight, our only harness ignorance ? Are we to be like the tailor in battle, who sewed a plate of iron over his back, and ran away ? Is' the position of the pursued ostrich, with its head under the sand, either dignified or prudent ?

We cannot prevent the questions which are in

the wind from lighting and germinating all around us, in the fields we are set to dress. What patient life-long study, what concentrated thought brought to bear on a vast accumulation of carefully collected and finely sifted data, have we got in modern science! How conscientious in its treatment of the subjects it handles, how cautious in drawing deductions, how logical in application of them!

And what is the answer from countless pulpits, not in England only, but in France and Germany as well? An anathema. The effervescing curate shrieks "Damnamus," and the easy rector mumbles "—namus!"—and who heeds?

Not the Abelards; they turn on their heels with a sneer at the fool's paradise we have created for ourselves, and refuse to dart their logic into our heavy ears. Not the active, expanding minds of the readers of our day—they see nakedly which way reason runs. Authority is a wherry blundering across its path, to be run down and swamped, if it will not clear out of the course.

It is a mistake, it is worse than a mistake, it is an injustice, to condemn opinions which we have never seriously set ourselves to understand. If the conclusions arrived at be sound, let us accept them; if they seem to us to controvert established beliefs, either those beliefs are human glosses on divine revelation, or the scientific conclusions rest on insufficient data.

It is a mistake, it is worse than a mistake, it is a sin, to assume that a new scientific or critical discovery ruins the foundations of our belief, before we have thoroughly mastered it and have had time to estimate its bearings on religious doctrines.

Rome trembled at the Copernican system, and doomed Galileo to recantation. Yet revelation has survived the discovery that the world goes round the sun. "E pur si muove." Let us be cautious lest we, like the Inquisition which condemned the great astronomer, make ourselves the laughing-stocks of the future.

At one time the fossil shells in our chalk hills, the saurian bones in our lias beds, were shown as manifest confirmations of the Mosaic narrative of the universal deluge.

Scandalized beyond measure were our grandmothers when geologists parted lias from chalk by a chasm of ages, and protested that even the modern chalk was earlier than the Flood by a thousand centuries. To ruin a cherished evidence of Bible revelation was profanity. To abandon this proof was to wreck Christianity. Yet it is all accepted now. "E pur si muove."

And now we have strange disclosures of the law of evolution discovered to rule the world; of the antiquity of man, and his gradual emancipation from the stage of ape.

How far these are established on conclusive evidence, how far they are hasty deductions from data inaccurately observed, I cannot now say.

What is true will survive, what is erroneous will fall. The survival of one sort of truth cannot imperil the life of other truths ; though it may sift out truths from conjectures. A robust, long-lived conjecture is often accepted as a truth.

Truth, from whichever quarter it comes, should not scare us. "Reason," says Justin Martyr, "commands those who are good, and lovers of wisdom, to cultivate and love Truth alone, casting aside the opinions of their ancestors if they be wrong."¹

A few years ago I was invited to attend a meeting of a clerical debating society. The subject of discussion was "Clerical Reading." Fifteen clerics attended. The chairman opened the topic, and each present was expected to speak on it. The first, in a florid speech, declared that one book alone was needed, before whose effulgence every human composition faded—the Bible ; let that be the one, the only study of the Christian minister. A second rose and advised the addition to the library of one book more—the hearts of his parishioners. A third recommended the daily paper ; a fourth the 'Cornhill Magazine ;' a fifth Scott's 'Commentary ;' a sixth Simeon's 'Skeletons.'

¹ 'Apol.' I. § 7.

None got so far even as 'The Contemporary Review.'¹

As I walked sadly home after this discussion, I passed some little boys sitting on a bridge, fishing for gudgeons with crooked pins. They had sat thus all the afternoon, but had caught nothing. Crooked pins catch no fish.

We are grievously in error if we think that the attitude of men's minds at the present day is one of hostility to Christianity.

There never was a time, probably, when men craved more sincerely for truth, panted more fervently for the water-brooks of God.

At the time when the first great expansion of the Church took place, men felt a need for religious truth; the poor and ignorant because paganism wiped no tears from their eyes; the wise and learned because they needed something stronger as a stay than the speculations of philosophers.

Christianity satisfied two great needs. The down-trodden and suffering wanted hope and sympathy; the learned wanted a revelation in place of guesses.

Christianity held up the cross and crown to the sufferer, and he accepted it without inquiring into the credentials of the Church.

Aristobulus, the Jewish Peripatetic, and Philo

¹ This incident, related by me to a friend, has already found its way into print from his pen.

paved the way before Christ to the Greek philosophical mind. Dionysius and the Alexandrian school after him supplied the thinkers of the first three centuries with a Christian philosophy nobler, more coherent, surer founded, than those of Pythagoras and Plato.

Christian philosophy went down under the waves of barbarian invasion; as the waters receded some precious relics only were cast up in fragments.

The loss of some of the most valuable books of the Areopagite, Catholic philosophy will never cease to deplore.

What Dionysius did for the first age, Aquinas did for the middle age. Then, as before, the want was felt of a rational system of Christian doctrine. If men were required to hold the Faith with their hearts, they would hold it with their understandings also. If it were divine it would answer the appeal of the opening intellect, and feed it, as it had fed the heart. The work of Aquinas prevented the rupture of intellect from faith. It was full up to the level of knowledge at his day.

Knowledge has been increasing since Aquinas wrote his 'Summa,' but the level of Christian philosophy has not risen with it. Science is in advance of theology; and theology has been steadily losing ground. We look in vain for any token of rebuilding the ruins of Dionysius, and

enlarging and modernizing the deserted halls of Aquinas. Theology must master the questions of the day, or be crushed to death under them. We stand much in the same position as did the preachers of Christianity when philosophers in the third century, and schoolmen in the twelfth, asked a reason for the hope held up by the Gospel.

It may be, it is, shocking to some minds, that what they have regarded since infancy as God's truth should be summoned before the bar of reason, and asked to give an account of itself. But it is inevitable, so long as the world is full of religions, each clamouring for the adhesion of mankind, and each producing claims to be divine. Men in the present day do not object to believe, they feel a need of religious truths, just as did the philosophers and schoolmen of old, but their reason must be satisfied that the statements they are invited to believe are truths. They decline to hook themselves on crooked pins.

Now what is the only answer we have given to this very just demand?

It is this:—The Bible is God's Word, His revelation of Truth to the world.

But a second question arises, How are we to know that the Bible is God's Word, His revelation of Truth to the world?

The answer given is the only one that can be

given, By the internal evidence of its truth. Now Biblical critics have set themselves to the task of examining this internal evidence, the task which *we* preachers of Christianity have set them. If there be that internal evidence, well and good, they will accept our first premises, and become, what we wish them to become, Bible Christians. But if, on the other hand, the first touch of criticism causes our proposition to snap and fly, and discloses flaws in what we protested was sound metal, who is to blame? Not the critics, they are only doing what we set them to do. We must beware of not resenting the result arrived at; our duty plainly is to re-examine our faulty propositions.

And science, accepting our dogma of the Bible as the basis of all Christianity, the perfect revelation of Truth, having arrived at certain conclusions on the origin of species, the antiquity of man, the non-universality of the Deluge, and the like, says: Here are facts which we can prove by overwhelming inductive evidence. They do not accord with the statements in that Book you say is a complete and infallible exponent of Truth; therefore your assertion is false. What evidence is there to the truths of Christianity?

Is science wrong in taking up this line? We have forced her to assume it; we should be the last to blame her.

What is the force which urges on our scientific men, our Biblical critics? Is it not a passionate love of truth? a craving to find out the truth? And what is a more healthy sign of divine life than this?

Through all the shams and veneers of modern conventionalities, arms are stretched forth to clasp the true, the firm. Voices cry, when we present them with bold assertions, Are these true, or are they shams only? Like dying Göthe, souls sick of the yellow glimmer of artificial illumination plead for "more light," not of the same quality, but white and clear, the pure beam of day. It is the cry of health, an appeal from man to God; and God will not reject it. In what age have there been such revelations as in the present? And why so? Because the craving for truth in man is like the rod of Moses; it taps the fountains of eternal truth, and makes them gush out of the flinty stone. God's revelation answers to man's cry, to man's capacity for receiving it.

The healthy reason gasps for truth as the lungs pant for air. Its function is discrimination. But reason is dead and in dust among those who gulp down with equal zest a Catholic verity and a mediæval figment; to whom the marvels of Bethlehem and of La Salette are alike and equally credible.

The same principle which would forbid the

exercise of the reason in matters of Christian faith, would also fatally forbid the Moslem or the Parsee to desert his creed ; would consecrate to all eternity the African fetish and the Hindoo idol.

To a certain class, Christianity will be always acceptable ; they will not ask to see her credentials, believing that she bears them on her truthful brow. But this is the same class as that which received her when she first appeared on earth. These will receive her for the same reason, because she satisfies a need in their souls.

Never, never, as long as the earth is full of violence, and men suffer and women weep, will the Cross disappear from the sky.

The dying gladiator, that noble relic of classic art, is a picture to us of the wronged and suffering of the heathen world. The side pierced, the life-blood draining away, the head bowed hopeless to the earth. Oh the sorrows of the ancient world, unlighted by a single ray ! The tears only dried by death ! the broken hearts bleeding, bleeding, like an open vein, without a healing hand to staunch and bind them up ! Only the earth to look to in dull despair, on which to fall, into which to be trampled !

And look from that statue to the stone forms on the cathedral front, types also. Martyrs, Magdalens, with raised eyes, pressing a book against their hearts, and finding therein rest for their souls.

There are fibres in human nature which sound responsive to the vibrations of the strings in the Gospel, as I have heard the chords of a harp tremble and sound when another instrument has been played.

But it is not the same with persons in easy circumstances, who have had nothing particular to distress them. A good breakfast, a thriving business, a capital dinner, and a comfortable home—what do they want more? There is no room for a want.

Such persons have been brought up to adopt no course of action which does not commend itself to their reason; to invest no capital in any venture which is not secured by guarantees. They are brought up from childhood to accept nothing on trust, to examine everything for themselves, to prove all things before they lean their weight on them.

How is this acquired frame of mind to be abdicated when it looks to religion?

Such persons are convinced only through their reason. Other persons are open to conviction through their hearts. The door to their souls is through their reason; the door to others' souls is through the affections.

Then by all means let Christianity in by the only entrance that is available, and do not hammer at a door that has been nailed up against the east wind.

I fear we have been sadly neglectful towards this class. No doubt the conviction of the heart is more beautiful than that of the head, yet, perhaps, intellectual faith is as precious in God's sight as that which is emotional. The latter is impulsive and unreasoning; the former, if cold, is more substantial.

The constant appeal to the feelings is unwholesome to the audience, and injurious to the preacher. It tends to make the religion of the former sentimentality, and to effeminate the mental fibre of the latter.

There was a time when the clerk ruled the minds of men. It is not to be regretted that the prerogative of learning is no longer confined to a caste; it is matter of thankfulness that the key of knowledge is in every hand.

But there is one cause for regret, that the clerk in Holy Orders has allowed himself to be outstripped in learning by the lay clerk; and it is cause for humiliation that he does not gird up his loins and strive to overtake him.

The temper of mind of a past age may have been one of indiscriminate acceptance as truth of every doctrine enunciated, but that was because the instinct of truth was then hybernating.

The present age, on the other hand, is actuated by an enthusiasm for truth, and its presence the clergy should be the last to ignore or misinterpret.

It may be more pleasant to the teacher to have his doctrines received without dispute, but it is certainly most mischievous.

It is satisfactory to the doctor that his patients should swallow his prescriptions with implicit belief, and reverence his cochineal and water as the elixir of life ; but such a temper, if general, would encourage quackery. Unhesitating belief in the province of religion would lead to superstition.

An unreasoning faith is a tincture, an intelligent one is an essence.

God asks of no man a blind faith, and what God does not ask, we should not attempt to exact.

All the forces of the human spirit ; every investigation in every realm, physical, spiritual, humane ; every artistic creation, even every refinement in the pursuit of pleasure, are the aspiration of the soul towards truth.

The truths men see are, indeed, partial ; but they are the irradiations of the sovereign, all-embracing Truth.

Truth is a light which invades the soul, and brings to it the sense of certainty ; evidence of a fact or of a law.

It does not depend upon the will, which seeks often in vain to elude it ; it masters, penetrates, absorbs the will ; it is a new sensation, like the magnetizing of the needle. The iron bar that lay listless wherever it was flung, when once animated

by this new tendency, rests nowhere but pointing to its poles.

If we take the mathematical verities, the clearest there are, is it not certain that so soon as the mind has resolved a problem, it rests in the solution with the relief of an exhausted swimmer who touches land ?

Moral truth is not as tangible ; but it does not carry with it less light. It is produced less from a syllogism than from an intuition of the soul. The jury which pronounces on the guilt of a culprit does not seek the same sort of demonstration as is contained in a geometrical theorem. The research is through an analysis of acts and motives, difficult and precarious, and reason would never thread its way, were it not preceded by conscience with a torch.

Truth in the analytical sciences lies at the bottom of the analysis, and the certainty of finding it there constitutes the attraction of the pursuit. Without the conviction that a certain result would crown the effort, there would be no research.

This conscience of truth, this passion for truth, establishes a filiation of the human soul from God, who is the plenitude of truth. The instinct of truth is the appeal of man to God through reason, just as love is the appeal of man to God through the heart.

So far as we are permitted to comprehend God's

design with respect to man, it would appear that each instinct is given to man to lead him to perfection. The man, therefore, who cultivates only the emotional side of his being, is incomplete ; and the same may be said of the man who sacrifices the heart to the head. One instinct rectifies another, so that there is always a tendency to a general result. An one-sided development is a moral monstrosity. A partial and progressive conquest of truth is the supreme exercise of intelligence ; it is the duty laid on individuals, and on all humanity ; the goal to which they must tend through heart and through head, the windows through which the soul sees heaven, the conduits through which truth flows in.

Perhaps future felicity, which religion promises, may consist in the spirit penetrating farther and farther by knowledge and love into the essence of the infinite Being. But in the meantime, the efforts of science from the beginning of the world are the striving of the mind to raise a little now, to-morrow more, the corner of the veil that covers the principles of facts, the laws by virtue of which they are engendered.

But God is the cause of all law, the source of all principles. What, then, is human science but the search after God ?

That it is sometimes hasty in its conclusions is not to be wondered at. This arises from the im-

petuosity of the soul in its pursuit, which obscures its judgment, and leads it to make premature generalizations, and to forget the verity that truths are complex and mutually control one another.

I have insisted, somewhat warmly, on the fact that modern science and Biblical criticism are not irreligious, anti-Christian ; that, on the contrary, they are eminently religious and Christian, inasmuch as the mainspring of their activity is the passion for truth.

This is not, indeed, the light in which they are regarded by pious souls reposing in traditional belief. The daring speculations of science, of criticism, of philosophy, afflict them with a panic. The water of their pool is troubled ; they cannot think that an angel has descended into it, to give it healing virtue.

The progress of science is viewed with apprehension, as though threatening the precious realm of faith ; every discovery is a Khivan expedition bringing science nearer to their confines, and conveying a threat of invasion. Better intervening wastes of barbarism than such close proximity with civilization everywhere.

No doubt that scientific and critical and philosophic speculation is often daring ; but what would science, criticism, philosophy be without speculation ? To deprive them of it is to pronounce their

death warrant. Speculation is to science what the tendril is to the vine. Before it ascends, it thrusts out a feeler, and that feeler is a conjecture. If it lays hold of facts, it pulls up all its wealth of leaf and fruit a stage higher. Speculation is to science what the eye is to the snail. The daring guess is projected forward to survey the ground before it creeps onward.

No doubt that scientific men and Biblical critics have shocked somewhat roughly preconceived ideas, and we may wish to address them as Virgil addressed Dante :

“Look how thou walkest. Take
Good heed thy soles do tread not on the heads
Of thy poor brethren.”

But if they have been rash and rough, have not the clergy been unduly suspicious of them, unjust towards the motive that actuates them ?

There is temper lost on both sides through mutual misunderstanding. The clergy and pious laymen are not wilfully obscurantists, hugging doctrines in which they do not believe, nor are scientific men actuated by an iconoclastic spirit.

If it frighten the former to see questions agitated which they thought were for ever set at rest, it irritates the latter to hear on all sides the shrill piping of those who lie stiff and stark in the icy

fetters of an unbending orthodoxy, like the spirits Dante saw in *Caïna* :

“Moving their teeth in shrill note like the stork,”¹

and always in condemnation.

When I see the activity of minds, the general agitation of spirits, which characterizes this age, I cannot doubt but that a divine breath of life has passed over the earth, a magnetic wave which has attracted and set trembling the needles within.

This is no evil influence at work. Evil produces torpor, death ; good produces life, activity. We are at a transition period in the life of Christianity, who can doubt it ? The last word on Christianity has not been uttered. Every divine verity contains in itself manifold truths, and the epiphany of each manifestation is preceded by a movement in the spiritual world. The days of the Lord never come, unless there is first an awakening of the dead. The excitation of minds in the third century preluded the advent of theology. Through the preceding age Christianity had been a religion of facts. Then, without abandoning one fact, it unfolded a theology. The convulsions of the sixteenth century were the precursors of a new manifestation, under which we now live ; Christianity became a system of philanthropy.

Again, after a long rest, the forces which stir

¹ Dante, ‘*Inferno*,’ xxxii.

spirits are moving. Never, perhaps, since the dawn of the Day Star, has there been such a shuddering, a rending of tombs, and rising from the dead.

Does this presage the death of Christianity? God forbid that we should entertain such a thought! It precedes the advent of a new expansion, a new revelation of the truth contained in Christianity.

Each manifestation has answered some need felt by the age which saw its birth. And the sense of that need is evoked by the touch of God.

II.

ON MYSTERIES.

AT the entrance of an Egyptian temple stood on either side a range of sphinxes, symbols to all who entered that they were approaching mystery.

It is over the sphinxes in Christianity that men stumble nowadays. Why, they ask, should there be mystery in religion? Why should we be called upon to give credence to that which we cannot understand? A religion to be divine, to be suitable for man, must be devoid of mystery.

The objection is plausible enough, but its plausibility is all that it has to recommend it.

In the temple of every human science, if the sphinx does not watch at its gate, it crouches within, in its last recess, behind a veil. Penetrate as far as you will, through the propylæum, the nave, thrust aside the veil on which the eyes of generations have rested, and which they have been contented to regard as inscrutable, press on into the sanctuary, and the mysterious sphinx is there.

In every science we have to admit the presence

of the inexplicable, the insoluble. We give a definition of it, and are satisfied that by naming it we have learned all about it. The definition of one age becomes the question of the next.

The mythic father of the House of Cleves was by name unknown; unknown he dwelt with his bride at Nymwegen, for a year and a day. A fatal curiosity urged her to ask his origin. Then a swan leading a shallop by a silver chain came swimming down the Rhine; the sad bridegroom entered the boat, and the swan swam away with him into the region of mystery, and was never seen again.

Science embraces mysteries and accepts them as facts, she governs, becomes a mother by them; but her fatal curiosity prompts her to ask too closely their nature, their origin, and they disappear from her sight. The final answer of to-day is the starting point of inquiry to-morrow. We are ever in pursuit, but never attain the perfect solution of every enigma. One mystery involves another, like Chinese puzzle-boxes. We open one, it contains a second, the second a third, the third a fourth, and so on till we come to the last; but in Nature there is no last box to be broken open, the succession is infinite.

It is unjust to expect of religion, what is admitted as necessary in science, to argue that mystery is unsuitable to the service of man in the realm of religion, when we live and act upon the

assumption of unsolved mysteries in our daily transactions.

Who doubts the identity of his personality with the little child of thirty years ago, and the youth of twenty? And yet that identity is a mystery.

Of what am I constituted? I am a congeries of matter, that is my body; my soul is the resultant of all the forces packed up in the atoms of which my flesh, and blood, and bone, and nerve are composed.

But what is that which collects material, distributes it, builds up neurine cells here, weaves fibrine there, forges rubies in the caverns of lung and heart, and rolls them in the rivers of artery and vein? What is that which assimilates some matter and rejects other? In the midst of the incessant flux of matter and change of forces, where, what am I?

I have not an atom in my body which constituted part of me when I was a little child; not a force that acted on my centre then acts on it now. Why then am I the same? What creates my identity? How explain my memory?

How comes it that lighting suddenly on an old copy of 'Red Ridinghood' I had pored over when I first learned how to read, and have not seen since, causes such a trembling in the finest, innermost fibres of my heart? That crimson cloak and gamboge basket are perfectly familiar to me—

even the blue patch of paint, extending from the little gown to the wolf's snout, though I have not seen them for thirty-five years. The brain particles, which received that impression more than thirty years ago, have gone through strange travels; they have been wafted off and utilized by herb and flower; the bee gathered them out of the heart of a rose, and built them into walls of wax, and the wax has burnt in a lustre at a duchess' ball, and the carbonic particles have drifted away, to be breathed in by the lungs of the fresh grass, and the grass has been consumed by the sheep, which served your meal to-day; but the old 'Red Ridinghood' is nothing to you, who have woven these particles into your brain; and I—I cannot look at it without turning my face to the wall. How is this? What constitutes that identity in me which 'Little Red Ridinghood' has revealed? The sphinx is there.

I take up on my finger this tiny grain of sand. Little grain, What are you? Answer me.

There is weight, there is shape, there is colour, there is consistency. I can seat you in a scale, or weigh you in water, and tell your actual or your specific gravity. I can hold you down under a magnifying glass and measure your facets and angles. I can ascertain your powers of polarizing light. I can register your hardness. A hundred years ago you were only a bit of sand. Look up,

granule ; you are silex to-day. We know all about you. Your name is silex. Silex, to be sure, yes, silex, that is flint. Are we satisfied? May we dismiss you to your place?

No, little atom, we must know more. What is silex? Why do your crystals always form so many faces? Why are you not soluble in nitric acid? Why not disposed to oxidize? I know as a fact that you are not; but I want the reason of these facts.

Ha! no answer. The sphinx is there, in the little grain. I doubt the navigation of human reason, which wrecks on a petty particle of sand that I blow from off my nail.

There is a mystery, a miracle, hanging daily above our heads. Hitherto it has baffled science. It is a daily enigma, a daily apparent defiance of an universal law. A sphinx set in the sky—the sun.

The law of the equilibrium of forces and the indestructibility of matter is perfectly established. Yet the sun defies that law, or rather, let me say, we are, as yet, incapable of applying this fundamental, primary law to it.

The photosphere of the sun is composed of incandescent metallic clouds. We can analyse those fiery vapours, and tabulate the metals of which they are composed.

Combustion is chemical action. The metals in

the photosphere are being combined with some gas, probably hydrogen. The light and heat emitted are the forces given out, as these metals are converted into salts, hydrides, which will be precipitated upon the solid surface of the sun, in an unflagging rain of ash.

From the beginning of time there has therefore been an incessant liberation of force in the modes of light and heat, radiated into infinite space. Here and there these waves break upon a planet. We walk and rejoice in their glory and warmth, consume some and roll back others, which ripple away through boundless regions in ever-widening circles. There is, therefore, a daily, hourly, incessant exhaustion of the forces in the sun.

But if so, then the attraction of the sun must be sensibly diminishing, our orbit be steadily widening, our year lengthening, our seasons expanding.

Such, however, is not the case.

According to the law which science recognizes as infallible, the sun must receive a return of force in exact equivalent to the amount expended.

And as the force is radiated into space, from space the equivalent must return, or the balance be destroyed.

And whence comes the metallic supply that feeds the voracious orb, and whence the hydrogen to make them flame? If these had been erupted from

the body of the sun, it would have burnt itself out long ago. Metal once converted into cinder cannot be used up again. It has given off something in marrying hydrogen—light and heat, so much latent force, which is now raying away, away, eternally in the vast abysses of space.

But if there be a steady accession of material from without, in meteoric showers, for instance, then the bulk of the sun must be steadily increasing under the unfailing cinder rain. And if the mass of the sun be increasing by the acquisition of additional matter, then so is its total weight, its power of attraction. We are being drawn nearer to the sun, our orbit is contracting, our years, our seasons, are shortening.

No doubt some day this mystery will be explained. But till it is, science has no right to discredit religion because it is not bare of mysteries.

Mysteries, then, surround us, are above us, under our feet, are in us, are everywhere. We must expect, therefore, to find them in religion; and the existence of mysteries in the Christian faith is no argument against its truth.

Yet to hear the objections raised against Christianity, one would suppose that a mystery was an offence to the understanding; that it is unendurable for a rational spirit to be required to admit certain statements which it cannot sound, which it

cannot demonstrate with the precision of a problem in one of the exact sciences.

I. *Mysteries are relative.*

A mystery is a truth which we do not understand.

What is mysterious to me may be perfectly explicable by you.

The rising of water in a bent pipe to its own level, to the height whence it entered the tube, is a mystery to the labourer laying down a pipe between a spring and a cistern. To me it is no mystery. I know that what to him is a phenomenon is obedience to a law. The water rises at one end of the pipe to the level at which it enters it at the other end, because the column of air at one orifice must balance the column of air at the other orifice.

This is conclusive to the plumber. But I am uneasy about my law. I ask, Why has the air got weight? And I am told that the air has got no weight; that weight is only another name for the attractive force exercised on a substance by the earth.

But why has the earth this attractive power? Because it has force of cohesion. The attraction of gravitation is the resultant of the forces of cohesion in the atoms which constitute the earth. And why have these atoms cohesion? What is an atom? Produce one.

My friends, we are stumbling in the dark over a multitude of sphinxes.

But to return to my point. Mysteries, I said, are relative. They are relative to the degree of knowledge in each man. What is mysterious to me is not mysterious to another.

The mechanism of the steam engine is a mystery to me. The spectroscope is a mystery to you. A track of light lies before every man, illumined by his own knowledge, but all around, on every side, rise phantoms and darkness.

Standing in a fir plantation, and looking straight forwards, one sees an avenue reaching away to light and sky ; but on right and left is a labyrinth. Yet another man a yard or two off, has the same vision of an aisle of tree trunks and o'erarching branches, and where you stand is confusion only.

There is a great difference among men in the power of discerning truths, and the discernment of a truth is the rolling back of mystery.

There is a difference in aptitude for receiving truths. There is a hierarchy of genius. Some minds are more enlightened, with greater capacities than others. The more extended the knowledge, the less of mystery. All the intelligences of creation stand on different stages of a scale which stretches from earth to heaven, and each has his sweep of horizon more or less extended according to the elevation at which he stands,—the highest

intelligence commands the widest circle ; but it is a circle nevertheless ; it has its circumference, and beyond that horizon broods mystery. As he widens his circle, he widens his ring of limitations, of the unknown, of mystery.

What is a mystery at one time of life is not a mystery at another.

This follows from the fact of man being constantly undergoing education. Things seen partially and imperfectly in early life are seen perfectly in later years. The mist rises as the day advances.

2. The existence of mysteries is a necessity.

If mystery be that which lies over the frontier of the known, then mystery must exist wherever knowledge is partial ; and partial knowledge must be, in finite minds.

To God there can be no mystery, because He sees all things perfectly in all their relations.

But this is not possible with finite minds. The intellect may embrace all the laws which govern nature, but it cannot pursue every application of them to each individual worm or lichen.

Are we justified in concluding that we know all the laws and forces of nature perfectly ? In 1783 Montgolfier sent up the first fire-balloon. To ninety-nine persons out of a hundred the balloon was a miracle ; it ascended in defiance of the laws of gravitation. When it was ascertained that hot

air was lighter than cold air, the ascent of the balloon ceased to be regarded as miraculous; it ranged itself under application of known laws.

When it was proclaimed that the chemical constituents of the sun and of the fixed stars could be tested, it was thought impossible. Who could mount to sun and star and analyse their flames? When the spectroscope was exhibited, the statement which seemed an insult to reason was acknowledged as true.

Modern scepticism objects to miracles, says that those claimed as having been wrought by Christ were impossible. God could not violate His own laws. No, He could not; but there may be laws and forces at His command which as yet we know imperfectly, or not at all, by which these marvels may have been wrought.

We are not justified, then, in asserting that miracles are impossible; the only legitimate ground of argument against them is defect of evidence establishing that they took place.

Man, then, must see things partially; and this partiality in his vision is the cause of mystery lying on his horizon.

God could not, even if He would, make mysteries disappear from our eyes. For were He to do so, He would make our reason unlimited; and infinite intelligence resides with God alone. To give man absolute knowledge would be to cause an explosion

in his brain. Infinite knowledge cannot be crushed into limited capacities. "Not by caprice nor by choice," says Dante, "has God kept all things veiled, but by necessity."

3. *Mystery is necessary for us.*

For our happiness.

It is mystery which gives zest to every science and to art.

For if a science were limited, it would lose its interest. It is the immeasurable depth, the never-exhausted variety, which exists in every department of the study of nature which draws on the mind, captivates the attention, quickens observation, creates and feeds research as an absorbing passion.

The primeval men, says Indian tradition, lived in a subterranean abode. They perceived long fibres hanging to them from above, roots that stretched feeling down for moisture. They laid hold of these trailing fibres, and crept up and up; as they ascended they became aware of light and space and air, and so at length they reached the surface of the world.

Every science is some such thread let down out of infinite light and truth and space, and up them men are climbing, light brightening, truth growing, space widening around them as they mount.

And art is only attractive because of mystery in

it, because it too lays hold of a fibre of infinity. If it were bound round with impracticable barriers, if it could but mix its colours and vary its designs, like the changing pieces in a kaleidoscope, it would lie down and die of despair.

The permutations of a kaleidoscope are so many, the combination of ideas in an artist's brain are so many. There is nothing new under the sun. A hot, hard band contracts the brow. The soul is stunned and stupefied.

Greek ecclesiastical iconography is all rule; and Greek art is no more. A sacrifice of Abraham must have a green tree on the right and a brown tree on the left; the angel must have one hand up and the other down in a prescribed upper corner. The ram must be caught in a thicket by both horns, and must be in profile. Abraham must be in such a posture, and in such coloured garments of such and such a cut; and Isaac in such and such.

It is said that in every picture you must show a peep of sky, or a way out of it into the sun. There is no opening in Greek iconography for the artist's soul to break out, ruffle its wings, dip them in heaven's dew, and soar skywards.

"In that which is secret," says Humboldt, "there is an inexplicable charm, a breath of infinity."

S. Theresa, if I remember rightly, had a vision of hell. Not flames and the undying worm were its torment, but its drear monotony; its dark wall

opened glimpses of no future, were hung with no ideal pictures. Everything was finite, and therefore the soul perished with suffocation. The soul had lost all sight of God, of the infinite, and this was death eternal.

And what is more distressing to the human soul than to be windowless? Weariness of spirit, ennui, is the languishing of the soul in the presence of things it knows all about. Give it a new pursuit, open it a passage into some fresh path, and life, zest, happiness revive.

Take the first and simplest illustration that occurs—a Swiss inn in rainy weather. Hour after hour, day after day, of a curtain of falling parallel lines without, of three poor lithographs on the wall, and two Tauchnitz volumes on the table. The monotony becomes maddening. Everything in the room is perfectly well known, every attitude in the lithographs, every situation in the old novels. The mind is dying of boundary. It cannot break through book or picture.

Mystery is therefore a necessary consequence of the sense of the infinite; its presence is the earnest given to the soul that it may expand and aspire. The progress of knowledge does not lead to the destruction of mystery, but to the revelation of more and more of it. Every newly-acquired light throws back the problem without dissipating it; and if it seems to illumine one mystery, it is only

that it may disclose a grander, more solemn one behind it ; and this is necessarily the case, for mystery is only another name for the stage of the infinite at which our reason halts. The reason may grow eternally, and eternally advance, but it never can attain infinity.

4. If, then, mystery necessarily spring into existence through the contact of the finite with the infinite ; if the existence of mystery be a necessary consequence of the finality of man's knowledge, then its presence in Christianity is no argument against the truths of Christianity. If religion did not contain mysteries, if it did not touch the infinite, it could not be divine, it would not be true. It would be no religion, but a *cul-de-sac*.

Every science, nay, every action of our lives, reposes on the assumption of hypotheses.

We assume the objective reality of the phenomenal world, the unity of the thinking I, myself ; our freedom, causation, and a thousand other things, which are not demonstrable.

To systematize chemistry, the existence of the atom which no man had ever seen or weighed was assumed and given weight ; and on this gratuitous assumption the science of chemistry was reared.

The point and the line are defined, and geometry starts to life, but point and line are not ; there are no such things, never were, yet without the assumption of them geometry would be impossible.

What is the unit? absolute, indivisible? We have no unit in the world. Everything is compound, multipliable, divisible, and subdivisible. Nowhere in the world are we shown the unit engendered of nothing, indivisible by itself, which multiplied and divided by itself is always and only one, immutably itself.

The existence of the unit is hypothetical, and it lies at the base of numbers and of mathematics.

What hypotheses are to science, that revelations are to religion, foundations on which to build. The whole of Christian morals and religious worship stands to the facts of revelation in the same position as the problems of Euclid stand to the definitions and axioms. The fundamentals of religion must be either hypotheses or revelations; but whether one or the other they must be mysteries, for they relate to the unknown, the unknowable.

As Dante in 'Paradise' sings:

“ The deep things which here I scan
Distinctly, are below to mortal eye
So hidden, they have in belief alone
Their being; on which credence, hope sublime
Is built.”

III.

THE MYSTERY OF CREATION.

APART from the world which God has called into being, God is unknowable, because inconceivable.

I AM THAT I AM is the only name by which He can be designated apart from creation. Obliterate from your thoughts the existence of the phenomenal world, and try to conceive a notion of God,—it is impossible. When we say that God is good, is wise, is infinite, is all-powerful, we use expressions to which we have only a right because of the existence of the world ; and these expressions are purely relative, they describe the position in which God stands to creation. He is good because the creatures of this world are happy ; He is wise, because the laws of this world are admirable ; He is infinite, because space predicates infinity ; He is all-powerful, because force acting through matter emanates from Him. Destroy matter, and what is force ? Remove boundaries, and what is infinity ? Destroy the world, and laws cease to rule, wisdom disappears from our horizon, and with it the conception of goodness.

The existence of the world is therefore the revelation of God's nature in relation to phenomena, not in itself, for of that we do, we can know nothing.

This truth is well brought out in the Book 'Zohar,' one of the earliest monuments of the Kabala :

"Before God manifested Himself," in creation, "when all beings were yet concealed in Him, among the unknown He was the most unknown. Then the idea of God can be given no name, it can only be indicated by an interrogation. He first formed the imperceptible point, and that point was His thought"—of creation—"and that thought assumed a mysterious and holy form, and He clothed it with a rich and shining vestment ; then the universe was, and God was thenceforth nameable."¹

"Before God had created form in the world, before He had produced any image, He was alone, resembling nothing, inconceivable. For who could conceive Him as He is, before creation ? what was the form by which He could be seen ?"²

Now, there is a question which man has often asked, and which will always interest him. What is the origin of the world ?

As long as man is engrossed only in getting out

¹ 'Zohar,' fol. 1 and 2 ; fol. 105. 'Zohar' is a collection of Cabalistic maxims and philosophy, not by one hand, or of one date, but varying from the first to the seventh century. See Frank, "Le Kabale," in the 'Mémoires de l'Académie,' Paris, 1839.

² 'Zohar,' fol. 42.

of the soil what will sustain life, he asks no questions, any more than does the ox or the ass, content with its turnip or thistle.

The mind of the Central African negro, of the Australian or Papuan savage, has never done aught but grovel. From time immemorial it has run on all fours, seeing only pumpkins and maniocs, and seeing them only with an eye to eating them.

There are minds that never hatch, that lie permanently coiled up in their shells, which are to them at once a cradle and a coffin, satisfied with the air-bubble and yelk that nourish embryonic life, without a wish to burst into activity, to the surprises, the contests, ay! and the conquests of real life.

But the moment man begins to think, he begins to ask questions about the world he sees. And these are the leading questions that he asks :

1. *How* came the world into being ?
2. *Why* does the world exist ?

The rudest people who think have asked, How is it that the world we see, the sun, the moon, the solid earth, the plants, the beasts and birds, have come into existence ? Why is the sun constant in his course, the moon in her phases, the seasons in their sequence, the birds and beasts in their habits ?

But it is only after men have cultivated thought, and have learned to look for purposes underlying

all action, that they have further asked, Why does the phenomenal world exist?

Till we have found some answer to the first question, it is idle to speculate on the second. Let us, then, take this first problem, and seek its solution.

How is it that the world came into being? Now, before answering this question, let us see what sources of information we have to go to, on which to base a satisfactory answer.

First: We have Nature herself to question, but Nature may babble to us of her childhood, she can tell us nothing of her nativity; she can, however, reveal to us the laws which govern her, and thence we may deduce a strong presumption as to the processes she has traversed in attaining maturity.

Secondly: We have the answers of different religions, which provide us with accounts of the origin of the world. It is very clear that such accounts cannot be founded on the evidence of men. They must be either guesses or revelations.

These revelations or guesses may be subdivided into two classes. They yield us, after sifting, one of two answers. They give us a creation or a cosmogony; they represent the world as *creatura*, κτίσις, or else as *natura*, φύσις. The world was made, or the world was born.

Each answer presents a difficulty. Each possibly contains a truth.

Out of each a distinct religious system has emerged, Theism and Pantheism. According to the Theistic view of the universe, the world was created by God. By an act of will He called into being all things that exist. He spake, and they were made, He commanded, and they were created. On these created existences God impressed immutable laws. Creation is a marvellous mechanism made and set in motion by the Almighty, who also maintains it in working order. He stands outside, apart from his work, as an artificer who makes and regulates a watch. There is no evolution, no variation, no spontaneity. All moves in predestined order; all beings are struck in their inevitable shapes in inflexible dyes. Prolong this theory into religion, apply it to man, and its infallible, logical result is Augustinian, Calvinistic, Mohammedan predestinarianism falling like a frost upon him.

And it is a theory open to grave objection. If God is thus placed outside of, apart from the universe, if God be one, and the universe be another, then God is not infinite, not everywhere present.

And it is a theory which contravenes the daily accumulating results of observation, of science. From the lowly fungus, which, under varying circumstances assumes varying forms of organization, up to the tree that grows obliquely if it cannot otherwise reach the light, from the highest human faculty which increases or dwindles according to the

demands made on it, down to the polype that changes its skin into stomach and its stomach into skin when turned inside out, we see everywhere at work a living intelligent force, adapting its manifestations, modulating its expression, according to accident and circumstance.

Examine the recently laid egg of some common animal, such as a salamander or a newt. It is a minute spheroid, in which the best microscope will reveal nothing but a structureless sac, enclosing a glairy fluid, holding granules in suspension. Let a moderate supply of warmth reach this semi-fluid globule, in its watery cradle, and the plastic matter undergoes changes so rapid, and yet so steady and purposelike in their succession, that one can only compare them to those operated by a skilled modeller upon a formless lump of clay. As with an invisible trowel, the mass is divided and subdivided into smaller and smaller proportions, until it is reduced to an aggregation of granules not too large to build withal the finest fabrics of the nascent organism. And, then, it is as if a delicate finger traced out the line to be occupied by the spinal column, and moulded the contour of the body; pinching up the head at one end, the tail at the other, and fashioning flank and limb into due salamandrine proportions, in so artistic a fashion, that, after watching the process hour by hour, one is almost involuntarily possessed by the notion that

some more subtle aid to vision than an achromatic lens would show the hidden artist, with his plan before him, striving with skilful manipulation to perfect his work.

Where, what is the power that performs this miracle under our very eyes ?

Is it without, or is it within ? Does an external artificer make that reptile according to immutable design ? or is there a spontaneous, intelligent force in that glairy sac, energizing its constituents into form, marshalling the cells, co-ordinating the diverse functions distributed among them ?

Regard chaos as that egg in which floats purposeless matter. The heathen writers of Greece begin with the dark and formless chaos, in whose womb all beings slumbered in dreaming, fermenting germs, out of which they developed themselves by degrees in a dim, instinctive manner. With them there is birth, but not creation.

The kingdoms of Nature fight their way out of the depth of the life of Nature, emancipating themselves, differentiating themselves, accentuating themselves, by the impulse of some dark forces, incomprehensible, inexplicable,—a world-soul, as Plato called it.

Modern science leans towards a similar theory. Starting from matter as a homogeneous mass, subject to the operation of force in some quite simple form, there must ensue a process of evolution ; the

mass will be penetrated with force which will act from centres dividing the like from the unlike, and grouping them apart.

Thus there will grow up a progressively more and more complex structure of the universe, each portion undergoing its own peculiar changes. Slowly from this embryo universe, the universe of to-day is developed.

The various existences sprang up, indeed, subject to law, but it was the law of necessity. They were forced to assume their peculiar features, or must have disappeared. Thus law is imposed by the existences in the world. All the forces in the universe act, so to speak, on each solitary germ, and project it into such and such a condition of life, which it must fill or die. The universe is an oligarchy.

Is there no truth in this theory? I should be sorry to say so. But that this theory covers the whole of the question I cannot admit. It leaves untouched the very heart of the question. It may describe a process, but it does not establish its origin.

Underlying that question of the origin of the world is another, a very important one, which must engage our attention before we approach the question that rises out of it.

That question is, What is the world?

If we can answer this question aright, unless I

mistake, we shall find that what is true in Theism and what is true in Pantheism are capable of conciliation.

What, then, is the world ?

I adopt the definition of the Areopagite ;—it is a theophany. It is the manifestation of the thoughts of God.

What an act or word is to man that the world is to God. Man's thoughts find expression by muscular action, more or less complex, of the hand, or the foot, or the tongue. By such means he translates an idea into a fact. So the exteriorization of an idea in the mind of God is a creative act.

The glorious vision of the universe rose up before the mind of God—I speak as a man—and He converted that wondrous possibility into an actuality. What in eternity was ideal, became in time phenomenal.

The universe is, so to speak, the incarnation of the Divine ideal.

But what is idea ? It is the archetype, the paradigm of things that are to be.

The ideas of God formulate themselves in a created vehicle, and become their force.

Science declares the indestructibility of matter and of force. Why are they indestructible ? Matter, we are told, may change its combinations, force its direction, but neither can cease to exist. Why so ? Because the thoughts of God are inde-

structible. That is the guaranty for their permanence.

The creative ideas entering the phenomenal world become subject to the conditions of time.

In eternity time is not; time is not an entity, it is a condition of matter. Cause and effect, origin and end, are all one till matter is created. Then the result detaches itself from the cause, processes unfurl, the chain of effects unwinds.

The Divine ideas, having become phenomenal, pass under the categories of time, traverse all the stages from cause to effect. Consequently the idea of a plant or of an animal must needs travel through the periods of development from the first sporule to the last term.

Consequently, also, the world was at once created and born. It had a beginning when it passed by creation from the realm of idea into the region of actuality, and from the moment that the Divine idea clothed itself with matter it passed through all the stages of natural evolution.

We express our thoughts in words—I recur to the illustration—which we articulate with the tongue, or transcribe with the pen. The tongue and throat are set in motion to produce certain vibrations of the air, the hand to trace certain characters on paper. The instantaneous idea is spread out into a succession of sounds and letters.

The doctrine which I am enunciating is not only

that of Dionysius, the great Christian philosopher of Alexandria, it is also that of the Kabala:—"Come and see," says the Book 'Zohar,' "thought is the origin, the principle, of all that is. But the idea is at first undeveloped, it lies enfolded within itself. When the idea begins to expand, it arrives at the degree of spirit; then it takes the name of intelligence, and is no more as before hidden, the idea has exteriorated itself. Spirit in turn develops itself, in the midst of the mysteries which envelop it. Thence emerges the voice, which is the reunion of all the celestial choirs. The voice separates into distinct words and articulate sounds."

Thus the procession issues from the idea to creation, which is the complete manifestation of all that is contained in the one idea. "The idea," says the Book 'Zohar,' "is the principle of all that is, whence all that is derives being."¹

It is not a little remarkable to find the discoveries of modern philosophy, of which Germany is justly proud, anticipated and applied to solve the mystery of creation by the early ancient Christian philosopher and the Jewish Kabbalist.

Nature shows us every species of organism with which we are acquainted begin in a sporadic form. Accordingly we may conclude that the world started from innumerable beginnings, each of the

¹ 'Zohar,' pt. I., fol. 246. The same notions occur also in Philo's treatises 'On the Creation,' and 'On the Sacred Laws,' B. I.

infinitely many germs growing, expanding, ripening, attaining their destined perfection.

And what is each of these germs but the living Divine idea, slowly, surely, making its epiphany? Now if this hypothesis be true, we obtain a theory of creation not opposed to the doctrines laid down by modern science.

We are told that the primitive germs of all plants and animals are indistinguishable protoplasm, vitalized cells, and that these have been ruled by circumstances to assume here a position in the vegetable realm, there one in the kingdom of animals.

The Divine ideas of the man, the beast, the bird, the flower, the lichen, start from one source, the most rudimentary living cell conceivable. But they advance, gather material, differentiate functions, coordinate their action, from the simple progress to the complex, till each idea accomplishes itself in the perfect lichen, flower, bird, beast, or man.

In their course they run parallel for a while, but one halts here, another there; one branches off in this direction, another in that.

The various creatures are milestones on the road run by man; letters, syllables, words in the long sentence that ends and finds its signification in man.

Has every idea run its course out? is the variety of combinations exhausted? I cannot think so.

Look at a few ideas carried out to perfection

here, and see how many are the directions in which perfection is to be found.

Take, for instance, the hand in man, that organ so delicate, almost intelligent. In the bat it becomes a leathery wing, in the tiger a clawed foot, in the ruminants a column and hoof, in the walrus an oar, in the fish a fin, in the bird a wing.

Take the idea of lungs. If we look to the object designed to be attained by that organ, it seems to us as if it reached its most admirable and effective development in man; in whom it is folded within his breast.

But not so. Look at the bee, the butterfly. What are the wings? They are, to some extent, the lungs of the insect, not furled up within the body, but drawn out at the sides, spread, transparent or scaled with gorgeous colours.

What infinite variety there is in the bee, the moth, the butterfly! How marvellous is the splendour or the quiet loveliness of their painted or transparent lungs! Look at the variety of shape and of colour,—of colour from the purple emperor flitting about the oak tops, to the ghost moth wandering in the summer night among the apple trees;—of shape, from the streamers of the Brazilian swallow-tail to the twenty-four dainty plumes of the polydactyla.

Surely this idea cannot be further varied.

But look under water, and see the wondrous structure of air-bladders and gills in the fish, the delicate

fringes that adorn some of the shell-fish, the feathery blossom of the serpula, the soft brushes that protrude from the sides of the larva of the day-fly, the frost-flowers adorning the sea-slug.

These also are lungs,—lungs marvellously varied and marvellously perfect.

Surely in them the idea must be exhausted, so lavish is their variety. But not so. Look at the plant. What are the leaves, what the petals of the flowers? These are the lungs of the plant. Think of the inconceivable variety of leaves, of petals, variety in shape, in disposition, in colour, and you will get some faint notion of the unlimited changes that can be produced in the idea of lungs of this class.

And is not each in its way perfect? The indented leaf of the oak, the feathery fern, the sword of the rush, the disc of the penny-wort, the orange petal of the tiger-lily, the blushing cheek of the rose, the blood-tipped rays of the daisy, the heaven's blue lobes of the gentian.

Take, but very briefly, another instance:—the soft down on the human skin. In the hair of the head, in the nails on the fingers, the same idea takes distinct inflexions. But the same idea bursts forth also in the glorious plumage of the bird, makes the little humming-bird flash like an animated gem; the same idea clothes the fish, the lizard, the armadillo, with scales, strong and glistening with prismatic colours.

I have taken but a sample of instances to exemplify the manifoldness of one idea. And if one idea contains in itself so many possibilities, we obtain a view of nature not opposed to the law of evolution observed by natural philosophers. They take an animated cell, and they show how that by altering its circumstances they can alter its direction; they can develop it as a plant or as an animal.

Well!—the creative, living idea contains in itself many possibilities, and ripens into that form, expands in that direction which is adapted to the conditions in which it is placed. As the sun's ray falling on the rain-drop on the spray in the morning flashes as a ruby, as an emerald, as a topaz, or as a sapphire, according to the angle at which it is refracted, so is it with creative purpose entering into relations with matter.

From this we learn what is the law which governs evolution;—it is the law that the individual is conditioned by the whole. As the integers in a fixed sum may vary from the unit upwards, but as one rises in value, the others correspondingly decrease, as $5 + 5$, $4 + 6$, $3 + 7$, $2 + 8$, $1 + 9$ make up ten, so can the integers which make up the creative ideal vary indefinitely, but can never disturb the balance, never break the unity.

The sum of life in the coppice may be equal to the sum of life in the park; but in the former each of the countless saplings that spindles upwards

represents but a petty fraction of the unit ; whereas in the park the number of trees is diminished, and the amount of life in each is so much the more increased.

A square foot of soil will grow, say ten weeds and one meagre mangold. Pull up the weeds, and the mangold becomes comparatively bigger. The sum of life in the square foot is not disturbed.

The sum of life in savage Europe and that in civilized Europe may be equal, but in the former it was made up of tangled forest, dense morass, the urochs, the elk, the bear, the wolf, and here and there a group of shivering savages. The integer representing human life was low, that which stood for vegetable and bestial life was proportionately high.

But as Europe becomes civilized, the low integer increases, the population becomes denser, and the integers representing animal and vegetable life descend the scale. The forests yield to fields, the morass to meadow ; the urochs and the wolf disappear.

And thus we arrive at a reason for the law which we observe ; the reason for that law is the unity of the Divine idea of creation, an unity which it is impossible to disturb.

When the eye rests on a landscape, the vision forms an image on the brain. But though one, that image contains in itself subsidiary images,—of

the trees, the grass, the rocks, the sky. But each of these subsidiary images is itself composite ; it is made up of the representations of the leaves, the trunks, the grass-blades, the stones, the tracts of blue, and the patches of cloud.

Now in some analogous manner we may, with reverence, imagine the vision of creation to have stood ideally before God. The idea is one, but divisible, and subdivisible into an infinitude of subsidiary ideas, processions, to use the Dionysian term, all co-ordinated in one. All these ideas enclosed in the one vast idea of creation, inasmuch as they emerge from, and fall back into one idea, must be in perfect accord and unity.

The human mind receives ideas, and the ideas are transmitted from the objects to the brain. The illustration therefore is faulty. For in the Divine mind the ideas originate, and proceed from it, as rays from a centre, which differentiate themselves, from the simple break into the composite through a series of processions, each manifestation being an hypostasis of the thought of God.

“Every number,” says the Areopagite, “pre-exists uniformly in the monad, and the monad contains uniformly in itself every number, and every number unifies itself in the monad, and the more it departs from the monad the more it divides and multiplies itself.

“So also, all the rays of the circle co-exist in the

centre in their one point of union, and this is a point which comprehends in itself these lines uniformly united among themselves, which also perfectly coincide in the centre," to which they converge, and which also generates them, "and as they leave the centre, and separate, the more separable they become, the more also they diverge from one another." Thus in Nature the reasons of all individual and particular existences are in God, all partake of the unity of their origin, all issue forth from the one creative source, drawing from it their nature, their force, their direction.

" Among themselves all things
Have order ; and from thence the form, which makes
The universe resemble God. In this
The higher creatures see the printed steps
Of that eternal worth, which is the end
Whither the line is drawn. All natures lean,
In this their order, diversely ; some more,
Some less approaching to their primal source." ¹

¹ Dante, 'Paradise,' I.

IV.

THE MYSTERY OF MAN.

IN my former lecture I gave an answer to the question, "*How* the world came into being?"

I showed that the world is the manifestation of the creative ideas in God.

On this occasion I wish to show *why* the world was called into being.

If the world was made, there must be a reason for its creation. We cannot suppose that God called the universe into existence without a purpose, for to operate without purpose, is to operate without intelligence. If the world came into being without guiding intelligence, purpose unfolding itself, we have blind chance working in pre-existing matter,—a notion I set aside as one I am not prepared to discuss on this occasion.

What, then, is the purpose of God in creation? At the outset we must put aside certain reasons as inadmissible. We cannot say that God was constrained to create by any want in His nature.

We have needs, and the satisfaction of these

needs is the motive of our action. But the existence of these needs is the proof of our imperfection. If our nature were complete in itself, it would have no desires. Having no desires, it would not act. Consequently, to us, imperfection is the stimulus and guaranty of activity.

But God's nature is complete in itself; there is no defect, therefore no need. Consequently the motive of creation must not be sought in any necessity constraining God.

We speak our thoughts, we build, paint, compose music, write, because by so doing alone can we realize our ideas, and thereby give ourselves satisfaction. Our ideas demand exteriorization, and this exteriorization is necessary to us because we are composite beings. If we had no ideas to convert into action, we should be material beings only; if we had ideas with no desire to express them in act or word, we should be spiritual beings, only. But the fact of the imperious necessity in our nature requiring the manifestation of our thoughts, proves to us the duality of our nature.

Through the mind of deaf Beethoven rolled rich undulations of harmony, and fluent melodies, which he transcribed. But have we not heard of the tears wetting the old musician's cheeks and dropping on his manuscript, because he could not translate into sounds, hearing which he might rejoice, those ideas that welled up in his mind?

An idea with us is only realized when transformed into an act. But with God it is not so. A noumenal idea to Him is as real as that which is phenomenal, because His nature is simple, whereas ours is complex ; His is spiritual, whereas ours is spiritual and material.

Consequently, we must put entirely away from us the notion that the world of ideas is not as real as the world of phenomena ; and that to God, who is a Spirit, the idea of creation was not every whit as real as the visible universe of to-day.

If, then, the reason for creation were to be found in the nature of God, there would be no creation. We must therefore look elsewhere for the motive that led God to transform the world of possibilities into the world of actualities.

What, then, is the purpose ?

Let us examine our own natures, and see if they do not afford us a clue.

Now, why do we give form to our ideas ? I have already given you one reason, but that reason is not the only one. We translate our ideas into acts either to give satisfaction to ourselves, or because we desire to convey our ideas by that means to the minds of others.

Here, then, we have two reasons ; the first of which we cannot admit as explaining creation. But the other, I believe, unlocks the mystery.

God created the world in order that through

the visible things of the universe He might communicate His ideas to certain existences who should be capable of receiving them.

How do we know a man? By his thoughts. How do we know his thoughts? By his acts and words. So God may be known by His thoughts; and the thoughts of God are manifested by creation.

The world, then, is the visible exhibition of the ideas of God, Nature the sensible signs of His thoughts. It is a mighty book, written within and without with Divine conceptions. But who is to read this book? Who is to spell out this created speech, and comprehend its significance? Not the being simply material, the mineral, the vegetable, the animal; they are the alphabet of the great scroll, not the readers thereof. They live only in the material world; their notions move and circulate only in a created medium.

The readers, the interpreters must live in another world as well—in the world of ideas. Ideas exist and move in spiritual spheres. Those who are to catch and understand the ideas of God must have a spiritual nature capable of perceiving transcendental truths.

Now if God desired to manifest His thoughts to purely spiritual beings, He would not have created. For pure spirits receive ideas immediately, without material media acting as vehicles

for their transmission. Idea answers to idea in the spiritual world, as the flash in the west is a reflexion of the lightning-flash in the east.

Therefore, he who is to read creation must be neither mere spirit nor mere body, but must have a spiritual nature combined with a corporeal nature, so that through the things revealed to the mind by the bodily senses the thoughts of God may be perceived.

And who is this, but man?

“God,” said Timæus of Locri, “composed man by uniting the indivisible essence (spirit) and the divisible essence (matter), so that of the twain he made one, in whom are united the two actions which serve as principle of the two movements, one always the same (towards unity, infinity), the other always diverse (towards plurality, finality).”

If, then, God is the author of creation, creation is only rational with man as its final term. And man as its final term is only the key to and explanation of creation, if he have in him the faculty of reading and interpreting creation.

But that faculty is the mind or soul.

Now of mind or soul there are two sorts.

There is that which belongs to the animal, and there is that which is the prerogative of man. If man were a mere animal, he would require a mind sufficiently illumined to enable him to combat those hostile influences which combine for his extinction. That is to say, he would require

sufficient intelligence to form weapons wherewith to defend himself against wild beasts, and to provide himself with their flesh for food and their skins for clothing. His intellect would be higher in type than that of the dog and horse, inasmuch as he would possess the faculty of framing weapons, but in the structure of a dwelling hardly surpass the bird that builds so dainty a nest.

The measure of man's intelligence would be his necessities, and his necessities would be determined solely by the obligation laid on him by his nature of preserving his race from extinction.

But this animal intelligence is not the only one that has been observed in man. It is the only one, indeed, that is to be seen in certain races of mankind; but the fact of high civilization demonstrates the existence in man of not only an instinct of self-preservation and preservation of the species, but also of an entirely distinct phenomenon,—the capacity for and desire to reach a development independent of and even injurious to physical perfection. The oyster sickens to produce the pearl, and the artist and the student have not the rude health and muscular development of the savage. Art and science in no way conduce to the perfection of man as an animal. Art will not make man eat and drink and sleep better, and science by prolonging weakly lives tends to the physical deterioration of the race, for it allows those to live and become parents of still sicklier children, who in a savage

state would die off in early youth. Science interferes with the operation of the law of natural selection, and we have to thank it for the prevalence of consumption, neuralgia, and lunacy amongst us.

We have then as a demonstrable fact, in our natures an element whose development is independent of our animal instinct. Man has a double capacity, and a double intelligence; a capacity for animal development, with a corresponding animal instinct; and a capacity for intellectual development, with a corresponding spiritual intelligence.

The former is the *anima animalis*, the latter the *anima spiritualis*.

Man with only the animal instinct would be no explanation of creation, he would be but another step in the ladder leading to nothing;—a stride ahead of the gibbon and the gorilla, as the anthropoid ape is a stride ahead of the tailed monkey;—but that is all.

To explain creation man must have a spiritual intelligence. And a spiritual intelligence we know that man has got.

But you may ask what I mean by saying that he has the faculty of explaining creation.

I mean this:—that the intellectual faculty, mind, or soul, in man is capable of seeing beyond what is phenomenal; of detecting unity in the midst of diversity; of perceiving the abstract athwart the concrete; of piercing the limit to gaze on the in-

finite ; of seeking the simple in the midst of the multiple.

What is unity but the form of the creative idea embracing all possibilities, every variety in perfect harmony? And the simple, the abstract, the infinite, the absolute, are Divine thoughts, reflecting the very nature of God Himself.

Without these ideas, science and art could not exist, mental progress would be impossible. Whether man acknowledges it or not, God is in all his thoughts, for he introduces the ideas of God into all his scientific problems, into all his artistic conceptions.

Man beholding creation may place himself on one side and see in it only Nature, as when one observes a sunbeam penetrate a dark room, and watches the motes that glance in the ray ; or he may look up the long chain of existences, and behold God through them, as one standing in the sunbeam glances up it, and his eye catches, and is dazzled by the sun.

I have said that whether man acknowledges it or not, he has God in all his thoughts, for he has the ideas of infinity, of unity, of order, of truth, of beauty.

These are ideas which are manifested in creation, but which do not manifest themselves except to spiritual natures.

The world is made up of what is limited. In it

there is nothing that is not finite ; but the mind perceives beyond every limit, however far extended, into space indefinitely stretching.

The mind seeks for plan and unity in all phenomena. It compares analogous or opposed ideas, eliminates some, identifies others, till it has succeeded in discovering an underlying element of similarity which enables him to classify all creatures, and marshal them in their families and species and orders.

Truth is the clear view of every existence in its exact relations to every other existence. Error arises from the relations being misconceived in their proportions or position. To God alone all things are visible in all their relations ; the perspective of relations exists in the world which does not suffer us to see them thus, yet the mind is ever seeking to see things as they are, and not foreshortened.

It is ever straining to behold things as they are to God. Why so ? Because it sees the idea of truth in all creation. And the beautiful is the true. The soul rejoices in the beautiful, because that which is beautiful is that in which all the relations are seen in just order. A discord thrills with pain, for in it we have a note out of its due place, a colour too intense, too harsh for its surroundings.

Why does beauty delight ? Because the mind's eye sees order as one of the thoughts of God. If the mind saw not the general abstract idea, it could

not derive pleasure from its concrete expression in the rainbow or the flower.

I have now shown why God created the world. I have shown you that it was, it could be, through no caprice that it was created. That He created from no want in His nature, and that, therefore, the object *for* whom He created must be sought elsewhere.

I have shown you that as creation is the articulation in sensible signs of the Divine ideas, that great speech is addressed to some one.

That some one I showed you must be man, and that to understand the ideas underlying and vivifying the sensible signs—the objects of creation—man must have a spiritual as well as a material nature.

I have shown you that man is possessed of such a nature, and that he can and does read the thoughts of God through the works of God.

Therefore man solves the enigma of creation.

But I have only shown *for* whom God has created this phenomenal world. There is yet something more to be exhibited, and that is the motive actuating God in regard to man whom He created: *Why* did God reveal His thoughts to man?

There is but one motive conceivable, and that is LOVE.

Was it a guess of the ancients, or was it a revelation, that they declared Eros, Love, to have founded

and formed the world? No! it was no guess. For a guess which is true, ceases to be a guess, and becomes a revelation.

The motive actuating God was love—love to man then existing only in possibility, in idea.

Of love there are two sorts—the first is that whose highest manifestation is found in the mutual affection of husband and wife.

But this arises from either sex being imperfect without the other. What is deficient in the nature of man—the plastic, emotional, refining element—is supplied by the woman; and what is deficient in the nature of woman—the self-reliant, creative, spontaneous element—is supplied by man. The creative and the plastic elements united constitute the complete homo.

Such love as this has its foundation in an imperfection of nature, and is not, therefore, to be spoken of with respect to the motive of creation.

But there is another sort of love, of which we have a sketch in parental affection—a love rising out of a nature complete in itself, and pouring its benefits on the head of the child, with no selfish aim in view, with no thought save for the welfare of the dear child. This, I conceive, is the motive of creation, love, pure beneficence to man.

Look where we will, then, we see in all creation a love-token of God to us.

The child kneeling up in bed, watches through

the lattice the white moon sailing in the sky, the little spirit is filled with wonder. Dim thoughts struggle into form in the young mind. When God hung the silver globe in the heavens, in the beginning, He foresaw the rapt awe of the little child, and rejoiced therein.

When the willow first thrust forth her furry catkins, the Eternal One beheld the village children on the cool spring mornings by the pool gathering "palm" branches. The wood-anemone strewn in the budding copse, the white sorrel under the dripping bank, the red robin, the blue hyacinth, in the wood under the young green leaves! Have they not answered the purpose, the loving purpose, that called them forth?

I remember a young girl standing under a mulberry tree one summer eve, listening breathless to the warble of a nightingale heard for the first time. When the egg was laid, and the bird grew, the thoughts of God were in that heart swelling with ecstasy at the chant of the nightingale in that summer night.

When the earth's strata were bent and broken, and their jagged edges were thrust up into the sky, draped with glacier, crowned with snow, God foreknew the passionate delight the alpine peaks and ranges would afford to many a weary toiler in office and study. The Burgundian tyrant Gondecar laid a tithe on all the produce of his land, and demanded

of James, bishop of the Tarantaise, his share of the tribute. James had neither corn nor wine, nor flax. The only produce of his alpine diocese was snow. He filled two panniers with it, placed them on an ass, drove her to the court of Gondemar, and poured his tribute, a snow-drift, over the purple stair of his throne. The king sprang up in fury, and exclaimed at the "vile offering!" "It is not vile," answered the saint, "but thou hast not learned to value it."

The time of alpine snow has come; age after age has seen it powdered on the mountain peaks, slide down the flanks in ice, and flow away in rivers to the sea, unesteemed save for the water it yielded. But its time has come, its value is known. There is no medicine to weary brain like the golden light on a distant bank of alpine snow.

You may remember the verses of a distinguished authoress, on the artist with a thought, a message to men throbbing in his brain. She bids him grave his thought in stone figure and flower on the cathedral portal. And years will flow by, men—the soldier, the statesman—come and go, the market women pass the portal, but the sculpture yields not up its thought, till the poet for whom it was destined stands before the gate.

“ Then, I think, those stony hands will open,
And the gentle lilies overflow,
With the blessing and the loving token
That you hid there years ago,

And the tendrils will unroll and teach him
How to solve the problem of his pain,
And the birds' and angels' wings shake downward,
On his heart and spirit tender rain.
While he marvels at his fancy, reading
Meaning in that quaint and ancient scroll,
Little guessing that the loving carver
Left a message for his weary soul."

And have not the Alps been such a thought in the divine mind? a thought full of beauty, tenderness, and love to the clerk and the student, unfolding now, and speaking health and peace and faith to his soul?

I remember a mountain scramble, leading me suddenly from rough rocks and sear grass upon a dell of rich green-sward, girt about with pines. Set in the turf was here and there a fallen star—a yellow anemone, on the rocks the carmine alpine rhododendron was in full blaze of blossom, and over all the sward was a tender bloom of blue forget-me-not. Overhead burnt a glacier in the summer sun, and a thread of silver fell in powder from it, waving in the soft air. I am not ashamed to tell you that that vision filled my heart to overflowing. God spake through that scene, through every flower, out of the mountain, out of the ice. The voice of God walking in that garden was as audible as of old in Paradise, when Adam heard it in the cool of the day.

Every flower declared His love, His beauty, His perfection. Forget-me-not was the bloom cast over

all ; it was the whispered appeal of God ! the voice still and small. Forget Thee, my God ! Forget *Thee* !

Creation, then, is the manifestation to man of the thoughts of God, and that manifestation is made in love. Inorganic life is a prophecy and preparation for organic life. Organic life supposes man to read and interpret it.

“ See through this air, this ocean and this earth,
All matter quick and bursting into birth.
Above how high progressive life may go,
Around how wide ! how deep extend below.
Vast chain of being ! which from God began,
Natures ethereal, human,—angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect which no eye can see,
No glass can reach, from infinite to *Thee*,
From Thee to nothing.”—POPE.

Man is the explanation of creation. Looking back, the world is inexplicable without God ; looking forward, it is an enigma without man.

V.

PRIMEVAL MAN.

A NEW science, scarce thirty years old, has made its appearance, and has established itself in our midst, which has already made strange revelations relative to the antiquity of man, and threatens to overthrow tradition, and disturb our preconceived ideas as to his origin.

Like all sciences which are in their infancy, it promises more than it can perform. It must be so—a new science, like a new speculation, must advertise itself, make exaggerated pretensions, to excite interest and arrest attention.

But without admitting that all its promises are possible of fulfilment, we cannot deny that the science of prehistoric archæology, of which I am speaking, has already played a considerable and brilliant part, and has thrown a flood of light on a hitherto obscure topic—the history of primeval man.

If hypotheses have entered too freely into the system, and have arrogated to themselves the cos-

tume and airs of facts, it is but what one must expect in the midst of the excitement and enthusiasm attendant on a novel discovery.

But in spite of boasts and mistakes, the study of human palæontology has taken rank among the positive sciences. It has accumulated already a vast number of facts absolutely certain, the synthesis of which has already in great part been effected. Its researches have reproduced on the scene the rude and savage life of man in the first period of his career; it has disclosed to us his habits, his pursuits.

It has done more than this. It has accorded him an undreamt-of antiquity. By extending its investigations beyond the epoch at which the present surface of the globe was formed, before the continents assumed the shapes they now affect, and the seas filled their present beds, it has carried us back to an antiquity which cannot be reckoned by years nor by centuries. And it has shown us representatives of our species existing through the last transformations of the terrestrial crust, before the map of the world in the smallest degree resembled its present appearance.

In a science in course of formation, which is daily advancing, but is also daily revising and modifying preceding conclusions; in a science which reposes on an infinity of facts of detail, established independently by diverse observers, it

is impossible but that errors should occasionally slip in, and affect its generalizations, which it will require time and scrupulous care to correct.

But after making allowance for this, there remain certain conclusions which it is not possible any longer to dispute. Such is the dogma of the existence of our species on the earth throughout the geologic period designated "quaternary." The anterior existence of man during a portion of the "tertiary" period is on its way towards being established by proofs of great solidity, though not as yet sufficiently numerous and independent to be determined conclusively.

Now, however, that attention has been directed to this point, we may predict that before many years are passed, with the progress of discoveries, this point also will be demonstrated with the same degree of certainty.

Let us now consider, as briefly as is compatible with the interest and importance of the subject, the results satisfactorily arrived at, and the conjectures that have been formed relative to the origin of man, and then we shall be able to estimate their bearing on the doctrines of revelation.

The most ancient vestiges of man as yet found have been in the middle of the tertiary period, in the superior miocene beds; and the fauna and flora of those beds bear a relation sufficiently close to the fauna of the globe at present as to lead us

to surmise that the first ancestors of the races of man now peopling the earth synchronized with the first appearance of the species of beasts now extant.

The flora and fauna of the beds which exhibit the first traces of our species, show that Europe at that time enjoyed a temperature much more elevated than it does at present. Central Europe basked in a climate resembling that of the tropics; the most northerly portions of Asia, America, and Greenland itself, were not then mantled with snow. Even within the polar circle, all the unsubmerged land—then much more extensive than at present—was covered with dense forests, and enjoyed a temperature conducive to rich vegetation. In Greenland, under latitude 70° N., the *Sequoia sempervirens* ripened, which now is fruitless at Zürich, and only flourishes without check on Lake Como. Spitzbergen was clothed with woods of hazel, poplar, beech, and plane; and rank forests of beeches, oaks, magnolias, and cherry clothed the mountain sides of Greenland above Disco Isle.¹ Huge anthropoid apes resembling the gibbon, the four-toed rhinoceros, the gigantic acerotherium, prowled about the ancient forests of central Europe.

We have not got very precise information on the

¹ "The Miocene Flora of N. Greenland," by Prof. O. Heer, in the Royal Dublin Society's Transactions for 1866.

condition of man in the miocene period. All that we possess is due to one observer in a narrow circle—the Abbé Bourgeois in Loiret and Loire-et-Cher.

Certain flints rudely chipped into scrapers have been collected in the calcareous beds of Beauce, near Thenay and Selles-sur-Cher.

We can picture to ourselves the miserable savages of that infinitely remote period, living under tropical palms and gigantic ferns, on islets in the midst of lakes or seas, out of reach of the ferocious monsters that haunted the jungles of the mainland, fashioning their scrapers out of the coarse flint in the chalky soil—the fine flint and chert of which the polished stone weapons were afterwards made did not then exist in Beauce—that, having killed a beast, with these scrapers they might scratch the flesh from the bones, and clean the hide.

Above these calcareous beds lie the sands of the Orleanais, also a miocene deposit, but more recent. It belongs to the period which saw the arrival of the mastodons and dinotheriums. It also exhibits relics of man. In that bed have been found the same flint scrapers, and even fragments of rude pottery.

In beds, again, superior, but still tertiary, has been found the skeleton of a cetacean (halitherium), the bones cut and scored by flint knives. Look on

the map : see Pouancé, where that whale was cast on the beach and devoured by men, lying in a fold of the hills, towards the east, that stretch from the north in La Manche to the Loire in the south, and wonder at the remoteness of the period when a vast sea occupied the heart of France, when Finis-terre was a granite island in an ocean, when a mighty channel, wider than the Mediterranean, swept from the Caspian with scarce a break across eastern Europe, roared round the iron point of Norway, and foamed along the Malvern and Yorkshire hills.

All our knowledge of miocene man is as yet derived from the few facts above mentioned.

A change swept over the globe, or at least its northern zones. Slowly the temperature descended, and the tropical plants disappeared, to make way for those of the temperate zone. And as the flora altered, the fauna underwent a parallel modification. Did the primeval man survive this change, and linger on in cooler Europe till the glacial period set in and froze him out? Or did he migrate south with the gigantic apes to the steamy regions of equatorial Africa? We cannot tell. We have no data on which to found an opinion. No traces have yet been discovered of man in the deposits of this period.

In the middle of the pliocene age set in the first glacial epoch. The temperature had sunk so low,

that vast accumulations of ice formed over the north of Europe. Scandinavia, Scotland, England, the central plateau of France were wan and white, and deathlike. Scarce a leaf showed; from every hill, down every vale crept cold glaciers, grinding the rocks, and turning up the soil before them like a plough. Even the petty chalk range visible from Cambridge, which you have to look over the hedge to see, sent a vast sheet of ice to the German Ocean, and I live on a mighty heap of its grindings and sweepings, where it discharged into the sea. The mastodons, and with them trains of ruminants and carnivora, emigrated to the south before the advancing walls of ice.

The deposits of this period are mute concerning man. They contain no traces of his handiwork. A chasm of ages which the mind in vain strives to overleap, separates the miocene man from man on his next appearance on the scene.

Through that vast period he remained stationary, if he survived it. Century after century and cycle after cycle rolled its course, and left him unchanged. But where was he? We do not know. He may have gone south, and so the quaternary man may trace his filiation from the tertiary man. Or the primeval man may have died out before the glaciers, and the man who appears in the new age may be a new creation.

With the pliocene period the temperature of

Europe again rose, and from thenceforth remained much what it is at present ; for from that date the flora remains tolerably constant. But the new vegetation which spread over the land was very different from that which had preceded the period of ice. The fauna also was different. The hippopotamus and the horse appear. At the same time man reappears, and his arrow heads, bones of pachydermata cut or split, show that he lived by the chase. The contour of the land was not yet quite what it is now. An elevation of the bed of the English Channel to 600 feet united the British Isles with the Continent. The Thames was then an affluent of the Rhine, and fed the sea which covered northern Germany and Denmark. To the south Sicily was attached to northern Africa and to Spain. The Gulf of Obi was the mouth of a vast inland sea that washed the roots of the Altai, and has left its feeble trace in Lake Baikal.

Through Sicily passed a stream of African migration of beasts ; a hyperborean fauna simultaneously began its travels south, and poured upon central Europe across the plains of Russia. Each of these migrations consisted of analogous but distinct species. From the north came the mammoth and the hairy elephant (*Elephas primogenius*), the furry rhinoceros (*Rhin. tichorinus*), the reindeer, elan, glutton, and musk-ox ; from the south came the fauna which subsists in Africa, with its peculiar

elephants, rhinoceroses, and hippopotami. The indigenous fauna of the pliocene period died out, with the exception of the cave bear, and some others, before the double current of immigration, which met over their graves in the British Isles. The different phases of this substitution of one fauna for another may be traced in the coral crag of Norfolk and Suffolk, in the forest-bed of Cromer, in the fluviatile beds of Montreuil near Paris, in Sicily in the vast accumulations of bones which fill the grottos of Syracuse and San Theodoro, and which are exported annually in ship - loads to Marseilles, for the manufacture of saltpetre.

At this time were formed these deposits in the Yorkshire and Devonshire caverns, which contain numerous evidences of man's co-existence with these extinct monsters.

During this period took place also a grand revolution changing the relief of the continents, and marking the dawn of a new geologic epoch.

A steady subsidence, especially noticeable in the northern regions, plunged the greater part of the north of Europe under water, and floating blocks of ice were wafted over the submerged plains of Russia, Poland, and Prussia, laden with rocks and stones torn from the polar mountains. As these floating rafts melted, they discharged their burdens on the floor of the shallow sea. The British Isles were reduced to an archipelago of

little isles. Atlas stood up and took the morning, and reflected her red peaks in a shallow sea that covered what is now the desert of Sahara. The great tertiary Atlantis disappeared, Sicily broke her connection with Africa.

The accomplishment of these changes, the moment when they attained their maximum of intensity, open a new geologic epoch, the quaternary.

It began with a second glacial period, but not one of the same intensity as the first. Streams of ice filled the valleys of Scotland, Wales, of the Pyrenees, the Apennines; and the glaciers of the Alps disgorged upon the plains of Lombardy. One is not surprised at finding in the deposits of this age the relics of all the species, alive or extinct, which characterize the circumpolar regions, and which can only live in a cold climate.

But it must not be supposed that the climate was like that of Siberia. The fossil deposits exhibit an extraordinary mixture of species proper to hot and cold zones. The African elephant then lived in the forests beside the Rhine; the two-horned rhinoceros, now restrained to the extreme south of Africa, laid its bones in Great Britain. The African hippopotamus bathed in the Aire near Leeds; a huge lion or tiger—the *Felis spelæus*—with the hyæna and the leopard, haunted the plains of France. The explanation of this remarkable phenomenon is to be found in the fact that at the

quaternary period the ocean extended farther than at present, and wound in and out amidst a labyrinth of islands and peninsulas, bearing with it currents of warm water, and loading the air with vapour. The mountains were covered with glaciers, the rivers were swelled to an enormous width, and the lowlands and valleys enjoyed a mild steamy atmosphere.

All through this period man lived, and left innumerable traces of his activity in the soil ; and not of his activity only, his bones were laid in it as well, and by them we are able to reconstruct him in flesh and blood. The skulls of Stängenäs, of Lahr, of Maestricht, of Eguisheim, of Neanderthal, and numerous others, prove the existence of two distinct types of men in Europe, distinguished by the shape of their heads.

The one race, the dolichocephalic, was tall, with elongated skull ; the other race, the brachycephalic, was short, with round bullet head.

It can hardly be said with certainty which of these races was the first on the stage. The European dolichocephalous savages have their analogies in the New Caledonians. The type of the primitive brachycephalous men is preserved in the Esquimaux.

I need follow no further the history of our race as revealed by its remains ; thenceforth there are no gaps in it ; but there has been a slow yet steady

advance towards civilization. According to the lowest computation twenty thousand years have elapsed since the appearance of pleistocene man ; other calculations throw the date back to a hundred thousand.

And now, before proceeding any further, and opening up fresh questions, let us ask whether the admission of these facts, and facts they are, contradict the Biblical record.

In the first place, let it be remembered that the Biblical account and the discoveries of modern science on palæontological man have, and can have, but few points of contact. The history of the primitive ages of man is considered from two opposite sides. The Bible views facts of the moral order, whence it may draw religious instruction, whereas human palæontology embraces facts of the material order only. The two domains of faith and science adjoin, but are not to be confounded.

It is argued that two facts which emerge from the new discoveries on primeval man ruin the credit of the Mosaic narrative. First, in that the origin of man is thrown back long previous to the period fixed by Biblical chronology ; and secondly, in that primeval man is exhibited, not intelligent, like Adam and Eve, but in a condition of abject barbarism scarcely elevated above brutality.

The Bible, however, was not written to teach chronology ; the calculations based on the genealogies

of the patriarchs have never proved satisfactory ; the Hebrew text and that of the Septuagint vary in the number of years attributed to the first fathers, showing that the original texts were not agreed on this point. It is possible, moreover, as has been ingeniously suggested, that the names of these patriarchs represent, not individuals, but races. This was almost certainly the case later, when Arphaxad is so termed as "a dweller on the confines of the Accads," the primitive Turanian race in Chaldæa ; and Israel is used often as the name of a nation, though it was originally that of its ancestor alone.

I pass to the second point ; the low point of civilization at which man first appears on the stage.

Here a question arises. What is man ? Let me offer a definition. It is, perhaps, arbitrary, but if it be accepted, it solves a crowd of difficulties. And, moreover, it is a definition in accordance with revelation.

Man is that animal, highest in the scale of mammals, in whom the sense of the infinite first arises. In other words, man is that animal in whose breast the spark of soul is first elicited.

What is the Adam of the Mosaic record ? He is a man, the first man with a living soul ; the first man with the faculty in him of looking beyond the bounds imposed by matter, and of seeing God ; the first in whom the image of God was reflected.

I offer this definition with diffidence. But I

would ask you to consider it well, and see whether it is not consistent with the idea of Adam as set forth by Moses, and then to note how, if we adopt this definition, we are able to admit all the conclusions of eminent naturalists on the origin of races, on their gradual evolution, and to consider their speculations without alarm, waiting only to accept them till they are established on irrefragable evidence.

1. It is observable that in the book of Genesis there are hints of the existence of men independent of Adam. There are two accounts of the creation of man in that book, and it by no means follows that the second account is an amplification of the former. Cain is said to have had a mark set on him, lest he should be slain by the people then living on the earth. Who were these people? The sons of Adam, the son of God,—the Adamim go in unto the daughters of men, the Goim. It is an union of distinct races which is described and spoken of as an offence.

The Biblical narrative is therefore quite tolerant of a theory that there were men before Adam, men, that is, of human type, with instinct budding into intelligence, but not men with souls, with a power of perceiving what was beyond the limits of the senses, who stood in the same relation to the Adamites that the Papuans occupy at the present day towards Europeans.

2. Such a theory is in conformity with my argument, that the law of the world is evolution, that the manifestation of the divine idea passes through the categories of time, in a series of processions.

The one divine idea of life differentiates into vegetable and animal life. Animal life, starting from some elementary form, such as the amœba, divides into the synamœba and the infusoria. The former branches out into the Protasci and the Prothelymna. From the former issue the races of sponges and zoophytes; from the latter the worms. The idea thence rays off through forms in series reaching the classes of echinoderms, articulata, vertebrata, and mollusca. The solemn rhythmic march proceeds. From the monotremata emerge the ornithodelphians and the marsupials; from the latter the placentalia, then the decidua; the forerunners of the apes, the elephants, the lions. From the prasimiæ arise the simiæ; the miocene period witnessed the apparition of the anthropoid apes. Their descendants are represented in Africa by the engecco and the gorilla, in Asia and America by the gibbon and the ourang. Then appears man. Is the progress a genealogical tree of man? That I do not affirm. The paradigm I have traced does not necessarily indicate a natural filiation, but rather an ideal procession.

We need not affirm that at a given moment a monkey produced a man, but that the general idea of the simiæ contained in itself among all its possi-

bilities the idea of man, belonging by his anatomical structure to the same family as the gibbon and the gorilla, but diverging from it in certain structural peculiarities, and, above all, by his possession of an intelligent soul.

3. Science asserts, and asserts truly, that there exists a gap between the anthropoid apes which appeared in the miocene period and pleistocene man. It would interject an intermediary species of man-apes, walking upright, with modifications of the anatomy corresponding to this position, without speech, and with instinct hovering on the confines of intelligence.

As Adams and Leverrier, by observing the orbits of certain planets, satisfied themselves that another world existed, which had not yet been seen, and having calculated its position, turned their glasses to that point of the sky where they had convinced themselves it was to be found, and Neptune sparkled into their eyes, so anthropologists conclude from the anthropoid ape to the man, that there must have been an intermediate species.

If we accept the doctrine of the procession of divine ideas in creation, we may concede this also. For the divine ideas never advance by leaps, but always in logical progression. One manifestation postulates the next, and that which is presupposes that which goes before.

The idea of nerve predicates its manifestations

either arranged as a column or as a ring, and thus gave birth to the vertebrate and radiate realms of life. The existence of the lizard presupposes the worm, and the worm the amœba.

As yet no fossil remains of the primeval man (*Homo primigenius*) have been found; but if we compare the inferior races of woolly-haired men with the higher species of anthropoid apes, we are led to admit that, at least for the African races, their forerunner must have united the characteristics intermediate between their forms; that he must have been dolichocephalous and prognathous, have had woolly hair, and a dark skin; that his arms were longer and stronger, his legs shorter and deficient in calf. The brachycephalous precursor of the Asiatic races was closer allied to the type of the Asiatic apes, with hair not woolly but lank.

When did this man-monkey race exist? Was it at the miocene period, and is it they who have left their traces in the chalk of Beauce and the sands of Pouancé? We cannot tell, as no bones have yet been found, but it is probable.

4. I have said that the paradigm of man does not necessarily indicate a natural filiation, but rather an ideal procession.

Nevertheless, I am not unprepared to accept the modern theory of development by a process of natural selection, so soon as it is established on sufficiently firm ground. I do not see that to accept

the Darwinian doctrine of the descent of man need shock religious minds, need be considered as subversive of what is revealed.

“Those great modifications of structure and of external form,” writes Mr. Wallace, “which resulted in the development of man out of some lower type of animal, must have occurred before his intellect had raised him above the condition of the brutes, at a period when he was gregarious, but scarcely social, with a mind perceptive but not reflective, ere any sense of right or feeling of sympathy had been developed in him.”¹ In other words, man *was* anatomically, before he was spiritually. There was a time when there was no soul in man, when he was not yet Adam, when the divine likeness was entirely in abeyance; to the eyes of science a human being, but not to the eyes of the seer as yet a “son of God.”

And is not this a transformation which takes place before our eyes, now? Have we not got savage races occupying tracts of the earth's surface which have never risen from their original brutality, through all the ages that have rolled over their heads, but in whom, under the influence of civilization at their doors, some feeble glimmer of light begins to manifest itself, to be in fact kindled?

And if there be now going on this transformation of the animal man into the intelligent man, the

¹ ‘Contributions to the Theory of Natural Selection,’ pp. 319, 320.

spiritual man—a transformation taking place in our own selves—is it not probable that there was a time when the external pressure of circumstances forced certain apes into the anatomical position of man? How remarkable it is that the negro and the gorilla in Africa should bear a family resemblance, and that the lowest type of Asiatic man should have affinities of structure with the Asiatic rather than the African apes.

I do not, however, accept the theory of the development of man as completely established, waiting till it is confirmed by more conclusive evidence. To me, it seems that the Dionysian theory of the procession of ideas explains the facts of this order which science reveals, without having recourse to a direct filiation of species the one from the other.¹

But I cannot think that the Darwinian theory is repugnant to Christian doctrine. It is quite possible to hold it enthusiastically and be a sound Churchman at the same time. How this is possible will be better understood when we come to consider what Revelation and Inspiration really mean.

In conclusion, let me briefly restate the theory of Man which I suggest as a solution to scientific difficulties.

¹ 'Creation of Modern Science,' by the Rev. G. Greenwood, published by King and Co., 1874, is an admirable tract on the same subject. The author arrives at the same conclusions from a different point of starting, and through a different chain of reasoning.

Adam is the first man in whom the sense of the infinite, the spark, that is, of soul, was first struck; the first father of the whole race of intelligent men.

A beast sees nothing beyond the surface, never catches a glimpse of what underlies phenomena; and a two-legged, erect being that sees no farther, is, to all intents and purposes, a beast, and no son of Adam.

Are there races of men who have no such sense? If so, they have not yet attained to the stage of Adam. Into their nostrils no living soul has yet been breathed. For if there is soul, there must be chinks through which it stretches out towards the infinite. Some day the spark may fall from heaven into the dark heart of an Andaman islander, and at once a germ of movement and of growth will manifest itself, the light will pierce into the heart, at first in thin rays, but gradually it will widen and brighten, till the transformation is complete.

Look at the savage Kelt or Teuton. Shut in on every side save one,—Religion. Through that one opening above came down a ray of light into his abode, obscured by superstition, may be, yet God's light for all that. Like the gap in his cabin which was at once window and chimney, that opening admitted truth and let out error.

Through that opening our forefathers looked up, and saw stars, and stars beyond stars, and in those seen, prophecies of stars unseen, leading the spirit

on and up, away from the dull narrow bounds of sense, and educating him to be the father of the English of to-day.

And now, What is our present condition? Why every science, every art opens into infinity. Creation is a crystal palace, and the light flows in through every wall.

Wherever there is seen law, goodness, beauty, truth, there is an hypostasis of God. Every leaf that flutters in the wind, every spider that drops down its silken line, every atom that dances in the water, or floats in the sunbeam, opens into infinity. And man's life has become one of stretch and strain towards God through the objects of sense.

Education, progress, is the law of the life of man, as a son of Adam. He who walks in the meadows and sees in grass only grass, and in flowers only flowers, is imperfect; he halts between the ape and the angel.

I once heard a farmer's daughter exclaim with amazement at the delight and interest which a country walk afforded an accomplished lady. To herself, the wild-roses were only roses, the blue dragon-fly flitting over the yellow flags was only a fly. The ape prevailed in one, the angel in the other. The one rested at the husk and saw only shape and colour, the other perceived beauty and design. Every rose-leaf, every dragon-fly opened the kingdom of heaven to the daughter of Adam.

The song of all creation was a *sursum corda* resounding in her ears, inaudible to the other.

And what is history? A collection of facts to the Goim, the revelation of principles to the Adamim.

And art? The vision of beauty, striven after; and beauty is an hypostasis of God.

Thus all that is in the world becomes to the true man a revelation of the Deity, drawing him out of himself, thrilling his soul to its finest fibre, kindling in him a hunger which is never satisfied, a longing desire which never languishes, till in the great expansion of his innermost being, like Lamartine's stone-mason of Saint-Point, "He dies of the love of God."

VI.

BIBLICAL INSPIRATION.

1. *The Old Testament.*

THREE hundred years ago the conscience of Western Christendom, waking under the nightmare of the Papacy, put forth an arm to grope for something firm, something by clutching which it might shake off the haunting dream. Its hand fell on the Bible. The authority of the Book was marshalled against the authority of the Church. Protestantism seized on it as an arsenal of projectiles. In response to every anathema and excommunication hurled from Rome, it shot back a keen, barbed text from Wittemberg or Geneva. To carry on an effective warfare against the Papacy, the Reformers were forced, by the logic of circumstances, to assume the exclusive sufficiency of Scripture, its absolute, unqualified infallibility.

The formal position of the Reformation is often stated as the insurrection of human reason against the yoke of authority; the movement may have

tended in this direction, but it was not this consciously or avowedly. Its formal and avowed basis was an appeal from the Church to the Bible. The Reformers rejected traditional belief in favour of Divinity speaking through the Document. The cogency of their appeal lay in its presenting itself as an appeal from the human to the divine; from tradition, now discovered to be the voice of men, to a Book, thought to be the Word of God.

Reason was not consulted dispassionately. It was not for one moment suffered to dispute the hypothesis to which the whole movement was pinned. The claims of reason were not discussed, the question lay, in the sixteenth century, between rival authorities. The daring innovator who should have ventured into the vaults, torch in hand, over which the Reformers had built their house, and wrangled and passed laws, would have been dragged forth, hung, drawn, and quartered as a traitor.

A very slight acquaintance with the history of the Reformation is sufficient to show that the hypothesis of the Book owed its victory over the rival hypothesis of the Institution to causes extraneous to any superior probability intrinsic in the hypothesis itself.

At any rate it was inevitable that, when this theory had done its work in controversy against Papal supremacy, it should itself, in quieter times, be subjected to examination.

Reason, called in to expel the Pict and protect the Kelt, would in time turn its arms towards subjugating that which had invoked its aid.

It was inevitable that those who were told that the world rested on a tortoise should ask further on what the tortoise stood.

In surveying the battle-field one is surprised, almost amused, to note how wholly untenable the Protestant position was before a well-directed attack. Its flank was uncovered. On what authority did it accept the Bible? The book had not fallen down from heaven like the silver image of Diana. It was a bundle of documents selected from amidst a litter of others. Who tied the tape around these, and rejected the rest? The existence of the Bible as a sacred unit proved that there was a body authorized, or which thought itself authorized, to make this selection, and to publish a canon.

Nor was the Roman position less precarious. The Romanists admitted the authority of Scripture, and pointed to its texts as a basis for the claims of the Church. The Scriptures were its title-deeds, but then they were deeds of its own drawing up. The Church was infallible because the Bible said so, but the Bible was only infallible because it was authorized to be so by the Church. The argument revolved in a circle.

Thus the whole subject of contest at the Reformation period amounted to this, which had priority,

the egg or the bird? The bird that laid the egg, or the egg that produced the bird?

More than three hundred years have passed away, and reason, which was sealed up by frost after its activity in the sixteenth century, has begun once more to flow. Its stream is inevitably directed against that basis on which Protestantism built itself a house.

There are fissures in the walls, widening daily.

The rector of a church with which I am acquainted was told that cracks had formed in the tower. "Paper them over," was his suggested remedy.

Papering cracks will not mend faulty foundations or arrest ruin. This is a truth it behoves us to acknowledge and act upon. Unfortunately papering cracks is too frequently resorted to, and the caution is not uncalled for.

If there be fissures in the walls, it behoves us to consider whether weight has not been laid on ground not calculated, never designed, to bear it.

It cannot be doubted, I think, that a general sense of uneasiness exists in religious minds relative to the authority and inspiration of Scripture.

I am not of course alluding to ignorant religious minds which have never studied or thought about the questions affecting Biblical infallibility. Ignorance and hesitation are to one another in inverse ratio; no man is so positive on a matter as he who

knows nothing about it. So in the matter of Biblical inspiration, none are louder and more exacting in their assertions of it than those absolutely devoid of critical reading.

But I am alluding to those devout souls loving Jesus, the Author and Finisher of their faith, to whom the Bible is the dearest book ; to whom the loss of the Gospel would be the loss of the sun out of their firmament ; to such as these am I alluding, who have more or less been brought in contact with the current of rationalism ; and who see that what they once supposed was a closed question is now a crying one. Lothair thought life the simplest thing in the world till he entered into it, and felt and found how complex it was.

Two difficulties beset the received, popular, doctrine of Biblical infallibility at the outset.

1. Scientific discoveries contradict, or seem to contradict, statements of the sacred record. Thence the corollary is drawn, that if the Bible be proved guilty of error in matters which are verifiable, there is no guaranty that it does not err also in such matters as escape verification.
2. Criticism has reduced the Bible to a collection of independent documents of various dates and description, arbitrarily collected into one.

Therefore the authority of the Bible as a whole is impaired.

On the first of these points it is not my purpose to speak at present. The objections are too much matter of detail to be examined in a single lecture, and some of them have been touched on in my former discourses.

But the second point admits of being considered more briefly.

Criticism reveals that the Bible is not one book, nor is it made up of two parts, an Old and a New Testament, but that it is, on the contrary, a collection of from sixty to seventy independent compositions by different hands made at periods far removed, under circumstances widely various, in different stages of civilization and of religious thought.

Not only so, it shows also that we have not got these books in their original form, but glossed, interpolated and altered at different times, and with different intent.

Also, that some of them were never even written by the persons to whom they are attributed, and others never written with the purpose which has been thought to justify their position in the canon. And that doctrines have been twisted out of texts which were unknown to the writers, and prophecies pointed out, which prophecies were never intended.

All these points, and there are many more, are used with force to detach minds from traditional belief, or if not to detach them, at least to loosen their adhesion.

The Bible proves to be no homogeneous rock, but a congeries of stones drawn from various quarters, like the piles of drift which strew the plains of Prussia, in which are found fragments from the mountains of Spitzbergen, the rocks of Nova Zembla, from the Ural and the Dovrefjeld.

Let us now trace the formation of the dogma of Biblical infallibility in its most extreme form, and then we shall be able to estimate how much of truth it contains, and how much is made up of arbitrary conjecture.

Then, perhaps, we shall find ourselves in a position to form some theory of inspiration which will prove less faulty at the touch of reason.

Mosaism never took firm hold of the Hebrews through the period from the promulgation of the Law to the captivity in Babylon. Its prescriptions had not become the mould of their lives, its monotheism had not mastered their minds. If Mosaism did not fall into complete oblivion, this was due solely to an uninterrupted succession of prophets, men who, from the age of the Judges to the fall of the kingdom, pleaded incessantly, not for the observance of its precepts, but for the acknowledgment of its revelation of the Divine unity. The bias of the Hebrew people was towards idolatrous polytheism ; and the prophet was a protest against this tendency.

The Law had fallen into disregard, like canon Law

in the English Church at the present day ; its commands were ignored, as antiquated ; its ceremonial was modified ; some of its distinctive rites were, perhaps, never performed.

The new moons were still observed, but they were equally sacred among the Canaanites ; and if the ark was still revered, it was, perhaps, because the Moloch-worshippers had also their sacred coffer, the palladium of every tribe.

But about four centuries before Christ a radical change passed over the family of Israel. One might suppose oneself confronting a new people. The name is changed, and with the name of the nation, its tendency. Hebrews went down to Babylon ; Jews rebuilt Jerusalem ; the old title was laid aside, and from thenceforth the people are known as Jews. But it was especially in its beliefs, its religious and moral tendencies, that the change in the people is most conspicuous.

Mosaism in the Hebraic period had never been frankly adopted ; now it became incarnate in Jewdom. The Law which had been violated without compunction by the Hebrew, became to the Jew the sovereign rule of life. The sons of Israel who had been led captives to Chaldæa had for centuries gravitated towards polytheism ; from the moment of their return to the present day, their monotheism has been ineffaceable.

The Captivity must have cut the Jew to the heart.

The proof is in the complete transformation it effected. The bondage in Egypt and the captivity in Babylon, each was the anguish going before the birth of a new idea ; the pangs that preceded a regeneration.

Yet those who returned to Palestine by permission of Cyrus, did not bring with them these new habits, but they brought a disposition wholly new. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah exhibit to us these returned Jews living in the violation of the most positive prescriptions of the Law. Usury, forbidden by Moses, was exercised among them with odious cruelty ; in less than a century after the return of the first colonists under Zerubbabel, it had reduced a considerable portion of the population to abject misery.¹

The sabbaths and the feasts, far from being celebrated with decency, were desecrated by markets, at which assembled members of neighbouring nations with whom Moses had forbidden relations.² Marriages were contracted with Gentile women.³ The members of the sacerdotal tribe, the son of the high-priest himself, had set the example.⁴

But though there was no change in the manners, there was a complete change in the hearts of the people. The iron of captivity had entered deeply into their souls. They were conscious that their

¹ Neh. v. 1-13.

² Neh. xiii. 1-3 ; Ezra ix. 10-15.

³ Neh. xiii. 23-28 ; Ezra ix. 10. ⁴ Neh. xiii. 28 ; Ezra x. 18, *sq.*

exile had been a punishment, and their hearts were ripe for repentance. But as yet there was only the disposition. That Law which was to rule them thenceforth was as yet to them unknown. It lay rolled up in the custody of the high-priest, covered with dust.

Ezra and Nehemiah inform us that what was wanting to the Jews, their contemporaries, was, not a ready will to obey, but the knowledge of the Law which they were to be called on to obey.

The infractions of the commandment had been committed through ignorance, not through obstinacy. This is proved by the prompt repentance with which the instructions of Ezra and Nehemiah were received, by the readiness with which ties of family, consecrated by time and affection, were broken under the overpowering sense of duty.

After the calamity which, nearly a century before, had ruined the last relic of David's kingdom, after an exile, in which the generation which had known the ancient order of things had died out, there were no longer antecedents, or habits formed, to occasion a stubborn resistance to a reformation in conformity with the Mosaic institutions. Everything had to be begun afresh.

No other model presented itself for adoption save the ancient national legislation. The immigrants knew no other, its origin they esteemed divine.

The small number of the returned exiles, the

compactness of the body, facilitated the carrying out of a Mosaic restoration. Above ninety years passed, however, before a decided step was taken. Years they were, not without their lesson, deepening in the hearts of the colonists their yearning for an organization. The little settlement languished, exposed to absorption and disappearance among the surrounding peoples; their language, their traditions, their beliefs were slipping from them; a few more years, and they would have melted into the mass of Gentiledom. The fear haunted them, but it also paralysed them.

A chief was wanted who, by the force of his character, the exaltation of his faith, could impose his enthusiasm on the colonists and quicken their dispositions into actions. That man appeared in time. It was Ezra. But alone he might have failed to accomplish the task he had set himself as he mused by the banks of Euphrates. He went up with deliberate purpose, "Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it, and to teach Israel statutes and judgments."¹

Fourteen years passed, and yet little was accomplished, when Nehemiah, a Jew, inspired with the same love of his nation, and faith in its destiny, came to Jerusalem, appointed governor of the colony by the Persian king. Thenceforth, with one heart, the scribe and the governor wrought toge-

¹ Ezra vii. 10.

ther to create Judaism. One was the head, the other the arm, in this undertaking. Jewish tradition, the echo of the general opinion in these remote times, has sacrificed Nehemiah to Ezra, and has attributed to the latter the origin of all the institutions which thenceforth gave to the people of Israel its permanent stamp.

As Moses was the father of Hebraism, Ezra was the father of Judaism.

I need not relate to you the solemn production of the roll of the Law, the reading of it in the ears of all the people, the oath administered to them, and roll call of the covenanters. There is scarcely a more thrilling page in history, sacred or profane, than that which describes the triumph of Ezra. I know of but one scene like it, the Scottish Covenant of 1638. Each marked an epoch, was a hinge on which the destiny of a nation turned. From that feast of Tabernacles, when the people assembled as one man in the street of the Watergate, to this day, Jewdom has been not so much the witness to an idea, as the incarnation of a Book.

The prophets had upheld the Idea, the lawyers were the ministers of the Book. The success of the prophets had been but partial, because spasmodic ; that of the lawyers was complete, because systematic. Enthusiasm had done its work, it had handed on the lamp ; and now routine accomplished what enthusiasm had begun.

By a chain of circumstances which it is not necessary for me here to particularize, the Hebrew language ceased to be understood by the Jew, and the tongue which, in the days of Hezekiah,¹ had been unintelligible to them, became their vernacular.

The process was in course in Ezra's time ; as he read the Law, he was attended by interpreters, occupying the same pulpit of wood.

Hebrew having become a dead language, the lawyers, or scribes, became an important and indispensable body in the new community. They were not necessarily priests, they were not often nobles ; every class, and trade, and profession yielded *sopherim*, who made the Law their study, and the interpretation of it their occupation and delight.

The fact of the Law being in the dead tongue of their race consecrated to them that ancient language. Every extant fragment of the literature of the golden age of Hebrew greatness and culture was carefully collected, and the divine unction which rested on the writings of the Lawgiver rolled down to and hallowed the skirts of that extinct literature.

Now, what was this Law, which had been preserved, and which stood so high in the estimation of the people ? It was that code of rules given to

¹ Isa. xxxvi. 11 ; 2 Kings xviii. 26.

Moses, which we find scattered through the books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These books critics tell us did not then exist in their present forms, that probably no narrative was mixed up with the regulations, that the Law was a code and nothing more.

But other books existed, such as the "Wars of the Lord,"¹ which contained the narrative; and as the significance of the regulations depended much on the incidents which had called them forth, the narrative, it is supposed, was melted in with the code, and thus constituted the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.²

It is necessary to bear clearly in mind that in asserting the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch, we do so solely on the opinion and authority of the *sopherim* of three or four centuries before Christ.

Papyrus rolls had survived the ruin of the Temple, each roll was but a leaf of a rush, every leaf was separate; all remembrance of their original connection was lost, and Ezra and those who laboured with him to restore the observance of the Law had also to restore the text of the Law. What, then, more natural than that they should take one leaf

¹ Num. xxi. 14.

² According to Rabbinic tradition the ancient books had been lost at the burning of the Temple, but Ezra wrote them down from recollection. This is not true, but it shows that the Jews were aware that Ezra had a great hand in the recomposition of the Pentateuch.

from, say the Law, and another from the "Wars of the Lord," another from the "Book of Jasher," another from the "Songs of Moses," and weave them into a consecutive narrative?

At the present day we have the library of Assurbani-Pal laid up in the Temple of Nebo, discovered at Koujundjik. It is composed of inscribed tiles, piled in volumes; but tiles belonging to one volume have found their way into other heaps, and it is a work of extreme difficulty and nice critical discrimination to sort the brick pages into their several positions.

This was what Ezra and those who laboured with him had perhaps to do with the volumes of ancient Hebrew literature that had survived the wreck of the Temple; but instead of having tiles to sort, they had the loose leaves of rushes to piece together.

The Law was given to Moses, there could be no doubt about that; and when, with the regulations of the Law, a record of the events which called them forth was intertwined, the whole was given the sanction of the name of Moses. Such modern criticism asserts to have been the origin of four of the books which constitute the Pentateuch.

The book of Genesis, a compilation of the early traditions of the race, a book of unknown origin, and of remote antiquity, containing, as it did, so much to interest the Jew, so much of importance in

establishing his position in the world as a witness to God, was naturally attributed to the only writer of the first age of Hebrew literature with whom the Jews were acquainted. It was necessary to elevate that book into an authoritative place, and it was therefore conjectured, then it was asserted, and finally was generally believed, to have been written by Moses.

Thus the work of composing a canon advanced. Books of the most diverse aim were enrolled in it. The Song of Songs, for instance, which, if we may trust some recent commentators, was one out of a number of similar poetical dramas performed at weddings; the only relic of a popular character which survived the Captivity, was invested with the attribute of inspiration.

Job, the Faust of ancient Hebrew poetry, but the Faust with a different climax and opposite moral, was interpolated with the speech of Elihu to bring it into accord with the new Jewish sentiment, against which the whole tenor of the book was a protest, and so altered was numbered with the Scriptures.

Even Ecclesiastes, the sad lament of a voluptuary, received canonization.

The interpreters of the Law springing up from every class served to root the Law more securely in the popular affections. Synagogues were established, in which the Pentateuch was read on the

sabbaths, and its interpretation became the highest, nay, the only aim of Jewish intellectual life.

The interpreters of the Law, at once theologians and jurists, were those who slowly and surely formed the national character. They wove the web of the Law round the life of every Jew, so as completely to envelop him, and control his action from the moment he opened his eyes in the morning till he closed them at night. There was no moment too private, no act too insignificant, into which the lawyer did not penetrate with his rule.

The Jews became more and more firmly convinced of their mission, of the uniqueness of their situation in the world.

Impressed with the one absorbing conviction struck from their consciences by the blow of the Captivity, that they could only survive as a nation by rigidly minute organization, and finding a frame for this organization in their Law, it became a national necessity for them to make that Law infallible. From it they spun the web, fine and enduring as the thread that bound Fenrir, in which they have since been entangled. Talmudism in the realm of moral and social regulation, Cabalism in the region of theologic speculation, are the creation of the national spirit, the fatal, logical creation out of the hypothesis of the infallibility of every word and letter of the Law ; a hypothesis the national spirit was forced to frame to preserve its existence.

The lawyers, therefore, were the expression of this national sentiment. They were never false to it. Priests and nobles at times turned traitors to their country and their religion, but never a lawyer.

Times had changed since the fresh simple days when the Pentateuch had been written; a very different order of civilization now prevailed. Intellectual conceptions were as changed as manners and the social situation. As a manual of belief, the Pentateuch did not suffice; as a moral and judiciary code it contained a large number of prescriptions absolutely inapplicable, whilst there were no dispositions for a crowd of contingencies called into existence by new social relations.

It was necessary, therefore, to supplement the Pentateuch by other books. That these books must be written in Hebrew was the universal conviction. And thus the need and the patriotism of the Jews served to exalt every extant fragment of the old literature into a position of authority. The rabbis set themselves to interpret this collection thus formed, and to wring from its texts rules to regulate every act of which man is capable, and to extort precepts for every emergency.

The Talmuds of Jerusalem and of Babylon are the accumulation of these interpretations, monuments to all time of the folly of devotion to the letter without regard to the spirit, of the perils that encompass exegesis unaccompanied by criticism.

Thus, then, in the period between Ezra and the Christian era, grew up the theory of Biblical infallibility.

In the year 312 before Christ, Ptolemy I., after having taken Jerusalem, carried away with him to Alexandria a colony of Jews.

Voluntary migrations augmented this colony. The Alexandrine Jews acquired the same civil rights as the Greeks, obtained the monopoly of the corn trade, and increased rapidly in number and prosperity.

They had left Jerusalem before Rabbinism had set hard. They took with them the sacred books, but they did not carry with them the extreme theory of the infallibility of every sentence, word, and letter, for that theory had not as yet been formed,—it was in process of formation only. Alexandrine Judaism developed an exactly opposite current of religious life from that which flowed in Palestine. It was philosophic, expansive, catholic. It used the sacred text for a purpose wholly opposed to that which animated Palestinian Judaism.

It brought into prominence the grand eternal doctrines of the unity of God, of creation, of providence, of the immateriality of God, but the minute ceremonial regulations it disregarded, the narratives it sublimated into spiritual allegories. It did not shrink from altering the text in such theophanies

as seemed to it inconsistent with the doctrine of God's infinity and immateriality.

When Christianity appeared, and Jews of Palestine and Jews of Alexandria passed into it, each brought with them something of their past prejudices or persuasions with which they had been invested from their infancy. As Simon Peter girt his fisher's coat about him when he left his boat and swam to Christ, so did these converts hug their prejudices when they deserted their ancestral communities for the Church. The Palestinian Jew brought with him his theory of the infallibility of Scripture, the Alexandrine Jew his method of Scriptural interpretation.

The latter reappears in all its extravagant capriciousness in the writings of Origen, and then of the Latin mediæval commentators, till it died exhausted by its exaggeration. Now we are able to regard Scripture with a more just, less ideal, eye, and are prepared to treat the allegories we draw from the narrative as the play of pious fancy, not unfruitful, indeed, but not as forming the essence and kernel of Scriptural interpretation.

The Rabbinic theory of Biblical infallibility reached its apogee at the period of the Reformation, determined then, as in the period of its first formation, by the exigency of circumstances and of controversy.

To put aside what is extravagant, and retain

what is wholesome in this theory is that which is incumbent on us now. The question demands review with a sober eye.

From one side and the other, unquestionably, we shall meet with condemnation. For one we grant too much, for the other too little to Divine inspiration.

But truth lies balanced between extreme and opposite poles.

One thing it is very necessary for us to remember. However much the Reformers may have protested against tradition in some matters, they relied implicitly on it in others,—they invested tradition with infallibility at the very time that they rejected its authority.

For the claims of the Pentateuch to be the composition of Moses rest on no other grounds than the tradition of the Jews, and that tradition sprang out of the conjecture of certain obscure lawyers of the third century before Christ, whose very names are forgotten.

Our canon of sacred writings of the Old Testament is traditional; it has been accepted unhesitatingly from the precursors of the Talmudic rabbis—men with the minimum of critical knowledge—men blind to the incomparable grandeur of the documents they chose or rejected, actuated by no appreciation of their merits, their antiquity, or their authenticity, but impelled by a narrow, petty spirit of national bigotry and conservatism.

What I have said may surprise and startle some of my hearers, but I beg them to understand that I am laying down facts, not stating opinions.

Facts they are, and we do well to acknowledge them. We receive the Pentateuch as the works of Moses on the guess of ignorant Jewish rabbis, utterly unqualified to pronounce an opinion on their authorship. We accept our Old Testament canon on the same authority.

Mind me! I believe with all my heart that God inspired the ancient poets and lawgiver and prophets of the old Hebrew golden ages of literature, and that He used the narrow-minded rabbis of a later age to conserve to the time when the deposit should become the treasure of the Church, these inexpressibly valuable relics. But this does not alter the facts above stated. We invest the ignorant lawyers of the period between the restoration and Christ's coming with infallibility, when we unhesitatingly accept their assertions, and denounce as unbelievers those who call them in question.

The sticklers for Biblical infallibility are, in fact, the canonizers of the *sopherim* of the Ezraic revival. Reduce their assertions to a statement of plain facts, and it amounts to this: We believe that those lawyers who carried out Ezra's work, who recomposed the scattered fragments of the old Hebrew literature, were divinely inspired. Who they were, however, we do not know.

From earliest childhood we have been accustomed to see the Bible as one book bound within two boards, and it is only by an effort that we can throw ourselves back mentally into the ages when that one book was in process of formation. Seeing it as an unit has led to ignorant conceptions concerning the Bible, and it is of the utmost importance that the history of the formation of the book should be impressed upon us, lest we fall into prevalent superstitions concerning it, and become the ready prey of modern scepticism which can easily dispel the superstition, and therewith will scatter the truth that underlies it.

Nothing will conduce more to successful defence of the verities of our Faith, than the cutting down of the scrub that encumbers the ground and serves as cover to the enemy. We battle to hold points which it is impossible to maintain, and it is a mark of good generalship not to extend his line to cover these points, nor to convert them into keys to his position.

The success of infidel agitators in our factories and dockyards among intelligent workmen consists in their representing these points as pivots of Christianity; they ruin the credibility of the latter by demonstrating the fallacy of the former.

It is because we do not know our own ground, which we are set to defend, so well as do the invaders, that routs are so frequent.

VII.

BIBLICAL INSPIRATION.

2. The New Testament.

IN my last lecture I traced the history of the formation of the theory of Biblical infallibility, chiefly with reference to the Old Testament. I propose in this lecture to give a brief sketch of the formation of the canon of the New Testament, to show that this underwent a process somewhat analogous to that which the canon of the Old Testament passed through ; and then, having cleared the way by a statement of historical facts, to see if we cannot form some theory of inspiration and revelation which will not be in defiance of facts, and which will satisfy the conscience.

It does not appear, from a perusal of texts, that the Apostles held their writings to be specially inspired, nor did the Church during the first two centuries attribute peculiar inspiration to them. The Gospel was orally delivered, and became traditional. When Churches were founded, those who presided

over them were intrusted with this oral teaching, and not with written documents. The numerous terms used in the New Testament to designate the teaching of the Apostles, have all reference to instruction by word of mouth; everywhere we have speaking and hearing, preaching, proclamation, tradition, not once writing and reading, except in reference to the books of the Old Testament. And even long after, when the Apostles had passed away, this preference for oral over written testimony remained. "I do not think," writes Papias, friend of some who had been disciples of the Lord, "that I have learned so much from books as from the living surviving voice."¹ It is certainly remarkable that S. Paul in enumerating the gifts of the Spirit should say nothing concerning the inspiration of the writer, but only speak of the prophetic gift of the speaker, a sure token that then the part the penman was to play in the Church was undreamed of; that a written revelation was not what the Apostles intended as the basis of Christianity.

The character of the epistles written by S. Paul, S. Peter, S. John, and S. James, is such as to preclude the idea that they thought them formal declarations of the Spirit to guide the Church for all time. The letters were called forth by transitory circumstances, by short-lived disorders in a Church, by private interests, as the running away

¹ Euseb., 'H. E.,' III. 39.

of a slave, or the interference of a Diotrephes. They were addressed to individual Churches or persons, and were intended for them alone, unless otherwise expressed.

They were not designed as exponents of doctrine or as codes of morals. They were ephemeral productions, which would have perished, but that the love and reverence of the Churches or persons to whom they were addressed preserved them. Some certainly have been lost.

In the sub-apostolic age, though the Fathers, in their writings, use sentences or expressions from these epistles, they never quote them textually as if they were authoritative. The only apparent exceptions are where they address Churches to which the Pauline epistles had been originally sent, and then they appeal to these letters only to show that the exhortations now addressed were in tone the same as those already uttered by the Apostle, their founder.

Clement of Rome, the disciple of S. Paul, does not hesitate to invoke the "blessed" Judith, beside the "blessed" Paul, placing on the same footing writings which we regard as widely parted. And it is remarkable that when the apostolic Fathers cite the epistles they never use the formulæ, "*It is written,*" "*As says the Scripture,*" but that they do thus quote apocryphal books. In this manner Clement introduces a passage from the second book of Esdras ;

and the author of the epistle of Barnabas quotes as Scripture a passage in a lost prophet, and another apocryphal prophecy as "written in the Scriptures."

S. Ignatius also quotes as a saying of the Holy Ghost, "Do nothing without your bishop."

The case of the Gospels is otherwise. It seems that no written Gospels were in the first age received as canonical to the exclusion of others. Probably every Church had its collection of sayings and doings of the Lord, taken down from the oral teaching of the Apostles; and these, in Justin's time, and probably long before, were read at the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. But none was stamped with œcumenical authority. Some of these collections were fuller, others less complete. The smaller collections were being daily amplified by the addition of maxims and anecdotes contributed by other Churches with fuller collections.

The proof of this statement cannot be entered on here. I have established it elsewhere.¹ Suffice it to say that writers of the first three centuries do not always quote the Gospels we account canonical, but do cite Gospels which are now lost; and that some of the Fathers were unacquainted with our canonical Four.

We may safely conclude that by A.D. 130, or thereabouts, though writings of the Apostles were in circulation, none were appealed to as authoritative

¹ See my 'Lost and Hostile Gospels.' Williams and Norgate, 1874.

revelations of the mind of the Spirit, and that no collection of these writings had been made.

If we look to writers between A.D. 130 and A.D. 180 we see the same fact transpire, but already we notice a trace of the apotheosis of the apostolic writings.

In the celebrated letter to Diognetus there are almost no quotations, but there are tokens of acquaintance with certain of the writings of the Apostles; only once is S. Paul cited textually with the formula "the Apostle says," but the formula in this case contains no theologic element. One remarkable passage, however, occurs in this letter which must not be passed by. In speaking of the Word revealing Himself, the author says, "Thenceforth the fear of the law is sung, the grace of the prophets is recognized, the faith of the gospels is edified, the tradition of the apostles is protected." This is the first instance of the Gospels being mentioned in the plural. At the same time it must be remembered that the term "Gospels" does not necessarily apply to the Four, but may refer to the crowd of other Gospels then extant, most of which have since disappeared. It is observable also that the faith of the Church is shown to be the tradition of the Apostles, and that no mention is made of their writings.

Melito, bishop of Sardis, lived in the second century. Amongst his writings was one on the

Apocalypse of S. John. This is the first instance of a commentary on one of the books of the New Covenant, and it is significant that the book chosen to be commented on is the Apocalypse. Why so, I shall state presently.

Claudius Apollinaris, bishop of Hierapolis, a contemporary of Melito, insisted that Jesus had not eaten the Paschal lamb before his death, for He suffered on the day on which the Jews ate it; and he appealed to the Gospels in testimony that it was so. It is evident, therefore, that Apollinaris was only acquainted with S. John's Gospel, and others which agreed with the Fourth Evangel on this point, and that he was ignorant of the synoptics, where the contrary is maintained.

Dionysius of Corinth, who lived very little later, mentions the reading of epistles in the assemblies of the faithful; not, indeed, the epistles of Apostles, but letters sent from one Church to another. If, then, the letter of S. Clement, dead sixty years before, was, as he says, publicly read, it is probable that in the same Church the epistles of S. Paul to the Corinthians would be also read.

Apollonius, a writer against the Montanists, of the same period, quotes the Apocalypse, and also a saying of the Lord, which is not found in any extant Gospel, showing that at his date the number of the Gospels was not fixed canonically. Athenagoras, moreover, who died A.D. 177, exhibits a cer-

tain familiarity with S. Paul's writings, and he gives a quotation from Our Lord's discourses which is not in our canonical Gospels, and is therefore taken from another Gospel, now lost.

The letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne to those of Asia Minor, written in 177, also shows an acquaintance with S. Paul's epistles, without quoting them textually; only once does it give an extract preceded with the formula, that it is in "the Scripture," and in this instance, singularly enough, the passage is from the Apocalypse.

The Pastor of Hermas, written about A.D. 160, which was afterwards inserted in the canon of some Churches, although it tacitly alludes to passages in the synoptics, the epistles of S. Paul, and the first of S. Peter, nowhere prefaces a quotation with the famous "*Sicut scriptum est*," except once, and then it is to quote from an apocryphal book, "As it is written in the Book of Eldad and Medad." Justin Martyr (A.D. 140) deserves more particular attention. With him the supreme criterion of evangelic truth is the argument drawn from the prophecies. The prophets are the sure witnesses to Christ; the Gospel is true because the prophets spake before of it. Justin was unacquainted with our four Gospels; all his references are either to a lost Gospel, probably that of the Hebrews, or to the fragmentary memorabilia of Our Lord's sayings and acts, read, as he tells us, at the celebration of the Divine liturgy every Sunday.

To Justin the Old Testament writers are alone inspired ; neither Gospels nor Epistles are appealed to by him as such,—the latter indeed are never cited at all, and the Gospels only as an historic record of facts wrought in accomplishment of prophecy.

But Justin did recognize as inspired other works beside those in the Old Testament, and as such he speaks of the Apocalypse of S. John, of the revelations of the Sibyl, and of a lost prophet Hystaspes. Justin also expressly declares that the seventy translators of the Hebrew Scriptures were inspired by God.

Theophilus of Antioch (A.D. 180) is the first ecclesiastical writer to mention the Gospel of S. John ; but it is remarkable that fifty years before, this Gospel had been commented on by a Gnostic writer.¹ Tatian, a disciple of Justin Martyr, wrote a book called by some a Diatesseron, and by others a Diapente. It has been appealed to as a proof that the Four canonical Gospels were then known and recognized, and that of these Tatian formed a harmony. But this is begging the question. According to one account, the book was made up of five narratives which he harmonized ; but we do not know that any one of the canonical Gospels was employed in the compilation. The book was a

¹ Yet he does not venture to class S. John's Gospel among the Holy Scriptures. That term he reserves for the Old Testament alone : "The Sacred Scriptures, and other spiritual writers, of which latter John," &c.

Gospel, a sacred narrative composed from four or five independent sources, the collections, probably, of four Palestinian and Syriac Churches. This Gospel or Harmony of Tatian was in use till late. For in the fifth century Theodoret found it in the hands of the Catholics in his diocese. He collected as many as two hundred copies, and replaced them by the canonical Gospels.

The very first instance we have of a collection of epistles was that made by the heretic Marcion. He had a Gospel,¹ and what he called an *Apostolicon*, which contained the following epistles in this order, Galatians, Corinthians, Romans, Thessalonians, Laodiceans, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians.

The "Canon of Muratori" is found in a MS. of the eighth century, copied from an earlier MS. It is a list of books read in the church to which the writer, an African, belonged. It is not an authoritative list, but a private one, by an unknown writer, of apparently the end of the second century. The portion of the MS. containing an account of the Gospels is unfortunately imperfect, but there is mention of Luke and John; then the writer passes to the Acts, and says that they do not contain the passion of S. Peter and the journey of S. Paul into Spain, which must be read elsewhere.

¹ This Gospel I have shown in my 'Lost and Hostile Gospels' to have been the first edition of S. Luke's Gospel, before it had been subjected to revision.

This is the first direct mention of the Acts of the Apostles in ancient literature.

Then the writer goes on to name the epistles of S. Paul in this order, Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Galatians, Thessalonians, and Romans. The epistle to the Laodiceans and that to the Alexandrines (he probably means the epistle to the Hebrews) the African Church to which the writer belonged did not, he says, read.

He next enumerates the epistle of Jude, and two of S. John, but in ambiguous terms, as if they were apocryphal.¹ The epistle of S. James and the two of S. Peter he did not know.

Then he names the two Apocalypses of S. John and S. Peter as received, but some, he says, refused to read them in the Church.

If we turn next to Irenæus we find him quoting as "Scripture" the epistle of S. Clement and the Pastor of Hermas.

Tertullian gives an exalted place to some of the books we now acknowledge as canonical, but he relegates the epistle to the Hebrews to a position not of authority, but of edification, classing it with the Pastor of Hermas. His list of sacred writers consists of the four Gospels, the Acts, the epistles of Paul, one of S. John, and the Apocalypse; it

¹ "Epistola sane Jude et superscriptio (*sic*) Johannis duas in catholica habentur *et* sapientia Salomonis ab amicis in honorem ipsius scripta." For *et* read probably *ut*.

was without the epistles of S. Peter, the second of S. John, and those of Jude and James. The epistle to the Hebrews he held to have been written by S. Barnabas.

Clement of Alexandria quotes from the books then in use in his Church ; its canon included the epistle to the Hebrews, attributed to S. Paul, not the epistle of S. James ; it contained also the epistle of Barnabas, the Pastor of Hermas, the epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, the Preaching and Apocalypse of S. Peter, the traditions of Matthias, and the gospel of the Egyptians, all which are apocryphal. In quoting from these he introduces the texts as drawn from "the Scriptures."

By the fourth century a tolerable *consensus* of opinion had been formed on the respective merits of the apostolic writings.¹ The Revelation of S. John, after having been regarded as the only inspired

¹ The most ancient extant manuscript of the Greek Bible is the Codex Sinaiticus : it contains the canonical and apocryphal writings of the Old Testament, and with the canonical books of the New, the epistle of Barnabas and the "Pastor" ; the Alexandrine Codex adds the epistle of S. Clement. The Clermont Codex of the seventh century contains thirteen epistles of S. Paul, and a list of the books accounted canonical ; it contains the usual books of the Old Testament to Chronicles, then the Psalms, and *five* books of Solomon (including Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus), sixteen prophets, *three* books of the Maccabees, Judith, Esdras (i. e. Nehemiah), Esther, Job, and Tobit. The list of New Testament works comprehends the four Gospels in this order, Matthew, John, Mark, Luke, then the epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, to Timothy, Titus, Colossians, Philemon ; two of S. Peter, S. James, three of S. John, that of Jude, that of Barnabas, the Revelation of S. John,

book of the New Covenant, came to be considered as of doubtful authenticity, and had to struggle against unjust suspicion raised by its association with other Apocalypses of more than questionable genuineness.

By the third century also the writings of the Apostles had assumed a position of authority, and were regarded as inspired. Yet tradition maintained its place as superior, as that to which final appeal was made.

This is no gratuitous supposition; it is a fact attested by all the organs of the Catholic Church, as it emerges victorious from its contest with Gnosticism.

To prove this assertion it is necessary to make citations, and one is embarrassed by the number that offer themselves. The "rule of faith," which united and directed the Church, consisted in a profession of belief in the one God who created the world and of His Son, the Word, who appeared in the fulness of time, born of a woman, a Virgin mother, who preached a new law, died crucified, rose from the grave, ascended into heaven, sent down the Holy Ghost to guide the Church which He had founded, and would come at the last day as judge.

This was Christianity, the rule, the canon of the

the Acts of the Apostles, the Pastor, the Acts of S. Paul, and the Revelation of S. Peter. It did *not* contain the epistles to the Philip-
pians and to the Thessalonians. This in the seventh century ! !

Church.¹ Christian faith was a matter of *facts*, not of *books*.

No doubt the faithful desired to know more details than were supplied them by their Creed, but this was all that was necessary. The study of the details would be matter of curiosity, of edification, but not of vital importance.²

Consequently, far from appealing to Scripture to establish doctrines on a ground on which victory would be uncertain, the primitive Fathers invariably appealed to tradition, and if they referred to the writings of the Apostles, it was only to show that they accorded with Catholic tradition.³

Beyond the accepted faith, "all Scriptural study served only to upset the stomach and the brain."⁴ Heretics could always wriggle out of a contest through the aid of texts. There was, therefore, but one mode of confuting them, and that was by

¹ Regula fidei, κανὼν ἐκκλησιαστικὸς.

² "Ignorare melius est, ne quod non debeas noris, quia quod debeas nosti. Fides tua te salvum facit, non exercitatio scripturarum. Fides in regula posita est, habens legem, et salutem de observatione legis; exercitatio autem in curiositate consistit, habens gloriam solam de peritiæ studio. Cedat curiositas fidei, cedat gloria saluti."—Tertull., 'De Præscr. Hæret.,' c. 14.

³ "Ergo non ad scripturas provocandum est, nec in his constitutum certamen quibus aut nulla aut incerta victoria est . . . nunc solum disputandum est, cui competat fides ipsa? a quo et per quos et quando et quibus sit tradita disciplina qua fiunt Christiani? Ubi enim apparuerit esse veritatem disciplinæ et fidei, illic erit veritas scripturarum et expositionem et omnium traditionum."—Tertull., *Ibid.*, c. 19.

⁴ "Nihil proficit congressio scripturarum nisi ut aut stomachi quis ineat eversionem aut cerebri."—*Ibid.*, c. 19.

pointing to the unaltering traditions of the Church, preserved as a sacred deposit by the bishops whom the Apostles instituted, or their successors.¹

It is unnecessary to multiply citations. The Catholic Church held steadfastly throughout the Early Ages to this opinion—an opinion not unreasonable, inasmuch as for three hundred years tradition remained constant, whereas the canon of Scripture was in a state of flux, some books being regarded as canonical here and rejected as apocryphal there; and also, because the Church existed before a line of Scripture had been written, and Scripture, when written, was only the echo of primitive tradition.

We must now consider the reasons which led the Church eventually to canonize the writings of the Apostles.

As time passed, the eye looked back from the pettiness and distractions of the present to the past, and magnified the perfection and grandeur of the first founders of the Church. It was a natural feeling; nations have their heroic age, the age of Arthur, of Charlemagne, of Barbarossa, and the Church had its heroic age also, that of the Apostles. As centuries elapsed, the writings of these founders of the Church would naturally be treated with

¹ Τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐν πάσῃ ἐκκλησίᾳ πάρεστιν ἀναγνωρίσαι τοῖς τᾶληθῇ δρᾶν ἐθέλουσι, καὶ ἔχομεν καταριθμεῖν τοὺς ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων κατασταθέντας ἐπισκόπους καὶ τοὺς διαδεξαμένους αὐτοῖς ἕως ἡμῶν.—Iren., 'Adv. Hær.,' III. 3.

respect, then with awe; first as expressions of opinion to be listened to reverentially, then to be heard as infallible oracles.

But the Church would, perhaps, never have attached such an importance to the fragments of the literature of the first age, had not her attention been directed to it by the Gnostics. It is a remarkable fact, that the Gnostic heretics, a sect heathen rather than Christian, were the first to appeal to these Scriptures as ultimate authorities.

The Gnostics sought some ground on which to erect a fantastic theology of æons and emanations. The living tradition of the Church they could not touch. What authority could the Gnostics pit against Catholic tradition? They seized on the New Testament Scriptures, and claimed them as witnesses to their error. The Apostles, said they, had taught Gnosticism, their successors had subverted their teaching. It was the first instance of the Bible against the Church in controversy.

Thus, the first commentary ever written on a Gospel was that by a Gnostic on S. John's;¹ S. Paul's writings these heretics hailed as redolent of Gnosticism. To the Old Testament they would not appeal, as, according to their doctrine, it was the work of an inferior, if not of an evil, principle.

¹ Papias wrote a commentary on the sayings of the Lord by Matthew, but not on the First Gospel, which was not then compiled, or at least not known to him in its composite form.

They were, therefore, forced to exalt S. Paul and S. John into positions of infallibility, and their scriptures as criteria of truth,—past revelations of the divine Spirit, opposed to the living inspiration of the Church.

When the existing Gospels did not suit their purpose, they added to them or fabricated others ; at least they were accused of doing so. But the fact of the accusation, true or false, proves that the ground on which Gnosticism opposed the Church was the same as that occupied many centuries later by Protestantism against Catholicism—the claim to be scriptural rather than traditional.

This appeal by the Gnostics to the Apostles and Gospels necessitated a vindication of their orthodoxy from the doctors of the Church. Their attention was drawn to the holy writings, and they laboured to show that the genuine teaching of the Lord and of the Apostles was consistent with the traditional faith, and not opposed to it, as the Gnostics contended ; and that those books which did not thus harmonize with Catholic doctrine were impudent forgeries.

The writings of the Apostles are the first link in the chain of tradition. To interpret them one must be in communion with the Church and partake of the Spirit. The holy tradition could subsist well enough without paper and ink, and if the Apostles had written nothing, appeal would be to

the tradition of the Churches they had founded, without chance of error.¹

In A.D. 190 Serapion, bishop of Antioch, found that the Church of Rhossus in his diocese used a Gospel attributed to S. Peter. He suffered it to be read, till it was told him that it favoured Docetic views of our Lord's person. He at once forbade the use of the Gospel. He did not ask if it were authentic or not, but whether it agreed with the traditional faith of the Church, and because it did not do so, or he thought that it did not, he condemned it.

In the synoptical Gospels there was apparently an account of a solemn anointing of our Lord after His baptism. That some such a rite took place at the time, we learn from a fragment of the Gospel of the Hebrews which has been preserved, and it was on account of this that He received the name of Christ—the Anointed One. But the Docetæ fastened on this incident, and built their heresy upon it. It was therefore expunged from the Gospels, and the gap filled in S. Luke's by an unmeaning genealogy.²

¹ Πολλὰ ἔθνη τῶν βαρβάρων τῶν εἰς Χριστὸν πιστευόντων χωρὶς χάριτος καὶ μέλανος γεγραμμένην ἔχοντες διὰ πν. ἀγ. ἐν τοῖς καρδίαις τὴν σωτηρίαν καὶ τὴν ἀρχαίαν παράδοσιν φυλάσσοντες.—Iren., III, 4, § 2.

Ὁὐκ ἄρ' ἔδει πρὸς τὰς ἀρχαιοτάτας ἀποδραμεῖν ἐκκλησίας . . . λαβεῖν τὸ ἀσφαλὲς καὶ ἐναργές.—Iren., III, 4, § 1.

² I have shown this pretty conclusively in my 'Lost and Hostile Gospels.'

S. Jerome and S. Epiphanius tell us plainly that the Catholics cut out certain passages from the Gospels, which they thought gave occasion to error, or which they thought were interpolations.

All this shows that both Gospels and Epistles were regarded by the Primitive Church in a very different light from that in which we now view them.

Theophilus of Antioch, in A.D. 180, does indeed attribute to the authors of the Gospels the same divine inspiration which moved the prophets among the Hebrews, and the Sibyls among the Greeks, and he calls a saying of S. Paul "the divine word," but when comparing the writings of the Old Testament with the Gospel of S. John, he calls the former "Sacred Scriptures," and refuses to rank with them the divine Apostle.

It is unnecessary to follow farther the fortunes of the books which now constitute our New Testament. The collections of different Churches were compared, and by degrees those which the majority regarded as of undoubted genuineness came to be held in the highest respect, and hesitation characterized the treatment of those which were not in general circulation.

The Abyssinian Church, at the present day, has not the same canon as the Greek, or the Coptic, or the Roman Church. The Roman has not the same canon as the Anglican Church. In the third and fourth centuries every diocese had its canon,

formed, not authoritatively by Council, but by accident, or the choice of the bishop.

A constant sifting went on, and little by little the chaff was blown out, leaving only wheat.

But the canon has been ever in flux. Books which we treat as apocryphal, primitive Churches accepted as authentic ; and books which we believe to be genuine they rejected as apocryphal.

It is necessary, before we go any farther, to consider what was the idea of inspiration held by the Church in the apostolic age and in the two or three centuries that followed.

Of this there can be no doubt.

The Holy Ghost was given to the Church and to every baptized member of it, so that the whole Church was inspired ; every Christian was under its influence.

But what direction did this inspiration take ? It took one—the preservation and transmission of the truth. The truth revealed by Christ was the heritage of the Church, and this was orally delivered to the baptized, and expounded by the bishops. The Church, by virtue of her inspiration, was assured that this deposit would never be corrupted.

Consequently the Gospels fell under the conditions of ordinary and general inspiration ; they contained the truth, because what they related accorded with what the Church held traditionally. Where a Gospel did not agree with this traditional faith it was rejected, or altered without compunc-

tion. The epistles, moreover, were inspired, but so were all epistles from bishops or Churches; the epistle of the Church of Rome to the Corinthian Church, the epistle of Clement, were read as inspired, because the Roman Church and Clement were inspired, and the epistles of Paul and James and Peter stood on precisely the same footing. They were the expression of the thoughts and feelings of the first bishops, higher in honour, as founders, but not more fully inspired than Clement or Ignatius or Polycarp; for the same Spirit which breathed on Paul breathed also on Clement with undiminished effluence.

But there was one form of inspiration special and extraordinary, which the early Church set apart, and regarded in a very different light. This was the spirit of prophecy.¹ This inspiration left untouched doctrine and past facts; it was confined to future events. This alone was the miraculous outpouring of the Holy Ghost, distinguishing him who had it, and elevating his utterances above all others. Consequently the primitive Church regarded the Apocalypses of S. John, of S. Peter, of Enoch, the Testament of the twelve Patriarchs, and the dreamings of the Sibyls as supremely inspired. It is this which accounts for the singular

¹ Philo Judæus, "On Drunkenness" (xxxvi.), gives us the prevailing idea of inspiration in this century: "Those under the influence of Divine inspiration have the soul excited, as if it were frenzied, and the body becomes ruddy and fiery, . . . so that many foolish people fancy them to be intoxicated."—*Cf.* Acts ii. 15.

fact that the Revelation of S. John is the first book of the New Testament which is spoken of as inspired. Towards the fourth century these Apocalypses had fallen into disrepute, and the Revelation of S. John suffered from the reaction ; so that it had to struggle for recognition.

Such, then, whether we like them or not, are the plain facts of the history of the light in which the early Fathers viewed the canonical books now composing our New Testament, and of their fortunes in the first three centuries.

A knowledge of these facts will prevent us from falling into those errors which are so common, only because ignorance is one of the commonest of things.

We have now cleared the way for the formation of a theory of inspiration which will not run counter to facts.

1. The current book theory, that the New Testament, divinely inspired in every line, is that on which the whole of Christianity rests, it is very evident will not hold water for a moment in the presence of facts.

For, 1st, No such book existed in the first ages ; even now its contents are not settled. The Church existed and thrived without the book, portions of the Church for two centuries were without one single document now found in the New Testament, and read other documents which have since been lost.

2ndly, Men in different ages have decided what books to choose and regard as divinely inspired, and what books to reject as apocryphal. And we owe our New Testament to the authority of Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, &c., who chose to accept such and such documents, which also happened to be used and accepted by the Roman Church. They received these documents on the authority of the Roman divines; and relying on them implicitly, they rejected books which are read as divinely inspired in other branches of the Church.

If the book theory be true, then the Roman divines who drew up the canon of the New Testament are made infallible.

So also, to accept the Jewish canon of Old Testament writers infallibilizes the rabbis who compiled it after the Captivity.

According to the Protestant theory, then, certain unknown Jewish rabbis and certain Roman pontiffs were infallibly guided in the selection of the books which the English binder puts between two boards, and stamps "The Bible."

This theory carries its impracticability on its face. We will have nothing more to say to it.

Let us come to close quarters with the ideas of Revelation and Inspiration.

2. Revelation is the manifestation by God to man of truths man cannot discover by the aid of reason.

Revelation cannot include those matters which are attainable by intellectual process, for if so, God by revealing a truth would be arresting in its progress that reason He has given,—He would be undoing His own work.

The existence of God, as I have said elsewhere, escapes demonstration. Every attempt to prove this proposition rests on a *petitio principii*, is built on arbitrary hypotheses. One demonstration after another has been constructed, and successively ruined. Every one possesses a vulnerable heel.

The Incarnation, again, is an undemonstrable verity. No amount of miracles, no moral miracles even, performed by Christ, could establish His divinity to the human intellect. For the mind of man cannot embrace the conception of the Godhead in all its relations; therefore it cannot realize its union with the manhood. The Incarnation is a revelation, or it is nothing.

3. Revelation involves Inspiration. For revelation being the manifestation of a super-rational truth, that revelation must be made to a man, and that man who is the organ of the Spirit, to communicate the truth to the world, is inspired.

Inspiration, then, is the investing of certain men with the office of proclaiming revealed truths to other men.

Inspiration is therefore for a definite purpose—

the conveyance to the world of truths which could only be obtained through revelation.

From this it follows that outside of this purpose the organ of inspiration is liable to error. Thus: The author of the epistle to the Hebrews was inspired to draw the line between the ceremonial law which was fulfilled, and the moral law which was permanent; but inspiration did not prevent him from falling into error as to the position of the altar of incense.

And it by no means follows that because God chose a certain man as the organ for revealing His truth, that inspiration obliterated his natural characteristics, imperfections of temper, or intellect, or education.

Thus: S. Paul was inspired to declare to the world the divinity of the man Christ Jesus and the mystery of the Atonement. But inspiration did not prevent him from using hasty language about the elder Apostles, or enable him to conduct an argument to its end without lapsing into digressions and losing the thread of his reasoning.

4. We may append a corollary.

As certain of the truths which it is necessary for man to know are historical facts, subject to observation, and subject therefore also to inaccurate observation, inspiration extends to the record of such facts, and is a guaranty to men that the records of these facts are substantially true.

Consequently, if it be necessary for us to know that Christ was born of a virgin, died really, rose from the tomb, and ascended into heaven, then we may rest satisfied that such records as we have received of inspired writers contain true narratives of these events.

But, inasmuch as the minor particulars of these events are not of fundamental importance, therefore we have no certainty that inspiration has extended to these to the same extent.

For instance : There are serious discrepancies in the accounts of the Resurrection by the four Evangelists, which it is impossible to reconcile. Of the fact of the Resurrection we can entertain no doubt. The Evangelists were inspired to record that ; but as the order in which the women went to the sepulchre, the hour at which Christ rose, are not matters of essential spiritual importance, affecting salvation, into them human inaccuracy may have crept.

5. Revelation involves an inspired Body to conserve it. If revealed truth be necessary for all ages, then there must be a permanent inspiration to declare it, to maintain the deposit uncorrupt.

If the Bible were a book which fell from heaven complete in itself, then there might be no need for a Church ; but as we know that the Bible is composed of a number of independent documents, selected from among a host of other documents,

which the Church rejected, it is evident that the Church must be inspired to choose aright, or there is no guaranty that we have a revelation of God in those books now bound up by her in one volume.

As a matter of fact, we know that no such a thing as an isolated Book of Revelation existed without a living inspired Body.

The revelation existed, and the inspiration was given, before a line of writing was composed.

To the Hebrews was revealed the unity of God, the fact of the creation of the world by God, and His providential government of mankind. This was their Tradition, their Creed, revealed to them from of old. The Jewish Church was inspired to maintain this sacred deposit ; and by virtue of its inspiration, and in illustration of this revelation, it collected and preserved all such books as contained narratives of their history exemplifying God's providential government, and prophetic sayings which proved the continuance of inspiration in the Church. By virtue of this inspiration, those who returned from captivity recomposed in the Pentateuch the fragmentary records of their past. The work may have been that of ignorant lawyers, but for all that it was the work of an inspired Church, so that we do not receive the Old Testament writings on the authority of certain obscure scribes critically incompetent to perform their task efficiently, but on the authority of a Church animated by the Holy Ghost.

So also with the New Testament. Historically we know that the ultimate appeal was to Apostolic Tradition. *That* was the revelation, the sacred deposit. This is matter of fact, I beg you to observe ; it is no conjecture. It is a fact to which primitive Christianity bears witness with one voice. There were Gospels innumerable, prophetic revelations, and apostolic epistles without number. Every Church had its own Gospel, the echo of what it had been taught orally of the Lord's deeds and words. But none of these was authoritative. The only authoritative revelation was the Truth delivered in "a form of sound words" to the Baptized,¹ and expounded by the bishops. "Nobody," says S. Augustine, "commits this to writing that it may be read : rather let your memory serve for a manuscript, that you may be able to repeat without any chance of forgetting what has been delivered to you with so much pains."²

And Rufinus says, "The last of their (the Apostolic) ordinances was that these things should *not* be written on paper or parchment, but retained in the hearts of the faithful, that it might be certain that none had learnt them from reading, but from Apostolic Tradition."³

¹ The giving of the Creed to the Baptized was called the *Tradition*. The Baptized was then questioned what he believed, and he repeated the Creed ; this was called the *Reddition*.

² 'Serm. ad Catech.,' § I.

³ In Hurtley, 'De Fide,' p. 105.

I have trespassed so long on your time to-day that I must conclude in few words.

If the Tradition of the Church be the Divine Revelation, according to the theory of primitive antiquity, then we may with composure listen to the disclosures of critics relative to the books which compose our Bible. The critics of to-day are only doing what theologians for the first sixteen centuries thought themselves justified in doing—examining the authenticity of these documents, pointing out interpolations here, forgeries there. An Armenian prelate is at perfect liberty to question the genuineness of the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs now read in his canon; or an Abyssinian to dispute the authenticity of the book of Enoch, which he has been taught to regard as one of the Sacred Scriptures; or a Roman Catholic to doubt the canonicity of the book of Judith; or a Protestant to express his opinion that the second epistle of S. Peter is a forgery of the second century.¹

So long as a book agrees with the Revealed Deposit it may be read for edification. Revelation is not compromised if a book read in the Church be proved apocryphal, for revelation is independent of texts; at least according to Primitive teaching.

In England we are singularly ignorant of the

¹ Didymus of Alexandria, A.D. 392, says of it, "Non est ignorandum præsentem epistolam esse falsatam quæ licet publicetur non tamen in canone est." The Greek is lost.

results achieved by the biblical critics of Tübingen, Jena, and Strassburg. The names of Baur, Volkmar, Reuss, Colani, Scholten, Hilgenfeld, are scarcely known to us. But we cannot go on in this ignorance. The press will reveal to English people what has been done abroad in this field of inquiry, and before it our faith will be like a vessel beset with hummocks of ice in a gale. The old theory, which has been so smooth and white and firm, will go to pieces before the breath of criticism, and will grind us and cast us into the depths.

It is therefore imperative on us to fall back to primitive views of Revelation as into a safe harbour, and let down our anchors where there is a firm floor.

VIII.

THE MYSTERY OF EVIL.

IN his 'Confessions,' S. Augustine draws a lively picture of the distress and perplexity that his mind underwent in its efforts to account for the presence of evil in the world; and he bitterly reproaches himself for not having perceived that evil has no real existence, that it is only the absence of good.

He adopted the Stoic view of evil, a view neither comforting nor satisfactory.

Later in life he found occasion to alter his opinion, and to pronounce in favour of the positive nature of evil, so far, at least, as human action is concerned; and he was driven to the hypothesis that the real cause of evil was to be sought in the freedom of the will. This conclusion was forced on him by the repugnance he felt to attribute to the perfectly good Being the direct authorship of evil.

From the same premises, Marcus Aurelius drew a conclusion which denied the positive existence of evil. If the whole universe, he urged, proceeds

from an intelligent Being, it is impossible to conceive anything in it which is evil; that is to say, which is opposed to the perfection of the whole. Those things which we imagine to be evils are only inferior forms of good.

But Aurelius seems to have derived as little satisfaction from his theory as did Augustine. Through the meditations of the Emperor transpires a settled melancholy, only thinly veiled by the stately indifference of the stoic. As for Augustine, he does not affect to conceal how wretched the whole subject made him. "I was crushed down and stifled under these thoughts. I sought concerning evil, and I sought ill; and in my search I saw not evil."

The problem which depressed and bewildered Augustine and Aurelius is one, the solution of which has been incessantly sought ever since; and we may say with confidence, that no solution of it has been wholly satisfactory.

If we deny the real existence of evil, so as to free the infinitely good God of any part in the production, in the authorship, of evil, then we fight against one of the most primary, general, and firmly-rooted convictions of the conscience, we blow up the foundations of morality.

If, on the other hand, we allow the positive existence of evil, then we make God more or less directly responsible for the evil that is in the world.

If, again, to escape this difficulty, we exalt evil into an independent sphere, and attribute it an origin outside of God ; then we give to the universe two principles, one good, one bad, in incessant conflict. We fall into Mazdeism.

If, again, we regard the infinite God as the source of spirit, and evil as resulting from the union of spirit with matter—if we consider evil to be the yielding of the former to the seductions of the latter, and good to be the emancipation of the soul from the fetters of carnal appetites, then we make matter evil, having its source in evil ; there are in this case two principles, one spiritual, the other material. We fall into Manichæism.

Mazdeism and Manichæism have been the Scylla and Charybdis through which the Church has had to make her way. Each theory is so simple, so easily comprehensible, so plausible, that it has obtained ready adhesion from unphilosophic minds.

There was an historical reason also, why this should be the case.

From the fourth century before Christ Jewdom was divided into two strongly marked sections, the Palestinian, with its centres at Babylon and Jerusalem ; and the Hellenistic, dispersed through Greece, Asia Minor, and Egypt, with its centre at Alexandria.

These two divisions, as I pointed out in my sixth lecture, were governed by entirely distinct and

opposite principles ; for each section was exposed to opposite influences.

When Zerubbabel led up some of the exiles from Chaldæa, it was only the poor and ignorant who followed him. The wealthy and learned remained at Babylon ; and though afterwards, when Jerusalem recovered some of its ancient prosperity, and became the centre of the Rabbinic revival and organization, many Jews, no doubt, returned to the holy city, yet Babylon and Pumbeditha retained flourishing colonies, which throve under the patronage of the Persian monarchs.

The Jews who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel, and afterwards with Ezra, had not been long enough acquainted with the Persians to be affected by their religious doctrines. But it was not so with the large body that remained. Mazdeism presented too many points of resemblance to Mosaism, not to disarm the suspicion of the rabbis of Babylon and Pumbeditha ; and the large and important school of exegesis formed on the banks of the Euphrates, unconsciously became infected with Mazdean doctrines. The Babylonish school was regarded by the Jerusalem school as rigidly orthodox, and the intercommunication of teachers and ideas between both was frequent : thus the doctrines of Zarathustra gradually infiltrated the whole body of Palestinian rabbinism. Jewish demonology was the result of this intercourse.

In the book of Tobit, a production of the Babylonish Jews, Aishma-deva, a Zoroastrian div, appears as a Rabbinic devil.

The demonology of the Jews of Palestine and Babylon took a distinct form two centuries before Christ. It was then only that the serpent which tempted Eve was interpreted to be an incarnation of an evil spirit.

Some commentators have supposed that the Azazel to whom the goat charged with the sins of the people was devoted, was a devil. "And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot shall be for the Lord, and the other for Azazel."¹ But the word Azazel has no roots in the Hebrew language, is a foreign word, and only reappears in the book of Enoch, where a fallen angel is called by this name. Not once does it recur in any of the canonical or apocryphal writings of the Old Testament.

The book of Job, composed probably in the south of Palestine, at a very early date, and certainly outside of the influence of the Mosaic law, if it did not precede its enunciation, is the first to mention Satan. But in that book Satan is not a devil, but an accusing angel, belonging to the same category as the angels of destruction who wield the sword of plague and death.²

¹ Lev. xvi. 8, 10.

² 2 Sam. xxiv. 15, 16; Ps. lxxviii. 49; xxxv. 5, 6; 2 Kings xix. 35; Isa. xxxvii. 36.

According to the doctrine of the Jews before the captivity, the angels of God were divided into classes; and the function of one class was the execution of the judgments of God. Such was the angel who smote the first-born of Egypt, such the angel who was arrested at the threshing-floor of Araunah. And to this class belonged Satan. In the Psalms the name Satan occurs, but never as that of a devil, it is used simply as "an adversary." "Let mine adversaries—Satans—be clothed with shame," "For my love they are become my adversaries—Satans," "Let an adversary—Satan—stand at his right hand," &c.¹

In Zechariah, Satan is represented as an accusing angel of the high-priest, Joshua; approaching very nearly to the place given him in the book of Job.

In the first book of Chronicles, a late composition, Satan is said to have prompted David to number the people; whereas in the earlier record, it would appear that God inspired the thought. Here, then, Satan is an angel like the lying spirit sent to deceive the prophets of Ahab;³ but not yet a devil. So in Genesis, God moves Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, but in the book of Jubilees, a composition of a date not later than the reign of Herod the Great, it is the demon Mastema who prompts Abraham.

¹ Ps. xxxviii. 20; lxxi. 13; cix. 4, 6, 20, 29.

² 2 Sam. xxiv. 1.

³ 1 Kings xxii. 22.

But slowly, among the Babylonish and Palestinian Jews, a system of demonology was being elaborated which appears complete in their later writings, exhibiting at every point indications of Mazdean influence.

It was otherwise with the Alexandrine Jews. The colony had been founded before the demonology of the returned captives had been formed. They therefore had no preconceived notions on the subject to direct the development of their doctrines on the nature and origin of evil.

They had parted from the parent trunk before the serpent had begun to be regarded as the devil; and in their philosophy they explained the fall of man in an entirely different way from the Palestinian and Babylonish schools.

Manichæism was not yet constituted as a system, but all the ideas Manes appropriated were in existence before he was born. Alexandria was the market-place of the East, where met all the philosophies and religions of the Orient, modifying and colouring one another. From India came the notion of the inherent evil in matter. It at once arrested the attention of the Alexandrine Jewish philosophers, and became an integral part of their system.

According to Philo, who reproduces the ideas current long before his time, the soul is Adam, Eve is matter. The Fall is the union of soul and body.

The ethereal, divine Spirit, the breath of God, felt an attraction towards that which was earthly, material; it left its high estate; entered into a carnal body, and by so doing, fell.

Thence flowed a moral system. If the union of body with soul constitutes the evil which oppresses man, then the whole effort of his life must be emancipation from the affections of the flesh, the interests which attach him to the world. In a word, the only ethics of Philonism is asceticism.

Covert Manichæism, which entered the Church with the converts of Alexandria, penetrated its veins, and filled the deserts of Scete and Nitria with hermits, and afterwards the rocks and forests of western Europe.

The two systems mixed but never mingled, and manifested throughout the history of the Church a tendency to separate into independent philosophies of evil.

We will now leave the historical side of the subject, and consider another—the philosophical one. Mazdeism and Manichæism, still alive and active in the Church, are not systems even tolerable to a cultivated reason. We must set them aside to consider another.

I. But, first, let us establish the FACT of the existence of evil.

There lies open before every man an election

between two courses—physical or intellectual development. He may perfect himself as an animal or as a man. The Red Indian is as noble a type of physical development as it is possible to attain to ; but his intellectual position is very low down in the scale.

To be able-bodied, and enjoy rude health, the cultivation of the higher nature must, to a certain extent, be sacrificed. There is a certain amount of vital force in every man ; if it be drawn upon for the composition and corrosion of neurine, it cannot be used for the construction and resolution of muscle. You cannot eat a loaf and have it. It is a rare thing to find a student robust and ruddy.

To sacrifice the cultivation of the higher faculties in order exclusively to develop the physical condition, is an evil ; for it is the abandonment of a superior aim for one which is inferior.

The duplicity of man's composition, therefore, makes evil a possibility.

But the evil thus indicated is only a lower form of good. It is good to be sturdy,—it is better to be studious.

Does there exist evidence of evil different from, and darker than this, which contains in itself no apparent element of good ? I think that it cannot be doubted that there does.

There is an evil which is inexplicable by merely

supposing that the animal nature assumes preponderance over the spiritual nature. For it is an observable fact, that man has the faculty, and exercises it, of not only suppressing the growth of his intellect, but of simultaneously ruining his physical powers. If man elected to be an animal merely that he might become a more perfect and splendid animal, the mystery of evil would be simple enough.

Manichæism saw that evil in man did arise from the sacrifice of the spiritual to the animal nature, and on this it built its theory. It made the animal nature the source of evil. But this observation was only a partial one ; and the theory based on it, therefore, does not cover the whole ground.

It is perfectly certain that man, living as an animal, can deliberately go against his animal nature, and bring his physical organs into utter degradation. He can live neither for his mind nor for his body, but for the ruin of both.

It may be natural for a man to live as a savage, but it is not natural for a savage to incapacitate himself by debauchery from maintaining his life in full vigour.

That a race of men should invade the land occupied by another race and conquer it, is natural, but not that a nation should exhaust itself by cruelties and murder ; for such tend to no advantage physical or mental.

We may, I think, fairly conclude that there does exist in the world evil which is unnatural ; that the power to choose a course of life which conduces to absolute ruin does exist in every man.

It is the observation of this unnatural evil which has led to the formation of the idea that it is supernatural ; that the influence which is exerted to draw man into the ruin of his body and spirit stands in immediate opposition to the influence which draws man to the development and perfecting of his entire nature. Thus Mazdeism has arisen, which ranges the good and the evil principles in opposite and nicely-balanced camps, and makes the moral law consist in siding with the good principle against that which is evil.

2. We are told again and again that the notion of a personal devil, the author of all evil, is unphilosophical.

It is only unphilosophical if the personal devil be exalted into a position such as that assigned him in Mazdeism.

Dionysius laid this down as peremptorily as M. Réville. "It is inadmissible," said that great doctor, "that there should exist two principles contrary the one to the other, in contest ; for, if so, God himself would not be exempt from trouble and contradiction, and all Being would be in incessant struggle and confusion."

But, though it be inadmissible to exalt Satan

into a principle of evil, it is not unphilosophic, in presence of the facts of our experience of man, to suppose that such facts apply also to an angelic creation. We know that men can, by an act of free-will, refuse to develop their intellectual and their physical faculties ; in a word, can oppose the ideal of their nature.

Allowing that God may have created other beings, spiritual existences with an ideal object of perfection, and free-wills to enable them to advance freely to that term, or to oppose it, then the existence of devils is no more unphilosophic than is the existence of any degraded drunkard or prostitute picked out of the gutter.

3. What, then, is evil ?

It is not a hostile power in conflict with God.

It is not inherent in matter and opposed to spirit.

It is not a creation of God.

Dionysius answers, It has no positive existence. It is a privation of good.

It has been argued that evil, having no positive existence, is the defect of good. But this is not true. It is not evil in a beast to be without wings. It is not evil in a plant to be without the power of locomotion. But it is evil when a bird, designed to fly, loses its wings, and when a beast, designed to run, has its legs broken.

Evil exists in privation. That is, evil is the in-

terference with the perfecting of the idea in each object of creation.

Free-will makes evil a possibility, and free-will makes duty a law.

If evil were a positive existence, it must spring from God. But a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a sweet spring pour forth bitter water. Every other explanation of evil than that given by Dionysius is unphilosophical, and leads to Mazdeism or Manichæism.

But to deny the positive nature of evil is not enough. It is not, and yet it is. There is no such an existence as evil, what existence it has is good, for existence is that which is, but nothing is which is not of God. Evil is a wilful defect, declension, from the ideal. It is only possible because free-will exists. That which we call evil is evil because it is not what it might be.

Even the devils, as Dionysius argues, are not intrinsically evil, for that which is intrinsically evil is not, cannot be. The devils have being, and that being is of God. Inasmuch as they exist they are good; inasmuch as they are not what they might be, they are evil.

I cannot do better than quote the words of Dionysius: "How can the demons, created by God, be evil? For Good produces and establishes only good things. I answer, they are called evil, not because they are, for they issue from good, and

have obtained as their lot a good nature ; but they are evil because of that which they are not, having abandoned the conservation of their principle.

“ In what are the devils evil but in the fact of their squandering, surrendering by habit and operation the divine good which was theirs ? ”

4. The Stoic conception of evil as the absence of good, as I said at the outset, is eminently unsatisfactory. But this cannot be said of the definition of evil as the privation of present good, the voluntary non-accomplishment of ideal perfection.

From this definition of evil, what a magnificent perspective of moral law opens out ! Good is the striving of man to reach his ideal ; in the Apostle’s words, to reach the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Some natures are richer in possibilities than others ; there are various directions in which they may grow and flower ; they can never, in this life, amidst the circumstances that hedge them in, reach their full glory of perfection ; yet they can always strain after it, always aspire. And this aspiration, this struggle, constitute the law of their life. The law of growth, of progress, stamped on the material world, is impressed also on that of spirits.

To neglect that law, to have no such aspiration,

to abandon this struggle, constitutes evil in the moral realm.

Evil is wherever there is interference with advance to the ideal; moral evil exists only where the free-will intervenes.

The boy born with faculties which by cultivation may make him a poet, a painter, a man of science, a philosopher, is so hedged round by adverse circumstances, that these faculties never become effective. He spends his life as a farm-labourer. This is evil. But there is no moral evil in the case.

But when circumstances do not interfere, and he, having opportunities, neglects them, abandons the task of accomplishing any of his intellectual ideals, that he may live only as an animal,—there moral evil exists.

But if the same youth wastes all his intellectual opportunities, branches out in none of the higher possibilities open to him, and does not even develop his animal nature, but wrecks his constitution by loose-living and drunkenness,—here moral evil exists in full intensity. He has not aimed at or achieved even one ideal, but has rejected every one.

Where there is no free-will there is no moral evil.

There is another form of moral evil, which we are prone to overlook. We are liable to forget that from the moment of birth to the last gasp, it is the duty of man to be incessantly aspiring, seek-

ing to know more, to see farther. He has no right to halt at any moment and rest satisfied with what he has attained. So to do is to incur moral guilt. It is enough to indicate that there are such, too many in number, I fear, in whom the zest for the acquisition of knowledge is blunted.

“Speak not of them, but look, and pass them by.”¹

¹ Dante, ‘Inferno,’ Cant. III.

IX.

THE INCARNATION.

IN my fourth lecture I showed you that the motive of creation was love for man existing potentially in the mind of the Creator.

Man has a double nature : he is part spiritual, part material, and therefore in him the possibility of a fall from his ideal exists.

But to lead him to God, he has the world to gaze upon, and in it God's thoughts are legible. But it is quite possible for him to rest in the visible creation without looking through it to the ideas of which it is the expression, because, as to his body, he is animal ; and to the animal the exterior of the world is all.

Now if God's motive in creation be love, as I showed, and there exist in the essence of man's nature the possibility of a fall ; then it is probable that God would also provide a possibility of restoration.

But before considering further this point, let me say a word or two on the duality in man, and its consequences.

In man there are two principles, or two ideas, not necessarily opposed, quite possible of conciliation; but the fact of this duality in man's nature shows that in him lies the possibility of a schism.

There are two elements in the universe, God and phenomena. There are two possibilities open to man possessed of a double nature. He may seek God through nature, or he may seek nature for and in itself. He may rest in the word, or seek the reason of the word.

The possibility of temptation, and therefore of a fall, lies in the fact that there exists a phenomenal world, which may be mistaken by man for the object to which his nature tends, to the obscuration and oblivion of his spiritual ideal and pole. By making that which is created, material, phenomenal, his goal, he defies nature. Nature is a god to the beast, because it is the sole object to which it gravitates.

And man, by virtue of the duality of his nature, is capable of gravitating like the beast.

But nature, which is mother to the beast, should be only step-mother to man, said the ancients.¹ In that man is spiritual, he is in the likeness of God; in that he is material, he is in the likeness of the world; and this two-sidedness of his nature makes him liable to fall from God.

¹ The saying is in Philo; whence he quoted it I do not know.

But this is just a possibility which should have for ever remained a possibility.

The animal that follows its instinct completes the purpose of its life. Man who is governed by his passions cannot be said to do so, for he has given no room for expansion to his spiritual nature.

The child and the savage are the puppets of circumstance. That is to say, they are subject to the fatal dominion of exterior forces. We complain that they are capricious. They do not act from rational motives, but from the impulse of the moment; and the impulse of the moment is the transformation of a sensation.

Richardson, speaking of the Dogrib Indians, uses words which will describe equally any savages. "We found that however high the reward they expected to receive on reaching their destination, they could not be depended upon to carry letters. A slight difficulty, the prospect of a banquet on venison, or a sudden impulse to visit some friend, were sufficient to turn them aside for an indefinite length of time."

Few questions have been more hotly debated than that of free-will; but, it seems to me, that question is comparatively simple. It resolves itself into this—Has man got a mind open to ideas not necessarily concerning his animal development? If he have, is that mind subject to the law of

growth? If it be, can he advance or retard that growth?

Or, more simply—Is man capable of resisting the instantaneous impulse? If he be, he has a free-will.

The will is, indeed, the watershed of man's life, sending its streams towards God or towards nature. Free-will is the faculty of determining the development of one factor of man's being at the expense of the other, or of resisting the impulses of either. If I can make a choice between study and idleness, I have a free-will. If when struck on one cheek I can turn the other without retaliating by a blow, I have mastered my natural impulse, I have established the freedom of my will.

An accomplished lady, married to an eminent man of science, has related to me how when she—a young girl from school—first married, her husband required her assistance in some of his work, the registration of observations—work which interfered with his deeper studies. At first she had her novel under the table every day, and when her attention was not in immediate request, she reverted from the dry meteorological records to the harrowing romance. But by degrees she threw herself more and more into her husband's pursuits, and is now happy in her home, a companion to her husband, and in general honour. But for the exercise of her free-will she would have been now a

poor, frivolous, foolish woman, repining over her lot, resenting her uncongenial surroundings, by many pitied, by none respected.

Like the natural body, the spirit has before it a life of growth and development. The metamorphosis of sensations into ideas does not take place like those crystallizations which occur in a liquid, slowly building up the branches of a metallic tree. The soul has the faculty of catching each sensation, of retaining, analysing it, and extracting from it a sense, a lesson. The association of ideas has its laws, no doubt; the cerebral world has its echoes which do not sound at random; but there can be no question that we have the faculty of elaborating our sensations; and, if so, we have the power in our hands of giving scope to the growth of our spirit, or of cramping, starving, and killing it.

A spirit originally perfect is a contradiction in the world of nature, for the law of nature is evolution; and a spirit entering into union with matter becomes subject to the law of growth. The nutriment of the spirit is ideas; and these ideas are extracted from phenomena. But the fact of the spirit being compelled thus laboriously to draw its nourishment subjects it to conditions of time. It slowly accumulates ideas, and the accumulation of ideas is the acquirement of knowledge; and each step in knowledge is a stage of mental growth.

Perfection is the goal of the spirit, attained by a

continuous action of the will struggling against the fatal laws of nature. But by this, the spirit manifests its liberty.

In the child, the empire of liberty is scarcely founded ; the domination of fatality is supreme ; it is subject to the play of circumstances, and responds to them without independence. In the man who, by the sweat of his brow has formed his character, has established his individuality, the control of circumstances, the tyranny of fatality is reduced to extreme feebleness, whilst the empire of liberty is sovereign.

Now the spiritual nature of man is complex. As it looks towards nature, its tendency is towards science ; as it looks towards men, its tendency is towards morality.

That is to say, the mind in contemplating the works of creation, perceives in them order and unity, forms of the Divine idea, and seeks therefor to arrange the objects of nature in their order, and exhibit their unity. The mind applies abstract ideas to things that are concrete, and is able thereby to understand them.

But the mind in considering the relations of man with man is filled with these same ideas of order and unity, and thereby learns that man has duties, which he owes to his fellow-men, the correlatives of their rights.

Without a knowledge of the broad principles of

moral law, society would be an impossibility ; without society, civilization would be impracticable.

But these ideas which thus lie at the root of science and morals are the forms of the Divine idea in creation. Without God, they are rays without a sun, streams without a source. It is from God that all abstract ideas flow in which existences take shape and significance. Order and unity without God as their cause are inexplicable ; morality without God to impose it, is without obligation.

Yet it is possible to consider nature and society as ends in themselves, and thus to cast them adrift from God. In that possibility consists another departure from God.

The animal, the plant, cannot fall. Their destiny is to live for themselves ; to evolve their nature to its extreme limits, and then to hand on their life to fresh generations. When the tame pigeon escapes from its dovecot and takes to the woods, its progeny lose the characteristics of the domesticated pigeon, and become ordinary wild wood-pigeons.

I have in my garden a row of hollyhocks. They were planted double. They have in two years become single ; they have deteriorated. But in the pigeon and the hollyhock there is no fall ; for the bird and the plant are governed in their growth by external circumstances only ; and they assume that form best adapted to the circumstances in which

they find themselves. The forest life is unsuitable to the fancy pigeon ; the stiff loam to the double hollyhock.

Man is, indeed, subject in a measure to circumstances, but is not, as I have already shown you, fatally governed by them ; he has in him an element—his spiritual nature—which enables him to rise superior to adversities and difficulties. If he succumb, his is a true fall, for there existed in him the faculty of overriding the forces of nature, and maintaining his supremacy.

According to Christian doctrine, Adam, the first man, fell. That is, Adam, the first man possessing a spiritual nature, the Divine spark of soul, the faculty of seeing God, and reading creation, had before him God and the world, the spiritual and the cosmical poles of his being. He had before him the problem of attaining physical and spiritual perfection. By an act of free choice he inclined the scale of his nature towards the lower, animal pole ; he gave the material, physical, fatal element preponderance over the immaterial, spiritual, free element. And the beam he kicked has remained overbalanced ever since.

There are three possibilities open to man : the recognition of God, the deification of the ideas of God, and the deification of the phenomena which are the manifestations of these ideas. There are open to him, therefore, two sorts of apostasy : the

idolatry of ideas, and the idolatry of phenomena. The idolatry of ideas consists in accepting the abstract ideas of God without acknowledging them as belonging to God. The idolatry of phenomena consists in the deification of the objects of sensual life. The former is an arrested gravitation of the spirit towards God, the latter is a rupture of the spiritual attractive forces, and a rush of his energies towards the pole of animal life.

Before proceeding, let me briefly sum up what I have been saying in a series of propositions.

1. There are two elements in the universe—God and nature.

2. God has clothed his ideas in form. All the objects of creation are the manifestation of His thoughts; and man was made in order that he might, through these external signs, read the inner thoughts, and see these thoughts as proceeding from the mind of God.

3. And in thus reading the thoughts of God does man's spiritual nature grow to its ideal, which is perfection of knowledge.

4. But it follows as a possibility that man may not only be arrested by the outward husk, but may also halt at the ideas. By so doing he falls short of seeing God, and therefore of attaining his ideal.

5. And, alas! we know by experience that this possibility has become a fact.

If, then, the possibility of a Fall lies before man,

and the motive of creation was love for man, it is reasonable to conclude that God would provide some additional check upon man, make some other appeal to man, for his preservation or restoration.

One thing God could not do ; He could not perfect man without man's consent and co-operation. He could not do so for this reason,—that man is spirit as well as body ; and the essence of spirit consists in its freedom.

If God were to will man's perfection without man's free consent, it would necessitate the destruction of his freedom. But the destruction of his freedom would be the destruction of his spirit, and the destruction of his spirit would be the reduction of man to the condition of a mere animal. His perfection would then be his degradation.

Calvinistic predestinarianism therefore strikes at the root of Christian theology. By making man's fate depend solely on the determination of the Creator, it reduces his spirit to a condition analogous to that of the beast, higher it may be, but not more free, and therefore not really spirit.

If, then, God designs man's restoration, He must seek that restoration of man, not by suppression of man's freedom, but by supplying additional motives and inducements for the exercise of his will in electing agreement with God's design.

God can make another appeal to man, and must

then leave it entirely to man to give his ear to it or reject it.

The whole of creation is an appeal to man,—it was designed as an appeal to him, to his understanding. It is calculated to lift him above his animal associates, and enthrone him as the king of creation. He was sent into the world without hairy clothing like the bull, without the claws and teeth of the lion, the agility of the panther, with a naked and unprotected body; and this destitution of natural protection and means of offence and defence served to develop the faculties of his mind. His needs were goads to the exercise of his mental powers. “Though less capable than most other animals of living on the herbs and fruits that unaided nature supplies, this wonderful faculty (of reason) taught him to govern and chisel nature to his own benefit, and make her produce food for him when and where he pleased. From the moment when the first skin was used as a covering, when the first rude spear was formed to assist in the chase, the first seed sown or shoot planted, a grand revolution was effected in nature—a revolution which in all the previous ages of the world’s history had had no parallel; for a being had arisen who was no longer necessarily subject to change with the changing universe—a being who was in some degree superior to nature, inasmuch as he knew how to control and regulate her action, and could

keep himself in harmony with her, not by a change of body, but by an advance in mind.”¹

So, throughout, has civilization been produced by the advance and growth of the mind through observation and conquest of nature.

Creation has been the appeal of God to man's reason. He appeals through it still; and as science grows, men are penetrating farther and farther into the mind of God.

But the appeal through creation has not sufficed man; at all events, not all men. There are many, no doubt, who, seeking the laws of nature, do reverence to God whose thoughts they are, but there are others inaccessible to such appeals.

Moreover, the study of nature, though it may advance civilization, does not provide man with what is of greatest importance to him—the law of his conduct. History is the Book of Revelation of God's moral law, in which the philosopher may trace the tendencies of certain principles to the welfare or fall of nations; but, after all, it is an uncertain study, for so many causes are at work towards the development or destruction of a great state that it is impossible to reduce its welfare to dependence on a moral code, or rather to elaborate a moral code from the fluctuations in the prosperity of a nation.

¹ ‘Anthrop. Rev.,’ May, 1864: Mr. Wallace, “The Origin of the Human Race.”

Nor, indeed, in ordinary life, do we find that observation will give us a correct moral standard on which to frame our conduct.

The current theory that virtue is always recompensed with happiness is broken through by great and many exceptions. The cross and crown of thorns are often its only reward.

Nobleness, godliness, heroism of character in any form whatsoever, have nothing to do with man's prosperity, or even happiness. The utterly vicious man who violates soul and bodily ideals is no doubt wretched enough ; but not so the worldly, prudent, selfish man, who understands perfectly how to gratify his senses with tempered indulgence, following the hack routine of respectability. Though he may be the basest and most contemptible slave of his selfishness, he is happy and prosperous. He is following out an ideal—a low and ignoble one ; but inasmuch as it is an ideal, he therein finds contentment.

It cannot be said that social life encourages a high ideal. On the contrary, with a thousand hands it drags daring originality down to the common vulgar level.

Moreover, society takes cognizance of crimes, but not of sins ; of crimes, that is, wrongs which affect others ; but is supremely indifferent to sins, wrongs done by us to ourselves.

Consequently the philosophy of history and

social science will never supply men with a code of moral law for the guidance of their conduct with regard to themselves.

Natural science is the revelation of the thoughts of God in one order—declares one class of laws.

History and social science manifest to us the thoughts of God in another order—declare another class of laws.

But still there is a third order, very essential to man to know, which none of these reveal, the class of laws which relate to himself individually; laws which make heroism a duty, which transfer the principle of progress within, and constitute it the governing principle of man's conscience.

Now is it not probable that a God creating out of love would also in His love reveal those moral laws which affect man's personal well-being? Such a revelation Christianity declares was made in Christ Jesus.

As creation is the manifestation of God, so is social life, political organization, a manifestation of God; so also is the Incarnation a manifestation of God.

Creation is the revelation of the laws that govern matter. History, social science, reveal the laws that govern communities. The Incarnation unfolds the laws that govern individuality.

Law is evoked by the struggle of beings for existence. Law is really a *fact*; the fact of the

unity of the ideal which contains other ideas. We may call it a law which makes $1 + 2 + 3 = 6$, or $3 + 3 = 6$, and will not suffer any one integer to swell without a corresponding diminution in the others ; but it is really a fact.

As in the universe there are myriads of existences—i. e. ideas working to the surface—law is called into being to harmonize them. But this law is simply the fact of the unity of the idea of creation in the mind of God.

As in mankind there are multitudes of men, and their civilization depends on the control of the separate individualities, their subordination to the welfare of the whole, on the maintenance of just balance between authority and liberty, between, that is, the will of the whole and the spontaneity of the individual, law is called into existence ; and, so far as it is true, founded on true observation, it is a revelation of God's will with regard to man as a social being.

But as the individual man has a double nature, the friction in this case also necessitates the production of a law, that is, the revelation of the ideal of God in respect to man's perfection as an individual.

For the welfare of mankind, therefore, two revelations are necessary: the revelation of the laws which govern society, and a revelation of the laws which govern the springs of man's inner being.

The laws which govern society may be learned by experiment. Every form of government the world has seen has been an experiment to discover these laws. Parliament is a laboratory in which these laws are being investigated annually. These laws are to be discovered experimentally, as sanitary laws may be; and the political fortunes of nations are the data from which they may be deduced. We learn from the mistakes of a previous age, and may fairly hope in time to determine governmental laws as satisfactorily as we have determined certain laws of physics. When this goal has been arrived at, the political situation will be one of ideal perfection.

Now the Incarnation is the revelation of ideal perfection in man as an individual; and therefore the establishment of the law which is to govern his conscience.

If the world has been created in love, then a moral revelation is demanded. To create man, and not tell him his destiny, how he is to attain to the highest and noblest climax of his being, is to create him without love.

Yet love is the key to creation. It alone explains it.

Allow that the world is a revelation of the ideas of God, then a further revelation is postulated by it—a revelation of the ideal of human individual perfection.

That revelation is in Jesus Christ, the Man, the perfect exhibition before the world of the archetypal man, as he existed in the mind of God before the creation of the world.

Now let us turn to another order of thoughts.

Such a revelation has for its object the influencing of the human will.

Through creation God reveals Himself to the reason, and influences the will by instructing the judgment. But as there are men who are not governed by reason, whose will acts against their judgment, men who will not cultivate their judgment, God—according to Christian doctrine—has made a further revelation of Himself, not now to the reason, but to the heart, to influence the heart, to stir up the heart to quicken the judgment, and so stimulate the will to choose that which has been simultaneously revealed—the moral law.

It would be impossible to conceive a more beautiful and touching life than that of Our Lord—one more eminently calculated to move the heart. And the emotion thus aroused is not a vain stirring of sympathy ; it is designed to lead on to something—to acceptance of His teaching, the declaration to man of the moral law.

Man's perfection consists in the development of his whole being, and this is possible within certain boundaries only ; he must know these limitations to his energy, and freely accept them. To compass

this, God manifests His love to man through Jesus Christ, by whom also He declares to man what the law of his nature is. Man, attracted by this exhibition of love, voluntarily bows to the law, and in Christianity reaches the apogee of perfection social and individual.

The design of creation was to reveal to man ideas of a certain class only ; ideas of another class are revealed to man through Christ.

Creation is the prologue to the Incarnation ; it prepares for and leads up to that which is its completion.

Man is the explanation and climax of creation ; and Christ is the explanation and climax of man.

If man sum in himself all animate and inanimate nature, Christ sums in Himself all humanity.

That revelation which was partial in creation is completed in Christ. In Him God reveals His fulness, and creation was a prophecy of Christ.

It is not possible to demonstrate the fact of the Incarnation. All that I can do is to show you that this Christian doctrine is not impossible, nay, further, is probable.

Now I must answer, very briefly and imperfectly, one of the most prominent objections made to the doctrine of the Incarnation.

It is said, How could God the Creator become His own creature ? This is thought to contain an irreconcilable contradiction.

But it does not do so.

If creation be possible, the Incarnation is possible; for if the ideas of God can be clothed in form and substance in creation, so can also the idea of God in Himself be invested in flesh.

The Second Person of the Trinity, the Logos, is the living Divine idea of the Godhead begotten of the Father, existing from all eternity.

For God could not exist without having the idea of Himself, in the plenitude of His perfection, and that idea is begotten of God; yet the time never was when He had not this idea of the plenitude of His nature.

The idea of God, issuing from the mind of God, is the idea of God with all His attributes, and is therefore equal to God. This eternally begotten Divine idea, one with God, is the Logos.

God, as the I-myself, revealing itself to itself, and unfolding its fulness in the form of distinct thought, is the Eternal Father. Looking on the heavenly image of the world as it arises out of His own essence, God sees the express image of His person, the vision of His own perfect essence as its cause and its end.

The heavenly ideal world would not be a system, but a chaos split into variety, without order, but for the idea of God rising as the principle of thought before His mind as the unifier, the co-ordinator, the all-sustaining principle of that objective

manifoldness which presents itself to the Father's gaze.

Thus the Son is the alpha and omega of creation, its harmonizer, its sovereign; "without Him was not anything made that was made." "By Him are all things, and in Him all things consist."

Indeed, it is inconceivable that the Father could have called the world into being without the Son; for He could not have seen the ideal world rise up in imagery before His mind, without the idea of Himself as its source, its law, its end.

Now apply the same thought to mankind.

God sees the human creation, and the idea of Himself as that from which it sprung, and to which it tends as its perfection. Without the Son, man could not exist ideally; and man needs the Son present to lead him back to God.

If the Son be the centre of creation, He is the centre likewise of the innermost ring of that great circle of being.

All men are indeed manifestations of a Divine idea, and that idea constitutes their individuality. But no one of the individuals, who constitute the human family, expresses more than a partial and imperfect union of the Divine and human natures.

All, therefore, point beyond themselves, to an union of God and man, which shall be perfect and complete.

As the fulness of all creative ideas is in the Father, so the fulness of all humanity is in the Son. He entered into immediate relation with humanity, not merely as the idea of humanity in the abstract, but as the idea of perfect human individuality, to be the exemplar of all mankind, and to be the point of union through which they may return to their source.

PUBLISHED

BY

W. SKEFFINGTON, 163, PICCADILLY, W.

In elegant cloth, price 5s., by the Rev. F. E. PAGET, M.A.,
Rector of Elford, and Author of 'Village Sermons for a Year,'
'Tales of the Village,' &c.

Faith and Patience in Work and Warfare,
TRIUMPH and REWARD. A Course of SIXTY-SIX
SHORT DAILY INSTRUCTIONS or SERMONS on
Heb. xi. xii. (Rev. xiv. 12) for Village Churches, Reading, &c.

Village Sermons for a Year. By Rev. F.
E. PAGET. For the whole Year. Two Vols., cloth, just
out, 10s. ; by post, 10s. 8d.

N.B.—This work contains Sixty-two Sermons, including
ADVENT, CHRISTMAS, OLD and NEW YEAR, EPIPHANY,
LENT, EASTER, ALL PRINCIPAL SUNDAYS and HOLY
DAYS. Also MISSIONS, HARVEST, CLUB, SCHOOLS,
FUNERAL, CHURCH RESTORATION, DEDICATION,
FESTIVAL SERMONS, &c.

Vol. I. separately (ADVENT to WHITSUN DAY), 5s.

Fifth Edition, square 8vo, elegant cloth, 2s. 6d. ; by post, 2s. 8d.

The Sinless Sufferer. By the Rev: S. W.
SKEFFINGTON, M.A., Fellow of University College, Oxon.
A Course of Six Sermons on our Lord—The Sinless Sufferer ;
The Willing Sufferer ; The Foreknowing Sufferer ; The For-
saken Sufferer ; The Triumphant Sufferer ; The Divine Sufferer.

"Simple in style and language, they are yet the fruit of most deep and devout
meditation on their stupendous theme, and could only have been written by one
who has entered deeply into the mystery of suffering, and gazed, with an intensity
which few perhaps could command, on its Supreme Example."—*Guardian*.

"Of a high order as regards beauty and tenderness of thought, and of
singularly devout feeling—the sermons are exquisitely beautiful."—*Literary
Churchman*.

"Far too seldom do we receive such a volume of Sermons as Mr. Skeffington's.
They are exceptionally of a high type, and have evidently been written with the
fullest sense of the grandeur of the subject which their author could bring to bear
upon them."—*Church Times*.

By the Rev. S. BARING-GOULD, M.A.

Just Published, price 7s. 6d.

The Lost and Hostile Gospels: An Essay on
the Toledoth Jeschu, two Hebrew Lives of Our Lord circula-
ting among the Jews in the Middle Ages, and on the Petrine
and Pauline Gospels of the First Three Centuries, of which
Fragments remain.

This Work is Published by WILLIAMS AND NORGATE,
14, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON.

In 3 vols., cloth, price 13s. 6d.

Plain Preaching for a Year. A complete

Set of NINETY NEW SHORT PLAIN SERMONS for all the SUNDAYS, all the SAINTS' DAYS and HOLY DAYS, with Sermons for CONFIRMATION, MISSIONS, HARVEST, FUNERAL, SCHOOLS, &c. Complete in Three Vols., elegant cloth, price 13s. 6d., post-free for 14s. 6d.

The following are among the many eminent Plain Sermon Writers who contribute to this important Work :

REV. A. R. ASHWELL.	REV. DR. W. J. IRONS.
„ S. BARING-GOULD.	„ W. MICHELL.
„ JOHN HENRY BLUNT.	„ F. R. H. H. NOYES.
„ GEORGE BODY.	„ F. E. PAGET.
„ J. B. DYKES.	„ R. D. B. RAWNSLEY.
„ EDMUND FOWLE.	„ W. H. RIDLEY.
BP. HARVEY GOODWIN.	„ S. W. SKEFFINGTON.
REV. CANON C. A. HEURTLEY.	„ J. B. WILKINSON.
„ „ W. W. HOW.	BP. J. R. WOODFORD.

Vol. I. of this Work (ADVENT to WHITSUN DAY) post-free for 5s. 4d.

Plain Preaching to Poor People. Edited by

Rev. EDMUND FOWLE. Series I. to IX., each 1s. 6d.; by post, 1s. 7½d. There are Twelve Short Plain Sermons in each Volume, and among them are Sermons for almost all Church Seasons and Occasions, including ADVENT, CHRISTMAS, NEW YEAR, OLD YEAR, EPIPHANY, LENT; (Two Special Sets of Seven Meditations on "The Seven Last Words," and "The Stations of the Cross," for GOOD FRIDAY), EASTER, &c.; CLUB, HARVEST, FUNERAL, MISSIONS, SCHOOLS, COMMUNION, HOSPITAL, &c. In short, they form in themselves a miniature Sermon Library. Among the eminent contributors are—

REV. A. R. ASHWELL.	REV. G. E. JELF.
„ S. BARING-GOULD.	„ CANON KINGSLEY.
„ W. BAIRD.	„ W. H. LYTTTELTON.
„ H. J. W. BUXTON.	„ DR. MONSELL.
„ H. W. BURROWS.	„ W. MICHELL.
„ W. R. CLARK.	„ F. E. PAGET.
„ G. F. DE TEISSIER.	„ R. D. B. RAWNSLEY.
„ J. B. DYKES.	„ M. F. SADLER.
„ E. FOWLE.	„ S. W. SKEFFINGTON.
BP. HARVEY GOODWIN.	„ J. R. WEST.
REV. WALSHAM HOW.	„ J. B. WILKINSON.
„ DR. FRANCIS HESSEY.	„ PETER YOUNG.
„ W. E. HEYGATE.	

8
—
CR

1
358

P. L. 67-5-15-'07-20 M

Public Library.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

BS. B234s

All losses or injuries beyond reasonable wear, however caused, must be promptly adjusted by the person to whom the book is charged.

Fine for over detention two cents a day (Sundays included).

Books will be issued and received from 9 A. M. to 9 P. M. (Sundays, July 4, December 25, excluded).

Keep your Card in this Pocket.



0 013 413 366 1

