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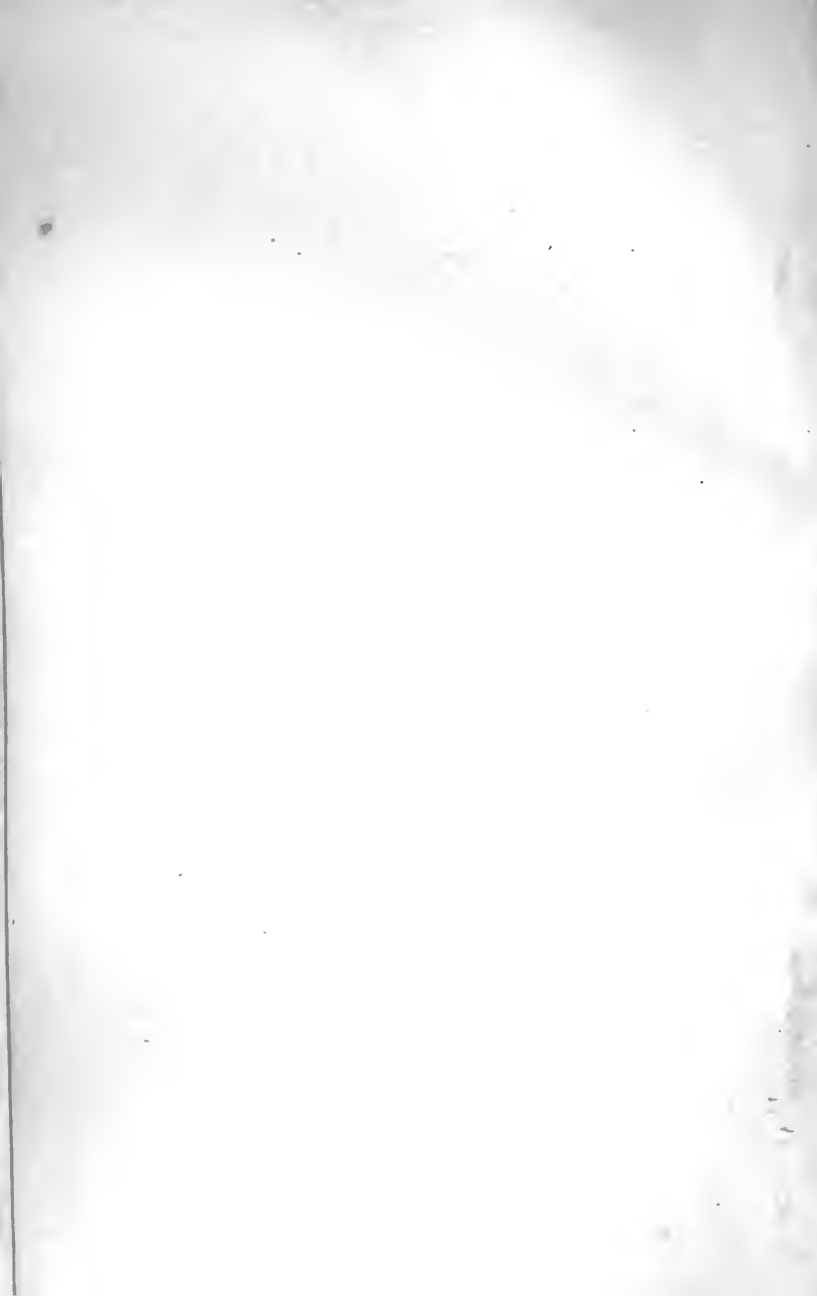
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“AFTER THIS LIFE—
WHAT NEXT?”

BEING

*CONSIDERATIONS OF THE FUTURE STATE OF MAN,
BASED ON INTELLIGIBLE TRUTH.*

BY

PERCY RUSSELL.

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THE origin of this Treatise was as follows.

The writer being desirous of ascertaining what has been said of the Future State of Man by unbelievers as well as by professing Christians, found the task of pursuing the inquiry encyclopedian. It occurred therefore to him that if the main results of philosophic speculation as to the visible Cosmos and its Invisible Author could be concentrated in a comparatively small book, in a simple and non-scientific shape, a great benefit would be conferred on many zealous searchers after Truth, who, from various causes, are unable to devote themselves to original sources. In a word, the writer has sought to compose such a book as *he* would have been thankful to meet with when he first turned his attention to the momentous questions of "What is man?" "Whence is he?" and "Whither does he go?"

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FORMING

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PRELIMINARY.

LET us suppose that a person, of ordinary judgment and ability, is informed that very shortly he may be compelled to visit a certain foreign country. Let us further suppose that he is assured, by one in whom he has implicit confidence, that most likely he will have to set out at a moment's notice, that in any event he must go alone, and that on reaching his strange destination, he will most probably be exposed to a variety of deadly perils.

Would not any person thus admonished be immediately and sincerely anxious on all practical points connected with such an adventure, and would he not seek, by every means within his power, to ascertain all attainable facts relative to the country in question? Would he not endeavour to ascertain what were its manners and customs, its inhabitants, its laws, and its language?

Further, assuming him to possess only ordinary prudence, would he not seek to fit himself, in some measure at least, for the exigencies of so mysterious and alarming a prospect?

In like manner, if a retired champion marksman, having settled in a despotic country, were abruptly informed that its despot had determined to test his skill, and hang him if he failed to hit a given mark, would not our veteran fall to and try by actual

practice whether his old cunning yet remained to become the preserver of his life?

These simple — almost childish — propositions, which might be multiplied indefinitely, cover a truth as sublime and vital as it is obvious and neglected.

In effect, human beings *do* equip themselves, mentally and physically, for many contingencies, of which a large number never happen. Thus some men acquire, at an enormous cost of time and brain power, knowledge for which no really practical use is ever found, just as other men amass wealth they find it impossible to distribute. But while thus fully recognising—as all mankind does, by a common consent—the wisdom of preparing against probable contingencies, how much systematic endeavour is really made to prepare for that greatest of all the certainties of this life—the absolute certainty of death?

If we contrast the preparations, elaborate and unceasing, made for the eventualities of this life, against the niggardly and begrudged provisions which are usually deemed ample for the end of this existence, an impartial judge can only conclude either that, popularly speaking, death is regarded as a myth, or that it is such a commonplace, unimportant matter that sensible men do not deem it necessary to provide particularly against its occurrence.

An ancient maxim declares that each man thinks all men mortal except himself, and no doubt there is much truth in the saying. In reality, however, the strange paradox, here so faintly illustrated, does not arise so much out of indifference to the solemnity of that last change which awaits us here, as to the widely prevalent ignorance existing as to the true correlation of life and death.

To some persons the objection may naturally

arise that were people generally to regard their decease in the same way that a prudent man would regard a difficult departure into a strange land, life would become insupportable under the ever-deepening gloom of an anticipated fate from which humanity instinctively shrinks. It might be further urged that anyone fully realising that he **MUST** die, would, by such an ever-present knowledge, be practically incapacitated from performing properly the ordinary and legitimate business of this life.

Such pleas are specious. The careful merchant, however, who insures his goods against loss, and fully provides against a thousand and one contingencies of trade, does not find *his* mind distracted or unhinged in consequence; and if we judge the moral discipline of most men by the rules prescribed for their business conduct, they must all stand convicted of a folly at once stupendous and extraordinary in regard to their indifference to a future state.

Why is this?

An explanation in part may be found in matters that come under universal observation.

Notice the faces of those who suddenly hear of some good fortune—even those simply setting out on a recreative tour—and mark the sincere joy, the absolute reliance on the future which can be produced by a matter in itself, at the most and best, of a very transitory character.

Traverse the crowded streets of a mercantile quarter, penetrate the purlieus of some great industrial hive, enter a railway carriage, and after attentively studying the faces you see, ask yourself if they look like those of men who, whatever their immediate pains and burdens, were **SURE** of taking a journey, sooner or later, to some place where henceforth all would be ineffable and ever-increasing happiness?

The plain, sad, ay, unutterably sad answer really is that very few indeed believe in things invisible and to come, the moment it is understood that these things lie on the other side of that awful barrier—death. As for believing in the "other world," in the same way that an educated man believes there are mountains in the moon, or in any other astronomical fact, the bare idea of such credulity is too generally laughed to scorn.

These matters we are often sneeringly told belong to religion,—a sentiment to some, a myth to many, a poetic dream; an influence, if you will; a present good in mollifying manners, and more often in coercing than in convincing men to be honest. Beyond this all is vague and unknowable. Virtue and honesty are admittedly good, and their practice is sociably laudable; but, with death, an impenetrable veil descends, and human life ends practically in nothingness.

This is, doubtless, Atheism. It exists, largely tempered by much true morality, and even devotional aspiration among many, and is generally accompanied by a lingering hope that what is known as religion *may* be true.

Such is the real mental state of multitudes in these days, and more especially is this the state of many among the cultured classes, who have learned something of Positivism, and its many negative creeds.

What persons believe absolutely, they must in some sort understand intelligently, and if we analyse the current conceptions of the "other world" possessed by those who profess to regard it as the true consummation of their lives, what can we usually make of them?

The allegories and symbols of Scripture and poetic legend are to them too often the real entities of the future state. To some it is an everlasting

service of song—a constant processional phantasmagoria of white-robed saints ; to others an eternal contemplation—of what they know not. In all cases there is an utter inability to define the heaven to be intelligently, and they are as little able to say in what form they expect to participate in these mystic glories.

Yet these very blunderers and stammerers as to celestial matters will generally avow themselves fully informed as to the whole significance of *this* life, and even as to the nature of the bodies that they now wear. In a word, if *science* be substituted for religion in their examination, they will in most cases acquit themselves with much credit.

Knowing, as we all do, that death **MUST** come to each of us, it is surely of an overwhelming importance to every one among us to ascertain if by the employment of our common faculties we may not find some solution for the problem set to us all, and by more fully comprehending what life is—ascertain in some degree the meaning of that awful mystery Death, to what it probably leads, and what are the extra Scriptural grounds for anticipating some kind of resurrection after the dissolution of our tangible bodies.

Such, in a word, is the task attempted in these pages.





CREATION AND ITS AUTHORSHIP.

I DESIGN throughout this treatise to abstain from all dogmas properly so called, and to confine the arguments and views here enunciated to a basis of facts, admitted alike by the believing Christian and the theoretical Atheist.

As a departure point, then, in the inquiry before us, we will take the simple fact that we find ourselves living on a world which geology pronounces to be inconceivably remote in origin. Our most familiar experience of human life is that all the inhabitants of this world, after a more or less brief period, entirely disappear from view, and live again—so far as can be seen—only in the recollection of the survivors, who in their turn are soon swept away by the common destroyer—death.

This awful experience is so commonplace in the minds of most people that we rarely realise its real and terrible character, although, doubtless, it serves to intensify in millions of cases, the unspeakable agonies of those who die a sudden death, and on whom—when utterly unprepared—descends in an instant the horror of an abrupt mortal stroke.

Finding ourselves, then, lodged on what science has ascertained to be a revolving sphere suspended in illimitable space, amid many similar orbs, we have, for the purpose of our immediate inquiry, to consider whether we can attain to any primary

truths outside what is popularly known as dogma, or understood as Revelation, whereby we may find bases for some inductive endeavours to aid us hereafter in our guesses at the other world.

At starting we have at least two cardinal conceptions, which are really independent of Scripture or science for their verification. These conceptions are those of eternity and space. It is impossible to imagine that those stellar interspaces revealed by the night sky are less than illimitable, and although we know that humanity had a beginning, we cannot conceive a period, however remote from the historic ages, in which duration was not. In other words, an endless series of antecedent periods always results in the necessary conception of eternity.

In order to avoid the admission of a God, as understood by all Christians and Deists, the conventional Rationalist substitutes Nature in some form for an intelligent First Cause, and we have some such conception as the meteoric moss of a celebrated English scientist for the assumptive origin of human life.

If we take an acorn and examine its structure, supposing for the sake of argument that we were ignorant of trees, like the denizens of some polar regions, we should hardly anticipate that from a group of fibrous matter an oak, weighing several tons, and enduring several centuries, would emerge. If, again, we contrast the two, the acorn and the oak, and were asked which were the greater feat, to make the acorn *capable* of producing the oak by its inherent vegetable chemistry, or to make the oak direct out of already existing vegetable substances, who can hesitate as to the nature of the answer? To make the acorn after such a manner that when sunk in the soil it should germinate and grow a forest giant, is obviously a more marvellous feat—

a grander exercise of creative powers than to make what we will term an artificial tree.

In like manner, if we assume that science does correctly describe the evolution of this world from a few elements through a sequence of innumerable changes, and during a series of uncounted eons, our marvel at the Original Power that could accomplish such a work is but the greater.

Let us further assume that the initial origin in a material sense of the solar system, was but an enormous mass of vapour, which gradually condensed into various spherical bodies, taking up their respective orbits by virtue of what we call the laws of motion. These spheres, hardening as they condensed, finally evolve what is known as the physical world. Well, here we have clearly indicated an antecedent cause, unknown, indeed, but not on that account the less absolute, and if we stave off the difficulty by assuming a force, the real question is only shifted to—“Whence then that force?”

The material world, as we know it, distinctly demands an original constructor, and a force demands an intelligent original, just as much as motion demands an initial impulse.

Mathematically, the greater cannot be contained in, nor is it explicable by, the lesser; and viewing physical creation in its present development, we cannot rationally resist the conviction that by its very constitution an adequate author is conditioned.

It is an obviously necessary law that although thought, *i. e.*, intelligence, can and does make itself materially manifest, and can and does modify the physical universe, we never find, nor can even our minds rationally conceive of the opposite process. Mind may appear present in matter, but matter never develops into mind.

No amount of subtle reasoning, no adroit use of the higher mathematics for example, can convince any ordinarily sensible person that a locomotive could be its own author. It is simply incredible that a piece of original matter should, *unimpressed by external forces*, continually modify its form by a selective process—even allowing countless trillions of ages for the operation, until by a sequential system of adaptation and rejection, the complete machine was evolved perfect as we now find it.

Yet, if we substitute protoplasm for metal, according to modern materialism, this is the way in which man has been evolved!

All scientific experience accords with common sense in this, that of *itself* matter evolves nothing. The progressive changes constituting the various cycles of nature are always the work of some super-added forces. The materialistic positivist philosophy of the day rests wholly on a peculiar kind of speculative Atheism, which is rarely obtruded in its naked and naturally repulsive shape, but is manifested in the various forms of agnosticism now so prevalent.

Absolute Atheism is rarely advanced, unless in some exceedingly rare and altogether phenomenal instances. The assertion that there is no God is obviously a logical absurdity. To *know* that there is no intelligent framer of the universe, would be to possess powers of universal observation entirely superhuman; and as such powers are not possessed by any human creature, the proposition denying the existence of a creator cannot be rationally entertained. This form of counter argument, by the way, to bald Atheism does not seem to have been as generally perceived, popularly speaking, as one would imagine must be the case from its obvious application to the Atheistic enunciation. Then, again, while from the Atheist's view-point there is

only the *one* possibility—evidently improbable and unattainable, as a matter of fact—of there *not* being an intelligent creator of all things, there is necessarily, *per contra*, a series of probabilities that there *is* a creator—so numerous that it is as one to the greatest number that the human mind can conceive. Of course, the reasoning here is at present wholly on the neutral ground of unaided human reason, entirely outside Revelation, or indeed, any sort of supernatural assistance.

Before, however, proceeding further in this momentous inquiry, I will epitomise, as succinctly as possible, the cosmic conceptions of the ancients, and of those later and modern speculators who have professed to reject what is generally understood as revealed religion. This, then, will form the subject matter of the succeeding chapters.





COSMIC CONCEPTIONS, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

(ANCIENT.)

PROBABLY the earliest formularised cosmic conception in heathen cosmogonies is that crude idea known as the Mundane Egg. In the Egyptian, Hindoo, and Japanese mythologies the maker of all things is described as producing an egg, whence the world and all its complex manifestations is in due season evolved. The conception, as may be supposed, assumes various special forms in different countries, but it is safe to assert that the egg is one of the oldest, if it be not *the* oldest symbol of creation among those races which have been or are distinctly Pagan.

Thales, one of the famous seven wise men of Greece, is usually admitted to have been one of the first Europeans who is known to have philosophised as to the origin of man and the world. He formulated a singular kind of material cosmos in which all things were assigned to an aqueous original. He further taught that in water there resided some force which initiated the sequence of vital gradations culminating in mankind.

Socrates and Plato naturally mark new and extraordinary eras in the cosmic speculations of the heathen world of ancient times. The former is

remarkable for all ages as having been the first to logically initiate and irresistibly substantiate the famous argument of design which the Christian Paley turned to such effective uses in his *Natural Theology*. Nothing, perhaps, is more remarkable about Socrates than the intense enthusiasm of a man who was at the same time the most practical and common-sense thinker of his age. Firmly persuaded, as we know from unimpeachable records, that he had a divine mission to fulfil, he devoted his entire existence to the inculcation of purity, truth, and virtue, and prepared the way for the more subtle method of the ideal Plato. Socrates, as it were, began with man as his subject, and argued thence to a God, but Plato, taking Idealism as his basis, startled the world of his contemporaries by proclaiming the pre-existence of original types of all that is good in the visible universe. Plato declared, in other words, that there resided in the unseen architect of the universe patterns, or archetypes, whence all mundane conceptions were derived. For example, the divine conception of a circle was the cause of all round bodies or things. This belief, which in the middle ages became known as Realism, was opposed by a sect of schoolmen termed Nominalists, who denied abstract originals, and refused to allow that archetypes existed. This is, in truth, the fundamental position assumed by many Materialists in the present day, and it has been supported indirectly by Locke, who so strenuously refuses to admit the existence of innate ideas.

Pythagoras, the founder of what is known as the Italic school of philosophy, maintained the famous doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and declared that in number alone could absolute certainty be found. Number was, in fact, the essence of all things; things were but the images of numbers. It has been plausibly explained that the number

theory was worked out from a primary conception that after destroying, or at all events disarranging, every other attribute of matter, there still remained the notion of number, it being always possible to predicate that the thing is *one*. From this crude and repellent theory was evolved the idea of the Finite and Infinite, corresponding respectively with odd and even, and thence it was taught that all things in this visible, tangible universe really sprung: The abstract principle of Perfection was one and the finite; of Imperfection the many and the infinite. The system of the universe was conceived as a cosmos consisting of ten celestial bodies circling round a central fire—the hearth as it were of the human world. From this singular belief arose the famous doctrine of the harmony of the spheres—a music resulting, it was assumed, from the correlative movements of the celestial bodies. As to the soul of man—for Pythagoras taught that man had a soul—that partook of the essence of the central fire, and was of a triune character, viz., a combination of Reason, Intelligence, and Passion. The triune combination was special to man; the dual arrangement of intelligence and passion only was the characteristic of the animal creation.

Unpromising as these singular conceptions appear at first, it is only fair to concede that the ethical *cultus* of the true Pythagoreans was undoubtedly pure. They regarded virtue in its highest forms as a harmony of the human soul, and a means of approaching more nearly to Deity. It was this that led to a partial blending of some of the Pythagorean doctrines with the speculative philosophy of early Christianity.

Of all cosmic speculators of the ancient world, Plato alone excepted, Epicurus has been, doubtless, most influential, and however ready we may be to admit his personal virtue, it is sufficiently apparent,

from a calm review of his teachings, that the prevailing tendency was decidedly atheistic. Epicurus was born a few years after the death of Plato, and devoted the whole of a long life to the elaboration of a philosophy which made pleasure the great end of man's action here, and exalted sensation into a species of religion which began and ended, if rightly estimated, in pure selfishness.

That the famous "garden" philosopher, as he was called from the customary place of his verbal teaching, was himself temperate, and so far as we know, of most exemplary morals, does not in the least compensate for the radical unsoundness of his metaphysical views, nor the pernicious uses made thereof by his many successors, among whom Lucretius, the Roman poet, holds so remarkable a place.

Epicurus was a most prolific author, and is said to have himself composed a library of full three hundred volumes, but it is possible to sketch the salient features of his teachings in a comparatively small compass.

Although, like Aristotle, a natural philosopher, he sought to unfold the mysteries of the natural world as a moralist. The cardinal point in his doctrine was that the great evil afflicting mankind was Fear, and here, as we shall see later on, he runs parallel to the central principle of the dominant creed of the Asiatic world—Buddhism—the essence of this fear is a dread of Death as well as of Deity, or as he put it, of the gods.

The object of the whole Epicurean philosophy was to rescue mankind from both, and here the reflective reader will not fail to note that in his postulates, Epicurus assumes something like an innate consciousness of moral imperfection in man—else why the double terror on which he dilates?

His cosmic views are that the universe is a corporeal entity, infinite in extent and everlasting.

There are, he contends, only two kinds of existence, viz., that of bodies and that of space. The world itself is simply the outcome of the impact on each other of original atoms, and in like manner human souls were merely subtle particles disseminated through the physical body, and having a likeness to mere vapour informed by heat.

Epicurus did not deny the existence of the gods in the Greek Pantheistic sense, but he boldly declared that as enduring beings they had nothing in common with man, and he even declaimed against attributing the processes of nature to their care. In this manner he explained away what he deemed a capital obstacle to human happiness—the fear of the gods.

He next sought to deduce from his atomic theory that the dissolution of the body necessarily involved the destruction of the soul, and thence, he argued, that the most acute of all our fears—the dread of death—is nothing to mankind. “Where we are,” said Epicurus, “death is not, and where death is, then we are not.” Such is the famous syllogism whereby he strove to establish his negative and purely materialistic creed.

The practical part of his teaching was a logical result of such premises. Pleasure was, he contended, the one primary good, and this was to be attained by the pursuit of virtue and by contemplation. The mainspring of human action, under such an ethical regime, was obviously an economic prudence, and, as a natural result, his followers have at all times reserved the privilege of interpreting the philosophic idea of pleasure entirely in accordance with individual appetite.

Epicurus denied the existence of any abstract principle of right or wrong, and thence the highest morality deducible from his teaching is *Expediency*. The rottenness of the whole doctrine, apart entirely

from any Christian standard, is apparent at once when we perceive that its outcome in human conduct will be in exact conformity with the natural propensities of the individual professing its tenets. In Epicurus himself it seems to have been temperance and virtue, but in the libertine of the ancient, as of the modern world, it would be simply the grossest sensualism, tempered by utter selfishness. In practice, as well as in theory, Nero and the other Roman emperors of that type were consistent epicureans.

In utter contrast to these materialistic views are the cosmic speculations of the famous Philo Judæus, distinctively known as the Philosopher. He has sometimes been compared to Plato himself, and there is, as we shall perceive, much solid ground for such a parallelism.

He was essentially a Jew, and he strove in a carefully formulated philosophy to give a concrete expression to the general vagueness of the Hebrew religion regarding Deity and the character of the world unseen and to come.

He laid down as a fundamental principle the maxim that God is the one good. The world in which we live is, he declares—thus anticipating Bishop Berkeley—only an appearance. The Deity is to be conceived as primal light which cannot be seen itself, but is recognized by its effects. God is also called by Philo Judæus the Place (in the Talmud, Makom), because He pervades all space, and while possessing in His ceaseless activity supreme power, He is endowed with grace. As, however, the nature of the Deity is essentially different from that of man and the created world, God employs innumerable powers, or spiritual messengers, to do His bidding, and in this heavenly hierarchy, which was evidently known to Milton, there are various grades of majesty and might.

Philo Judæus further taught that man is essentially immortal, but in this potential immortality, if I may so express it, there are gradations, and thus there will be an even vaster difference in men living after death than we now find in the actual flesh. Virtue and sin are opposite poles to which mankind variously incline. Paradise is simply to feel at one with God, and a place of torment is the consciousness of possessing a state of mind, or rather of spirit, actively at issue with what are the recognised laws of the Maker of all things. The Framers of this remarkable system, which is really a Hebrew paraphrase of the ethical religions of Socrates and Plato, had even some Messianic notions, for he expresses a belief that at some period a great Deliverer will arise among the Jews, restore them to their original heritage, and fully reconcile the whole race with an offended God.

It is needless for me to add that Philo Judæus has exercised an enormous influence on religious thoughts and speculation. He was followed in many of his daring views by early Christian writers and teachers, and contributed greatly to that Gnosticism which for a long period rent the patristic world with theological thunders.

Such are the principal cosmic speculations of the classic epoch. It now remains to notice, as briefly as is consistent with clearness, the origin, nature and growth of that phenomenal belief, Buddhism which still sways the minds of the greater portion of the human race.

Buddhism therefore, forms the subject of our next section.





COSMIC CONCEPTIONS, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

ANCIENT.

BUDDHISM.

THE belief known as Buddhism, derived from the name of its founder, Buddha, *i.e.*, the Wise,—is generally admitted to be nearly two thousand five hundred years old, and so far as the numbers of its adherents go, it must be pronounced to be the prevailing religion of the world. In the East—including China and Japan—it is usually computed that some 400,000,000 of human beings accept its dogmas and follow its ritual.

Very opposite and extremely perplexing views prevail as to the origin of this faith. By some it is regarded as a vestige of the primal religion of the ancient Hindoos, or even as the surviving remains of a primeval worship. Speculations, indeed, on this head are as numerous as the modes of spelling the name of its reputed founder, which has full fifty forms; but it is generally agreed by good oriental scholars that Buddha was a real person,—a prince of the house of some ancient Nepaulese monarch. He is known as Sakya, and sometimes as Guatama, which signifies the *ascetic*. The word

or name Buddha was an after addition, agreeable to its derived signification from the root *budh*—to know. The universally accepted story of this personage is sufficiently poetic and romantic. The Prince Siddhartha—such is his original earthly name—is described from the first as being of such a contemplative and ascetic disposition, that his father had him environed from the days of his youth by every form of luxury in order to prevent him from deserting his high caste. He is described as being married to a lovely and amiable lady, and being himself endowed with great strength, grace, and uncommon powers of intellect.

While yet young, however, he is seized with the fixed and mournful conviction that everything offered by this life is but vanity. He broods, while still himself unwrinkled, over the knowledge that old age and all its dire train of evil is fast approaching, and in the issue resolves to ascertain whether an existence of systematic self denial—of pain and privation—will not in some degree allay the mental tortures from which he suffers.

Resolute to make the trial, he flies from his country, obliterates all the special signs of his high caste, and commences the painful life of a religious pilgrim—whither bound he hardly knows. During this probation he studies, and makes himself master of all the knowledge of his time ; and undergoes a supposed temptation from a principle of evil. An allegorical importation, doubtless, into this remarkable narrative. He next seeks to acquire the secrets of life and death by mere dint of hard thinking, and is said to have remained for whole weeks in a condition of utter abstraction. In due course he reaches the conclusion that birth is the great evil and he thence inquires, Whence comes birth and continued existence? In the issue he is described as reaching the conclusion that ignorance is the

ultimate cause of existence and that were ignorance removed, human misery might be ended. He is next fabled to have attained in himself consummate wisdom, and thence his name or title of Buddha. Having by a singular course of contemplative asceticism thoroughly weaned himself away alike from the joys and sorrows of common mortals, the next stage to be attained was that of the missionary ; and accordingly we find that for some forty years he preached in Northern India, making many converts, and dying at last at Kusinagara, in Oude. From the beginning, the new creed was of an intensely missionary character, and as may well be imagined, many strange additions were grafted on what was at first an inverted form, if I may so express it, of that epicureanism referred to in the last section.

Buddhism is based, to a certain extent, on the faith of the Brahmins, and equally with it accepts the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. When a man dies—so Buddha teaches—he is born or takes an entirely new shape. If his demerits are extreme, he will, however, be first born in one of the one hundred and thirty-six hells enumerated by the Buddhist priests, and in these the smallest penal infliction is to live for ten millions of years. A meritorious life, on the other hand, secures a proportionate amount of bliss of even longer duration ; but the peculiarity of the belief is that in any case these after existences must at last terminate, and begin, *de novo*, perhaps, in some fresh form. Buddhists have no idea of a God or of creation, and, as is popularly known, the Chinese, the Mongols, and the Thibetans, have no word in their respective languages to express the idea of deity. It follows that these peoples are really philosophic Atheists, contrary to the opinion once held that such a phenomenon did not exist ; but then, unlike

most Atheists, they firmly believe in a future state, and the separate existence of the human soul.

The very base of this extraordinary belief is the assumption that human existence is on the whole a bane, and from this death there was no escape, as even the heaven and condition of godhead to which certain individuals might attain, was not final. Buddha, therefore, sought exemption from renewed birth, and thence he formularised a vague state—if nothingness can be rightly called so,—termed Nirvana. The word really means a blowing out, and undoubtedly it is equivalent to annihilation.

The key to Buddhism has been said to consist in what its founder called his four verities. The first asserts that pain is, the second that pain arises out of desire, the third that pain may be ended in Nirvana, and the fourth professes to indicate the way whereby the consummation of nothingness may be attained.

Buddha's idea seems to have been, by entirely overcoming ignorance, the illusory nature of all things would become apparent, and that by further casting away, as unreal or evanescent, the senses, contact, perfection, desire, and attachment, and reducing the whole being to one intense contemplative calm, a state of nothingness could be reached!

It is needless to detail the ritual of such a creed. Its actual intent and purpose does not, of course, really appear to the mass of its adherents, and as universal charity and the practice of virtue is strongly inculcated on all its followers, it naturally prevailed in lands where caste had already raised up such terrible barriers between man and man. An acute writer has aptly said, that what Christianity was to Judaism, that was Buddhism to the terrible Brahminism it strove to supplant. It thus became the missionary faith of the East to a far greater

extent than Mahomedanism. Frederick von Schlegel, in his famous and eloquent "Philosophy of History," devotes considerable space to the consideration of Buddhism, and the cognate beliefs that have emanated thence.

Its introduction into China was extraordinary. It is not too much to assert that prior to its entrance there the Chinese had preserved the worship of a deity, and a belief in a creation with a singular tenacity, and there is historical grounds for believing that the great saint, who as Confucius taught them, was to appear in the west, really embodied a Messianic idea. It is further asserted on historic grounds that some sixty years after the birth of Christ the Chinese sent special envoys to ascertain the truth. These messengers, however, met the apostles of Buddhism, and as Buddha himself was described as an incarnate god, the religion they preached was introduced into China, where it was propagated with an amazing rapidity.

Summed up, it would appear that Buddhism, in its purity, signifies the painful practice of every virtue in order at last, through a cycle of successive "future states," to attain to such a condition as shall fit the soul after transmigration, extending through billions of years, for the Nirvana stage, or, in other words, utter extinction.

It is necessary to add that while the above is a fair representation of Buddhism in its orthodox shape, various heterodox views are entertained by the exponents of this peculiar faith, and that in some cases Buddha is himself held to be a deity, and Nirvana a final blending with his essence.

Such is the creed that has been held by so many thousand millions of human beings since its promulgation. It is, perhaps, superfluous to add that of the multitudes who have followed the tenets of

Buddha, few, indeed, have understood the nature of its doctrines as laid bare in this brief exposition.

It seized on the imagination of the ignorant masses as a creed of charity, virtue, and self denial, and offered a prospect to the worthy of admission into many successive heavens, while it kept the vicious in awe of its hundred places of torment. It taught distinctly that the individual man should live again, and although the faith, when fully analysed, is absolutely atheistic, the logical consequences of its tenets could not readily present themselves to the illiterate masses among whom the doctrine was first preached.

The obvious deduction to be drawn from a review of Buddha and his work is that a sense of imperfection, a feeling of unfitness, a consciousness of evil is really inherent to man whenever he enters on the contemplative exercise of his mental powers. This general consensus of his spiritual faculties to the abstract principle that there is outside and beside himself something to which he may and should attain, is established, even in the gross materialism of Buddhism. And what can be more suggestive than the admitted fact, that though he live again—after death repeated uncounted times—such are still the awful effects of his original imperfections, that there is really, in the matured estimation of the wisest sage that the East ever knew, no better end for him at last than absolute destruction !

If we substitute sin for pain, and the two are nearly allied, how close a resemblance we have here to the so-called dogma of original sin !

This, however, is not the place for a comparative view of the various creeds and beliefs that have contended for supremacy over mankind.

Beyond Buddhism and its offshoots there remains Mahomedanism as a power in the eastern world. The gross cosmic conceptions of Mahomet,

and the general nature of his creed and ritual, are familiar in these days to most of us. They do not demand separate notice in the present treatise, and I shall now proceed to pass to the cosmic speculations of modern, or comparatively modern, speculators; confining myself, however, to those who have really exercised a determining influence on the direction of contemporary thought.





COSMIC CONCEPTIONS, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

MODERN.

THE wide space between the Patristic age and the revival of philosophic investigation, in regard to the unseen world, is bridged, as it were, by gnosticism so far as Europe is concerned in our present inquiry. It will, however, be more convenient if we rapidly pass in survey the modern cosmic conceptions of philosophy, and reserve for another section an analysis of that gnosticism which is now widely prevalent, coloured and distorted, indeed, by those very modern speculations which we have now to examine.

Four great names—covering a space of far less than two centuries—may be taken as representative of new departure points in the metaphysical history of mankind. In other words, Descartes, Leibnitz, Spinoza, and Kant, must be regarded as cardinal factors in the sum of modern speculation as related to metaphysics properly so called, and as having laid or prepared the substratum for all systems of religious thought, not strictly confined within what are popularly understood to be orthodox limits.

The first of these original thinkers, René Descartes, was born as long ago as 1596, in

Touraine, and although educated in the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church, he soon abandoned that faith, and devoted the whole of his life to the attainment of what may be called the absolute in philosophy. The result of painful inquiry, elaborately expressed in voluminous works, may be briefly summed up. He arrived at the conclusion that he felt and thought, and from this simple position he deduced the fact of his existence. The relation between personal consciousness and necessary existence was reduced by him to the famous formula, *cogito, ergo sum*—I think, therefore I am. Further, he reached the conception that whatever is clearly thought must be true, and as he recognised among his clear and distinct thoughts the idea of a God, he argued that a God existed, because God only is the measure of our idea of the absolutely perfect being. Descartes reasoned that such an idea could not be self formed; it was, therefore, he contended, innate, and he thus inferred the existence of a God from the nature of the idea of the absolutely perfect, an idea that all men—not mentally abnormal—possess, and he inferred that the idea of perfection necessarily involved that of existence. Now, if God exists, said Descartes, then we have an assurance of a ground for certainty, since the Deity as a perfect being cannot originate falsehood. It was by this means that the French thinker reached the conclusion that we may and should believe whatever our consciousness clearly testifies.

This is a most suggestive argument, I think, and one that has been too much neglected in refuting bald Atheism. It is perfectly clear that man cannot think that God does not exist, for to do so, as I observed at the opening of this work, would require the possession of omniscient powers, but it is quite obvious that man *can* think the

Deity *does* exist, and thus on the Descartes' method the cogitation argument is in itself a sufficient refutation of Atheism.

Had Descartes gone no further than this, he would have done much ; but he attempted an inquiry into the essential difference between spirit and matter, which he distinguished respectively as the *thinking* and *extruded*. He reached, however, the singular conclusion, as it has seemed to many, that so great is the difference between them that they cannot exert any influence upon each other. As, however, a correspondence obviously does exist between the two—whatever they really are—he assumed a constant action of God—an assumption which gave rise to a doctrine known as Occasionalism. It is within everybody's observation that certain actions of the body, for example, are accompanied by a corresponding action of the mind, and the reverse holds equally good. To the rude popular conception there appears no difficulty, but in reality the manner in which this is brought about is a great mystery when we exercise but a little reflection, and Descartes solved the problem by boldly affirming that whenever any action of the mind took place, God produced a corresponding action in the body. It is needless to enlarge on the many serious objections that exist to such a theory, but such as it is, it formed a conspicuous part of the Cartesian system.

Leibnitz, whom we have next to consider, was born in 1646, and may be regarded as in some respects the pupil of Descartes, although in his ultimate conclusions he altogether outdid his French master. Steeped at first in the Cartesian philosophy, he soon emerged thence with striking and original views of his own, which have had

remarkable issues in much of the speculative philosophy of the day.

Leibnitz held a special doctrine as to what is termed the theory of Monads, a pre-established harmony and the famous formula of optimism. The theory of Monads was by no means original. It was derived from ancient Greek philosophy, and had been doubtless formulated to justify the extraordinary Pantheism of that imaginative people the original Greeks. The Monads, said Leibnitz, were simple primary substances without figure or form, having no extension, and being indivisible. It is, he declared, by the aggregation of these Monads that all bodies are formed. These Monads are described as of two kinds, the one being totally unconscious, and the other endowed with a peculiar species of inherent activity, which he called "apperception." These Monads are in effect souls, and the prime Monad is the Deity or soul of the Universe. How easily this purely assumptive theory runs into gross materialism may be readily inferred, and it has been largely drawn upon since by those who seek to reduce the world and all that belongs thereto down to a mere system of mathematically adjusted mechanism. The optimism of Leibnitz stands on a very different basis, and is fully explained in his work entitled *Theodicea*. The salient point in this production is that among all the systems for the creation of the world which presented themselves to the divine intelligence as practicable, that one actually existing was selected as the best, both in a moral and a physical sense. The argument in support of this view is ingenious and striking. If the present universe be not the best, it must be either because God did not know of a better universe, or that God was unable or unwilling to create the presumed better world. All these three hypotheses are evidently contrary to the

admitted attributes of God, the first with his omniscience, the second with his omnipotence, and the third with his benevolence.

But to revert to the Monads of Leibnitz. He rejected the theory of Descartes which ascribed the interaction or reciprocity of mind and matter to the direct interference of God, and substituted therefore an hypothesis of what he termed pre-established harmony. The mind and body were two distinct mechanisms, each of these had its independent mode of action, corresponding modes of action synchronizing together. Both were so adjusted by the creator as to ensure the perfect unison of all their actions. Leibnitz illustrated this pre-established harmony by the instance of two chimney-pieces, one being made to strike as the other indicated the hour. In like manner, directly the mind determines on a particular act, the body, responsive to the laws of the God-given pre-established harmony, adapts itself to the mental action exactly in such manner as shall give it full efficacy.

The third great exponent of modern cosmic speculation was Spinoza, who was born in 1632, and who developed the Cartesian idea into a form which has exercised a prevailing influence with many philosophic minds even in the present day.

Spinoza's system is by no means difficult to explain. He begins by assuming that there are three primary things which he calls substance, attribute, and mode. According to Spinoza there is but one *substance*, and that is, necessarily, he contends—God. There is, he argued, no real difference between mind or God and nature. The tangible world is not distinct from deity, but should be regarded as his manifestation. Extremes meet, and what Spinoza, who was himself a Jew by birth, appears to have regarded as a rigid Monotheism, really became expanded into Pantheism, and that again was easily

reduced to virtual Atheism. In his ethics he denied the existence of free-will, and plainly announced that man is entirely dependent on external, not on internal, or in other language self-wrought, causes for whatever destiny he finds, and thus with Spinoza good and evil are but relative ideas. Our only real existence is in knowledge, and utility alone is the real determining guide of human life. At first Spinoza was regarded by numbers, even of acute thinkers, as a "God-intoxicated man," and his philosophy was widely accepted in Germany. His speculations, indeed, in various forms, more or less modified, have been adopted as the basis of contemporary German metaphysical investigation, and the serious flaws in his ingenious system appear to have been generally overlooked by the eagerness of many anxious to accept a species of religion which thus effectually relieves its followers from the awful burden of individual responsibility. The fourth and last of these modern cosmic speculators was in many respects the greatest of all.

Immanuel Kant was born in 1724, and the formal promulgation of his perfected system of Metaphysical Inquiry marks a great epoch in the history of the human mind. It has been justly said of Kant that the investigations to which he devoted his life, refer not so much to special problems in philosophy as to an examination of its limits and principles. He taught that the faculties of sense, understanding, judgment, and reason include innate *à priori* conceptions and functions. Thus, according to Kant, in the sense there must inhere the forms of space and time, in the reason the faculties of principles, in the judgment the conception of design, and in the practical reason or the will, the idea of moral law. He ultimately deduced the idea of freedom, of immortality, and of the being of a God as conclusions inevitable to the inward

necessities of practical morality. The cardinal point in Kant's system is that religion—whereby he understands the recognition of our duties as divine commands—is contingent on morality. It would transcend the scope of my purpose to attempt an analysis of the famous *Critique of the Pure Reason*, and it is not, indeed, necessary to examine in detail the elaborate works of this sublime thinker. The summary of his views, given above, fully explains the nature of the conclusions he reached.

I have thus endeavoured roughly but faithfully to sketch the nature of the leading philosophies of cosmic speculation as formulated by the greatest thinkers of ancient and modern times. In dealing with Gnosticism in the next section, it will be possible to take a rapid survey of the whole grounds from a popular view point.

In this manner a solid basis of facts will be established whence we may legitimately reach those conclusions which are obviously justified by the data furnished.

No sketch of modern cosmic conceptions could pretend to completeness that excluded reference to Emanuel Swedenborg, whose days and nights were, during a long life, dedicated to theology and spiritualism.

It is now about a century and a half since a book entitled *Opera Philosophica et Mineralia* appeared at Leipsic, and attracted attention to a writer who was evidently penetrating deeply into the very nature of material things. Shortly after the writer, who was Swedenborg himself, issued a treatise on the *Infinite* and the *Final Cause in Creation*. The object of the daring investigator was, as he himself explained, to track the soul to its inmost recesses in the human body, and it was while engaged in this entrancing pursuit, that Swedenborg became a visionary, and the rest of his days passed in a real

or pretended state of trance, in which he had many apparently divine monitions from the unseen world.

One of the principal aims of Swedenborg's mission was to restore the lost science of correspondance. The natural world was, he alleged, only the birth of the spiritual cosmos, and the spiritual again was itself the outcome of the unseen mental world. Invisible evil found its expression in matters noxious and repulsive to sight, and good on the other hand was made manifest in the utilities and graces of this mortal life. Further, his nature became mystical, as when he declared that man was a mere epitome of nature, while nature again was man in *disjecta membra*—an obvious absurdity. He taught that there are three heavens—the first of love, the second of wisdom, and the third of obedience—a sublime conception if adopted as a figurative and symbolical description. As to hell, for Swedenborg believed in one, that he explained was the place for all in whom self-love was the ruling passion, and he taught that immediately after death the soul made a short sojourn in what he designated the world of spirits, where its fitness for heaven was duly tried.

The cardinal principle of Swedenborg's doctrine was that God alone lives. Creation and man are dead, and only live in God. The Deity is described as being everywhere the same, but the difference in his manifestation lies in the recipients ; thus a man represents God more adequately by far than a tree, and even the devil is only God's presence perverted. Directly the connection of anything having existence with God is broken, it vanishes, but existence in God is a perpetual creation.

Thus self-consciousness and the feeling of individuality, common to all of us, are sensations directly communicated by God himself.

Such are the views of the founder of the new church. They seem to me to include much important truth, mingled with an inexplicable mysticism. It is probable that the idea of the indwelling of the divine spirit in man is derived in reality from the declaration in Genesis that man became a living soul when the afflatus of the Deity passed into his earthly frame.





GNOSTICISM.

IT is a matter for profound reflection that among the four principal nations or races of the primitive world—the Indians or Hindoos, the Chinese, the Egyptians, and the Hebrews—all but the last—held pantheistic views of the “other world,” the Jews alone being rigid Monotheists. The fifth great people of antiquity in its remotest aspect, viz., the Phœnicians, inclined strongly to Pantheism, in spite of what some acute ethnological critics assert to be their Hebrew origin. It is equally, or rather more, remarkable, that outside the Jews themselves, who alone preserved intact the sublime conception of a theocracy, or government by one personal Deity, people so widely scattered over the entire surface of the world then inhabited, should still concur in a belief in Deity.

It is striking, too, that the first great conflict of mankind, as described in the Mosaic testimony, is more or less traceable in the sagas of the most ancient tribe of mankind, such as the Greeks and Indians, while the earliest records of the aboriginal Asiatic peoples are in agreement with the initial narratives of Genesis.

It would be beyond the scope of a treatise like this to go into elaborate details of exegesis, but it is impossible to examine primitive profane history so superficially as not to perceive innumerable confirmations of the salient facts recorded in the Jewish

Scriptures. Thus, to take but one example out of many, the Chinese symbol representing dispersion is a *tower*. Surely such a palpable reference to, or rather record of, the primitive scattering of mankind cannot be simply coincidental.

Clearly outside all so-called dogma, irrespective of every species of revelation, entirely distinct from what is commonly called the supernatural, we have an overwhelming testimony to the entire unanimity of ancient mankind in accepting a general belief in Godhead, individual or multiform; but in each and every instance a divinity.

That Buddhism, as shown in a previous chapter, is, logically considered, a species of atheism does not in the least affect this part of the argument. To the myriads of its initial worshippers this was never perceived in its ultimately deducible issues, and it so clearly formulated an invincible faith in a *future existence* that it may well be reckoned among the religions of the world. Even Buddha himself may not have perceived the full consequences of his doctrines. To do him mere justice, he sought to send his followers out of this world better than they entered it, and even he may have had an inner and secret faith that the rest might be left to those mysterious powers of which he had full consciousness, as indeed have all men in all times, but of which he possessed no knowledge.

The ancient Phœnicians—the lordly founders of Tyre, and the original authors of an advanced civilization which utterly perished while the world was still in its comparatively early ages—exercise a natural fascination over our imagination. They are generally admitted to have been a Semitic people, and are probably of Hebrew origin. The oldest record of the race is a document dating about 1250 B.C., and rendered into Greek by Philo of Byblus. The Bible itself contains references to

the Phœnicians, and about a thousand years before the birth of Christ they had practically colonised the entire borders of the Mediterranean basin. They may have even gone further, and in addition to their settlements in South Britain, it is not inconceivable that they may have anticipated Columbus, and reached America. Be this as it may, they became an imperial people, and in the extent of their dominion politically anticipated, or rather facilitated, the growth of the Roman sway to follow. It is, however, in the present case, with the religion and not the politics of the ancient lords of Tyre that we have to do.

As stated above, all the ancient peoples of the world, the Jews alone excepted, were pantheistic in their religious creeds, and the Phœnicians were no exception to the rule. Their sub-divisions into tribes were numerous, and so, too, were their deities, but even with the Phœnicians a something acknowledged as an ultimate *Numen* was admitted to be the absolute Godhead.

For the rest, the physical world, in its various aspects, was, so to speak, deified, and in ascribing direct supernatural agencies to the common processes of nature, the Phœnicians doubtless prepared the way for the refined and poetic Pantheism of the ancient Greeks.

It is curious, by the way, to observe how nearly the rude pantheistic idea of the ancient world corresponds to the devout belief of the educated Christian, that the Supreme Being, by the action of secondary causes really sustains and controls the physical universe from hour to hour.

It has always appeared to me that the Pantheism of the ancients was in general but a crude idea of Christian providence *in disjecta membra*, or, in other words, in a piecemeal shape.

The pantheistic creeds of the ancient world

formed the undoubted basis of Gnosticism, which was in reality an ethical projection into early Christianity of the old expiring creeds of the primitive Pagan world. The Pantheon of India, Egypt, Greece, and even Rome was mingled with the more or less philosophical systems of Plato, Aristotle, and others, and blended by an ingenious subtlety into the patristic forms of the earliest Christianity.

The following is a succinct summary of the Gnostic faith. The Deity, whose essence is admitted to be love in its fulness, is represented as enthroned in remotest space, and as being in himself a silence, and abstract contemplation, quite incomprehensible and almost non-existing to the human mind. God as a spiritual being,—so taught the original Gnostics,—cannot have any contact with matter, and could not therefore have *made* it. The Gnostics solved the obvious dilemma here stated by assuming a pre-existing matter named *Hyle*, and from this the universe wherewith we are acquainted was *formed*. They further taught that between this *Hyle* and the supreme incomprehensible Being there was a fulness of light and plastic power, which they described as a *Pleroma*. It was in this that there subsisted the spiritual attributes of Deity, viz., wisdom, equity, truth, peace, and power. These emanations from Deity, necessarily inexhaustible, consequent on their very origin, were entitled *Æons*, or everlasting ones, and these were the really active principles in creation. A dualistic creed, however, arose among the Gnostics of Oriental origin who believed in an eternal principle of evil for ever struggling to turn men from the light of the Deity through whose manifestations in an *Æon* the earth was itself created. The Gnostics concurred in describing Christ as an *Æon* sent down to restore man to primitive purity, and a variety of singular and mystic beliefs were

formulated by the early Christian schoolmen who departed from the strictly patristic theology.

We have now rapidly surveyed the ancient world from a strictly historic view-point, without any reference to authority as understood in the term Revealed Religion. We have also roughly sketched the rise and nature of modern speculative thought on the unseen cosmos, and we have found in all instances a startling and overpowering unanimity of belief in a continued existence for man after death. It is quite needless to enforce this by any studied form of argument. It is self-evident to every student of history, and a smattering only of comparative philology invariably yields the same result.

In the next section of our inquiry I shall examine more minutely the primitive conception of the Deity and of the active principle of evil, popularly known as the Devil.





THE CONCEPTION OF DEITY.

THE conception of a supreme ruler of the visible universe is at least coeval with language, in other words, it is as old as mankind. The English or Saxon form God is popularly associated with the word good, but if we go back to the remotest historic periods it will appear that the radical idea in the concrete conception is simply power. Again, outside the Hebrews, it will always be found that Polytheism precedes a monotheistic conception of Deity, and that the dualistic notion of good and evil, alluded to in the previous section devoted to Agnosticism, everywhere prevails. The direct contrasts exist in all the very ancient beliefs. Thus, in the old Phœnician religion we have the Bael-Adonis in opposition to the Bael-Moloch ; and again, among the Egyptians, Isis, or Light and Wisdom, stands in antagonism to Typhon, or Darkness and Malignity.

The question outside revelation, is whether Polytheism or Monotheism was *first* in man's conception. A careful analysis, however, of polytheistic beliefs invariably lands us finally at either a unitarian, or at most, a dualistic conception of Deity ; and thus it will be found that the exegesis of the historic record harmonises with the Monotheism of the Hebrews, as set forth in their sacred books, *i. e.*, the Old Testament.

Fully formularised, the theistic argument, considered entirely apart from authority, ultimately rests upon the *design*, every where observed in nature, and the idea of deity is nothing but the concrete reply to the question, Whence is this universal order? If, however, we examine the subject more closely, we shall find that in reality the order and design—the sequential gradations of nature—are not inherent to nature from a conceptional view-point, but are really in ourselves as reflective beings. They inhere in the human mind, and thus our departure point is not from the physical to the moral—from the tangible to the intangible; but *a priori* from our own reasoning faculties, which, by an eternal law of their own, really recognise the impress of divinity, or, at all events, of something supernatural in the physical world in which we live and move.

Thus it is that an acute thinker has justly remarked, that “mind is the true image of deity.”

It follows, therefore, as a logical result, that the discovery of ourselves as thinking beings is really equivalent to the discovery of a God, although he may remain to us like the unknown deity to whom the ancient Athenians set up the statue which served Saint Paul as one of his most potent texts.

To discover, in fact, the basis of human psychology, is to take the initial step towards the revelation of deity, and thus the well-known philosophical saying is amply justified, that the conception of a God is a postulate of human self-consciousness. If man be more than a mere mechanism, an automatic result of sundry chemical sequences, then the argument for the existence of Deity becomes irresistible, and it follows, therefore, that man must first *feel* himself to be more than a mere arrangement of material elements, or in other words, he

must discover that he has himself personal IDENTITY before he rises necessarily to a true knowledge of Deity.

The personal—or self-consciousness argument—is generally understood as the *a priori* method, while the more popular reasoning from the design shown in nature to a designer is known as the *a posteriori* mode. The last mode is old as philosophy; the first is elaborated by the framers of the cosmic conception of comparatively modern times, and the two, taken conjointly, must be pronounced as irresistible.

The formula, "I am," establishes identity; the formula, "I think," establishes self-consciousness as a mental or mind principle, and our rational and universal recognition of the absolute truth that design implies a designer, bring us naturally to the idea of deity. This is a sublime discovery unquestionably. It has advanced us an important step in our inquiry, and although the character and even the nature of the deity thus revealed still remains a subject for the most various speculation, we have established a firm basis for further investigation.

In reaching this position we have spoken of our *consciousness*. It will be well to examine briefly in what this really consists.

The German philosopher Schlegel remarks—to summarise one of his most valuable works, the "Philosophy of Life,"—that man's consciousness is a combination of body, soul, and mind. To the latter belong the faculties of will and understanding; to the soul those of reason and imagination. It is remarkable that the three capital kinds of mental alienation correspond exactly to this triune view. Thus monomania arises from some purely mental error, frenzy, or intense passion in the outbreak of a soul broken loose from the

bounds of reason, and actual idiotcy is due to organic defects in the brain.

Imagination (Einbildungskraft), is the inventive faculty ; reason (Vernunft), the regulative ; understanding (Verstand), the intuitive ; and, finally, the will (Wille), is the moral faculty. These are primary faculties of the human consciousness, and subservient to them are the memory, the conscience, the passions or natural impulses, and the gross outward senses. This is not all : the writer acutely remarks that the memory is the intermediate faculty between the understanding and the reason ; that the conscience interposes between reason and the will ; that the passions stand between the imagination and the will ; and, finally, the material senses form the connecting and informing link between the imagination and the body. The striking use made of the word imagination by the translators of the English Bible will doubtless occur to the reader in connection with these suggestive definitions. It is not a little startling to reflect how nearly the outward senses of the body correspond with the triune description of man given above. Strictly speaking, we have but three senses—sight, hearing, and touch ; the last including its sub-varieties of taste and smell.

Now, the sight is decidedly the organ of the mind, hearing of the soul, but touch especially the sense of the body. The body can survive the loss of the senses of sight and hearing, but it perishes altogether with the entire extinction of the sense of *touch* or feeling.

Later on we shall have to enlarge on these highly suggestive guesses at our psychological constitution.

We have now advanced a considerable degree in our inquiry, and having thus established—outside the pale of dogma—the postulate of a deity,

it remains to examine the nature of evil, or at all events, the bases of the beliefs that are as old as mankind, in the existence of some malign powers in the universe. As this subject necessarily involves, as will appear, the consideration of free-will, it must form the theme of a new section.

With regard to the arguments from design, it must not be forgotten that sceptics have declared that it proves too much, and consequently refutes itself. A design does prove a designer, they admit; but they ask, with the usual audacity of doubt, must not Deity then have had a designer, and so on *ad infinitum*. The inquiry is well known to students of theology under the name of the infinite series. The proper answer is this: Intuitive truth shows us the existence of independent beings, *i. e.*, ourselves, as typified in Paley's theological arguments, under the forms of watches; and necessarily there cannot be a dependent without there is first an independent being, *i. e.*, a God. If, in a word, we can once demonstrate a here, we are quite sure of the there, although that may be projected into infinitude, and be at present invisible to us. If we can—and we do—demonstrate man as one term of the great proposition to be a dependent being, we are perfectly certain that the complement to the term is to be found in an independent being, *i. e.*, in God.





THE CONCEPTION OF EVIL.

THERE is scarcely a subject which is the centre of such a fierce controversy as the origin and nature of evil. The suffering, destruction, as it appears to be, and above all the ever active principle of death in the universe as we know it, have all been recognised as evil from time immemorial. Every form of religious belief that exists, or that has ever existed on this earth, and every code of laws, or in other words every kind of government has, in some shape or other, admitted the existence and activity of what is popularly known as evil. From the earliest days of human inquiry, until now, man has perpetually been asking why and whence is this evil, and in the initial stages of his mental growth he finds an explanation in a system of dualism exactly similar to the Miltonic conception of evil as defined in "Paradise Lost."

The doctrine of the Fall of Man as set forth in Genesis, is supposed by many to fully account for the existence of evil, but as an historical explanation we find it incomplete. If we assume the devil as the prime cause of man's moral decay, the question naturally arises, Whence the devil? and thus we are driven back to the dualistic system explained in the section devoted to Gnosticism. Speculation has been for ages busy in this fascinating and awful problem. One school of thinkers have argued that evil, like darkness, for example, is a necessary element

in human existence, and others more ingenious have sought to establish the philosophical dogma that identity or individuality can only be the product of opposing forces. In nature there is rest and motion, and why not in morals a like polarity? Good it has been argued can only exist in contrast to evil. Some again have more speciously asserted that evil is equivalent to imperfection. God is perfect, and therefore he is good, but the creature man is evil by reason of his imperfections. Science has of late years been invoked, and has striven hard to "explain" away evil, being unable to account for it *as evil*, and thus it has been sought to restore the supremacy of Pope's fallacious dictum that whatever is is right.

Before proceeding more closely to examine these views, let us glance for a moment at evil in its concrete form as set forth in the personal devil of the ancient world, and the middle ages.

The conception of a personal devil, historically speaking, was not a conception of the ancient Jews. The Hebrew Hierarchy, prior to the Babylonish captivity, certainly taught nothing of this kind, and in the Mosaic account of the tempting of Eve, we find no trace of a belief in a personal devil. Later on, however, in the Hebrew scriptures, Satan is mentioned, as in *Job*, and something like a personal character, or identity is ascribed to him. An idea extensively prevails among Orientalists that the Hebrews borrowed the idea from the dualism of Zoroaster, and even, perhaps, tinctured with a superstition similar to that which evolved the fauns and satyrs of ancient Greece.

The real development of the popular idea of a personal devil seems to date from the advent of Christ, when Palestine appears to be infested by an extraordinary plague of demoniacs. These demoniacs are popularly regarded as ministers, or

satellites of a supreme demon, and that this conception took an irresistible hold of the apostles is abundantly clear from their writings. Later on we find St. John in his Revelations unfolding a kind of divine drama, where he describes an actual conflict as having taken place in heaven, in which the devil is finally defeated and cast into an abyss. That these conceptions, so roughly sketched here, were coloured by references from the contemporary mythology may be probably true; but, granting so much, it remains a fact that no sceptical criticism can wholly explain away that the teachings of Christ synchronised with a revelation of an active antagonist to man—of an agency apparently at work in direct opposition to the benign action of a Divine Providence.

Concerning what is popularly known as the fall of the rebel angels, opinions varied much in the patristic world. Some of the fathers taught that Satan fell through pride, some through other causes, and several of the old schoolmen, including, by the way, Saint Augustine himself, declared that man had been created to fill up the void in heaven occasioned by the lapse into sin of a portion of the Heavenly hierarchy. On this, and some cognate ideas, a great variety of legends were based, and later on they received new and sombre accessions from the grim fancies of the Norse mythologies.

It is vain, however, to trace the multiform varieties of diabolical identity through history. It is sufficient to know that the common consent of all nations has recognised the existence of evil, and that in general this evil has become personified in the shape of a malignant being, sometimes regarded as grossly material as in the present day by some negro tribes—and more frequently refined into a spiritual entity.

Now, at the very outset, it must be admitted that

in attempting to deal popularly with Evil, we approach a subject beset with the greatest difficulties. It seems to me, however, that the only possible solution even of a partial and interrogative kind lies directly in an explication of FREE WILL and a clear understanding of *its* nature and action.

The question of Free Will has been debated from the very dawn of metaphysical enquiry. The Greek stoics are supposed to have been the first to "formularize" the conception that man is free in his actions, and many centuries later, Pelagius contended against the great Augustine for the liberty of the human will, which ever since has proved a terrible crux for metaphysicians. The controversy has raged for centuries, although the whole non-philosophic class has never entertained the least doubt as to man's possessing complete freedom of will. In reality mankind, by unanimous consent through all time, has always recognised what is the primary postulate of human consciousness—freedom of volition. Without this justice and morality were mockeries, and truth would be no essential way different from a lie so far as the moral aspect. Professor Clifford and other Mathematical Positivists have striven to teach that man is only a chemical automaton, moved by and moving in an unyielding series of strictly material matrices—the inevitable product of external material circumstances! When you bring an acid in contact with an alkali effervescence ensues, in like manner the Positivist declares when the requisite component parts of the human brain are evolved from nutriment *thought* results, and if we only knew enough, they add, we could even predicate from an examination of the human structure what the special bent of that thought would be.

This is simply pseudo science. It arises from an arrogant desire to know everything, and from an

utter confusion of the actor and the agencies of action. It is as if we were to say the talent of the flute player resides *in the flute*, or to take an extreme illustration—as though Shakespeare's genius lay in the pen wherewith he wrote.

Seriously to deny the existence of Free Will is to contradict the entire sum of human experience, and in effect to deny that man is a *rational* being.

When, however, we concede the freedom of the human will, as all are constrained to do whatever metaphysical subtilty may allege the other way, the clue to the evil existing in and around us becomes manifest. Man is or he is not a moral being; if he be a moral being, he is then responsible for the consequences of his own acts, and it is obvious that unless he were free to go to the right or to go to the left, as he wills, morality and responsibility would be unmeaning words. How little man in his volitional character has to do with what is merely physical is sufficiently evinced when we turn, as we are sometimes compelled to do, to the contemplation of the machinations of a malignant nature entirely deprived of the means for putting those machinations into execution. How many more murders there would be if thoughts alone had the power to kill the animal body!

But to revert. Man, having volition, may clearly by his own individual action do evil or good, and by virtue of this volition he obviously becomes an accountable being. If the Deity were to act on man directly or indirectly, so as to render the commission of evil impossible, man would at once cease to be volitional, ergo, he would really cease to be, in any reasonable sense of rational existence. Professor Clifford notwithstanding, he would be no more than a mere part of organic nature, moving automatically in response to eternal superimposed conditions. Put briefly, it is not that man must sometimes fall

into evil in order to become good—there is no more compulsion for evil than there is for good, but man, most decidedly, must *resist* evil in some form, in order to be, or remain good.

It transcends the power of even Deity to constitute man a meritorious being, and at the same time secure him absolutely against becoming a criminal being.

That there are special and awful difficulties besetting this part of our subject should not render us incapable of grasping at the obvious truths arising out of the very nature of the problem.

Man is after all but a finite creature as we know him here, and discovering that he is placed in the midst of infinitudes, he is perpetually asking, in effect, "Why am I a finite creature?" No doubt a vast amount of the perplexity that encumbers all human efforts to pierce the depths that surround us as soon as we look beyond the mere earthly life arises necessarily from the extreme limitation of our view, even over man and the material universe of which he appears to be the chief inhabitant. The careful survey of a single acre in any part of our country would not afford us a correct idea of the real extent and character of the earth itself, and what is that again as compared with the solar system; and then again that solar system itself is insignificant in comparison with the marvels of that SPACE through which this world and all its attendant planets is believed to be moving on to some remote but inevitable and awful goal.

Reverting once more to the question of human volition, a great writer says:—

Had the soul remained in a luminous repose on the God who made it, the resultant consciousness would have been simple where it is now complex. It would, in fact, have been a triune combination of understanding, soul, and will. Reason and

imagination, which are now ever in conflict with the will and the understanding, would have been as it were absorbed in those higher and primary faculties, and even the conscience would not have been a special action.

The next stage in our inquiry is reached by a critical examination of the theory of evolution to which the succeeding section is devoted.

Let us remember that the Scriptures do not in any sense exclude or cancel the oldest sacred traditions of the peoples preceding the gathering of the Jews into a nation. All ancient records, whether among the early inhabitants of Asia, or those of America, contain very explicit references to the giving of some supernatural revelation to mankind, and they also include pretty copious accounts of a deluge in more or less correspondence with the text of Genesis.

These early traditions became deformed and encrusted with a vast amount of mere fable, and naturally exhibited an increasing divergence from what we understand as revelation.

Dealing with this subject, Frederick von Schlegel remarks :—

“Nature was originally the faultless work of the Almighty, but the rebel angel in his fall brought disorder and death into all material creation. Hence arose that chaos which the breath of creative power only could remove.”

It has been objected by some that it is contrary to the character of the Deity as a Perfect Being to permit evil, and especially the perpetuation as it seems to us of its most malign properties. In like manner objectors to the idea of an individualised form of evil—a devil in fact—have asked why, if God is good and omnipotent, does he not destroy the devil, and at once abolish sin and misery from his creation.

Such questionings are common enough, and we may trace the spirit that prompts them in much of the literature of the present, as well as in that of the past. In the first place, no finite being, like man, can possibly comprehend the ways of an eternal power. Apart from this, however, such a questioning shows, on but a little reflection, that it proceeds from a dread, not of the evil in itself so much as of the fatal consequences that may result thence, and above all, it evinces a profound ignorance of the fundamental truth that even God cannot do that which would be contradictory to his own essence.

The fact is, theologians of this type allow their conception of mercy to completely blot out their sense of justice, and with them the man who sinks under sin, a being after all who has surrendered to an antagonist he *could* overcome, is to be made the subject of a divine miracle, although he will not begin the required change in his own heart and mind.

In truth, this class of objectors found their arguments on only one phase of the divine character, and the rest they repudiate, because any recognition thereof would render their conclusions manifestly futile.

If man have not within himself entire freedom of choice, he is only a mechanism, no more worthy to be called a rational being than the watch he uses to regulate his movements; but if he have full liberty of choice, then he must have full sequential responsibility, and no action on him from without can in any way alter that responsibility.

The whole subject is fraught with intense and awful difficulties; but we need not gratuitously increase those difficulties by importing into the problem new perplexities. In our own judicial procedure we all admit that the judge does not,

and cannot, indeed, by his sentence, make any man a criminal; nor will acquittal really purge a criminal of the crime he has committed. The thing is *in* the man, and cannot be reached without an inward influence.

Surely we reach here to the true key of many of the tender sublimities of the New Testament. It was the knowledge, clear and absolute, of the truth I have struggled faintly to show, that induced the Saviour to declare that He knocked at the human heart, and that if it were opened He would enter and abide within. Mark the force and solemnity of this declaration. Even Christ in His spiritual character, nay, even Christ in His divine nature, cannot *compel* the human creature—the merest atom of the moral and intellectual creation—to admit Him. He cannot *make* the heart soft if it be wilfully hardened against Him, and this by reason of the very principle on which man has been made a reasoning being and a free agent.

Evil, precisely like good, is sequential and progressive. Directly the first man deviated from his inward monition of right, he entered on a path which has ever since been growing more and more complicated and bewildering for all those who have succeeded him. Is it not obvious that the first lie uttered and persisted in, lives this day among us in all the appalling magnitude of that fraud and deceit which we all know honeycombs our social state, even in its fairest and best phases. The first murder—for here again evil was initially a mere unit—is directly responsible for all the oceans of blood that have been since shed.

It cannot be justly said that evil in this gross destructive form diminishes. Millions of men submit to a more or less scientific training, with the express purpose of becoming proficient in the art of destroying their fellows, and it must be

conceded that organized war, as now carried on, is one of the most diabolical outcomes of the civilization of the age.

The bare fact that much of this warfare is conducted without anger or animosity towards each other in the combatants, renders it still more revolting, and converts the armies of the Christian states of Europe into so many disciplined hordes of scientific executioners. This language is by no means too harsh for the occasion, and the man who shrinks with abhorrence from filling the office of public executioner ought logically to feel an equal repugnance to becoming a paid professional soldier.

The elaboration of the modern agencies for destroying mankind are among the most appalling signs of the times, and the many forms of apology for what is the cruel business of organized murder are in themselves ample evidence of the enormity of the crime they would vainly strive to palliate.

Rightly considered, the continued existence and development of the fell arts of destruction bear in themselves terrible witness to man's freedom of action, and to the dreadful manner in which evil, once initiated, intensifies and broadens on from generation to generation.

Stumbling block as is undoubtedly to many the bare conception of moral evil, it is a still greater stumbling block to face the awful question, Can a perfect being, *i. e.*, God himself, permit evil?

Now, Matthew Arnold aptly says somewhere, that there is in this universe an eternal law of righteousness. Just in the same way that if you wish to ascertain whether fire burns, you can convince yourself that there *is* a power—not in man—which is retributive to evil. The law is revealed in the human conscience, and is proclaimed in the *what ought to be done* of every language of every people.

All admit that sin exists, and seeing that God is a being of perfect benevolence, the question has been asked by millions, Why is sin permitted to exist?

Now Kant in his famous discussion, "Religion inside the range of mere Reason," concludes that the moral law, which he rightly regards as the sublimest thing in all creation, cannot be fully explained to the human mind. In like manner Julius Müller, in his famous work "On the Doctrine of Sin," remarks that the student of religious science need not feel ashamed to confess that the origin of evil is enveloped in a mystery. We say, shortly enough, that evil arises in the abuse of free will, and then this leads to the inquiry, Whence the abuse? Müller and Kant both incline to the supposition that the true origin of evil is referable to some state of existence anterior to this present one, and such, when we reflect deeply, are the mysteries of this awful subject, that it is no way surprising to find some of the profoundest thinkers on the subject driven to an origin of evil anterior to the creation of the existing state of things.

It has been said that sin is permitted as a purifying process to make men good at last. But this is manifestly unjust, ought not to be, and therefore may be set aside as an untenable theory. The idea that sin should eventuate in the greatest good of a certain number is equally inequitable, and in like manner, if, as an American divine expresses it, every sin were a fall upward, there would be great reason to doubt the perfect goodness of the Creator.

Summed up, we may go so far as to assert that no perfectly benevolent being would ever subject his creatures to extreme pain to attain something that could be attained *without* that pain.

The strongest argument seems this: In the very

nature of things there cannot conceivably be a good without the possibility of an evil, just as "here" is correlative to "there."

Now it will be readily agreed that a created must be a finite being, and it follows that a finite is necessarily an imperfect being. But it follows again that there must be the possibility of less than perfect action in any being not perfect, and as man is such an agent, we reach a rational view of his liability to sin.

In other words, let us fence as we may with the difficulty—equally vast and appalling—in the issue we must still reach and rest our conclusions on the assumption that even God the Creator cannot prevent sin dealing with finite creatures endowed with freedom of choice.

The fact is, we know our responsibility so soon as we feel ourselves exercising a moral choice. Well, but it has been said, God brought us into existence, and if this be so, is not He in some sense the cause of our sinning? Not so; He gave us in free will the sure means for avoiding sin if we would, and to accuse God in the matter is equally a folly as it were a blasphemy. The ocean, says an acute thinker, floats piratical vessels, and the sea breeze fills their sails; but neither ocean nor breeze can be justly blamed for piracies.





EVOLUTION.

UNQUESTIONABLY the splendid and elaborate triumphs of contemporary civilization are among the causes rendering the quasi-scientific theory of evolution so acceptable to many, and especially to those who take a gross view of human life.

Roughly speaking, the exponents of this theory assume a savage at the beginning of the vista of human history, and, placing the *savant* at the other end, declare that the latter is the outcome of the former!

It having been shown that the ascent of man on this principle is *not* substantiated by history, the period thus included, some six thousand years, has been waived, as it were, and as many millions of years appeared requisite for the inconceivably slow process of evolution, millions of years have been forthwith assumed. In a word, the actual operation of evolution has been shifted back out of the theatre of human action as recorded by history and tradition, and cast into a purely mythical period, whereof we have no real historic records. Is not the reason obvious? No human eyes have ever seen a vestige of the *process in operation* whereby the sponge becomes a fish, the fish a lizard, the lizard a quadruped, the quadruped a biped, and the biped a savage. Quite contrary to all this, history, fully sustained by tradition, tells us of races of men who

have sunk into hopeless degradation, and of profound thinkers, like Socrates and Plato, who have been succeeded by illiterate hordes leading an absolutely sensuous existence.

There is no doubt that we are all greatly prone to the common error of these days of universal intelligence, of massing around the contemporary man of science the full sum of human genius, and then turning upon the remote past, we ask by inference, What are your wisest men compared to him? Printing has had an enormous effect in this direction. The man who reads much and well, becomes in some sort an epitomized type of intellectual mankind. If, however, we confine ourselves to just and individual comparisons, we cannot fail to see that, were evolution true, we ought to discover that intellectually and physically the races of man show some approximation to a graduated progress, and that having reached, after some thousands of years, the eminence of a Solomon or a Plato, our highest intellectual leaders in these days should be proportionately beyond and above these types as they are beyond those of Tubal Cain or Nimrod.

It has been wisely asked, if the Darwinian theory be right, how is it that initial portions of the development series are before us in juxtaposition to the terminals? The monkey, the monad, and man may be examined side by side. If the theory were really correct, I hardly see how we could have the initial departures contemporaneous with the conclusions of the series.

Then again, certain types of animal disappear, a fact established in every natural history collection. Has development ever supplied any of the gaps thus made? Is there a single record of a really genuine incipient type? Then again, turn to man himself.

The evolutionist tries to persuade us that prior to historic time man was a mere brute, subsequently elevated to the dignity of the stone age, and then suddenly bounding into the constructional genius of the builders of Babylon and Tyre.

Surely, were this correct, there *must* be some physical evidence in facial differences between the man of to-day and the man of the remote ancient world. Yet if we closely compare contemporary man with his ancestors of ancient Greece, of Assyria, or of Egypt, can anyone rise and honestly assert that there is the slightest appreciable specific difference?

If there be *no* difference, and you multiply *nothing*, however *enormously*, the product must still be *nil*. Now, if any difference worthy of the name existed, we may be assured that it would long since have been detected and crystallized into the sceptical literature of our philosophic geologists.

Man is progressive, individually and socially, but not in the Darwinian sense. Is there anyone hardy enough to affirm that Mr. Gladstone possesses more *wisdom* than Plato? Yet we all know that Mr. Gladstone has more *knowledge*. Reverse the positions of the two in point of time, and Plato will have more *knowledge* than Mr. Gladstone.

It has been well asked, have a thousand years of progress taught us to love one another better, or are we less liable to revenge than our remote ancestors?

If men were mere mnemonic museums, no doubt they might be said to have achieved a positive advance, but mere knowledge is not reason, still less is it wisdom, and at best it can only be justly said that we have better intellectual tools to work with than our remote progenitors.

No really authentic skull of primitive man has been found that favours the wild notion that man had ascended from a perfectly savage state.

Then again, far too much is made of our material achievements of late years. The telegraph, telephone, and kindred inventions are vaunted as though they had revolutionized human nature; and surrounded, as most of us are, by the paraphernalia of an age of extreme material luxury, many forget that in an *ethical* sense no change of a radical kind whatever has been effected in mankind. To the contemporary, every age is a "nineteenth century." What really rational man imagines, for example, that the upper classes among the ancient inhabitants of buried Babylon did *not* discourse very much as some of us now do, about being in the very van of progress, "the foremost files of time"? In truth, the average attainment of human beings, during this comparatively short life, is substantially and in radical matters much the same in all ages. The *mind* of the ancient Roman soldier was quite as much exercised in dealing with the weapons he wielded as is that of the modern artilleryman over an eighty-ton gun. He who endeavours to deduce from science that man has advanced in a manner that in any way justifies evolution, is simply the slave of a fallacy originally designed as a potent weapon in the armoury of the polemical atheist.

Historic tradition carries us backward many ages. If the evolution theory were true, is it not singular that we have no traces whatever of its ethnological processes, that there are no historic records to even hint that humanity has been perpetually ascending from a lower form of animal life?

The following is one of the many common-sense objections to the Darwinian theory. The evolutionist supposes that each type of animal has been very gradually developed, but still the variations have been decided, and in the long term from ape to man, it is evident that these successive sequential

variations must have been *favourable* to the variations, or the altered type *could not* survive. It must, in short, have decided advantages over its companions, otherwise according to the other Darwinian doctrine, the survival of the fittest, the differentiated type *must* perish in the universal competitive struggle for existence.

Now, how does this apply to the matter before us? Physically each differentiation from ape to man would tell seriously against the latter, and the loss of hair alone in the primitive forests, which were the scene of these scientific miracles, would have been a serious misfortune for the incipient man. Then again the *gradual* substitution of a *thumb* for the corresponding part of the gorilla's paw could be of no possible service in the forest, and would only place the "improved" ape at a fatal disadvantage, and it is quite clear that the softer skinned variety would soon have been exterminated. In truth, the full working out of this scientific dogma involves miracles far greater than those which excite the scorn of the scientist.

The discoveries of geologists and the deductions thence made by the avowedly infidel philosophers of our day have undoubtedly done much to shake the faith of many who are not by nature inclined to question the theory at least of accepted religion. The main points in the deductions drawn from their scientific premises by a certain class of contemporary thinkers are first an antiquity for man which shall render the initial narratives of the Bible mere legends of yesterday, and next to impute at once a diverse and an evolutionary origin to the human race.

With regard to the latter of these propositions, I would refer to *Fossil Men*, a very recondite work of acknowledged merit, published in 1880, by Professor J. W. Dawson, of Montreal, in which these subjects

are treated in an exact and exhaustive manner. Professor Dawson is no second-hand investigator. He has made arduous personal researches into geology, and must be pronounced an authority on anthropology. The result of his careful investigations and examinations of many hundreds of extremely ancient human skulls is that there is nothing whatever to indicate a diverse origin for mankind, while he absolutely states that in one of the oldest skulls of fossil man extant there is nothing whatever to vindicate the expectations of those who would regard prehistoric man as approaching to the apes.

In another section of his work he entirely refutes the notion that an extraordinary antiquity must be assigned to fossil man, and demonstrates that accumulations of stalagmite, which according to some geologists would require half a million of years for their formation, have been produced in two centuries!

By a series of strictly scientific inductions, Professor Dawson finally shows that the appearance of man, with all his powers and properties, was in the postglacial period of geology, and not more than six thousand, or at the most eight thousand, years ago! The writer says, to quote his own words: "This abrupt appearance of man in his full perfection, his association with animals, the greater part of which still survive, and his introduction at the close of that great and as yet very mysterious revolution of the earth which we call the glacial period, accords with the analogy of geological science."

So much for the vaunted antiquity of man, and the so-called development theory of Darwin and Huxley.

In another portion of his work, Professor Dawson asks how is it that the aboriginal inhabitants of

North America evidently held a common belief in the existence of a God and a future state precisely similar to that belonging to the primitive peoples of Asia?

Surely facts like these, for facts they most certainly are, furnish matter for serious reflection. I have purposely avoided any rhetorical embellishment, but have simply put them forward to remind those who have submitted to the bigotry of science that *all* scientific men do not agree in finding the testimony of nature at variance with the letter even of the Inspired Word of God, as the Bible is still regarded by some among us.

In the year 1868 Professor Huxley announced to the world that the gelatinous matter found in the ooze of river and ocean beds represented protoplasm. This substance he called bathybius, and a few years later Strauss used this vaunted discovery as an argument against the miraculous in nature. It was not long, however, before the whole thing was exploded, and bathybius, instead of being the potential basis of all organic life, turned out to be simply a complex mass of slime containing foreign bodies, and the remains of dead organisms.

Thus vanished one of the so-called discoveries of the evolutionists which they hoped would fully establish their theory of a self-produced and a self-producing universe.

The serious objections to Darwinism are undoubtedly formidable. There is the total absence of any certain link between man and the most highly differentiated ape, the well-known sterility of all hybrids, man's moral characteristics, and the existence in many animals of organs useless to the possessors under the laws of natural or sexual selection.

A very potent objection, too, is this. According to a famous definition of Professor Tyndall there is

in man as in the world but one substance, which may for want of a better phrase be described as double matter, spiritual on one side and physical on the other. The evolutionist does not allow anywhere an immaterial agent separate from matter. Now, it is well-known that in about a year all the particles of the human body are changed, and if matter evolves the thinking part, how is it that we retain identity, while physically we change entirely many times in our lives?

To say, as an eloquent writer remarks, that, although the human body in a living state loses all its particles, and although these are replaced by new ones that the old form is yet retained, is surely to introduce a design without a designer? Is it not like making a building construct itself; the bricks and mortar and timber falling into their respective places without the agency of human hands? The truth is, what is known as the collocation of parts in an organism is exactly the something that materialism has always been totally unable to explain.

It is certainly true that oxygen and hydrogen unite when brought together in proper proportions, but they have no power whatever to bring themselves together.

In truth, the *inherent* properties of particles or atoms are not transferable, and if the materialists, *i.e.*, the evolutionists, were really right, we should be perpetually exfoliating, as it were, our soul, and consequently there ought to be a corresponding renewal of our personality. Now, we know all of us very well that we do *not* change our individualities, although we do change our bodies.

The truth is, matter and mind have *separate* qualities, and they are not by any means transferable or reciprocal.

Further, if evolution be true, living matter must

have arisen out of non-living matter, and even the great German, Hackel, in common with Herbert Spencer and other eminent authorities on biology, does not contend that spontaneous generation has ever been established.

It is allowed, too, that all hybrids are sterile, and that natural selection can never proceed *per saltum*, yet a number of links in the sequence from the lower mammalia to man are missing.

But we have yet another objection. It is allowed by all the evolutionists that life is incompatible with a gaseous order of things; now it turns out on careful examination that the period since the earth was in a condition of fusion—a vast vaporized mass—does not supply sufficient time to allow of the formation of plants and animals on Darwin's theory out of a primordial cell.

The evolutionists here overreached themselves. They wanted an extraordinary lapse of time to work out the details of their theory, and forget that science might rise and meet them with a limit that would at once demonstrate the fallacy of their conclusions.

The evolutionists allow that the cubic capacity of the brain of the most "developed" ape is thirty-four inches, and that of the least developed men is sixty-eight inches. Now, the struggle for existence, or, indeed, natural selection, does not account for this difference. Then again, is it not remarkable that the eye of the *trilobites*, one of the most ancient of fossil forms, is entirely developed; yet these *trilobites* appear suddenly, and without any fore-runners. It may be argued that the use of an organ may modify it, but how about its formation? use has nothing to do with that. The organ cannot be used until it is made. Surely this alone is a terrible argument against the specious theory of evolution.

Materialism has been described as the doctrine that the soul or mind of man is secreted by the brain as electricity is by the torpedo fish, and ergo when the brain itself is disintegrated, the soul, or mind, no longer exists.

Let us look closely into this theory, and, before we pronounce thereon, see what science really says on the subject.

The ablest exponents of biology have reached the following results. First, that nothing that lives is alive in every part; secondly, that the nourishment or substance of all vitalized organisms is composed of nutrient matter, or, more properly, food, germinal matter, or bio-plasm, *i.e.*, life-substance—and finally of formed matter—tissue, secretion, and so forth. The microscope has demonstrated that the germinal points found in all organic tissues are the only living parts of the matter, and these points or bio-plasts always arise out of anterior bio-plasts. They can move of themselves in all directions, and each part when divided has the power of the parents' germ. These bio-plasts weave, so to speak, the initial tissues of all organic life. Under the microscope these wondrous germs of all organic life may be seen at work, throwing off formed material, as thread from a spindle, and in them and their marvellous labour we reach the initial bases of all "flesh and blood." Even Häckel, the great German materialist, who calls these bio-plasts plastids, admits them to be mysteries, while he equally admits that we ourselves can originate life. In order, however, to save his materialism, he is forced to advance the theory that somewhere, bewildering ages ago, one of these bio-plasts, with its marvellous power of reproducing itself, originated in a fortuitous concourse of atoms or in spontaneous generation!

Professor Huxley, more cautious than Häckel,

asserts that life is the cause of organization, and not organization the cause of life; but if life exists prior to organization, it may exist after that organization.

Thus much for the origin of organic life.

But we must go back a step yet before advancing to our conclusion.

All students of Greek know that one of the famous questions of Greek philosophy was whether the relation of the soul to the body was that of harmony to a musical instrument, or that of a rower to a boat. Such is the most striking controversy in the *Phaedon* of Plato. If the first of these theories holds good the destruction of the musical instrument is also that of the harmony, but if the second theory be the right one, then obviously the boatman may survive the destruction of his boat. In a word, in one case death ends all, in the other it does not. This brings us at once to the real question at issue, What is LIFE? Herbert Spencer tells us it is "The definite combination of heterogeneous changes, both simultaneous and successive, in correspondence with eternal co-existences and sequences." A better definition has been given by Mr. Joseph Cook, in his famous lectures on biology, to which I must here gratefully acknowledge my deep indebtedness, who tells us that "Life is the invisible, individual, co-ordinating cause directing the forces involved in the production and activity of any organism possessing individuality."

He further remarks there is inertia everywhere in what we call matter. Now, inertia, as is well known, is a property of the matter in the bio-plasts as well as in that of any other material substance, and Professor Faraday, in his authoritative "Correlation and Conservation of Forces," remarks, "one wonderful condition of matter, perhaps its only true indication, is inertia."

Even Mr. Herbert Spencer allows that the proximate chemical units in organic substances "cannot possess the property of forming the endlessly varied structures of animal forms."

Now, it must be remembered that the bio-plasts of which an account has been given above, weave a tree, or a human tissue indifferently, as one bio-plast is like another. Consequently we must have behind the bio-plasts the principle of FORECASTS in some shape.

Established science agrees that the nervous system is composed of the automatic and the influential arcs. Plants possess the former only. The influential arc is specially possessed by man, and it is thereby that he is enabled to perform all volitional acts. The former makes him a mere automaton, moved in and by the matrices of anterior and present physical circumstances, and the latter enables him to act as his will may direct.

It has been demonstrated that if half the brain be removed or paralyzed, a corresponding paralysis results in the limbs and organs of the corresponding side, but notwithstanding this all the mental operations may be fully performed. This shows at once the essential distinction existing between the automatic and the influential nerve arcs, and proves that the action of the *volitional* part of the human creature is not originated by the physical causes operating in the automatic nerve arcs.

Well, then, it has been shown that the action of the bio-plasts in weaving brain tissue does not originate in matter. This action must originate, then, in an external and immaterial source, and this, which is in part revealed through our consciousness, is LIFE, or the soul. Now, the microscope demonstrates that this is an agent external to, and not inherent in, the nervous mechanism it

sets in motion, and consequently we reach the conclusion that the relation of the soul to the body is not that of harmony to a harp, but of the rower to the boat, and this being proved, it has universally been admitted that death does not end all.

At setting out reference was made to Professor Tyndall's materialism, which assumes that matter is “a double-faced unity, having two sets of properties.” If this were so, it would necessarily follow that the special qualities of matter and mind would conjoin in one substance.

The fundamental qualities of matter are familiar to all, but the properties of *mind* are absolutely antipodean, or rather irreconcilable. We may well ask what is the colour of a sublime thought? or what is the shape of a mental sorrow? The fact is, argument and illustration are superfluous here, and we may say shortly that two sets of absolutely irreconcilable attributes must belong to two substances, therefore matter cannot be matter and mind in one and the same.





DEATH AND THE STATE HEREAFTER.

IN the foregoing I have sought to sketch—in outline, at least—the psychological history, so to speak, of mankind, and to indicate, however slightly, the manner in which the true individuality is lodged within its tenement of clay.

A priori there is no reason whatever for believing that death implies in any degree the destruction of our true living power. What we term death, is the dissolution, indeed, of the physical body—of the envelope of our real self; but that death is more than this we have not the slightest evidence. Our bodies are divisible, and death disintegrates them at last; but consciousness is manifestly indivisible, and cannot, therefore, be disintegrated. The common experience of sleep, trance, and swoons demonstrates fully that the consciousness remains intact while ceasing to act through the body, and we must always remember that no part of the body which is disintegrated by death is *per se* percipient.

This is a consideration, the significance of which has been popularly overlooked, but a little reflection will convince anyone of its importance and truth.

An objection has been started that on such an assumption animals may be immortal. We do

not know that they are not. We know each individually what is our own central consciousness, and can in a great measure communicate this knowledge. The animals, so far as we are aware, do not appear to possess more than that mere sensuous consciousness which may be briefly stated as being the sum of the impressions of mere tactical senses massed in the cerebral ganglia. In animals we see a progressive process, reaching a distinct end, and with the attainment of that end the animal dies; but in man we never find an ultimate realization of power. From birth to death he is ever advancing—advancing, it may be, in a vicious sense—but the growth of that invisible character, which we know by its outward manifestations, is perpetual, and we have an overpowering argument from all analogy for believing that what is so evidently progressive here is designed for further activity hereafter.

Apart altogether, however, from speculation, the great fact remains, that the death of which we have experience cannot be shown to have the least power over consciousness; or to put it more pertinently, the true percipient being. All that death does is to deprive us of the material agencies requisite for communicating with those still living in the flesh. In all probability, among those who have, as we popularly call it, *died*, inter-communication is of marvellously increased facility. In this life the consciousness communicates ideas by means of speech, consisting of certain types of language. In that life we may fairly assume that communion is instantaneous, and needs no translation into forms of speech, and in like manner must it be with other great changes induced by the dissolution of the earthly body in which we are now clothed.

And how strongly, and with what glad encour-

agement, does this apply to the question of mutual recognition in the other world !

Let us consider briefly the manner in which our true inner conscious self is really built up.

First, there is memory, composed of a more or less accurate record of the doings of others as well as of our own acts ; and this, too, is a history of all we have read, thought, or derived from reflection.

When, as occasionally happens to most of us, a man is suddenly shut in upon himself, his whole inward being becomes, as it were, luminous with his own character, and he receives an intimation—faint, indeed, to the coming reality—of what he must find himself at last, when he stands—as we all shall—isolated and cut off from contact with that world in which he has been mentally and morally formed.

How common is it to seek every conceivable means for finding some distraction from the retrospective action of our own minds, how eagerly do we strive to go out of ourselves, and how intense is sometimes the vain and awful longing for self-forgetfulness ?

Yet a time must come when to even partially do this will be impossible—a time when the true man, or woman, must both see themselves as they are, and find no possible refuge from the vision, however awful that vision may then be. It is in this way that we shall at last be taught how every sin carries its own punishment with it.

The well-worn maxim, *So many men, so many opinions*, may be paraphrased into the profounder truth—*So many men, so many worlds*.

Place an unlettered labourer and a Tennyson on the same spot of ground, and bid each look upon the still life of nature. How vast will be the difference between the reflective action of the scene on the one from what it is on the other !

The cause lies in the mental constitution of the two men being so diverse; but education alone, powerful as that agent is, cannot fully account for the phenomenon. A Burns or a Clare would receive much the same impressions from nature that the cultured Tennyson does, and thence the explanation must lie originally in the very opposite means men voluntarily adopt for the discipline of their individual consciousness.

If we take the gamut of human character, as sketched by history, we find that the series begins with a close approximation to mere animalism, and ends with an approximation to pure spiritualism. The man who "whistled as he went for want of thought," is the true antithesis to him who exclaimed, "My mind to me a kingdom is," and taking both as types, we may assume that the spirituality of the one could be scarcely born, while that of the other was already in the vigorous growth.

We have thus a powerful illustration of what Saint Paul implies in his famous declaration as to the necessity for a *new birth* taking place in the individual.

This life is the period during which our potential spirituality has to develop within its ever changing envelope of perishable substance. How many men run what seem splendid courses, as the world would put it, and yet engraft on their real personality little indeed that is not of the earth—earthy.

Such men go down to the grave, and may well view the prospect before them with appalled conscience.

When once the material envelope of this visible life is cast off, and the man perceives what has been his true character throughout, he then will also perceive the equity of the divine order that

has made the earth-life a series of educational phases.

If we may—in all reverence—compare the finite in any sense with the infinite, let us take a simple illustration of what may be implied by unfitness for a heavenly life.

A man, let us suppose, aspires to take a university degree. He enters on the customary course, and fails to pass the necessary examination. Assume that he tries again and still fails. Can that man justly blame the examiners for *their* share in his rejection, or shall he presume to sit in the academical senate when he has failed to acquire the prescribed qualification?

In like manner, if a man wilfully neglects every opportunity that this life so richly affords all for acquiring the proper qualification for entering on a future state of bliss, it will not be God, but the man himself, who really is the author of his woe.

There can be no doubt whatever that it was to inculcate this terrible lesson that the Saviour delivered the well-known parable of the man who *would* not provide himself with a wedding garment.





THE STATE HEREAFTER.

THE experience we have, on the one hand, of the germination of seeds, and on the other, the revelations of the microscope, certainly suggests that in the human embryo resides the full potency of the future being. As the embryo grows the innate principles which in their totality constitute the human creature, assimilate to themselves the necessary particles of matter to afford them the physical means for physical manifestation, and when manifestation is once attained, the reflex action of the material upon the inlying principle results in those modifications of the principle which gradually develop its individuality, and in the sum of their influences eventually produce the completed character. Here we seem to reach an explanation of idiotcy, of insanity, of abortion, and of those monstrous outcomes of human birth which are so shocking to humanity.

It is evident that as the embryo gradually develops, it does so by means of a certain harmony between it and the matter of which it takes temporary possession. Clearly, then, if from any cause the special matter is wanting for the right expression of any of the embryonic propensities or powers, one of two things must necessarily happen. Either these propensities or powers will remain

unexpressed altogether, or they will find a perverted form of manifestation, and result either in physical malformation, or in some kind of cerebral disease.

Why and how is this?

The explanation is sad and simple.

The initial processes of embryonic assimilation are necessarily directly due to parental origin. Now we all know that the systematic violation by men of the laws of nature results in the hereditary transmission of more or less vitiated materials for the formation of future human bodies. It is owing to this principle that we sometimes witness in the descendants of certain individuals the material expression of ancient crime and vice. An embryo often is in initial contact with the inevitable material dregs, so to speak, of terrible human depravity, and it is no way surprising if in its future development it reveals the visible results of a vicarious contamination.

This fact involves some tremendous considerations. How far the children are accountable for hereditary depravity can never be fully known here, but we may fairly assume, in the future judgment of humanity, each individual is strictly regarded as an individual.

The cripple will not be expected to run like the sound in limb, nor the blind to see like him endowed with an eagle's vision. Allegory aside, we may safely conclude that the impossible is never demanded from man by an all-knowing Creator.

Analogy furnishes a very cogent argument for the assumption that in the human embryo resides the full potentiality of the future human being.

Every person readily admits that he perceives himself, mentally—not particularly located, but generally diffused throughout his physical body. Each portion of that body is with equal accuracy

described as ME or I, and no one has any notion of being localized or specialized in some corner of his animal economy. If it happens, moreover, that paralysis or mutilation of any kind deprive a man of part of his physical economy, he does not find that his character, his conscious individuality are impaired in a corresponding degree. The true man—the developing principle that lodged complete in the original embryo having expanded to its full proportions—fills with equal intensity every portion of that body forming its tenement, and is no more affected by mutilations of that body than is the body itself by the wearing out of its ordinary habiliments. The real man, then, is the thinking entity, the character, the individuality, the personage or identity, of which we are all fully conscious. Now, this does not lodge in any particular part of the body. Anatomy cannot point to some place, after dissection, and say, Here or there may be the spot where the soul or reason finds a home. Physiology throws not the least light on the universally interesting problem of how to find the material seat of man's invisible self. Logically, then, what are the proper inferences to be deduced from these facts?

First, that which IS, and yet does not occupy a special space, must be according to our senses incorporeal. Our own entities form the animating principle of our bodies, and live equally in every part. It follows that there is as much of this entity in one part of the body as in another. It is manifest that our entities, *i. e.*, our true selves, reason; but reason occupies no position in space, hence our entity is incorporeal. Our entity sees bodily things, but it sees them only through the agency of bodily means; but we see abstract things, such as truth, with a purely immaterial view. Now, if our entity were a material something shut up in a

material body, it would see that body inwardly, which we know is not the case.

It may then be assumed that the developed embryo, lodged in a material frame, which is to it precisely what clothes are to the body, has nevertheless a determinate form of its own, and even a substance too.

The indirect testimony of all history and tradition points to this conclusion. All supernatural manifestations have a more or less determinate form assigned to them. Apart from this, however, individual entity, divested of all form, is evidently unthinkable. An old monkish writer—whose works exist only in a very rare manuscript—speaks of the spirit essence of man inhabiting or informing the fleshly tabernacle of the body, and gazing through the loopholes of the eyes as from a watch-tower. We know that all the traditional stories of after-death appearances assign an earthly shape to the visitations, and if the real substance of the inner or immortal essence be some combination of material atoms, it is reasonable to conclude that it corresponds very nearly to the grosser manifestation visible here. Such considerations naturally lead to the following conclusions.

So far as we know—scientifically speaking—the resolution of the material world around us is into a molecular state. Science says that molecules are aggregates of *atoms*; but atoms are what no man has seen. They are only imagined. How the atom passes into the molecular state is a mystery. It is a problem the boldest philosopher has not even attempted to solve.

Solidity is but a relative term. We can but estimate the external world as it appears, not as it *is* to ourselves. It may be taken as an axiom that no two particles of matter are in actual contact. There are spaces between all those combinations of

matter which make up this visible diurnal sphere. Even such a substance as granite, or ivory, is no exception. Had we instruments of sufficient power we should discover that every one of the component particles is at a certain distance from its fellow; and that each, too, is in motion, in anticipation of the final disruption of correlation, which inevitably awaits all material bodies preparatory to their re-union in new forms. Thus is it that the whole physical universe mutually interpenetrates part in part and myriads of organizations may move and have their being in the interstices of a diamond!

As solidity exists, then, merely in appearance, it follows that the spirit-form, if composed of some atomic combination, could find its lodgment in the interspaces of the material body. Such a "body," divested of the flesh and blood constituting its tangible tabernacle, would be superior to the ordinary laws governing the course of material things, and might traverse, what seems to us as solid substance, exactly as sunshine traverses glass, and the sudden presence of the risen Saviour among the conclave of his disciples, shut in by thick walls and locked doors, would be immediately explicable on rational grounds.

That we have here so slender an amount of testimony to support such a view does not militate with any force against the argument. The physical world in which we now live is one of illusion far more than of absolute reality. Had we additional senses, who that has reflected, will venture to doubt that we should see much in this visible universe that would then be to us equally new and wonderful? Surely the fact that there are people born totally blind may by inference suggest as much, and who would be rash enough to say that the so-called prismatic hues are the *only* colours in the

universe, or that our musical gamuts include the whole of the sounds that are in creation?

But, again, with regard to this inner essential atomic entity, which we here assume as being the true man or woman, it may well be that just as many to our tactical and visual knowledge never reach the physical perfection that even flesh and blood is capable of attaining, so may it be with the informing spirit. Much more likely, indeed, is it to be so; and precisely as we find diseased minds in healthy bodies, so may it be that the innermost spirit may fall far short of its *potential* development, although the body it inhabits becomes mature and apparently is endowed with all the usual attributes of humanity.

No subject for speculative inquiry can well be more obscure than this; yet if these suggestions include but a germ of the truth, how abundantly do they clear up all the so-called difficulties of the Biblical account of the creation of man?

God made man in His image, that is, He formed of atoms an inner typical man, resembling Himself in having spiritual capabilities; and having clothed this atomic entity with the grosser dust of the visible earth, God breathed into His work the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

It is inferrible thence that the *form* selected for the manifestation of the new-made man would be one most suited to his sphere of physical action, and it is equally inferrible that on removal thence the real entity may assume *whatever form* is in harmony with the *fresh conditions* of its new *habitat*.

Such an order of things would be exactly adapted to a being endowed with liberty of choice and bearing within the awful heritage of responsibility for the uses made of every manifestation, real or meditated, in this world of ours.

The entity which generally resisted temptations to evil, and preferred the pure to the impure enjoyments of life, would, on the dissipation of the gross body—the dust of the earth—appear in a permanent form, calculated to insure its happiness in that state of existence for which it had been preparing. On the contrary, the entity that yielded to vice and lust, and generally indulged in evil, would, on the dissolution of the body, be only fitted for a continuation of its evil courses; and while its form corresponded to the desires which had ruled its action in life, the conditions for fulfilling those desires would be wholly wanting.

Let sceptics allege what they may, some intimation of this as constituting the state of man after death is inherent in all of us. The very nature of all vicious pleasure, of all evil courses, equally with the character of pure contemplative enjoyments—of intellectual and spiritual union with those we love or esteem, indicates plainly that, though the one state may be permanent, the other cannot be so.

We have, then, the dreadful prospect of a vitiated individuality, living again with all the evil propensities in full force, and no means for their exercise. If there be a place of torment, surely it is a state like this!

Clearly the real destiny of each immortal soul is determined here by its own acts. Every man can judge between right and wrong, and we may be sure that a God who has made man a responsible being will only exact from each what is just, according to the capabilities of each. The Bible plainly says that there are many gradations, even in a state of bliss, and the tone of all the parables of the Saviour was to show that each man is judged according to the light and strength that are within him, according to the circumstances in which he is placed.



ON MUTUAL RECOGNITION HEREAFTER.

ASSUMING, then, that we survive the dissolution of this earthy frame, and find that death is but an exit on one side to be an entrance on the other, it is very clear that as conscious beings we shall then be wholly dependent on our own inward resources. Our characters will be fully revealed, even to ourselves, as they never could be during the union of body and spirit, and we shall then realize that the whole process of the existence just quitted has been but the formation of a character which becomes visible, just as the material envelope becomes invisible.

Let every reader reflect, If we live again, can it be otherwise? All analogy points to this as the true consummation of human action, and each one of us carries in that conscience—which even Atheism cannot quell—an eloquent and faithful witness that all a man can carry out of this world is his character, with its memory of the past, and its consciousness of its own inherent self.

Every state and phase of our temporal being must terminate in death ; but here we have plainly indicated what the spiritual residuum really must be, and it is in this sense that the poet insists that the mind is its own heaven or hell.

The recognition of friends hereafter does not, on a little reflection, present any difficulty. It is clearly not for what is seen and felt in a tangible sense that we give our love and esteem. Those we care for are equally dear to us, whatever be the material guise they bear; and to meet them as they are inwardly is exactly that consummation for which we most long. If we subtract what is merely *perishable* from our beloved ones—not simply the material paraphernalia of life, but their own forms—we still have all that we really know and value; and it is obvious, reversing the process, that the visible and tangible subtracted thus is of itself nothing. It is at best a mere cenotaph, and can only move us as a bundle of old letters, a faded glove, or a gravestone often does; and then the feeling is evoked only on account of what is *indicated*, not what *is*.

Our personal experience of this life, if rightly regarded, affords an unerring criterion to what we have to expect. The familiar fact that some are happy in the midst of material misery, and some unhappy in the midst of material prosperity and luxury, shows in unmistakable terms that all depends on our own *inward* and now invisible selves, on our *state* of consciousness, on the character of the recollections and present impressions that really make the sum and true substance of our spiritual condition.

Here, however, we are naturally faced by a tremendous fact. What we really are, we have made ourselves. In every rational creature there must be a prompt and strictly pictorial judgment, and prefigured in life through the medium of what is known as conscience, it must be inevitably realized directly the sum of our probation in time is terminated by that death which awaits all. The man who has indulged in a foul sensuality, or a

canker-like irreverence for all that is true and pure, must needs find himself in a naked deformity cut off entirely from every one of the fleeting gratifications which formed his former indulgence, and deprived, too, of the means for amendment which he has persistently rejected during his earthly career. Here, then, is a personal judgment, which may well appal the imagination and dismay the boldest.

On the other hand, the man who has with equal persistency cultivated the good and true—or, at least, sought to do so—will find himself naked indeed, but not ashamed, while the whole scope of his consciousness will be towards that contemplative inner satisfaction which has ever been the ideal aim of all philosophy worthy of the name. He will then reap in light what he has sown in darkness, and will realize—even on the awful abysses of a new and unknown existence—how good it is to spend this earth-life in ways that fill the mind—

“ With thoughts august,
The beautiful, the pure, the holy, and the just !”





THE POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY.

ALTHOUGH from one view-point any reference to Positivism is evidently out of place in a treatise professedly dealing with the unseen world, it is essential to the completeness of the design I have sought to follow to devote some space to a form of belief, or rather of unbelief, which is making such progress in all directions among the cultivated classes. I purposely excluded Comte and his views from the previous sections devoted to cosmic speculations, because Positivism entirely ignores the world to come, and even Buddhism, as I have shown, inculcates faith in the *continuous* spiritual life of individual man.

I assume that all my readers are familiar with the salient features of a system which has been most improperly called a religion, but it may be well to premise the leading features of the creed in question.

According to Comte, the race, like the individual, necessarily passes through three intellectual stages. The first is the theological, in which a supernatural origin is sought for all phenomena, the second is the metaphysical, wherein efforts are made to demonstrate the existence of abstract forces capable of creating phenomena otherwise inexplicable, and finally we reach the positive stage in which the mind is supposed to recognise the

utter futility of both theological and metaphysical research, and to strictly confine itself to realities and facts always appertaining solely to the present life and its various offices. Again, according to Comte, Europe had already reached this positive stage before he died, and both theology and metaphysics were in utter decay, and exercising only pernicious influences on the human race, Comte thereupon became the founder of an entirely new philosophy, and, calling himself the founder of the religion of humanity, devoted the whole of his life to the propagation of the views thus sketched in outline.

The basis of the whole system is a conviction that there is nothing so good for man as this world, and that to enjoy this world he has only one life. All that he does or is, with views exterior to this present existence, is so much lost; it is simply energy entirely wasted. The creed has been vaunted as new, but it is in truth as old as mankind, and long ages ago was crystallized in Chinese philosophy under the name of Confucianism. A careful examination of the teachings of Confucius will convince any unprejudiced person that Positivism is but another conspicuous example of the well-worn saying that there is nothing new under the sun.

Confucius preached a simple but estimable morality, considered solely in its social aspect, but, exactly like Comte, he shrank equally from theology and metaphysics.

That an infinite and eternal Being could or would create a creature out of nothing, to the end that the creature should know and feel the glories of the Creator, was a conception that hardly seems to have entered the mind of Confucius.

He chained to the earth the thoughts that naturally would busy themselves with eternity, and

repressed the strong natural spiritual tendency of mankind by putting a stern veto on speculative thought. In a word, Confucius, like Comte, endeavoured to direct the attention and energies of his countrymen exclusively to the affairs and duties of social and political life.

"I teach you nothing," he is recorded to have said, "but what you might learn for yourselves, namely, the observance of the three fundamental laws of relation between monarch and subject, father and child, husband and wife; and the five capital virtues, universal charity, impartial justice, conformity to ceremonies and established usage, rectitude of heart and mind, and a pure sincerity."

This was in effect the entire doctrine of Confucius. It may be justly called an unphilosophical materialism, just as that of M. Comte belongs to the philosophical type. What real difference is there between the two?

Confucius appears to have believed that the great virtues of charity, justice, and sincerity could be fully developed without the help of any kind of religious belief.

In effect the great Chinese Positivist may well be described as saying, "In the same way that I feel compelled to accept certain material phenomena as facts, so must I admit certain peculiarities of the human mind to be *facts* too." Even Confucius was staggered to find that good and evil divided the domain of the human heart, and in his singular dogmatic way he defines the faculty whereby we all of us, sooner or later, make the discovery as "the lights of intelligence"

There, however, Confucius stopped. He never in his public teachings reasoned, like Socrates and Plato, from good to God, but confined his views exclusively to such things as lie within the tactical scope of the actual senses. Yet even Confucius, in

the honesty of his purpose, which was to induce men to be moral, was constrained to go further in spite of his theory. He counsels men to participate in whatever religious services have been established. "There may be something in them, and they may affect your welfare in a way you do not know of. As for the genii and spirits, sacrifice to them, whether they exist or not ; their worship is part of an august and awful ceremonial, which a wise man will not neglect or despise."

Such are the warning words of the shrewd old sage, and coming, as they do, from a self-taught heathen, what profundity of truth lies beneath their surface !

To call Positivism new—to pronounce Comte as an original propounder of a fresh departure point in human faiths—is to betray entire ignorance of the plain teachings of history, and to aid in propagating a monstrous fallacy.

The so-called religion of humanity is nothing but Confucianism adapted to modern and western civilization, and lightly venerated with the pantheistic creed of heroic Rome.

Positivism is not the making the best of both worlds, or rather the miserable endeavour so to do, it is the bold attempt to apply to the whole problem of contemporary life the epicurean doctrine of the ancients, and to carry out to the very letter the *carpe diem* philosophy of the poet Horace, as foreshadowed in his lightest and most worldly moods. In a word, Positivism is simply Atheism in its boldest form, and can only be justified—let its exponents plead as they will—on the assumption that it is logically demonstrable, first, that there is no personal governor of the universe ; and secondly, that matter made itself, and although itself unintelligent, has, nevertheless, somehow, contrived to produce rational beings !

As to the high humanitarian aspirations for which the positivists claim so much, the fact is they could never by any rationally conceivable process have known or felt anything of the kind but for the inherent consciousness of man that he is more than a mere automaton—a piece of fine mechanism simply requiring the lubrication of prosperity, until death puts out the fire and delivers him up to eternal disintegration. Reasoned out, as it always should be, from its true logical basis to its true logical issue, Positivism is a dogma that simply revolts human nature, and it is only when its specious exponents cast about it the glamour of morality, entirely plagiarised from Christianity, that the human mind can regard it with complacency. I challenge any Comtist to tell me whence he has borrowed his splendid sentiments, clothing human genius with the immortality of his fleeting Pantheon, unless it be from our instinctive yearning to the unseen world, unless it be from the ineradicable knowledge implanted in every reasoning being that self-consciousness and responsibility are correlative terms.

Nothing, if we reflect deeply enough, more absolutely demonstrates the fact that man is conscious of sinfulness, or, in other words, of evil, than the strenuous endeavours made by the opponents of accepted religion to remove the standard of morality from something *outside* to something *within* man. To effect this is the great aim of scepticism of every form, and to accomplish the feat would naturally be the absolute triumph of evil over good. I know that the positivist exponents of the so-called religion of humanity will eloquently expatiate on the lofty aspirings of the human mind, and on the absolute purity of the code of morals their system evolves, but evil will *never recognise itself to be such*, and evidently were Positivism the

only accepted and known system of morals in the universe, we should have as a result a finely graduated series of moral standards varying as the individuals from a high morality to a base turpitude.

Such a result is inevitable. Man can no more stand alone than the world would subsist without a creator. Were it not, indeed, for the broken glimpses of heavenly lights that have been caught by tradition, as well as by revelation from the other world, the positivist of to-day would *not* indeed *know* anything of that spiritual beauty on which he expatiates, as on a creation of his own. And yet having really borrowed light and heat from the Divine sun, the first use he makes of the precious gift is to deny the existence of that sun, and to accord himself full credit as the source of that light and heat which he perverts to ungrateful uses!

In truth, to be, in the strict sense of the phrase, a law to oneself implies something of divinity itself, and is manifestly beyond the proper functions of fallible and finite creatures.





MIRACLES.

ANY attempt to reach something like concrete ideas of the "other world," would be obviously incomplete without due reference to the subject of miracles—a subject which with many minds forms probably one of the greatest obstacles of all to a full recognition of a really providential government of the universe.

Radically, a miracle simply signifies something to be wondered at. This idea is the popular one, and in the Patristic ages we find miracles known as *teras*, a wonder or portent; *dunamis*, a power; and *semeia*, a sign. Under these various designations was understood some act of a supernatural character—something, in a word, beyond the ordinary capacity of human nature.

Ancient views of miracles often describe them as being either a violation or a suspension of the usual course of nature, and accordingly sceptics stoutly maintained that this must be impossible. The great principle of sequential order, or fixed law, observed by man in connection with everything physical, appeared to some as precluding the possibility of interference, and as all human experience is evidence for the undeviating courses of nature, the sceptics before and after Hume have always objected to miracles that they are incredible *because* contrary to human experience.

We have first, however, more immediately to inquire into what really constitutes a miracle.

First, there are numerous scientific operations which, to the unscientific, appear veritable miracles. If it were possible to dispute their reality, I am convinced many persons would at once do so if they discovered that some moral or religious principle depended for its validity on some marvel of the laboratory. These scientific miracles, however, when we come to analyze them, are found to be worked by employing certain agencies known to the chemist, who can exactly predicate the result of certain operations. The chemist knows sufficiently, for the purpose in view, the nature of certain bodies—and by disposing them in particular proportions, he obtains predicated effects. Now, it is obvious that the seed of one plant put in the ground produces a different fruition from that of another. The result is all we know, and a nomenclature founded thereon is the sum of our knowledge. Now, I contend that there must be a power knowing *in detail* the process by which one seed results in a red and another in a blue blossom. In like manner we do not know the real way in which the food we eat provides our nourishment, but is evident enough that the way is knowable, and that which is knowable must be known, or we must admit it to be *self-known*, which in the case before us is evidently absurd.

Now, granting so much, it surely follows that the Being who *knows* the processes whereby these wondrous changes are wrought and who has also initiated them all, can, by a small exercise of the power of this knowledge, change or otherwise modify their sequential course so as to produce a *fresh result*. Man, in a very humble way, does work a sort of miracle frequently in his interference with the course of nature, and were his knowledge

very greatly advanced, this power of controlling even nature would be proportionately increased. This idea of law or order, which is everywhere revealed by our investigations of life, rendering miracles impossible, can only be rationally accounted for on the basis that the law or order in question is itself God, and that God thus constituted is immutable, and strictly limited to a prescribed course. Now, this immediately lands us in a dilemma. If it be thus, we evidently reach a purely atheistic conception of the other world, and we make law or order *its own author*. Law, however, is evidently the outcome of *will*, and while acting on and through material phenomena, it cannot be bound by them, for if it were so, then it would not be law, but in that particular case the physical phenomenon controlling it would be the law, and this would imply volition in the physical phenomenon, and evidently lead to a manifestly absurd conclusion.

The truth is, to talk of law as rendering miracles impossible is, in other words, to convert law into Deity, and then to restrain that Deity by necessity, thus raising necessity to the position of a supreme ruler of the universe, and in the issue establishing the dogma of a fatalistic materialism for the universe—a materialism which, by the way, on examination, will be found to need an author—and thus the difficulty is postponed on the *ad infinitum* principle.

The conception of the *miracle* really depends on the same basis as that of freedom of will, which, as we find it in the creature man, is undoubtedly the true explanation of the assertion that God made man in His own image, and obviously the divine will which prescribes can alter or suspend any particular law or order of Nature. Again, everything we are acquainted with or compacted of in respect

to what we call matter, is necessarily composed of certain initial elements, united under certain conditions imposed upon them by an external power. Now these initial elements, being created, had a Creator, and obviously that Creator knows their nature in a way we can never attain to in this life, and although He has so ordered matters, that, in general, they shall act only in a particular manner, He, by simple virtue of His perfect knowledge, can always dispose them otherwise, and thus at will bring out other results, which, being out of the range of ordinary experience, are known by us as miracles.

To dogmatize, as some do, that the Creator must be bound by His own laws, is simply to deify those laws, and to introduce a pantheon of antagonistic forces. In truth, law and law-maker are strictly correlative, and can never be justly confounded. The true difficulty, doubtless, in reaching a right understanding on this subject arises from the fact that the finite is seeking to measure the infinite, and that man, finding miracles beyond *his* reach, would argue thence that they are also beyond that of the Deity!

Again, if we take any ordinary natural process, we find it undeviating, and discover that the same sequence of changes eventuate in the same results. Must we conclude, thence, that from the initials, only *one* set of finals *can* come? In any part of the sequence the Creator may interpose and induce any specific preordained result that He pleases, and to contend that He cannot, as many do in these days, is simply to deify necessity, and to make the universe automatic.

It has been well and wisely said that law is necessarily the outcome or action of a will perfect in justice and knowledge. Now, while all law or order must be manifested through various natural phenomena, it is quite illogical to represent that

law or order has been *constrained* by the media through which it operates.

To declare, as some do, that all miracles are impossible, is simply to dogmatize without *data*, for we do not know anything of the *mode* of any recorded miracle.

I think it may now be assumed that we have advanced in these pages sufficient reason to justify the assertion that creation has a Creator, and we have certainly seen that if that Creator had not freedom of will, then He becomes simply automatic and subordinate to some other being, so that by a necessary process of exact reasoning, we must, at last reach that freedom of will which is essential to the conception of Deity.

Now, nature is clearly the medium through which Deity is manifested, and a miracle is to be justly regarded as the revelation of a will which, while leaving nature as a whole to its accustomed course, must occasionally demonstrate the fact that it is *not* nature itself, and that even nature, or the physical world, is really subordinated to the spiritual needs of man.

Passing from speculation to fact, we find that the evidence for the Christian miracles is of such a character that if it related simply to anything *but* miracles, no one in his senses would have ever dreamed of disputing their authenticity.

No year passes away among us, humane and carefully civilized as we profess to be, but men and women are hanged on evidence which, however strong in itself, is slight compared to the testimony extant on behalf of any one of the miracles recorded in the Gospels! Such evidence applied to the coming business of our daily lives would be regarded by the most cautious men as simply *absolute*, and it is only because they relate to Christianity that we have presumed to doubt their truth.

The Christian miracles rest on the recorded testimony of eye-witnesses who had no motive to deceive others, and were not any way different from ourselves in respect to capacity for judging aright what they saw.

The historic evidence is indeed so strong, and the contrast between the Christian miracles and those alleged to be worked by such men as Mahomet so striking, that the bitterest opponents of Christianity have been compelled to seek refuge in the miserable explanation that the witnesses of these early wonders were the victims of their own exalted enthusiasm! M. Renan, for example, concedes almost everything recorded in the Gospels, but he explains away the supernatural by assuming that Christ was a poetic dreamer, who impressed the outcome of His sublime imaginings on His enthusiastic followers!

The arguments, in truth, advanced against miracles are precisely like those advanced against the conception of Deity. As only an *all*-knowing being could authoritatively proclaim that there is no God, so it would need, in like manner, an all-knowing being to pronounce that miracles are impossible. The two cases are logically parallel.

But we will pause here, and simply ask, Has any miracle been established in a manner irrefutable, even by the most perverse and dogmatic sceptic?

There *is* decidedly one that no rational being can consistently dispute.

I remember reading somewhere that a certain somewhat irreverent mediæval monarch, of the nominal Christian type, inquired of his chaplain if he could epitomise the evidences of Christianity, as he, the king, had no time to devote to theology.

The chaplain is recorded to have accomplished this extraordinary task in one sentence of two words only. He replied, "*The Jews, Sir.*"

Now, the miracle that has been unquestionably verified, and which is verified among us in these contemporary days, is the *miracle of the prophecies* relating to the Jews.

No sceptic will venture to dispute the authenticity of the prophecies respecting the Hebrew nation, and it is equally impossible to deny, with any show of reason, that those prophecies have been fulfilled to the very letter.

Such prophecy as this is miraculous, and is evidently, therefore, superhuman, and the superhuman is equivalent to the supernatural; therefore we deduce from the verification of ancient Hebrew prophecy a perfectly valid collateral testimony to the other miracles recorded in the Scriptures.

It is superfluous to impose on the reader the dead weight of the historic evidence on this head. The men who predicted the events that would happen to the Hebrew people could not have merely guessed them. The nature of the prophecies entirely precludes the possibility of such assumption. At the time of the predictions the dispersal of the Hebrews must have seemed simply absurd, to take but a single instance; and then again, let us remember that there was no human *experience* of the events predicted. Nations have been extirpated, but, except in the case of the Jews, none have been known to retain their special nationality while entirely rooted out of their native land. Prophecy, however, does not stand or fall on one incident. It has been demonstrated by the testimony of recorded history to be true in every particular, and taken fairly on all sides this must be pronounced as nothing less than miraculous.



SHALL WE LIVE AGAIN ?

NO question conceivable by the human reason is so momentous as the simple one, "Am I to live again?" In comparison, all earthly considerations are as nothing ; and yet, although each one of us finds his whole life merely a concrete form of this question, how few there are who seriously consider the answer until they find that death is at their very door. In the business of active life men exercise the qualities of prudence and foresight in view merely of *probabilities*. More than half the transactions of civil life are based on what is merely probable, not on certainties ; and any man who neglected due business precautions, *because* the exigencies to be guarded against were not *absolute* certainties, would be universally held a fool or a madman.

The whole theory and practice of evidence, or, in other words, all jurisprudence, turns on the nice balance of probabilities. Wherever these on the one side are numerous and strong, and on the other few and feeble, men never hesitate in their decision a moment ; directly, however, their own individual well-being—their eternal good—is at stake, reason seems in some cases entirely subverted, and the Agnostic or the Positivist shuns Christianity as an evil thing, preferring to stake his all on *one* possibility of its being a mere legend, against the innumerable probabilities—many of

which are of extraordinary cogency—that it is a divine truth.

"If I am wrong," says the believer, "I am then no worse off than the unbeliever in the future and in the present, and have a source of intense happiness to which he is an utter stranger. If, however, I am right, what is to become of the unbeliever?"

I have spoken before of the *innumerable* probabilities in favour of man's immortality, and some readers may inquire whether such a phrase does not savour of exaggeration.

It may now be fairly assumed, from the sections devoted to cosmic speculations, ancient and modern, that the doctrine of the immortality of man has the sanction of the universal belief of mankind from the remotest ages known to history. If it be alleged that the belief of the ancient Scythians in a future state was the product of superstition, what shall we say to the highly elaborated creeds of Plato, Socrates, and other philosophers of antiquity whose intellect was admittedly equal to that of any of our nineteenth century sages? The consensus of antiquity on this head is complete, and fully enforces the familiar Ciceronian maxim that "In everything the consent of all nations is to be accounted the law of nature, while to resist the law of nature is to resist the voice of God."

Then, again, the strong desire for continued existence is an evident instinct of the human heart. It is this strong instinct that has resulted in all the arts of life, and in all the ennobling achievements of literature, to say nothing of that heroism which constitutes the main substance of history.

Volumes might be filled with mere enumerations of the multiform ways in which men seek a posthumous reputation—a matter that from the atheistic view-point can be of no concern whatever to the individual; no, nor even from the positivist's

either, since if man perishes utterly at his death, why should he trouble himself during a life—in any case fearfully, awfully brief—about that which to him is nothingness?

In addition to this common instinctive faith in some hereafter, it must also be remembered that man is manifestly endowed with powers *far beyond the necessary requirements of this earthly existence*. He has—although he may not always even partially exercise them—capacities and powers which obviously need infinitude of extension and infinitude of duration for their full expansion and proper application. The achievements of science and the elaboration of pure mental philosophy demonstrate in an unmistakable manner that man is naturally designed for infinitude. The embryo in the womb is endowed with many properties which are of no use whatever until after birth, and similarly man has capacities within him which as clearly require an eternal scene for their proper display.

If we consider memory alone, and reflect on such marvels as that of Cyrus, who knew all the soldiers of his vast army individually; of a Dr. Wallis, who could extract the cube root of three to thirty places of decimals without one written note; and of many others, we may—rather we *must* perceive in *memory* alone a special faculty designed for the requirements of infinitude.

It was considerations like these that compelled Cicero to exclaim that a nature that could contain so much within itself could not be mortal.

With the merely animal creation we all know it is quite different. *They* reach their perfection, and remain stationary; but in the case of man, who can assign a limit to his mental attainments?

And if man be specially fitted for infinitude, we have only to glance beyond this earth to perceive

around us an infinite number of worlds. Some thousands of stellar systems are visible to our eyes above on every clear night, and the revelation of the telescope has shown us that the number may be indefinitely multiplied. And yet if we carry this multiplication never so far, we feel that there is still a capacity in ourselves for receiving the knowledge that these unknown worlds would convey to us could we only visit them each in its appointed sphere. It is indisputable, then, that we have a perfect correspondence here between the physical infinitude outside this world and the moral infinite capacity within ourselves, and such a correspondence irresistibly suggests that the one is correlative to the other.

The moral grandeur of man, as exemplified on the stage of history, is another powerful presumptive proof of his being heir to immortality. Everywhere we perceive absolute evidence that man is an infinitely progressive being, and yet we find that while everything except man runs a *complete course*, as in all the complex operations of nature, he alone is cut down by death in the very midst of his progress, and in all cases long before he has even approximated to any kind of completeness or finality.

A profound observer has said, "Each period of man's life is *introductory* to the next succeeding one; the life of the *fœtus* to that of the infant, the infant to the child, the child to the youth, the youth to the man, and the man—surely that must be to immortality."

An argument has been sometimes adduced in favour of a future state from the terrible apprehensions which the approach of death occasions to most people, and especially to those who have been guilty of atrocious crimes. Anecdotal history abounds in such reminiscences, but I prefer

not to press this form of argument, as the positivist will meet it with the objection that it is due alone to superstition, and because in the face of other overwhelming evidence, it is not essentially required for the conclusion of this exposition.

A much more cogent argument is deducible from the fearful contrast presented by the disordered state of the moral, as contrasted with the perfect order of the material universe.

A survey of the physical mechanism of man, or of the world—so far as science has revealed either—fills one with spontaneous admiration of the perfection revealed in both; but a review of human past or present history is altogether another matter, and who does not instinctively feel that wrong, violence, fraud, and vice are really the sovereign powers of these mundane affairs of ours.

Let Positivism allege what it can, man, regarded as a finite creature, is distinctly evil; and it is only when his infinite capacities come into play that he ever rises to virtue or truth.

As the world *is*, the good undoubtedly suffer and the evil prosper; and our innate sense of equity is shocked as often as we attempt to survey mankind in its present state.

The positivists essay to remedy all this by setting up what they term a religion of humanity; but the very virtues they would inculcate are those which were first revealed in their real beauty and significance in the Sermon on the Mount, and they are virtues that can only be properly exercised by an infinite being designed for an indefinite hereafter.

It is only necessary to glance at the manifest absurdity of imagining that the thinking principle in man can ever be annihilated. I have already pointed out that as the true conscious man or woman is *indivisible*, we have no evidence that death has the least effect thereon, for death is

simply a *disintegration*—a resolution of a certain combination of atoms into some new sequence; and as to annihilation, all creation furnishes no single instance of such a thing ever happening.

Astronomical observation indicates that creation may be in progress still, but we have no knowledge of anything at all like annihilation. The only forms in which destruction is really known to man is in that of change, and as the mind is evidently *indivisible*, the disintegration of its earthly covering can only affect it in a tactical and sensual way with regard to other minds still enveloped in their respective bodies.

We have, I think, in our preceding sections clearly established the fact that material and moral creation *have* an intelligent Creator, and it is not too much to assume that the facts last adduced go to demonstrate as fully the great fact that there *is* a future state for man.

Not a few sceptics have founded their objections to this on the common fallacy that the ancient Hebrews did not, as a people, believe in the immortality of man. If God's own chosen people had no certain belief on this vital point, say some, how can *we* have a more definite faith than men who, as you allege, lived in the days of miracles, and under the very shadow of the Almighty?

Now we have here a fallacy, not an argument, to answer. The ancient Jews *did* believe, as a people, in the future state of man. In truth, the conviction that man is destined for immortality was a fundamental principle among them, and it was simply because they held it as a matter of course truth, that we find no formal statement of what they deemed a necessary consequence of any kind of religious profession. We do not find among the ancient Jews any formal refutation of Atheism, simply because they were unable to conceive such a thing as a denial of God's existence, and in like

manner no ancient Hebrew deems it worth while to formularise on man's implied immortality, because he could not realize that any rational man should entertain a contrary view. The phrase so frequently met in the Pentateuch, "gathered to his fathers," never merely means that a Jew had been buried in the actual graves of his people, but that he had passed to the companionship of his progenitors in the unseen world.

In Genesis xxv., for example, it is written,— "Abraham gave up the ghost, and was gathered to his people." Now Abraham's mortal remains were deposited far away from those of his house, and the passage has wholly a spiritual, and not at all a material significance. I need not multiply examples. The assertion made above that the Jews recognized that man *has* a future state can be substantiated by many passages from the Old Testament, and may safely be included among the absolute truths demonstrated in the present argument.

Even that sect of the Jews, the Sadducees, did, we know, after a time modify their views, and received the doctrines of angelic beings and of the resurrection of the body, so that at last they were only distinguished by their rejection of tradition.





THE "OTHER WORLDS."

NEXT to the question, Shall we live again? the most important and interesting must obviously be, What is the nature and probable scope of that other life to come—assuming that we attain to immortality?

With some persons there is an idea that the "other world" cannot be in any material sense like anything wherewith we are acquainted, or, indeed, like anything we can even conceive.

It is, however, a great error to assume so much, for although much illusion undoubtedly prevails in this material sphere, it is evident that there *are* physical realities even in it, and the magnificence of the outlying physical creation cannot be a mirage of the mind which vanishes at death.

In the Hebrew Scriptures we find prevailing reference to the physical world, and particularly to the outlying systems which are continually invoked as eternal evidences of the glory of the Creator.

A slight investigation of these planetary marvels indicates that they are all constructed on and maintained in strict accordance with mathematical principles, or in other words, science; and it is the study of their movements and constitution that has most largely contributed to what we understand as knowledge. This implies that the *origin* of science is not *in* man, but *in* these works which have communicated to the human mind

some conception of their own inherent nature. If they be the causes of evoking scientific responses from man in his present imperfect state, how much more should they do so when he is free to contemplate them from the standpoint of a pure intelligence?

Irrespective of man, certain truths remain necessarily intact, and among these must be reckoned the science of numbers and mathematics. Our crude and desultory investigation shows that all creation is organically based on combinations of certain numbers and proportions, and it is thence clear that science has a concrete existence outside and independent of man. Man in his highest philosophic development only *observes* and *infers*. The science of which he boasts—often so unduly—is not at all *inherent* to him. It is the reciprocity of nature herself in harmony with the inquiring mind that really leads to discovery; and thence it becomes clear enough that, granted man survive the disintegration of his visible body, he will find himself in the presence of the *same* physical phenomena as that which had previously engaged his intellectual powers. No doubt, much that was illusion, arising from the crudeness of our visual and tactical powers, will disappear, and many things must appear altogether different; but *essentially* the same material universe exists for us on both sides of the grave.

It has been finely said that God himself laid the foundation of mathematics. The works of the starry systems consist entirely of various kinds of spheres, moving in various paths, all of which are among the *data* of mathematical science. To properly comprehend the mere motions of the celestial bodies a considerable amount of mathematical knowledge is essential, and how can we form even a feeble notion of the magnitude of the

inter-stellar spaces unless we know something, at least, of arithmetic?

The cultivation of such knowledge, aided by the mechanism of the microscope and telescope, has enabled man to ascertain and disseminate among his fellows much information regarding the worlds beyond; and so far he has in modern times imitated the precepts of some of the inspired writers, and studied the handiwork of the Deity.

No unprejudiced person can read the Psalms without reaching the conclusion that the writer, while soaring in imagination to the stars, never lost sight of the truth—that their Creator is omnipresent. The most striking and marvellous thing in modern science in general is the fact that so soon as human knowledge has risen to some new object of scientific contemplation, the idea of its immediate connection with Divinity is abandoned, and even devout observers interpose some secondary causes as though there were something altogether wrong in the immediate recognition of Deity in all His works.

This strange indisposition to allow that man can come near God by rationally contemplating His works, is, I believe, one of the most prolific causes of unbelief in these days.

The natural eyes may turn upwards and mentally picture Divinity in the voids beyond, but directly the telescope is used, and distant worlds made visible, *then* the notion of *science* is commonly substituted for that of *deity*, and the Creator is lost sight of amid the details of His works.

And here we may fitly pause a moment and reflect on the sublime immensities of the visible creation.

The space occupied by the solar system has been ascertained to be nearly 40,000,000,000 miles across, and an ingenious writer tells us that were

the entire area formed into one solid globe, containing 24,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 miles of matter, and rendered incandescent, a blazing sun of ineffable splendour—and were it thus to continue a thousand years—there are still stellar spaces inferred by our telescopic investigations that would remain unaffected by its light or heat, and to an eye that took in creation, it would seem, in comparison with the whole, as one bright lucid point.

Clearly we have here illimitable scope for the rational future of rational beings. Sir William Herschel once reckoned—when viewing the Milky Way—that within the space of seven minutes over 50,000 stars swept across the field of his vision! And it has been since calculated that a hundred millions of stars may be detected within the extreme scope of our astronomical instruments. It has been logically deducted that the whole universe—as revealed to man—comprehends within its compass 2,400,000,000 of worlds; and even this is but a part of the infinity of organised creation.

These worlds are decidedly material bodies, and when we reflect a moment on the beauty and endless variety exhibited in this earth of ours, scourged as it is by the vice and passions of mankind, what we may well inquire must be the ineffable glories of these innumerable worlds beyond! Here we know that no two leaves on the same tree are exactly alike, and the study of a long philosophic life does not suffice to exhaust a single section of our science. What, then, must be the sum of the KNOWLEDGE of these planetary systems, concentrated as it must necessarily be, in Deity? No wonder the sacred writers were overwhelmed when viewing creation, even on a far more limited scale, and exclaimed, "How manifold are thy works! In wisdom thou hast made them all."

To assume—as some materialists would persuade us they do—that all this divine opulence of creative energy is void of intelligent life, that these worlds unnumbered by man, roll on their several courses in silent uninhabited gloom, is absolutely contradictory to all reason, and opposed to the entire sum of human analogy and historic experience. There is nothing wasted or lost in the cosmic economy actually known to ourselves, and everywhere we find matter is the correlative of intelligent energy.





ON THE INHABITANTS OF THE OTHER WORLDS.

THAT the "other worlds" exist in material reality none will venture to dispute, and that they are inhabited by some kind of beings may be taken as self-evident. It is, at all events, in strict logical accord with all analogy, and is, on the showing of the most resolute sceptic, a case in which we have on the one hand an innumerable array of the strongest and most reasonable probabilities, and on the other only one extremely indefinite and feeble possibility. To suppose, indeed, that the millions of spheres which perform their periodic courses like this earth of ours are destitute of all intelligent life, clearly does violence to human reason, and is, I have just said, at complete issue with the entire sum of rational analogy.

Before, however, proceeding more particularly to inquire into the probable character of the inhabitants of these worlds beyond our own, it will be well to ascertain what are the historic records, if I may so call them, relative to beings of another mould than that of man.

In ancient writings—excluding those regarded as inspired—we have not a little detail concerning the celestial hierarchy; and tradition, which is always entitled to a respectful hearing, gives us much detail on this interesting head, which, if not convincing from the standpoint of the determined unbeliever, is, at all events, highly suggestive.

The word angel, to begin with, the most popular form of supernatural being, signifies messenger, and occurs constantly in writings of the Patristic ages.

The Scriptures, indeed, do not profess to offer any systematic account of angels, but the belief in the type known as *guardian* angels has been held in all ages by all sects of religion, and is entitled to consideration on account of the obvious sanction of a common human consent to the fact of their existence. The fathers assigned the creation of angels to a period anterior to that of the earth, and so general had the belief become in these celestial messengers, that the Council of Laodicea, in 300, pronounced this faith to be simple idolatry. A later council, at Nice ruled that, though guardian angels were not to be worshipped, they might receive a respectful obeisance, and subsequently, as is well known, the guardian angel was regularly recognised in the ritual of the Roman Catholic and Greek churches.

More mystic by far is the ancient Hebrew conception of the cherub, a winged being having a human countenance, and represented in direct connection with the Deity. The cherubim are mentioned, I need hardly remind the reader, as the keepers of Eden, and in the Jewish tabernacle they presided in effigy over the Ark of the Covenant. The prophet Ezekiel makes particular mention of the cherubim, and in the Revelation of St. John

they are described as surrounding the throne of God.

The Jewish writers generally reckon cherubs as angels, but modern theologians have sometimes regarded them as mere poetic figments.

Allied to the above we have the seraphim, who are likewise described as being in actual attendance on the Deity. In correspondence with the cherubim they partake of the human form, have a face, a voice, hands and feet, and are provided with six wings.

Such are the three principal types of celestial creatures of which we have any traditional or Biblical record.

Many Biblical students suppose the "morning stars," mentioned in Job xxxviii., to mean angels, and it has been conjectured that the creation of the angels was among the earlier works of the Creator.

Now, in the human world we find a vast gradation of mental capacity, but, taking a fair survey of the whole, it is reasonable to assume, as we find him here, that man is at the bottom of the scale of intelligent creation. At all events, our scope for conceiving of lower rational beings is obviously limited, while no human imagination can fully realize the infinite scope for the display of intellectual and spiritual powers above those acknowledged and known to be the peculiar endowment of the human race.

Let us turn for a moment to the historic accounts of angelic performances as set forth in the Bible. Evidently the Hebrew historians regarded them as altogether beyond men in their powers. Thus the angel Gabriel, during the few minutes in which the prophet Daniel prayed, is described as descending from the celestial regions to the city of Babylon. An angel is described as slaying 200,000 Assyrians

in one night, and we find frequent allusion to their might and wisdom. An eloquent writer says :—

“Angels dwell in a land where truth reigns triumphant, where moral evil has never entered, where substantial knowledge irradiates the mind of every inhabitant, where the mysteries which involve the character of the Eternal are continually disclosing, and where the plans of His Providence are rapidly unfolded. They have ranged through the innumerable regions of the heavens, and visited distant worlds for thousands of years ; they have beheld the unceasing variety and the endless multitude of the works of creation and Providence, and are, doubtless, enabled to compare systems of worlds with more accuracy and comprehension than we are capable of surveying villages, cities, and provinces.”

There is a certain analogy between the human form and that of nearly all the forms of organized life that we are acquainted with—the variety is very great in even this one world of ours, being, if we include the whole range of animal creation, a hundred thousand. Now, we may reasonably assume that the heavenly hierarchy exhibits a variety in at least corresponding proportion to the transcendent magnitude of the regions open to them, and we may conclude, therefore, that among the angelic host there is an infinite series of gradations in glory and power.

It is a noteworthy circumstance that whenever any of the angelic tribes visit this earth, as recorded in the Bible, the Talmud, or general tradition, they are invariably described as bearing a general resemblance to the human form, while they have the property of rendering themselves suddenly invisible.

I may interpose a passing remark that, *prima facie*, the fact that celestial visitants are described in the Scriptures as being of a somewhat *human*

form, appears a strong confirmation of the sincerity of the narrators. An impostor evolving supernatural beings out of his own mind for the sake of enforcing some religious cheat would be sure to studiously avoid attributing the form of man to such conceptions. He would deem that far too simple to meet with ready credence, and he would exhaust his inventive ingenuity to assign to the creatures of his imagination forms altogether extraordinary and unheard of.

But angels have forms. In all recorded accounts of angelic manifestations, a definite shape is mentioned, and the possession of such material powers as may be sensibly felt by those to whom they came.

Spiritual beings without forms are unthinkable, and cannot, with any show of reason, be said to exist. It is conceivable, however, and highly probable, that the vehicles, if I may so express it, of celestial beings are of a far rarer texture than the bodies of men. But the fact of their being rarefied is no evidence whatever against their being corporeal. The very air we breathe is material, and yet invisible, and there are substances far rarer still. Hydrogen gas, for instance, is full twelve times lighter than atmospheric air; and then again, the bodies of *animalculæ*, although distinctly and often elaborately organised, are quite imperceptible to the unaided human eye.

I have pointed out in a previous section how numerous and important are the illusions of our mere senses. Thus, *solidity*, as popularly understood, has no real existence, because no two of the multitudinous particles constituting our earthly frame-work are in actual contact, and thus there are interspaces in every human being which may well be interpenetrated, and probably are, with the real permanent substratum of our immortality.

Then again, *our* senses are only those of seeing, hearing, and touching. Surely when we are compelled to admit that—

“Worlds on worlds unnumbered roll,”

we cannot reasonably dogmatize that our senses are the *only* avenues existing for the conveyance of ideas to the true seat of intelligence in rational beings. The fly finds a world in a space of a few feet, man ranges over the solar system, but misses obviously the details, yet analogy demonstrates that there must be beings capable of combining the minuteness and the magnitude of a rational perception, and we may fairly assume that the denizens of the unseen worlds beyond are in all ways adapted, or, in other words, correlated to the characteristics of those mysterious spheres.

I know that some will smile incredulously at the bare notion of there being active intelligences outside the pale of the human creation, and yet a little reflection will show that the real absurdity lies, not in the acceptance, but in the rejection, of such a doctrine. I think it may be fairly claimed that we have thus far established the fact that there *is* a Deity who presides over the aggregation of cosmic creations known to us as the universe, and of the actual substantial realities of the innumerable orbs that circle through space there can be no question. Science is at this point fully at one with revelation, and to imagine these orbs vacant desolations—unpeopled solitudes—is to do extreme violence to the natural suggestions of the human reason, and to run counter to the direct teachings of all analogy. The negative view evidently involves numberless and serious difficulties, while the positive view above formulated harmonizes perfectly with the teachings of all science worthy so to be called, and is in exact correspondence with what I

may call the traditional and common consent of mankind in all ages and under all forms of religious dispensation.

In a word, it is by the thoughtful contemplation of the mechanism both of the earth and of the various celestial systems beyond, that we naturally reach the conclusion that there is a graduated scale of rational creation filling the unspeakable distance between man in his sublimest form and the full perfection of Deity.





THE DWELLING PLACE OF DEITY.

IN scientific operations inference and analogy are universally acknowledged as legitimate agencies for the elimination of truth, and these agencies are surely equally sound in respect to an inquiry like the present one.

An idea has long prevailed among astronomers that the solar system—and even those in connection therewith—are but adjuncts of some universe of a far more elaborate and magnificent character; and it may well be that all the known systems of the celestial spheres really revolve around a common centre. That centre, inferentially, would bear at least as great a proportion to the aggregation of the planetary bodies, known or surmised by human science, as does our sun to the bodies revolving around that luminary. The sun itself is some five hundred times larger than the earth, and the inference consequently would be that the vast central universe would in like proportion exceed all the other created worlds, and be in itself the origin of all light and power; in other words, the very abode of the Deity Himself.

Such an idea certainly carries with it a pitch of sublimity to which the human understanding cannot fully rise, but it does not present any inherent difficulty, and well corresponds to the

majesty of the ancient Hebrew conceptions of the dwelling places of Deity. Such a conception, in truth, appears every way in accordance with what we know of the character of God as revealed in the physical and moral worlds, and corresponds sufficiently to the ascertained facts of astronomical science to be at all events probable.

If it be thus, we have at once the key to the emphatic language of Scripture, in which we are told that "Jehovah has prepared His throne in the heavens," and much—if not all—that appears specially hard to comprehend in respect to man's future state is cleared up and made intelligible.

Compared with the ineffable majesty and overwhelming beauty of such a centre of the universe as this, our earthly conceptions of power and loveliness become utterly insignificant, and even the solar system itself is but one bright spot in the transcendent effulgence of the actual abode of God Himself.





THE DISSOLUTION OF THE EARTH.

THAT the earth—as a habitat for man—has been destroyed, is as much a matter of history as of Scripture. Independently of that fearful deluge—traces of which are to be found in the traditions of every nation—there have been at various periods terrible local convulsions—which have been fatal to all within their scope, as in the case of the awful earthquake at Lisbon, and the human imagination has at all times been strangely fascinated by the conception common to most of us, that just as men die at last, materially speaking, so some day this globe itself must prepare for dissolution.

Much prophecy—sacred and profane—has been devoted to this awful subject, and naturally a vast amount of fallacy has been popularized as being fully justified by certain texts of Scripture. Now, it is a very remarkable fact that while on the one hand sacred prophecy announces what seems to be the destruction of the world, on the other hand it distinctly states that the creation shall still endure. In one place we are told that “the heavens shall pass away with a mighty noise,” and in another that the Creator has established this planetary system for ever. How these conflicting assertions can be reconciled, however, may not be so difficult

to understand when we reflect on the fact that the very atmosphere enveloping the earth is composed of gases, one of which is the essential constituent of fire. Any serious electrical disturbance in the constituents of the atmosphere would undoubtedly result in the liberation of an appalling flame, which would, by the heat engendered, destroy everything superficial to the globe. The dissolution of the gases of the atmosphere would occasion a concussion that would resound through nature, and the result would be such as to justify the language used in Revelation, wherein we are told that "the earth and the heaven fled away."

Yet even this tremendous resolution of the whole surface of the globe into fire would not by any means necessarily condition its actual destruction, or imply, as some have thought, that the entire fabric of the solar system must be shattered into a stupendous chaos of meteorolites. The actual materials of which the earth is composed would still exist, and might, after the purging by fire, be made to re-assume the primeval character of the original creation.

We are all of us conscious of the awful uncertainty of human life. We live individually, as it were, on a knife-edge, and when we seem most secure, death is often closest to us. In reality, we cannot *absolutely* calculate on one second of what we understand by the future, and it is only our intensified familiarity with this awful precariousness of human life that renders us in general so callous to all considerations of this kind.

The fact is startling and awful, but it is more startling and awful by far to remember that the organic life of the globe we inhabit—if I may use the phrase—is even more precarious than that of most individuals. Earthquakes and volcanic outbursts are sufficiently appalling evidences of this; but let

us remember that the law of gravitation is always exerting a force, of which the human mind fails to form an adequate idea, to attract all the revolving spheres of our universe together, and condense them into one solid mass! If this mighty force were not kept in check, all creation—so far as we know it—would rush together with the impact of weights and velocities known only to science, and one universal ruin would ensue. The bare conception of this earth entering on an awful journey of destruction, to burst like a cannon ball of an inconceivable magnitude on some larger sphere than itself, fills the human mind with a horror that cannot find expression in words.

Here, indeed, is a field virtually illimitable for the display of forces that man cannot pretend to control in the slightest degree. The forces exist so much, he knows—that they are in themselves unintelligent; he knows also, and it is equally obvious, that these forces ARE controlled. If they were not, there is nothing to prevent chaos from coming, and instead of the grand procession of the planets, each in its due path, we should have them all crashing together, and filling space with their awful ruins.

In truth, we have a triune revelation of God in His double character of Maker and Preserver. In our own consciousness in the works of nature in this world we inhabit, and especially beyond this world, throughout the universe are there facts bearing unmistakable testimony to the truth of the being of a living God.





SCEPTICISM ANSWERED.

IF we analyze carefully the groundwork of what may be conveniently termed our civil life, it will be instantly perceived that it is almost entirely based upon *probabilities* of varying degrees of strength. Thus, nearly all the transactions of trade are conducted on the assumption of the *probable* solvency and good faith of the party or parties wherewith the business is to be transacted. The merchant would stare, indeed, if you told him he must reduce his business entirely to the limits of *certainties*, and that he must not venture to consign any goods to anybody unless he had an absolute certainty of that person being fully solvent, and not only solvent, but absolutely willing to settle at the time of payment, and as absolutely sure neither to die nor fail during the interim.

Of course the whole supposition is ridiculous. The entire fabric of civil relationship would dissolve, and matters would come to an utter standstill.

Yet directly religion is substituted for business, although religion be manifestly an infinitely more important species of business, we have the mass of mankind seized by a paralysis issuing in the form of doubts, because they do not, or will not, admit that the exponents of religion can offer them anything beyond *probabilities* in support of their claims on behalf of the life to come. Thus, too, we have the paradoxical outcome that, conduct

which if exhibited in relation to the fleeting affairs of this life would be called sheer stark-staring madness, is when shown in connection with the awful destiny of the human soul merely a matter of natural scepticism or "honest doubt," to use the unhappy phrase, wherewith Mr. Tennyson has striven to hallow the essentially false.

No doubt many persons, to take a salient example, who have never read the works of Strauss, Renan or Baur, are profoundly affected by what they have heard about them, and in like manner, as they hear that various "Scriptures," so-called, exist which have been pronounced spurious by the Patristic authorities of the Christian Church, it seems to them a matter for doubt whether the canonical books themselves rest on a really solid basis.

With regard to M. Renan and his famous *Life of the Saviour*, it is not too much to say that unwittingly he has served the cause he strove to controvert. He accepts historically the substance of the Gospels, eliminates thence a kind of fifth version of the life of Christ, and rejecting entirely the supernatural, strives to represent the author of Christianity as an enthusiastic visionary of the Mahomet type. M. Renan invests his theme with all the charm of a rich verbal eloquence, but, as he has probably himself now discovered, he proves too much for the success of his covert project. He represents the Saviour in opposite and totally incompatible phases, and while on the one hand attributing to Him all the moral perfection claimed in the Christian exegesis of the Gospel, on the other he imputes a course of action which is simply in the writer blasphemy crystallized in language whose beauty only renders the result more hideous.

Then again, in a work professedly of the most

critical character, M. Renan is so careless or confident that he declares that the Talmud was plagiarized by Christ, when the truth is that the Talmud was only reduced to writing three centuries after His birth.

Those who desire to be deceived by spurious criticism of the irreligious school of modern thought will, of course, endorse M. Renan's rash conclusions, but no impartial student of the Bible will be misled by a work which is inspired by prejudice and constructed on poetic assumption.

And here it will be in place to add a few words regarding the special evidences existing on the side of Christianity.

In the first place it cannot escape our notice that in the Old Testament the evidence, *historically* considered, of the miraculous passages stands on the same basis as that for the ordinary *human* record of the events related. It is precisely the same with the Gospels themselves. All the incidents related, whether natural or supernatural, are, if criticism be *justly* applied, on a common ground. Apart from the *religious* aspect of this momentous question, we should no more have the genuineness of the Bible questioned than that of the modern accepted versions of Virgil or Horace, or of the Hindoo Vedas. The more criticism has investigated the claims of the Scriptures to be accepted as authentic documents, the more positive have those claims become, but the supernatural element has been the obstacle to the professional Rationalist, and to disprove that has been the one end of all his critical toil.

Now, it must never be forgotten that Christianity alone, of all religions offered to men, has rested from the first on a supernatural basis, *i.e.*, the miracles preceding, and pointing to the advent of the Saviour and those wrought by and through Him.

This cannot be justly claimed on behalf of any other religion. The few assumed wonders of Mahomet were not wrought in the face of the world, and the earliest propagation of that remarkable creed was in nowise attempted on the ground of the supernatural.

Again, it is speaking strictly within bounds to assert that the *historic* testimony to these miracles is perfect. It is so perfect, indeed, that M. Renan is compelled to evade the difficulty to him by alleging that the workers and witnesses of these wonders were alike *self-deceived*. Monstrous marvel! This is in effect to invoke one miracle to destroy another.

Now, it is universally allowed that miracles are said to have been wrought in three different ages of the world's recorded history. These periods are respectively the establishment of the Mosaic covenant, some fifteen centuries prior to the Christian era, the restoration of that covenant some six centuries later, and finally the full development of miraculous power during the ministry of Christ and that of His immediate followers. Now, these three epochs, separated by intervals of centuries, are all *sequential*, and absolutely correlated together. Surely it requires something vast in the way of sceptical faith to believe that *three* resolute conspiracies to mislead mankind could be three times repeated in such remarkable succession.

Clearly, to deny the miraculous bases of the Christian religion is to display an amount of credulity inconceivably beyond anything needed to accept the inspired record as matter of fact.

I have in the previous sections established on sufficient evidence the absolute truths that there is a personal and intelligent government of this universe, and surely the marvels we have revealed by logical inference as to the worlds beyond this

are in themselves clear proofs that the supernatural does exist. By the supernatural is meant the exercise of vital forces and powers exterior to this earth. If, however, these forces and agencies are in operation in the worlds beyond, and we cannot rationally doubt this to be the case, I fail to see, even on the ground of the Positivist, any valid reason why such agencies should not be exercised here, and produce effects subversive for a time of what we call the fixed law of nature.

To believe this is only to act in reasonable accord to the teachings of history and viewed by the philosophy of probabilities, which I have already explained, is indeed the only course open to the impartial enquirer.





ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

IT was my intention to attempt an exhaustive discussion of the subject of future punishment, but to do so inevitably leads to considerations of a character so awful, that the human mind naturally shrinks from a cold ethical summary of their details. I feel, however, that just *because* this subject is so appalling, something ought to be said about it, and the views here offered are to be taken as in no way dogmatic, but merely the outcome of a desire to represent both sides of a terrible question fairly.

It is well known that the number of universalists, or believers in the full restoration of the whole of mankind, past, present, and to come, to purity and unending bliss—is very numerous, and this sect gains ground daily in all Christian communities throughout the globe.

As to the arguments whereby the exponents of this fascinating creed seek to justify their views, it may be briefly stated that they are broadly based on the rendering of certain texts, and especially upon the perfect love of the Creator; and the many eloquent vindications of a supreme charity, which characterise the whole scope of the Gospel narratives.

Now to do but bare justice to the majority of those who expound these views, it must be allowed that they do not favour in the least the action that

because all men will be preserved for life everlasting it matters nothing how they conduct themselves in this life. On the contrary, they glory in the fact that their virtue and goodness will be all the more signal, seeing that it has never been stimulated by FEAR, but is the outcome of a pure natural love of the good and true.

This sounds sublime, and it seems very specious, but may not an awful error lie hidden beneath the fair outside of this, obviously the most widely popular of all forms of Christian belief? *All* men will be saved, and be translated to eternal bliss. Is there no danger that our common and natural desire that this may be so, not only for ourselves, but for others, has led us to overlook the most formidable of the many objections that certainly exist against such a belief as is here implied?

It will be conceded at once that the society of the other world must—so far as it exists within the actual presence of Deity—be pure and good. Expatiating on the delights of the heavenly company of the blessed, a writer says, “Let us suppose a vast society, composed of such characters as Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Paul, James, and John, and the Evangelists—men who accounted it their highest honour to glorify God, and to promote the salvation of mankind; such philanthropists as Howard, Clarkson, Venning, and Sharpe, who displayed the most benignant affection, and spent their mortal existence in unwearied efforts to ameliorate the condition of the prisoner, and relieve the distresses of the wretched in every land; such profound philosophers as Locke, Newton, and Boyle; such amiable divines as Watts, Doddridge, Bates, Hervey, Edwards, Lardner, and Dwight, to associate perpetually with such characters, even with the imperfections and infirmities which cleaved to them in this sublunary region, would

form something approaching to a paradise on earth. But let us suppose such characters divested of imperfection, endowed with every holy principle and virtue ; let us further suppose, intelligences invested with faculties far more sublime ; let us suppose ambassadors from numerous worlds occasionally joining this celestial society ; let us suppose the man Christ Jesus among them in the effulgence of His glory, and we have a faint picture of the social enjoyments of the celestial world.”

Such is a true—although, necessarily, a very faint impression—of some portion of the happiness of a redeemed universe ; but clearly there is no room in such an assemblage for those who have during the whole course of their earth-life given themselves up to falsehood, deceit, malignity, and revenge, and all the other fell outcomes of a malevolent nature. Let us glance at history, and reflect what a tissue it is, for the most part, of revolting cruelty, and let us further remember that all this awful sum of cruelty is of human origin, and must be regarded as the spontaneous outcome of depraved and fallen natures. The same writer whom I have quoted above, dealing with this very subject, says, “Let us now suppose a vast assemblage of beings collected in a dark and dreary region ; let us suppose many thousands millions of such characters as Nero ; Tiberius, who delighted in torturing his subjects ; Caligula, who butchered thousands ; Hamilcar, who threw all his prisoners to be devoured by wild beasts ; Jenghiz Khan, who boiled seventy persons alive, under his immediate inspection ; Tamerlane, who once pounded some thousand human beings in mortar, and built them into a wall—let us suppose such characters associated—and it is evident that a scene of misery would be produced beyond the power of the human mind to conceive or describe.”

These are striking and strong examples, but do not our contemporary annals tell us of deeds cruel as any of those here enumerated, and if perpetrated only on individuals instead of multitudes, equally malignant?

You cannot take up a daily newspaper without being reminded that both brutality and bestiality still remain among us, quite as much as in the days when the stern Hebrew lawgivers stoned to death those who outraged the God-given form of man. If we boast that no Neros or Tamerlanes now exist, we shall presently be reminded that vivisection has sprung up to demonstrate the great truth that science without religion would soon prove the most awful scourge that humanity has ever known; and how many crimes are continually perpetrated, even by those on whom the light of knowledge has shed no uncertain rays?

Clearly, such criminals as are here referred to could have no portion in the pure societies of the redeemed world. But the advocates of universal salvation allege that they will be changed in spite of themselves at the last, and be, in fact, born again.

To know that only *one* human soul could be irrevocably lost to the ever increasing and eternal joys of heaven would be a profound sorrow to every feeling heart, but to suppose that God, at the hour of death, will by a creative act destroy in all evil beings the essence of their sins, and, in a word, accomplish in one miraculous moment all *they* have persistently failed to do in the course of their whole lives, is to imagine a miracle quite inconsistent with all we know by implication of the divine character. Under such a supposition, indeed, all conceptions of justice and equity, of purity and truth, are necessarily lost, and the whole scheme of Christianity is rendered wholly nugatory.

I have always believed myself that in the parable of the man without a wedding garment—one of the most awful, it seems to me, of any in the Bible—we have an absolute refutation of the doctrine of universal salvation. One of the most obvious consequences of man being endowed with a rational liberty of choice, must be that his individual character is determined by himself, and thus we have a complete justification of the well-known fancy of an old English dramatic poet, who declares—

"Our acts, our angels are, for good or ill,
The fateful shadows that attend us still."

Some will immediately object, but what of those who are born into such vice and brutality that they necessarily grow up more or less vicious and brutal, simply by reason of *inherited* evil. The answer is, I think, plain. What is impossible to man is easy to God. Divine justice must weigh all things equally, and each must stand or fall according to the use he has made of the opportunities offered him. The parable of the widow's mite was doubtless especially designed to meet this difficulty, and many a man, woman, or child, seemingly steeped in vice and brutality, preserves within many touches of that nature which makes the whole world kin. There are many circles and gradations in heaven, but what I meant to convey principally, was the fact that nothing essentially evil, in a moral sense, can enter in that holy universe, and the state of man at the time of his dissolution in this world must be preponderating either towards good or evil.

I much wish I could have entirely avoided all allusion to a subject so dreadful as is this, but the scheme of this work renders it indispensable to dwell at some length upon what is one of the most awful problems we have to face beyond this life.

Feeling as I do on this subject, I will not add more of my own views, but close with one more extract from the writer quoted above.

“It is incompatible with the laws of moral order that pride, hatred, malignity, and revenge should dwell in the same abode with humility, benevolence, friendship, and love . . . the two states of immortality revealed . . . are accordant with the dictates of reason, and with the declaration of our Saviour, who has solemnly assured us, ‘The wicked shall depart into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.’”

Permanence, irrevocableness, persistence, immutability, fixedness, these are words which many of us use lightly enough; but they have terrible meanings in their applicability to evil. The famous Welsh Triad says, “Even God himself cannot procure good for the wicked.” The great champion of universal salvation, the well-known Theodore Parker, devoted a great part of his life to teaching that the New Testament, properly expounded, does assert the possibility of a human being being unable to reach that finality of holiness which is necessary to sanction everlasting communion with God. I suppose everyone will allow that true blessedness cannot be without holiness, and to say, as some do, that after death man will be enlightened and reform, is to assert something unhappily contrary to all analogy, and in opposition to the direct teachings of that moral discipline to which we are all of us subjected in this life. Let us never forget that the laws of self-producing habits, while they hallow the good equally blast the wicked. How can it be otherwise? The phrase “It is never too late to mend,” is one of the most perilous of all moral precepts, and has led thousands to the commission of evil on the secret understanding with innermost self that

they would amend *after* they had obtained their full surfeit of what they knew to be wrong. Reader, you know this is so. Now we are all aware that under the physical and organic laws of the world there is, indeed, such a thing as being too late. You cut a sugar-producing maple to obtain the juice, but if you cut too far you kill the tree. The one cut is good, the other is evil; and carries with it nothing curative.

John Milton has by some been accused of absurdity in representing the arch fiend as choosing evil, while himself free of will. But we forget one side—the most awful one of the proposition—it is this, a human intelligence may be so perverted and disordered as to lapse into *preferential* evil.

The great Origen held that Satan might return to his allegiance to God, but we are faced by the dreadful fact that character tends always to some kind of permanent fixedness, and this evidently may be for evil as well as for good.

What right has man to assume that he has any chance of reforming beyond the chances conferred on him by this life?

Julius Müller faces this awful question, and says plainly, "Such is the constitution of things that unwillingness to goodness may ripen into eternal voluntary opposition to it."

This, then, is what we should understand by the solemn phrase, the *inveteracy of sin*.

In all our practical pursuits of life we are manifestly free. If a merchant runs beyond his credit and fails, shall he cast the blame on the bankruptcy laws? If a man wish to grow wheat and sows barley, shall he fly into a rage with the laws of germination, or shall he demand a miracle that barley be converted into wheat to correct his blunder?

One trembles to write these things—one trembles

still more to *think* on them ; but if they *are* truths, can we neglect their obvious teaching without falling into sheer madness?

A Spanish proverb says, "Each man is the son of his own deeds," and Jean Paul Richter declares that every act becomes more certainly an eternal mother than it is an eternal daughter.

Do we not see that if God gave the wicked further opportunities for becoming good, the good must be subjected to further trial? It is all very well to ask, Cannot God so arrange the universe that all things may in the issue work together for good? but to my mind it seems that the practical and momentous question for us is simply, Has HE?

It has been said that the permanent existence of sin would cast a doubt on the divine benevolence. But this may be said of sin as we now know it. This kind of questioning really arises from a failure of man to regard himself as a creature, as an incomparably inferior being to the Deity. Man imagines he could have ordered the universe better than he has found it. The fact of such questioning and of such imagining seems to the deeply reflective mind *prima facie* evidence of man's natural taint of evil. Man would undoubtedly order the world, if he had the power, on principles of expediency, and, as I have previously shown, each man would be simply a law to himself.

There is a moral law—*that* much we know—and the whole of our business is to seek to render obedience to it while we *can*. While we live that is possible. After death it may be impossible, and in face of that "may be" even who will dare to risk his eternal happiness?

Of course there is, I know, another view to take of the moral state of man, who commits real, or,—as thousands do—virtual suicide before he has

run out what should be the natural sum of his days. For one thing, no man can tell what his future may bring him, and how, if he cut himself off in the grim face of a featureless gloom which was about to disperse in the sunshine of new hopes and soul-peace? The fatalist—for such deluded beings are—interposes what is *is*, and if it could be thus, the man would not die in despair. That God knows what will happen, however, is a distinct thing from God *making* the thing to happen. Omniscience, like all *infinite* endowments, is a mystery really beyond our understanding; but to try to put this somewhat intelligibly, we may say that although Deity may and does forbear to put forth his omnipotence, His prescience necessarily cannot remain inert. HE knows what will happen, but this is sometimes a knowledge that is utterly devoid of constraint on men.

If I may be allowed very humbly to institute a slight and infinitesimal comparison between the finite and the infinite, I may say that often in offering a child a really free choice between what is nice and what the child thinks the reverse, you know perfectly well beforehand what that choice will be, and yet, at most, your knowledge of that child, physically and mentally, and of his surroundings in their multiform *influential* aspects, is as ignorance itself when set against the perfect knowledge that God possesses of man and all his ways.

But to revert. It would follow that through his exercise of volition a man—unspeakably insignificant as man is, in comparison with Deity—might even frustrate the *unfulfilled* portion of his destiny. This is an awful thought, and fills the mind with equal horror and fear.

It is fully admitted that the love and world-embracing charity of the Deity are, humanly

speaking, illimitable; while it is rank folly to believe that God will miraculously change for the better the man who snaps short the thread of his own life, or, in other words, weave in a moment for *him* the indispensable wedding garment of the world of bliss. We must remember that the love of God passeth all understanding, and that the wisdom of God is altogether beyond man's comprehension.

The fire of a righteous wrath, consuming the true man by the process of remorse, may still have a vitalizing and purifying virtue; and, again, we may suppose that in the infinite degree of the heavenly hierarchy of the redeemed world, there may be in the processes of eternity an opportunity for restoration, even for the most vile and wicked of erring mortals.

We cannot be sure that because goodness progresses at an ever-increasing rate that evil will not do the same, nor can we be *quite* sure that, in the face of the clear terms of the Christian dispensation, man's *probation* does not end here?

There is room to hope for the worst of men, and it is never for *us* to predicate in any case who is or may be among the worse, for *nothing* can be more sure than that God does *not* judge as men; but I can never forget that Archbishop Whateley has fully shown that the whole of the reasoning that sin *cannot* endure eternally, proceeds on principles that prove that sin would never be allowed to begin. The redemption, in some mysterious way, may be in the issue universal, but *let no man build*, in the least, on such a hope or assumption—let no man dare to presume on such infinite mercy, for to do so is surely by implication a species of defiance to God, and the God of love ineffable is still sometimes a consuming fire.

It may be that all character tends to final permanence, and that the bent is entirely given in this life. No doctrine can, I think, be more perilous than that of universal pardon for man, because—such is man—that he will in numberless cases secretly presume on the mercy he does not merit. That fact alone—and I defy any man honestly to controvert it as a fact—seems to me to indicate of itself that there is in man—while still living in these fleshly environments—a distinct taint of depravity that justifies fully the old doctrine of original sin.





THE ULTIMATE PRINCIPLE OF LIFE.

SOME time ago, there was reported in the newspapers a murder which had nothing special about it except the fact that the murderer, an uneducated young man, confessed that he had committed the crime in order to be hanged, as he did not find it worth while to live. He was hanged in due course, and the incident was soon forgotten, even by our curiosity-mongers. There is, however, something especially awful about a crime of this type to every reflective mind, as it reveals at once a terrible form of practical Atheism, and a depth of depravity which one would fain believe to be incompatible with the possession of ordinary humanity. Yet such cases do not stand alone. The above was, of course, a species of suicide, but in how many cases of absolute suicide do we not also find that the primary cause is the profound conviction that life is an evil which may be voluntarily extinguished in everlasting nothingness.

Who, whatever his pain and anguish, would think of self-destruction, as it is emphatically termed, if he had a really firm conviction that there was a life to come, on the threshold of which he would be called to a strict account for all his deeds during his earthly existence.

Again, who, having a profound conviction that he could only kill the *appearance* and not the *reality* of his life, would dream of risking the indefinite prolongation of a pain for which possibly, even in this world, some anodyne might exist.

A work of great erudition and careful research has recently appeared, entitled, *The General Physiology of Muscles and Nerves*, by Dr. J. Rosenthal, and the object of this production is to make an advance to what may conveniently be termed ultimate physiology, in other words, to ascertain what is the real seat of vital action.

Dr. Rosenthal has, it is believed, concentrated into a single volume all that is known or conjectured about human muscular and nerve action, and he includes, too, an exhaustive account of the marvellous machines employed by Du Bois, Raymond, and the famous Helmholtz for reducing the results of certain physiological experiments to mathematical precision. So much for the work, the most learned and scientific of anything of the kind that has yet appeared. The results, however, are practically *nil*, and Dr. Rosenthal is reduced to the same class of hypothetical explanations of life that Mr. Herbert Spencer has already evolved without the aid of these extraordinary physiological investigations.

Surely this conspicuous failure to ascertain the ultimate seat and cause of what we feel to be our conscious lives, or more properly, perhaps, our individualities, suggests, at least, that we are in our vital realities *generally* present in our bodily appearances, and not by any means located in any one part more than another. If it be so, to dissect tissue or nerve for the purpose of ascertaining where lurks the essential principle of human existence, is very like taking a telescope to pieces to ascertain what the eye of the user is like, or,

indeed, like unpicking the seams of a man's clothes to learn the constitution of his veins and arteries.

Pleasantry aside, however, there can be no question whatever but that the whole system of human physiology is merely a wonderful elaborate piece of natural mechanism whereby we are enabled to manifest ourselves sensuously and tactically to each other, and on and through the surrounding materialities wherewith we are all environed.

If it be so, it is simply impossible that physiological science should ever penetrate the mystery which has been revealed from the first through mind. For the scientist, with any instruments he can devise, to dream of discovering what he terms the ultimate principle of human conscious life, is like trying to grasp a sunbeam in his hand.

In a former section I have alluded to the extreme tenuity of some forms of matter. It is obvious that, assuming we ourselves are individualized spiritualized substances shut up in and expressing ourselves through a gross material frame, that the agencies destroying that frame, or at all events disintegrating it, will not necessarily have any effect on *us*. The sword that severs the neck of the criminal, for example, divides the air in its descent, but the particles of air—for even air is composed of separate particles—are not in any degree affected by the blow. How great an amount of dissolution of the human body may be needed to render it totally incapable of any longer containing the conscious self is a mystery we cannot expect to penetrate in this world. It is, I think, a mystery wisely and mercifully withheld from man's investigation. But if we know nothing on this head, we may infer much. When death, as we call it, ensues manifestly in what is known as the course of nature, it may be supposed that body and spirit are divorced about the time of what we may call the obvious death.

But in the case of violent death of all kinds the rule may be very different, and the very conditions that facilitate severance in a case of natural decay, may retard that operation in instances of what may be termed premature death. Thus, for example, the desperate suicide who reduces his body, yet capable of enduring as a working machine for many years, to the state of a corpse, may find he has only, as it were, buried his true individuality in a tomb too awful to particularise, and one from which his release may be slow ; slow, indeed, when we remember what agonies of vain remorse may be concentrated in a single moment of time.

The subject is one of exquisite pain, but it may not be without profit for some. I cannot but think that the views here enunciated throw light on many difficulties of Scripture, and they are in perfect harmony with what may be inferred from the utterly negative results of all scientific endeavours to ascertain what is the ultimate principle of human life.





ON THE MEANING OF "HEAVEN."

IN the opening of Genesis we read, "And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament, and God called the firmament the *heavens*."

This familiar passage from the Bible, when we reflect thereon, suggests a fact of momentous importance. It will be observed that the name heavens is given as distinguishing the gaseous envelope, with all its wondrous and beautiful phenomena, from the earth which it invests. There is nothing whatever to suggest that heaven, as here located, means a special dwelling-place of angels or Deity.

Our familiar and popular use of the word heaven is undoubtedly altogether a mistake, and arises from the misapplication of a word which has been often employed to indicate a something not in any way itself.

For ages mankind has thought and spoken about "going to heaven," and yet how few indeed have had any real true perception of what the expression really meant.

No doubt, with many of us, the idea prevails, If I could but once get there—if I could only ascend to the celestial realms of purity, peace, and joy, *then*, indeed, I should be blessed and holy for evermore.

Are you quite sure of that, even granting that the heavens had such a specific locality, and that you were located for life in the skies, as millions and millions believe they will be?

Confucius asks, "How if a man lose his principle?" In truth, heaven is not by any means so much a place, at least for us, as it is a *state of being*.

The impure, if they could enter the holy place where the blessed are, would be just as impure there as now in this time-worn, sin-stained earth. And even on this earth of ours there are, I believe, many secret Edens of simple and pure affection—many little heavens of the home virtues, altogether sacred to, and preserved from, the foul touch of the world outside.

This covers and enlightens to some extent the awful mystery of the intense sinfulness of sin. God in his charity might easily transport the sinner to a material paradise; but when there, would that sinner do better with a God-given paradise than he did with his own body, and the circumstances he called his own on this earth?

You may introduce a scavenger in his foul habiliments to the court of a sovereign, but the fact of the introduction will do nothing towards making the man a courtier.

If we could eliminate from human society the whole sum of its vice and crime; of its hypocrisy and its falsehood, would not even this earth of ours become a heaven in the fullest spiritual sense of the word?

These things touch on mighty coming truths.

Some persons imagine that the after state of man is altogether incompatible with existence in any sort of physical world, such as we are acquainted with. Yet our astronomical science—

sweeping space for millions of leagues—can still encounter as *localities* nothing but spheres, which are evidently similar to this we now inhabit.

The true end of the Christian economy is the restoration of the world, not the substitution of an altogether different species of creation. Were it otherwise, the word Redemption would lose a great part of its most glorious significance.

Let us remember, too, that even the physical exertions of life, as we now possess it, may in a modified manner and with unerring beneficent results be continued in a glorified and redeemed universe. Prior to his fall man was placed on this earth in a paradise, it is true, but even there he had to "keep the garden"; and nothing is more incompatible with the reasonable hope of a Christian future than the idea of a dreamy voluptuous repose, as set forth in many forms of eastern mythology.

Everyone who reflects at all, knows that even this material life of ours in the world wherein we are placed is a matter, not of facts, but of *relations*, and references to something else. Up and down, thick and thin, indeed, everything in thought of a descriptive character, is, after all, simple Relativeness, and we have to fall back on our self-consciousness to reach the Absolute, which is found only in what is usually called the abstract. Truth and equity we can understand as things absolute, as in like manner we concentrate on the conception of Deity the Absolute of all our conceptions of good.

We might imagine, then, from what has been previously stated, that assuming ourselves to be spirits lodged in forms of flesh and blood, the state to come would be of an altogether vague and shadowy character. It does not follow by any means that this is the case. In the first place, we

ourselves are by no means so substantial as we imagine ourselves to be. It is an absolute fact that the numerous particles composing a living human body are all in rapid motion, and in no case in *actual contact*. Of the myriad molecules that compose our mortal frames none touch, and could we see ourselves as we are, the bodily shape would be the appearance, I believe, of the inner substratum or reality—the true man or woman. We gaze with the *mechanical* eyes given our real selves, *i. e.*, to our spiritual perceptions, on the physical life around us, and are deluded into accepting it as very solid and real. Could we only see it with a psychological perception, how different it would be!

It is a dim and vague consciousness of this truth that has given rise to our metaphysical views as to matter, and it was this, doubtless, that made Bishop Berkeley deny the existence of matter, as he is erroneously said to have done. In truth, I can only believe that he found reason to question the reality of what is only appearance after all; and in this he was right, as we shall all of us some day discover.

I cannot allow, then, that the passage to, and the awakening in, the coming state of existence is, as some seem to imagine, a transition to a vague being in a shadowy realm of unsubstantial things. On the contrary, I contend—and the view is certainly supported by all our close observations—that the coming state is one that will convince the most sceptical that it was not mere poetic sentiment which has induced the wise men of all ages and lands to pronounce this world and all that in it is a fleeting show of idle vanities.

Tennyson himself seems to have caught a gleam of this divine truth, when he exclaims, after enumerating the work in this life of the Duke of

Wellington, that surely in the other world there must be for him some—

“Nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo !”

The final restoration of physical creation to what God originally designed, before sin entered through the gate of man's volition, is what we must look for hereafter ; and what purer, intenser bliss can rational creatures anticipate than to labour, when from labour has been removed its awful curse ?





THE NEW TESTAMENT RECORD : WHY IT SHOULD BE BELIEVED.

THE position of Jesus Christ in reference to mankind, as recorded historically in the Gospels, is perfectly unique, and, indeed, altogether unparalleled in the entire records of mankind. The claims advanced by Christ in His character of a Saviour were, judged by any mere worldly standard, of the most extraordinary and inadmissible character. Yet mark the result : those claims have been met and admitted by mankind since, in general, in a manner that is simply marvellous, if regarded merely as a historic phenomenon.

Christ claimed not only to be a moral teacher (in this He was really the Bible made manifest in humanity), but He claimed, too, to be a person who was at once the Light of the World and its Life, *and* one who at once forgave the sins of fallen man, and in judging saved him.

Both Moses and Mahomet founded religions, not indeed of themselves, but in the name of that Invisible God whose spokesmen and prophets they both claimed to be. In like manner the ancient Persian faith was framed and, indeed, created by Zoroaster, but he, too, only asserted himself to be the organ of the great unseen wise spirit Ormuzd.

The religion which Confucius gave to China was but the wisdom of the ancients republished, truths that patriarchs had spoken to a people when worship was filial.

These men, and some others of the same type, were justly revered for what they said, but they were never themselves—no, not even in the case of Mahomet—made the sole centre of a system sufficient for all the spiritual wants of mankind, and then again, the things they said were not held sacred *because* of the men who uttered them.

The only person, indeed, with whom in the order of founders of religion Jesus Christ might with any show of reason be compared was Buddha, and yet even here we have much more of contrast than of comparison. The religion of Buddha was one, as I have already endeavoured to show, of absolute despair, whereas Christianity is obviously the religion of boundless hope.

Buddha, knowing nothing of God, could make no claim to Divinity, but the *special* mission of Jesus Christ was to reveal the Father, and to furnish intelligible answers to the great questions, whence man comes and whither does he go?

Through Jesus Christ life and immortality were *first* brought to life in man's mind, and the dark shadow of universal death, the common lot of mere flesh and blood, was *first* transfigured in the ineffable glory of a life to come.

But with regard to Jesus Christ, as shown to us in history, what should we say of Him? Surely, of all the most incredible things, the *most* incredible would be to believe that He was the incarnate spirit of a mere priestcraft, bent on deceiving men. It would be wholly illogical to say that He was the most stupendous impostor on record to be able to inspire the world with reverence of an absolute nature and control mankind by simple love to rule

permanently the morals of daily life, and to improve and elevate the spirit of civilization in every conceivable form and manner.

To accomplish so much would be impossible, if Christ were not all He described himself to be, for no evil could either be or effect such good, and least of all the evil that could be actively represented in a living man.

Time has no mercy on idols, especially on those that men most abjectly adore; must it not be, therefore, that whatever of the Christ of history was real, must have been real and true indeed?

But now as to the Christ, not only of history, but of faith and of Christianity. Was HE a mere creation of a dogmatized creed which bore only an accidental and casual relation to the Jesus of Nazareth?

Now, what do the absolute records of the New Testament contain, and why should they be believed? The person pre-eminent in the record is Jesus and the event pre-eminent is the Resurrection.

Discussion as to the meaning and relation of the Christ of history to the Christ of faith settles one great department of the field of controversy, and discussion as to the credibility of the narratives themselves must exhaust the other.

Observe that the Christ of history and the Christ of faith were alike presented in the New Testament record. Popularly, yet, correctly speaking, we might say that the former was presented in the synoptical Gospels, and the latter in the fourth Gospel and the Epistles, and it is very noteworthy that the oldest and undoubtedly most authentic documents in the New Testament present us *rather* with the Christ of faith than with the Jesus of history; in effect, the theological interpretation of

Christ's person is, so far as literary expression goes, older than the mere historic representation.

From the very earliest stage, however, the two conceptions have been identified so as to become inseparable ; the Jesus of history has become the Jesus of faith. And now let us ask, how was it that HE became the Christ of faith to His early followers—to the men who knew Him, saw His shame, tasted in some degree the agony of His death, and witnessed His fortitude ?

Lessing said there was a great distinction between the religion of Christ and the Christian religion, and he added that what men needed was to escape from the Christian religion to that of Christ.

It would seem, however, that such a sentiment hardly actuated Strauss in his earlier efforts, for it was not the historic, but the philosophic sense that ruled him. The Christ that Strauss found was humanity, the divine Son in perpetual flow or flux of everlasting birth and death. But no great time elapsed before, as we know, Strauss discovered that he had dissolved too much, that he had entirely lost the creative personality. So in his third edition of "*Leben Jesu*," put forth in the year 1838, he advanced beyond this mythical standpoint, and said, "We must attribute to Jesus historic reality, and call Him the supreme religious genius. All great movements arise in persons. Christianity must have arisen in a person, and the person it arose in was Jesus of Nazareth, the supreme religious genius of time."

But that position did not remain long, and various considerations induced a recoil in its framers. Then Baur came to substitute his theory of tendency. He said Strauss has given us a criticism of Gospel history without a criticism of the Gospel narrative: the latter must be the fundamental process. And Baur thought that his theory of tendencies would

exactly explain how the Jesus of history had become the Christ of faith.

But he failed to prove his position, for this reason: his rival tendencies were *not* rival in a great central point; his theory did not explain the central persons where the central form was the same in the varied tendencies.

That splendid romance, or historic criticism, known as "Vie de Jesu," of Renan, could not by any possibility be regarded as a real historical approximation of Jesus in His historical person. Strauss, and every succeeding thinker of that stamp since, as already shown, started on the assumption that miracles were impossible, and all, therefore, that needed to be explained was the way in which the miracles came to be credited, and to exercise so enormous and determining a power on the life and the history of the world.

But if the assumption that faith made was illogical, how much more so was the assumption made by criticism? If the one assumed that miracles were possible, the other that they were impossible, then, I think, criticism has not any right to charge faith with being illogical in its assumption, because faith could surely, in all fairness, make an exactly similar charge against criticism.

Now, what do men mean when they talk of *the uniformity of nature*? When they talk about invariable necessary laws precluding belief in the supernatural, what are the premises that justify this conclusion?

Was the uniformity of nature subjective or objective—the idea of man, or the reality of nature? The phrase uniformity of nature expresses, of course, a given conception of nature—a given notion or idea—and nothing more. It represents the generalized experience of mankind, and the notion that based on that generalized experience

such and such phenomena have been observed to repeat themselves. They are assumed to be regular, and to constitute therefore the order of nature formed solely on the given experience of finite man.

Now, man, in the simplest sense, is a child of nature, a son of his land and people, the products of the varied historical conditions that surround his birth. The problem is, whether in the narrow physical sense, as used by the unscientific criticism of the present day, nature alone *can* explain the person, the work, the teaching, and, above all, the being of the historic Jesus?

Just contemplate for a moment where and when Jesus was born.

He was, as we know, born in Judea, a country narrow, disunited, bi-parted among a people who had never realized their own religious ideas.

Judaism was narrow and exclusive, the very antitheses of all that was now to come—the antipodes of all we understand by the word cosmopolitan.

Education was at a very low ebb. Some men knew, it may be, the past of their own race, but not the men in Christ's circumstances.

Contemplate, too, that Jesus Christ was born a peasant, and the narrowness, distinctive of His class, was His initial environment.

Superstition, formalism, and gross ignorance were everywhere about Him.

We must not, indeed we cannot, justly measure Him by the priest, the Pharisee, nor, indeed, by any members of the Rabbinical school. We have to view Him as a peasant. Let us consider the extreme shortness of His public ministry, which lasted barely three years, and then contrast the mighty sublime work He accomplished in that space of time! Contrast here the work of Plato with that of Jesus. Plato was hardly dead before

his school died too, while the cause and the work of Christianity has ever rolled on increasingly from one age to another.

If we judge systems of religion by their results, what is there in the world that can for a moment be compared with the work that Christianity has wrought in the world, and the work that it still does in our midst?

Some reason surely exists in all this why the New Testament record should be believed.





A WORD ON THE BIBLE.

IF we take and examine the Bible as a whole, no unprejudiced man or woman can reach any other conclusion than this, that—apart from the question of inspiration—no other work, or series of works, existing, so fully and exactly meets the needs, and responds to the hopes and aspirations of our common human nature.

As a rule, I believe that the people who, in these excessively critical days, level doubts at the Holy Scriptures, in whole or part, rarely, if ever, read the text for themselves. They are usually quite content to rest on their recollections derived from their childish readings, or on the minute portions they may hear in connection with religious services—if they ever attend any. They read, however, the subtle analyses of free-thought inquirers, and in general act very much like a jury who, having listened to the prosecution in a case of difficulty, declined to hear the defence.

It is wonderful, too, what small matters seem sufficient to make some minds incredulous as to the authority of the Scriptures.

One man objects because the mustard seed is mentioned as the smallest of its kind, as though the Bible were written to teach botany, and as

though Campbell, the poet, ought to be pronounced a liar because he declared that the genius of the Andes—

"With meteor standard to the winds unfurled,
Looks from his throne of clouds o'er *half the world!*"

Another gets hold of a "suppressed" Gospel, finds a rationalistic account therein of the birth of Jesus Christ, and straightway disbelieves the Evangelists. Others cite the Koran and so-called "holy" books of the Hindoos, and point out that their morality is much on a level with that of the Bible; and generally it is something marvellous to see how ingenious men suddenly grow in the vain endeavour to disprove the authenticity of the only book which really denounces sin as sin, and justifies the universal voice of human conscience.

To some the imprecatory Psalms are an objection, and to others, again, certain incidents found in the historic Scriptures, which they deem revolting. They forget that the Bible not only admonishes man, but it sternly shows what he has been, and what he can be at his worst. Taken as a whole, no other collection of histories and essays, of precepts and poems, preach throughout one unflinching moral lesson; and if there be certain passages of the Bible which some persons would hesitate to read out, let them remember that the Koran and the Shastras are overflowing with preceptive, not merely historic, matter, which cannot be named in Western society.

The end of the Bible is morality, and the lives of Christian communities have demonstrated this to the world in all ages since Christ died on the cross. What the effects of the Koran, of the Vedas, and other "Bibles" of the pagan religions of the world have been, we can see now in the vice,

the murder, and immorality wherewith eastern communities are saturated.

If the Musselman be—as he often is—a good subject and a faithful husband, the cause is in the better impulses of his human nature, and not in the religious training to which he has been subjected. The same rule holds good with the Chinese and Japanese, who often present to us amiable characteristics, which are really due to nature, and not to the culture of their times. But even this amiability, which impresses the traveller, is often but a mere varnish, and hides beneath its smooth surface a depth of unspeakable depravity.





CONCLUSION.

VERY many years ago, I remember seeing a clock with a dial so spacious that the movements of the *hour* hand could be distinctly noted. I remember, although very young then, that the sight made a deep impression on my mind, and when we reflect that time, as we call the measure of things human, *never* stops, but is continually hurrying the whole succession of human beings into some after-state, it will be admitted by all that to fix ourselves entirely on this world is nothing short of downright insanity.

We die ourselves, sooner or later. If we survive longer than customary, we cannot keep others from going before us into the world unseen.

Every year that we live ourselves adds to our awful associations with the vast world of those who have passed away—a world inconceivably more populous than anything we can adequately picture in the way of numbers.

Finally, if we yet linger on, there must come a sad time of unspeakable solitude, when we can sorrowfully cast up our mortal account, and find that the greater part of our social ties are no longer to be found here.

A few whom we love may yet linger on ; often, however, there are none, and it will sometimes happen that the whole of those who have occupied

our warmest affections are gone entirely beyond our earthly reach and sight.

This is the universal lot, and no man can evade it.

I have sought in these pages, in a humble way, to obtain a glimpse of the eternal economies of the world or state to which we are sure, at some time or other, to go.

I have endeavoured, from a standpoint outside Revelation, to indicate the awful errors of the various atheistic dogmas of the day, and I have striven to show that the evidences of the supernatural are thick around us all.

Now, however, in closing a work which is but an outline—a mere sketch of what nature herself reveals of the God whence she sprang—I entreat the reader who has followed me thus far, whether he be Positivist, Agnostic, or Rationalist, to turn to the Bible itself and study its pages with but the same attention he devotes to his Darwin or Huxley.

To the believer, into whose hands this book may fall, I say nothing; *he* knows innately that the masterpieces of human intellect are but fleeting vanities beside that Word of God which endures for ever and ever.







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