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God's Word

MAN'S LIGHT AND GUIDE.

A COURSE OF

Lectures on the Bible,

BEFORE THE

New York Sunday School Association,

BY

*REV. DRS. TAYLOR, BRIGGS, STORRS, CROSBY, BOOTH,
PORTER, BOARDMAN, WASHBURN, AND
SIMPSON.*

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PREFACE.

THE Course of Lectures comprising this volume was given before the New York Sunday-School Association, during the past winter, 1876-7. At the commencement no thought of their publication was entertained; it became apparent, however, very early in the course, that the interest awakened by them could not be satisfied by their delivery only: and in answer to the frequent and urgent requests of the Sunday-school public, application was made to the authors for their manuscripts for publication. The result is seen in the present volume, which is put forth with the confident expectation that not only many who were unable to hear the lectures, but a large number of those who did, will desire to preserve this volume among their choice reading.

It should be stated, in justice to those whose names are annexed to the lectures, that each is held responsible only for the opinions expressed by himself.

E. C. WILDER,

PRESIDENT N. Y. S. S. ASSOCIATION.

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THE
INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.



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THE INSPIRATION

OF

THE SCRIPTURES

IN entering upon the consideration of the inspiration of the Scriptures, it is essential that we have first a clear idea of the place which that subject holds in the order of a logical investigation into the claims and characteristics of the Old and New Testaments. The existence and personality of God is the great postulate of the soul; and that being granted, it is at once seen to be both a possible and a probable thing that He should communicate in some way with man in his state of conscious guilt and spiritual helplessness. The Bible claims to be such a communication; and we can trace it up through the centuries to the dates at which its several component parts were written; we can establish that its books were written by the men whose names they bear; and that in their Greek and Hebrew forms they have come down to us with wonderful accuracy, so that we have more certainty that we have Paul's epistles as he wrote them, than we have that the letters of Cicero to his friend Atticus are preserved in their original form. All these things are settled for the sacred books precisely as we

settle the genuineness and authenticity of other ancient writings; and the next topic of inquiry is the credibility of Scripture. Allowing that we have here genuine ancient books, and that they were written by the men whose names are attached to them, may we believe their statements? Here we are met by the first serious antagonism in the shape of a denial of the possibility of the supernatural. It is alleged that miracles are impossible, and therefore that the books containing the records of them are incredible. So the whole subject of the possibility, credibility, and evidential value of miracles falls to be considered at this point; and it is only after the miracles have been proved to be real, and the miracle-workers to be thus divinely attested and endorsed, that we advance to the question of inspiration.

In the arrangements for this course of lectures, and when I undertook to treat this very important and difficult subject, I expected that this order would have been observed; but as each lecturer had to be taken in the week when he could be got, it was found to be impossible to carry out this design; and so it is all the more needful that I should point out to you the proper logical sequence of the different themes that are to be discussed before you. I shall have to take for granted that one writer has proved to you the genuineness and authenticity of the sacred books, and that another has established to your satisfaction the truth of the miracles, and the reality of the Deity of our Lord and the divinity of the commission of the prophets and apostles. And

with these things held as settled, I am to inquire into the subject of the inspiration of the Scriptures.

The term rendered in 2 Tim. 3:16, "given by inspiration of God," signifies literally "God-breathed;" and it implies that the writings of the Old Testament, of which Paul is there speaking, were the result of a certain influence exerted by God upon their authors, who, as Peter has it, "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The word, then, may be held as intimating that the Holy Ghost was especially and miraculously present with and in the writers, revealing to them truths which they did not know before, and guiding them alike in their record of these truths, and of the transactions of which they were eye and ear witnesses, so that they were enabled to present them with substantial accuracy to the minds of others.

The peculiarity of this definition lies in the word "miraculously." Many would say all the rest, but would falter over that. They conceive inspiration to be only a higher degree of genius, and deny that there is anything supernatural and peculiar in the case of the writers of the Bible. But in opposition to that opinion we cite the declarations of the men themselves, who stand before us as men divinely endorsed by miracle, and who must be held to be the best witnesses in the case. When David said, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue," he meant something more than the apostrophe to the muse with which the Iliad begins, or even than the prayer to the Spirit which forms the gem

of Paradise Lost. When Isaiah and his brethren said, "Thus saith the Lord," they claimed something higher than that they were speaking under the stirrings of poetic rapture; and when Paul said to the Corinthians, "Which things we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth," he used language to which you will find no parallel in the literature of mere human genius. And no man of candor or intelligence can pass from the writings even of the unapproachable Shakespeare into the perusal of the Bible without feeling that the difference between the two is one not simply of degree, but of kind; he has not merely ascended to a loftier outlook in the same human dwelling, but he has gone into a new region altogether. There is what we may call a certain "unknown quality" in this book which clearly distinguishes it from others; and if we may take its own explanation of the matter, that unknown quality is divine inspiration.

Now it may clear away much of the obscurity which has been thrown around this subject if we distinguish between things that differ, and it may serve to render our remarks more memorable if we group them under a few appropriate headings.

1. In the first place, then, you will observe that Scripture is entirely silent as to the manner in which the divine influence wrought upon the minds of the authors, or the kind of agency of which they were the subjects. God never answers the question "How?" When in regard to the new birth Nicodemus asked, "How can these things be?"

he received for answer a reiteration of its necessity. And when men ask into the "how" of gravitation or cohesion, they are met with the same silence. So in regard to inspiration, we have no information whatever as to the mode of its action; we are pointed only to results. We must not allow ourselves therefore to wander beyond the record, and speculate with Dick, Doddridge, and others, on degrees of inspiration, such as superintendence, elevation, or suggestion. All such attempts are ensnaring, and tend only to confuse us in regard to a subject which is mysterious enough in itself.

2. In the second place, we must distinguish between inspiration and revelation. The most cursory perusal of the Bible will show that it consists of two different kinds of records: first, those of truths directly and immediately imparted to the mind of the writer by God, and which he could have learned in no other manner; and second, those of events that occurred before the writer's own observation, and of sayings that fell upon his own ears. Thus Paul received the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper "by revelation," and he went up to Jerusalem "by revelation;" but when he is narrating the incidents connected with his interview with Peter at Antioch, he is telling facts which were as well known to others as they were to him. There is therefore a very apparent distinction between these two things; but inspiration touches the written accounts of them both, and it is the same for them both. Its province is to secure accuracy in the transmission of truth, whether that truth

be a revelation directly received from God, or the history of something which has occurred before the eyes of men on earth. Hence though the whole Scripture is inspired, it does not stamp with divine authority every sentiment which it reports as uttered by the men of whom it speaks, or mark with the divine approval every action which is related in it as performed by those whose biographies it contains. In the Book of Job, for example, inspiration gives with equal accuracy the language of Jehovah, the words of Satan, and the speeches of Job and his three friends; but it does not therefore place them all on the same level of authority. Each speaker is responsible for his own utterances, and neither Job nor Bildad nor Zophar nor Eliphaz nor Elihu spoke by inspiration of God. They gave utterance to their own opinions, and all that inspiration vouches for is that no one of them is misrepresented, but that each spoke the sentiments that are here attributed to him. This may seem so evident as to be a mere truism; but even such a thinker as Coleridge has charged the advocates of the verbal theory of inspiration (and if his charge is true at all, it is equally so of the plenary theory which we adopt) with the palpable absurdity of making God responsible for all the half-truths uttered by those ancient debaters; and so it becomes us, holding as we do to the fact that inspiration guarantees the accuracy of the report, to repudiate and expose the ridiculous perversion of the truth which is industriously attributed to us. Because a sentence of Satan's is recorded in Job, and also in the history of our

Lord's temptation, and because I believe that Satan has been in both instances correctly represented, it does not follow that I must also believe that he spoke by inspiration. And the same is true of every interlocutor introduced into the sacred narratives. Claudius Lysias was not inspired to write his letter to Felix because that letter is preserved in the book of the Acts; but the inspiration of Luke vouches for the accuracy of the representation which he has given of the letter—that is all. So, again, the fact that David's cruelty to the Ammonites is recorded in the Book of Kings does not imply that God approved it. The inspiration of the book vouches only for the accuracy of the record. Only when he who speaks is speaking in God's name, and is a recognized prophet or apostle, have we any right to regard his utterances as of divine authority. This distinction between revelation and inspiration must be clearly understood, for some of the most plausible objections to the common theory have arisen from the fact that by many it has been either unrecognized or ignored.

3. In the third place, we must distinguish between inspiration and verbal dictation. The Holy Spirit did not employ the writers as copying machines. He used the men themselves, and spoke through their individuality to others. He wrought in and with and through their spirits, so as to preserve their individuality, while yet he transmitted his truth. The gold was his; the mould was theirs. If you ask me whether inspiration affected the words, I must answer Yes, for it could not

insure the correct transmission of thought, without in some way affecting the words ; but it affected the words not directly and immediately by dictating them in the ears of the writers, but mediately, through working on their minds, and producing there such vivid and clear ideas of thoughts and facts, that the writers could easily find words fitted to their purpose. The Spirit employed the attention, the investigation, the memory, the education, the fancy, the logic, in a word, all the characteristics of the writer, and wrought through these. Hence we find Luke, in his introduction to his Gospel, affirming that he had made diligent investigation of all things from the very beginning of Christ's ministry. Hence also, we have peculiarities of style in the productions of each of the sacred penmen. We can see a difference between the manner of Moses and that of Matthew ; between the songs of David and the epigrammatic proverbs of his son ; between the mystic grandeur of Ezekiel and the simple majesty of Isaiah ; between the intellectual acuteness of Paul and the keen spiritual intuition of John. We must conclude therefore, that while from the divine side the Holy Spirit gave through men clearly and faithfully that which he wished to communicate, from the human side that communication came forth in language such as the men themselves would naturally have chosen. I am aware that many would sneer at this as an impossibility, and would allege that if the words are affected by inspiration at all, there must have been dictation. But the "must" is a "*non sequitur*."

It is admitted by all that God works out his own purposes in the government of the world, through the ordinary actions of men, while yet no violence is done to their personal freedom. It is admitted, also, that God, through the gracious operations of his Spirit, works in the hearts of his people so as to develop the new man in each of them, while yet the individuality of each is preserved, and the type of piety is just as distinct in each Christian as the style is in each of the sacred writers. These cases are so nearly parallel to that before us, as to suggest that all denials of the possibility of inspiration without the destruction of individual characteristics, are as unphilosophical as they are arrogant.

4. In the fourth place, I remark that, in the reproduction of discourses, inspiration is not verbatim reporting. This follows from what I have already said, for reporting would have been a mere mechanical operation; but the Spirit used the memories, the intuitions, the judgments, and indeed, the idiosyncrasies of the writers, so that while each gives that of the discourse which, as I may so express it, adhered to himself, he was enabled to give it with substantial accuracy. No one of the sacred writers professes to give a complete account of everything that Jesus said on any one occasion, for John is careful to declare that if such a thing had been attempted, "the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." But the Spirit so wrought in them, and through them, that what they did write was in substance true. Thus, in the case of the title over the cross,

each of the four evangelists gives different words. In Matthew it stands thus: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." In Mark, thus: "The King of the Jews." In Luke, thus: "This is the King of the Jews." In John, thus: "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews." Now if inspiration had been mere verbatim reporting, then these four would have been alike; but since the Holy Spirit used the memories of the evangelists, there are verbal differences, while in the great matter which fastened itself on the memory of each, namely, that Pilate had acknowledged the royalty of Jesus, they are all alike. That was the substance of the title, and in conveying that, accuracy is secured. Now let it be observed that by using the sacred penmen thus, the Holy Spirit has let us see the Saviour's history from four different stand-points, and by so much the more has increased our knowledge of him. Hugh Miller, in one of the most interesting of his writings,* has remarked, concerning the imitative faculty, that he has seen it rendered valuable by being set in the literary attainment of a newspaper reporter, so that he has had to estimate at a different value, the respective reports of gentlemen of the press, equal in their powers of memory and in general acquirement, and unequal merely in the degree in which they possessed the imitative faculty. In the reports of the one class, he had found only the meaning of the speakers, in those of the other, both the meaning and the speakers too. Now this difference in men reproducing the sub-

* "First Impressions of England," page 282.

stance of what others have said in our own day, may enable us to understand how it is that through the eyes of John's intuitional character we see in his Gospel so much more of Christ's deeper nature, than we do through Matthew's narrative ; and how in the Gospel of Mark we are made so much better acquainted with the Lord's looks and gestures, than we are in that of Luke. Each took all that his own individuality, and the purpose which he had in view in writing, attracted to him ; but it is not professed that either one of them by himself, or the whole of them put together, give a perfectly complete account of every word the Saviour spoke on any one occasion, far less of all the words he uttered in his public ministry. Yet what each gives is, so far as it goes, a correct representation of the Lord. If each had given simply a full verbatim report of the discourses which he heard, then whenever they came upon the same address, they would have been only reproductions of each other, like the several pages in a manifold writer, and it would have been said at once that the fourfold testimony was virtually only one. But as it is, not only have we four views of Christ, taken from so many different points, but we have four independent human witnesses, by whose testimony the truth of the facts of the gospel may be established.

5. I remark in the fifth place, that inspiration is not sanctification. The possession of this gift was no proof of the personal holiness of him who had it. Balaam was inspired, and Saul prophesied with the students at Ramah,

and so we must distinguish between the inspiration and the holiness of the man. All gifts are not graces. Inspiration is a gift, sanctification is a grace. The one is no guarantee of the other. Yet, obvious as this distinction is, it has been often overlooked. Thus one of the most ingenious of the modern opponents to the common view of inspiration has said, "We all know that Peter reasoned very perversely about the circumcision, and that Paul at once vanquished him in argument." But we know nothing of the kind. What we do know is that Peter acted in a manner inconsistent with his own avowed views. Neither his teachings nor his reasonings were at fault. It was his conduct that was blameworthy. Not his inspiration as a teacher, but his sanctification as a Christian, was defective.

6. Finally, the inspiration of Scripture does not involve in it the infallible guidance of all the copyists and translators of the sacred books. In the early Christian centuries, and on till the period of the invention of printing, copies could be multiplied only by transcription; and that must have caused many inaccuracies which only a continuous miracle, such as we have no warrant to expect, could have prevented. Again, the translation from the original language into our own tongue and into other tongues was a human work, and like everything purely human is marred by imperfections. We must therefore be on our guard against charging inspiration with such mistakes as have arisen from either of these causes; while from the progress made in recent times

in the sciences of Biblical criticism and philology, we may expect that we shall come nearer and nearer to the sacred autographs and so minimize the difficulties that have heretofore pressed on every theory which has been advanced regarding inspiration.

But now, having attempted to show you what inspiration is, by a process of differentiation which has made manifest to you what it is not, I proceed to the proof that the word of God is authoritatively inspired. There are many lines of induction on which we might travel to that conclusion, but as it is impossible to take more than one on an occasion like the present, I select the testimony of the Lord Jesus himself. Remember, we have on other grounds arrived at the conviction that he is to be received as the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, and so we are not reasoning in a circle when we call him as a witness. Now on the very face of the Gospel narratives it appears that he was in the habit of appealing to the Old Testament in such a way as implied that it was of divine origin and authority. Of the law he affirmed that not one jot or tittle should in any wise pass from it till all was fulfilled. When he quoted from David he affirmed that the psalmist "spake in the Spirit," or "by the Holy Ghost." He declared that "the Scriptures must be fulfilled." He exhorted his hearers to "search the Scriptures," and he made one of his arguments turn on the declaration that "the Scripture cannot be broken." And if we may take the words of those who as apostles were his daily companions for years, or were

specially instructed by himself, as representing his views, then the manner in which Peter quoted from the ancient Scripture on the day of Pentecost and the fact that he declares that holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; the assertion of Paul that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and the method in which that apostle constantly treats the Old Testament in his epistles; the allegation of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that God spoke to the fathers by the prophets, and the formula by which the same writer cites from the book of Psalms, saying, "wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith," all indicate that in the view of our Lord and his apostles the Old Testament was given by inspiration of God, and is of infallible authority. We cannot therefore give up the authority of the Old Testament, without compromising that of the New; and in that fact you have the reason why so many assailants of Christianity direct their first batteries against Moses and the prophets. We hang the Old Testament on the neck of the Saviour. It has the endorsement and imprimatur of the Son of God, and we receive it as inspired on his authority.

But what of that of the New? We reply that we receive that also on the word of Christ, because of the promises which he gave to his apostles, with reference to their public work in the organizing of the early church, and the giving to it of the word of the truth of the gospel. There are two classes of promises given to the apostles, involving in them the assurance

plenary inspiration. The first is to be found exclusively in the three earliest gospels, and of these the passage Matt. 10:19-20 may be taken as an example: "When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Now if these words mean anything at all they imply, that on all public occasions on which the apostles should be called to defend themselves, whether before councils or synagogues, before governors and kings, they would be infallibly guided by the Holy Ghost, as to what and how they should speak. The second class of passages is to be found in the farewell discourse which John has preserved for us in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of his Gospel, and which are as follows: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." Now that

the apostles understood these words to mean both revelation and inspiration is manifest from many statements incidentally made in the Acts of the Apostles, and from expressions employed by Peter and Paul in their epistles. When the vision came to Peter on the housetop at Joppa, he recognized it as a fulfilment of Christ's promise, and said regarding the truth then taught him, "The Lord hath showed me." So Paul, speaking of certain matters which he narrates, says, "I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you;" and of a journey which he took to Jerusalem he remarks, "I went up by revelation." Again, in regard to his teaching, he says, "which things we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Again, when he declares that the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, he asserts by implication, that the New Testament apostles occupy a coördinate place with the Old Testament prophets, and as the latter spoke by the Holy Ghost, so also must it have been with the former; while Peter, in referring to Paul's writings and classing them with the other Scriptures, plainly implies that they also were given by inspiration of God. I might here greatly enlarge and bring together passages which have underlying them the claim on the part of their authors to be received as inspired. But I forbear. I wish to show you that as we receive the Old Testament on the word of Christ's endorsement, so we receive the New on the word of his promise to his apostles. In the one case he was looking back and

stamping with his authority what had been already written ; in the other he was looking forward, and giving his assurance that in producing all that was necessary for the initiation and perpetuation of his church, his apostles would be guided by infallible inspiration. Thus on Christ's word we rest the whole Bible, and because we believe in him, we accept it as divinely inbreathed.

But it may be well to look for a little at some of the objections which have been raised against the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. Of course it will be understood that I cannot take up all the difficulties which have been suggested. To do that would require, not a lecture, but many volumes ; still, classifying them under three heads, I may give you a few general principles bearing upon each of them.

I. Take, then, the assertion that the view which we have presented is inconsistent with the existence of apparent discrepancies in the narratives which the sacred writers give of the same occurrences. Now without entering upon individual cases, it is pertinent to remind you here of what I have already said, that inspiration does not guarantee the infallibility of copyists, and it is undeniable that many of these seeming inconsistencies may be traced to the carelessness of scribes. Many of the much-talked-of discrepancies between the books of Kings and Chronicles, as well as a few of those presented in the New Testament are at once accounted for in that way ; for the slightest change in a letter or a word, such as a weary transcriber after a long day's work would be

very liable to make, accounts for the disagreement, and the emendation being made, harmony is at once restored. This is especially the case in those statements in the Old Testament which relate to numbers; for as in the Hebrew language there were no numerals, but the letters of the alphabet were made to do duty for figures, and as some of these letters differ from others only by the merest hair-stroke, it is easy to see how in the process of transcription errors have crept in; but now that the science of Biblical criticism is so far advanced, we may hope to get nearer the original readings, and the more that hope is realized, the fewer will such discrepancies become.

Again I would recall what I said regarding the difference between inspiration and verbatim reporting, and that will help to remove much of the difficulty arising from the existence of these apparent differences, while it leaves the infallibility of the books intact. For the Spirit using men, did not intend to give a complete account of all that was said or done on any occasion. He helped each to give what he saw or heard, so that he gave that correctly; and as no one man could see everything that was connected with even one incident, or comprehend all that was implied in even one saying of Christ, it could not but be that differences should arise. You may take four photographic views of one face which shall seem as inconsistent with each other as the four gospels are, and yet they shall be all correct, because they are taken from different angles. The records are not exhaustive; if they had been, they would have been too volu-

minous to be of service; but because they are not, we must be content to accept them, with certain lacunæ which look like discrepancies, but which could be so filled as to remove all perplexity. Now in regard to these, all that is needed is the suggestion of a probable solution. The burden of proof lies here on the assailant, and he is required to show, not only the appearance of inconsistency, but also the impossibility of removing it, and that I take it, will be impossible, for the hardest thing to do is to prove a negative.

Further, we must not forget, that in the process of investigation, many of these difficulties have been fully removed, and the fact, that every new discovery among the monumental records of antiquity has tended to corroborate the Scriptures, is not without its significance in this regard. He would be a fool, who should think of giving up the Bible as a divine book, because he does not certainly know the unrecorded third fact, that is needed to put the account of the suicide of Judas in Matthew into harmony with the words used by Peter in the first chapter of the Acts. Both accounts are incomplete, yet both correct in what they state. If we could have put either Matthew or Peter under cross-examination, the first question might have elicited the solution; but as that is now impossible, we may leave it as it is, believing both are right, and remembering that an inspired record is one thing and an exhaustive history is quite another, and is, in so many words disclaimed by the author of the fourth gospel, for himself and brethren.

II. Another class of objections is that which is brought by those who allege that the sacred writers are in some of their narratives inconsistent with ancient historians. Now here it is pertinent to say, that inspiration altogether apart, we have just as much reason to believe in the accuracy of Luke or of the Chronicles of the Kings, as we have to accept the statements of Josephus or Berosus. We cannot therefore condemn too severely the conduct of these who when they find that Josephus is silent on any matter, or says something regarding it, which is different from the sacred books, therefore they must be wrong and he must be right. As Alford has said, "Josephus teems with inaccuracies," so we cannot admit his infallibility, and let that be employed as an engine against the Bible. Further, in some recent instances the truth of the sacred narrative has been vindicated in a remarkable manner. I need only refer to two, namely, the discovery from the inscription on the great Babylonian cylinder that the eldest son of Nabonnedus was named Bel-shareser, and that he had been admitted by his father to a share in the government, a key which enables us to unlock the difficulty created by the fragment of Berosus preserved by Josephus from which it appeared that Nabonnedus the king fled to Borsippa and there was captured by Cyrus. Thus both statements are seen to be correct. Again the minute accuracy of Luke which was apparently compromised by the fact that he had called Sergius Paulus the *ἀνθύπατος*, or proconsul of Cyprus, while it was alleged the proper title was procura-

tor, has been fully vindicated by the discovery of some coins bearing the effigy of the Emperor Claudius, and in the centre reverse occurs the word *κυπρίων*, of the Cyprians, while the surrounding legend gives the title used by Luke to a person who must have been the immediate successor or predecessor of Sergius Paulus. Now with these and many similar cases before us, we need not be disturbed by the occasional appearance of discrepancy between the sacred and profane historians. All we have to do is to wait, and give a liberal assistance to those who are diligently exploring Eastern lands, with the full assurance that whatever "records leap to light," not only will the glory of the Bible "not be shamed," but its authority will be vindicated.

III. A third class of objections is connected with the discoveries of modern science. It is alleged that its authors could not have been inspired, because their statements are declared to be inconsistent with the facts which science has discovered. Now, in answer to this, the following things have to be noted :

1. The Bible was not given to be a revelation of physical science; and so whatever references it makes to things in that department are incidental.

2. In these references its writers employ the language of the common people of their age. They must have done so, or they would have been unintelligible to those to whom they spoke or wrote. A book which is to instruct men must employ their vocabulary. Hence, even in speaking of God, the inspired writers refer to Him in

terms which are fully appropriate only to men. Now on the same principle as we account for the anthropomorphisms used by the prophets and apostles when speaking of God, so we explain the use of common and current language by them on scientific subjects. There were no other forms of speech then in use, and they had to accommodate themselves to the vocabulary of the times, just as in teaching your child you have to confine yourself as nearly as possible to terms he understands. Had they done otherwise, their words would have been rejected by the men of their own age just for containing that which our modern scientists complain that they omit.

3. Considering that these two things are so, the language of the Scriptures on certain scientific facts is very striking, and tends to the establishment of the fact that the Bible, though never in advance of the science of any age, is, when rightly interpreted, always abreast of science. It has been so constructed as not to anticipate modern discoveries by a divine revelation of the things discovered; and yet as science advances, the Bible is found, on closer study, to be in harmony with it. In this we have not only a successful reply to all objections, but also a clear proof of the inspiration of Scripture along another line; for as one has acutely said, "Only one seeing the end from the beginning could so adjust the language used as on the one hand to make it tell the men of the existing generation no more than they otherwise knew of astronomical or geological or any other natural truth, and yet on the other to make it such that the men

of all future generations should be able, in the long run, and without violence, to explain it satisfactorily in the light of their clearer and fuller information and their more advanced and accurate science."* In verification of this take a few illustrations. In that part of the Book of Job which is the direct utterance of Jehovah, (38:12,) we have the following passage: "Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place; that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it? It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment." Now there is nothing here to reveal to men the rotatory motion of the earth; yet that being discovered, how harmonious with it is the description, "It is turned as clay to the seal;" for the motion of the clay on the cylinder as it takes the impression, like that of the modern printing-press, is precisely analogous to that of the earth as it receives the day-spring. Again, in Ecclesiastes 1:6, we read, "The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually; and the wind returneth again according to his circuits." This does not indeed announce beforehand the rotatory law of storms; but the words are perfectly in harmony with that law, and accurately describe the motion of cyclones, as that has been discovered by recent meteorological observers. In the same chapter (verse 7) we have words which, without describing the process of evaporation, yet imply all

* "Reason and Revelation," by R. S. Candlish, D. D., pp. 80-82.

that we now mean by that phrase: "All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again." And Amos has employed language which clearly presupposes that which modern investigations have ascertained when he says, "Seek him that maketh the seven stars, and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth; the Lord is his name." (Amos 5:8.) So again, when the Lord Jesus, in defending himself (John 5:17) from the accusation of Sabbath-breaking, says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," he says nothing directly about the length of the days in the Creation week; but if the view which regards them as long periods be accepted, see what force it gives to his argument, as we amplify it thus: "We are living now in the seventh day of the Creation week. This is the time of Jehovah's rest. We have now no work of creation going on; no special additions have been made to the various orders of plants and animals on the surface of the earth since man appeared; and in that sense God has been resting. But though he has not called anything new into existence, he has been continuously at work in upholding all that he has made, and he has put forth special remedial efforts for the restoration of man to the state in which he was formed at first, and from which he fell by his own sin. If, therefore, during the Sabbath of Creation's week, and while God is resting, he

can yet put forth special exertions for the redemption and education of men, I am only following in the same line when, on the Sabbath of an ordinary week, and while I am resting from labor in the ordinary sense of that term, I put forth my energy in the restoration of an impotent man to health. My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." If the Sabbath of Creation's week has lasted for nearly six thousand years, and for anything we can see may last for thousands of years to come, there is not only no incongruity, but also perfect consistency, in supposing that each of the other days was a period long enough for all the requirements of modern science.

And, to take only one example more, when Paul in his argument on the resurrection, says, (1 Cor. 15:40, 41,) "There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory," he is not referring to degrees of glory among the saints in heaven, but illustrating the truth that the resurrection-body will be fitted for the resurrection-life, even as the body of the fish is for swimming, and that of the bird for flying, and as the physical composition of each heavenly body is adapted to its place in the universe. We had to take all that on his word until recent times; but now, by the invention and application of the spectroscope, astronomical observers, by their analysis of the varying lines in the spectrum of each, declare that it is indeed true that "one star dif-

fereth from another star in glory." Thus the latest science casts its light upon the words of Paul, whose writing here is abreast of the revelations of the spectroscope, but by no means an anticipation of them. These instances must suffice, but are enough to reassure us, and to make us feel that the word of God has everything to hope and nothing to fear from the advance of science.

For the rest, it may do good service to point out where precisely the alleged discrepancies between the Word of God and science begin to emerge. "The scientific man believes in the infallibility of nature; the theologian believes in the infallibility of Scripture; and the differences, of which so much is made in these days, lie not between nature and revelation in themselves, but between human interpretations of them. The man of science interprets his facts in a certain way, and makes certain deductions from them. These interpretations and deductions, however, are not infallible; they are not yet unquestioningly received by scientific men themselves. It is too soon, therefore, to speak and reason as if they were absolutely correct.

"Again, the theologian's interpretations of Scripture are by no means infallible. Many of them which were accepted in past days, have been disproved, and others substituted for them; and of many more it must be said that they are still unsettled. For instance, he would be a rash man who should assert that he has discovered with infallible accuracy, the meaning of the first chapter of Genesis; or should affirm that he can satisfactorily

unravel the chronology of the early chapters of that book. These questions, and many others like them, are still *sub judice*, and the wise course for all parties to this modern misunderstanding is to wait, with mutual respect for each other, until God, in his providence and by his Spirit, shall lead to such interpretations of nature on the one hand, and of Scripture on the other, as shall make manifest their perfect harmony. Let the man of science go on with perseverance, and let him not take any mischievous delight in flinging his hypotheses at the Word of God. Let the theologian also prosecute his inquiries with diligence and devoutness, and let him give over calling men of science by evil names. They seem often to be working against each other; but they are in reality working for each other and for the truth. In the formation of the tunnel though Mont Cenis, the workmen began at opposite ends, and approached each other with drilling machines apparently directed against each other, but met at length in the middle to congratulate each other on the completion of their great undertaking, because they were working under the same supervision. So it will be with our theologians and men of science. God, the great architect of providence, is superintending both; and by-and-by, through the labors of both, the mountain of difficulty will be tunnelled through, no more to form a barrier in the inquirer's way.

“Much also may be done in this matter by calling attention to such principles as these, namely, that the Bible was not designed to be a revelation of physical

science ; that its references to all such subjects are merely incidental, and made in popular language ; that, if it had alluded to such subjects in other than popular language, it would have been unintelligible to those to whom it was first given, and would have been rejected by them as containing that which some modern philosophers complain that it does not contain ; that, considering the fact that it refers only incidentally to these topics, its language concerning some of them is occasionally very striking, and fully in harmony with modern discoveries ; and finally, that considering the course of things in the past, and how what seemed at one time to be in hopeless antagonism to God's Word is now held intelligently and consistently with it, the wise course will be for both sides to wait before the one tries to prove that there is contradiction, or the other to enforce a harmony.

“Moreover, we should not allow it to be forgotten that, all advances of modern science notwithstanding, there will ever be deep, solemn, all-important experiences in the human soul which only God's gospel can meet ; and if we dig down to these we shall go so much lower than science, that the water which she has apparently drawn from our well will return into our spring. There will still be the poison of sin, which no earthly antidote can neutralize, and which can be counteracted only by the blood of the Redeemer's cross. There will still be the sorrow of bereavement, to be solaced only by the vision of the angel at the door of the sepulchre, and the hearing of his soothing words, ‘Why seek ye the living among

the dead? He is not here; he is risen as he said; come see the place where the Lord lay.' There will still be the sense of lonesomeness stealing over the heart, even amid the bustle, and business, and prosperity of the world, to be dispelled only by the consciousness of the Saviour's presence. There will still be the spirit-shudder at the thought of death, which only faith in Christ can change into the desire to depart and to be with him, which is far better. For these things science has no remedy, and philosophy no solace, and, strong in its adaptation to these irrepressible necessities of the human heart, the gospel of Christ will outlive all philosophical attack, and survive every form of scientific unbelief.

"But though all that is true, I would not have you speak of religion and science as if they were antagonists. They are elder and younger sister in the same family; and though occasionally they may seem to be at variance, yet let but some deep grief enter into the home, or some heavy calamity fall upon the dwelling, and all misunderstanding between them will disappear; they will lock themselves in each other's arms, and science will find her resting-place on the bosom of religion. You can afford, therefore, to bid science God-speed. Her triumphs will in the end contribute to the gospel's advancement. Is it not written, 'All things are yours'? And you may rest assured that truth in one department can never falsify that which, on its own evidence, has been already ascertained to be true in another."*

* "The Ministry of the Word;" W. M. Taylor, D. D., pp. 301-305.

And now, beloved friends and fellow-laborers, if all this be true, what new importance does it give to your work as Sabbath-school teachers! You are handling the Word of God. See that you do not handle it deceitfully; but "as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak ye in Christ." Do not corrupt it by your own additions, or explain it away by your own misinterpretations of its meaning, but let it be your ambition always to let it speak for itself, for its power is in itself. "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"

And remember also the responsibility which is connected with the reading of it for yourselves. It is, in one sense, a precious privilege to have the Bible, but its possession involves also a fearful peril. Improved, it may be the means of securing an entrance into glory. Neglected, it may be the millstone round our necks to sink us deeper in perdition. It is the glory of our age that it has been produced at a price that puts it within the reach of all; but we may not forget the awful truth which Michael Bruce has expressed in these lines, which were found after his death on the fly-leaf of his copy of the Scriptures:

"'T is very vain of me to boast
How small a price this Bible cost;
The day of judgment will make clear
'T was very cheap or very dear."

THE
LANGUAGES OF THE BIBLE.



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PART I.

INTRODUCTION, AND THE HEBREW LANGUAGE.

THE languages of the Bible were prepared by Divine Providence as the most suitable ones for declaring the divine revelation to mankind. Belonging, as they do, to the two great families of speech, the Shemitic and the Indo-Germanic, which have been the bearers of civilization, culture, and the noblest products of human thought and emotion, they are themselves the highest and most perfect developments of those families, presenting, it is true, their contrasted features, but yet combining in a higher unity on the principles of Pentecost, in order to give us the complete divine revelation. Having accomplished this their highest purpose, they soon afterwards became *stereotyped* in form, or, as they are commonly called, dead languages, so that henceforth all successive generations, and indeed all the families of earth, might resort to them and find the common, divine revelation in the *same fixed and unalterable forms*.

Language is the product of the human mind, as

thought and emotion are the products of man's soul ; and therefore it depends upon the constitution of that soul, the historical experiences of the family or race speaking it, especially the internal experiences in culture, civilization, morals, and religion. The connection between language and thought is not a loose one, but an *essential* connection. Language is not merely a dress that thought may put on or off at its pleasure ; it is the body of which thought is the soul ; it is the flesh and rounded form of which thought is the life and energy. Hence it is that language is moulded by thought and emotion, by experience and culture ; it is, as it were, the speaking *face* of the race employing it, and it becomes the historical *monument* of the experience of that race ; so that in many nations that have perished, and whose early history is lost in primeval darkness, their language gives us the key to their history and experience as truly as the Parthenon tells us of the Greek mind, and the Pyramids of the Egyptian. It is not a matter of indifference, therefore, as to the languages that were to bear the divine revelation ; for although the divine revelation was designed for all races, and may be conveyed in all the languages of earth, yet, inasmuch as it was delivered in advancing historical development, certain particular languages must be employed as most suitable for the purpose, and indeed those which could best become the fountains for enriching the various languages of the earth. Hence it is that we can confidently claim that there are no languages—not even the English and the German,

which have drunk deepest from the classic springs of the Hebrew and the Greek—that there are no languages that could so adequately convey the divine revelation in its simplicity, grandeur, fulness and variety, power and impressiveness, as those selected by Divine Providence for the purpose. Hence it is that no translation can ever take the place of the *original Scriptures*; for a translation is, at the best, the work of uninspired men, who, though holy and faithful, and guided by the Spirit of God, are yet unable to do more than give us their own interpretation of the sacred oracles. They must enter into the very spirit and atmosphere of the original text; they must think and feel with the original authors; their hearts must throb with the same emotion; their minds must move in the same lines of thinking; they must adapt themselves to the numerous types of character coming from various and widely different periods of divine revelation, in order to correctly apprehend the thought and make it their own, and then *reproduce* it in a foreign tongue. A mere external, grammatical, and lexicographical translation is worthless. Unless the spirit of the original has been not only apprehended, but conveyed, it is no translation at all. Hence it is requisite that all-sided men should be chosen for this work, or at least a body of men so selected as to embrace the various types and phases of human experience and character. But even then the translation can only express the theological, ethical, and practical conceptions of the holiest and most learned men of the particular age; and

inasmuch as the divine revelation is an inspired revelation, given through holy men who spake not only from their own time and for their own time, but from and for the timeless Spirit, the *eternal* ideas for all time, so the advancing generations will ever need to understand the word of God better than their fathers, and must, if they are faithful, continually improve in their knowledge of the original Scriptures, in their power of apprehending them, of digesting them, and of reproducing them in speech and life. How important, therefore, how essential it is, if the church is to maintain a living connection with the sacred Scriptures, and enter ever deeper into their spirit and mysterious hidden life, that it should encourage a considerable portion of its youth to pursue these studies, and at all events insist that its *ministry*, who are to train it in the things of God, should have not merely a superficial knowledge of the Bible, such as any layman may readily attain, but a deep and thorough acquaintance with the original perennial fountains of truth ; otherwise, as church history has already sufficiently shown, these uninspired versions will assume the place of the *original inspired word*, and the interpretations of a particular generation will become the stereotyped dogmas of many generations, and the life of a Christian people will be cut off from its only source of spiritual growth, and a barren scholasticism, with its stereotyped dogmas, mechanical institutions, and *opera operata*, will assume the place and importance of the *divine word* and *living communion with God*.

The languages of the Bible being the only adequate means of conveying and perpetuating the divine revelation, it is important that we should learn them not merely from the outside, with grammar and lexicon, but also from the inside, from a proper conception of the genius and life of these tongues as employed by the ancient saints, and especially of the historical genius of the languages as the sacred channels of the Spirit's thought and life. For language is a living *thing*, and has its birth, its growth, its maturity, its decline, and its death. Language is born, not as a system of roots or detached words, that gradually come together by natural selection into sentences; for while plants may grow from roots after they have been cut down, but do not have their birth in roots, but in the seed-germ which contains the plant in embryo; so language, although it may be analyzed into roots, yet was not born in roots and never existed in roots, but came into being as sentences, (Sayce, Principles of Comp. Philology, p. 136, seq., 2d ed., London, 1875,) as thought is ever a sentence, and not a word. Then as the mind develops, thought is developed with its body, language, and thus the language grows with the culture of a people. All languages that have literary documents can be traced in their historical development. Especially is this the case with the languages of the Bible; they have a long history back of them; centuries of literary development were required to produce them.

I. THE HEBREW LANGUAGE.

The Hebrew language was long supposed to be the original language of mankind ; but this view can no longer be held by any philologist, for the Hebrew language, as it appears to us in its earliest forms in the sacred Scriptures, bears upon its face the traces of a long-previous literary development. (Ewald, *Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, 3te Ausg. Gött., 1864, s. 78, seq. Ewald, *Ausf. Lehrb. des Heb. Sprache*, 7te Ausg. Gött., 1863, s. 23.) This is confirmed by comparing it with the other languages of the same family. Thus the Shemitic family may be divided into four groups: 1. The Southern group—Arabic, Ethiopic, etc. 2. The Aramaic group—Syriac, Chaldee, etc. 3. The Hebrew group—the Phœnician, Hebrew, etc. 4. The Assyrian and Babylonian. Now these languages are more closely related to one another than those of the Indo-Germanic family, the people speaking them having been confined to comparatively narrow limits, and crowded on the north by the Indo-Germanic tongues, and on the south by the Turanian. Again, these languages have, for the most part, given us a considerable literature ; they were spoken by cultivated nations of the ancient world, mediating between the great centres of primitive Turanian culture—the Euphrates and the Nile. Everything seems to indicate that they all emigrated from a common centre in the desert on the south of Babylonia, (vide Schrader, *Die Abstammung der Chaldäer und die Ursitze der Semiten*, *Zeitschrift d.*

Deutsch. M. G., 1873,) the Arabic group separating first, next the Aramaic, then the Hebrew, while the Babylonian gained ultimately the mastery of the original Accadian of Babylonia, and the Assyrian founded the great empire on the Tigris. Now the book of Genesis (11:31) represents Abram as going forth from this central seat of Ur of the Chaldees, going first northward into Mesopotamia, and then emigrating to Canaan, just as we learn from other sources the Canaanites had done before him. The monuments of Ur reveal that about this time, 2,000 B. C., it was the seat of a great literary development, (*The Chaldean Account of Genesis, etc.*, p. 29, seq. Geo. Smith, New York, 1876;) so that the old objection that Abram and his children did not know how to read and write has been for ever exploded. The father of the faithful, whose origin was in that primitive seat of culture, Ur, and who lived as a chieftain of military prowess (Gen. 14) and exalted religious and moral character among the cultivated nations of Canaan, and who was received at the court of Pharaoh—that other great centre of primitive culture—on friendly terms, could not but have, to some extent at least, made himself acquainted with their literature and culture. Still further, the old and vexed question, whether Abraham adopted the language of the Canaanites, or brought the Hebrew with him from the East, must now be regarded as unimportant, for the ancient Assyrian and Babylonian are nearer to the Hebrew and Phœnician than they are to the other Shemitic families, (*Sayce, Assyrian Grammar, p. 1, seq.*

London, 1872;) so that if the languages, as now presented to us, differ less than the Romance languages—the daughters of the Latin—in their earlier stages in the time of Abraham, their difference could scarcely have been more than dialectic. Now the ancient Phœnician, the nearest akin to the Hebrew, was the language of commerce and intercourse between the nations, as the Aramaic, which took its place after the fall of Tyre, and the Greek after the conquest of Alexander. Thus the Hebrew language, as a dialect of the Canaanite and its closely related Babylonian, had already a considerable historical literary development prior to the entrance of Abram into the Holy Land. Hence the old idea that Egypt was the mother of Hebrew civilization and culture has been utterly disproved; for it is one of the most remarkable facts of history that the Hebrews should remain for so long a period in Egyptian bondage, and yet retain their Eastern civilization, culture, and language, so that at the Exodus they shook off at once all connection with the Egyptian civilization and culture as utterly alien and antagonistic to their own. For the very peculiarities of the Hebrew language, literature, and civilization, are those of the Babylonian. The biblical traditions of the Creation, of the Deluge, of the Tower of Babel, are those of the Assyrians and Babylonians. The sacred rest-day, with the significance of the number seven, the months, seasons, and years, the weights and measures, coins—all are of the same origin. Still further, that most striking feature of Hebrew poetry—the parallelism of mem-

bers—is already in the oldest Accadian hymns. Yes, the very temptation of the Hebrews to the worship of Ash-toreth and Baal, of Chemosh and Moloch, are those that have ruined the other branches of their common race. (Vide Schrader, *Semitismus und Babylonismus*. Jahrb. v. Prot. Theol., 1875.) How shall we account for these things unless we suppose that they were brought with him by Abram in his emigration to Canaan? Fixing our attention upon the single feature of the parallelism of members, how could the Hebrews have retained it as the essential feature of their poetry, if they had no poetic treasures preserved among them, and the poetic spirit had remained undeveloped with them? Without venturing upon an opinion with reference to the amount of literature to be attributed to these early times, but taking the Pentateuch as it is, we see therein a language admirably adapted for its purpose, the product of previous literary development. Whether Moses wrote the entire Pentateuch or not, yet all will admit a considerable Mosaic nucleus. This being true, the principles of language seem to require either that the ancient records have been improved by later editors, or that there must have been a large body of sacred literature to give the language that stable character that marks it throughout the entire sacred Scriptures; for while there is certainly a development in the Hebrew language of the Bible, and three periods may be readily distinguished, yet the differences between the earlier and the classic period are but slight, the chief distinguishing features being in the later wri-

tings of the Chronicler, of Ecclesiastes, Daniel, and the post-exile prophets, all showing a decline from the classic models and an approximation to the Aramaic. Sacred books give languages a permanence such as no other literature can give them. This is evident not only from the German Bible of Luther, and King James' English version, which have kept these great languages comparatively stationary, but also from the Koran, which has kept the Arabic so fixed to its classic style that it has taken a thousand years for the vulgar Arabic to reach that stage of linguistic development presented in the earliest Hebrew of the Bible. Hence we contend that unless the language of the writings of Moses has been changed by later editors—an incredible supposition—at least a considerable portion of the Pentateuch must be assigned to his times. Moses is certainly the father of the Hebrew language and literature, as Luther is of the German. He moulded its fundamental types, and started it in those directions that it has ever since maintained. As Abraham had gone forth from the culture of Babylonia to enter upon the pilgrim life of believing communion with *El Shaddai*, so Moses went forth from the culture of Egypt to become the representative of *Jahveh*, and organize a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, a theocracy the vital principles of which became *reverential* fear and worship of the personal God of the covenant.

Thus the Hebrew language became, in its essential spirit and genius, a *religious* language, the holy tongue of the holy people of God, and Moses laid its foundations

in a literature of sacred history, poetry, and prophecy. The history of the books of Moses is the fountain of all subsequent history. The grand hymn, Exod. 15, the prayer, Psa. 90, the prophetic didactic poem, Deut. 32, are the great boughs of lyric poetry upon which the Psalter subsequently burst forth in all its glory; and his prophetic discourses in Deuteronomy are the sources, as they give the key to all subsequent prophecy.

Looking now at the language as religious according to its genius, and considering it in its fundamental types and their historical development, we observe the following as some of its most prominent characteristics.

1. It is remarkably *simple* and *natural*. This is indeed a common feature of the Shemitic family. As compared with the Indo-Germanic, they represent an earlier stage in the development of mankind, the childhood of the race. Theirs is an age of perception, contemplation, and observation, not of conception, reflection, and reasoning. Things are apprehended according to their appearance as phenomena, and not according to their internal character as *noumena*. The form, the features, the expressions of things are seen and most nicely distinguished, but not their inward being; the effects are observed, but these are not traced through a series of causes, but only either to the immediate cause or else by a leap to the ultimate cause. Hence the language that expresses such thought is *simple and natural*. We see this in its sounds, which are simple and manifold, disliking diphthongs and compound letters; in its

roots uniformly of three consonants, generally accompanied by a vowel; in its inflections, mainly by internal modifications; in its simple arrangement of clauses in the sentence, with a limited number of conjunctions. Thus the conjunction *vav* plays a more important part in the language than all conjunctions combined, distinguishing by a simple modification of vocalization, accentuation, or position, between clauses coördinate, circumstantial, or subordinate, and in the latter between those indicating purpose or result. This is the most remarkable feature of the language, without a parallel in any other tongue. And so the poetry is constituted on the simple principle of the parallelism of members, these being synthetic, antithetic, or progressive; and in the latter case advancing, like the waves of the sea, in the most beautiful and varied forms. The only other principle of Hebrew poetry is the play of the tone, the force of which has not yet been sufficiently determined, but certainly had striking effects in the living language. (Reuss, Heb. Poesie, Herzog. Real. Encyk., V., s. 607.) Hence it is that the Hebrew language is the easiest to render into a foreign tongue, and that Hebrew poetry can readily be made the common property of mankind.

2. We observe a striking correspondence of the *language to the thought*. This rests upon a radical difference between the Shemitic and Indo-Germanic family in their relative appreciation of the material and the form of language. (Vid. Grill, über d. Verhältniss d. indogerm. u. d. semit. Sprachwurzeln in the Zeitschrift f. d. m. G.

1873.) The form, the artistic expression, is to the Hebrew a very small affair. The idea, the thought, and emotion, flow forth freely and embody themselves without any external restraint in the speech. This is clear from the method of inflection, which is mostly by internal changes in the root, expressing the passive by changing the clear vowel into the dull vowel, the intensive by doubling the second radical, the pure idea of the root by the extreme shortness of the infinitive and the segholate, the causative and the reflexive by lengthening the stem from without, and, as far as cases and moods exist, expressing them harmoniously by the three radical short vowels.

How beautiful in form, as well as sense, is the abstract plural of intensity by which *Elohim* expresses the fulness of the idea of God conceived as the one to be revered; by which *chayyim* expresses the fulness of life, and which is employed in such passages as Eccles. 5 : 8, where the exaltation of God over all earthly judges would be represented,

“For high over high watcheth
The *highest* over them.”

So in the dependence of the construct relation, and the use of the suffixes. But perhaps this feature is most striking in Hebrew poetry where the absence of an artistic form is most apparent. We see, with a general harmony of lines and strophes, that without any rule, but with the utmost freedom, the proportion in length and number is frequently broken through. And though the

Hebrew poet uses the *refrain*, yet he likes to modify it, as in the lament of David over Jonathan, 2 Sam. 1: 19-27, the 80th Psalm, and the magnificent prophecy, Isaiah 40-66. Again, though the Hebrew poet uses the alphabet to give his lines or strophes a sort of regularity in order, using it as so many stairs up which to climb in praise, in pleading, in lamentation, and in advancing instruction, yet he by no means binds himself to an equal number of lines, or even measure of length; and, apparently without necessity at times, breaks through his alphabet itself. Free as the ocean is the poet's emotion, rising like the waves in majestic strivings, heaving as an agitated sea, ebbing and flowing like the tide in solemn and measured antithesis, sporting like the wavelets upon a sandy beach.

3. The Hebrew language has a wonderful *majesty* and *sublimity*. This arises partly from its original religious genius, but chiefly from the sublime materials of its thought. God, the only true God, JAHVEH, the Holy Redeemer of his people, is the central theme of the Hebrew language and literature, a God not apart from nature and not involved in nature, no Pantheistic God, no mere Deistic God, but a God who enters into sympathetic relations with his creatures, who is recognized and praised, as well as ministered unto by the material creation. Hence there is a *realism* in the Hebrew language that can nowhere else be found to the same extent. The Hebrew people were as *realistic* as the Greek were *idealistic*. Their God is not a God thought out, reasoned out

as an ultimate cause, or chief of a Pantheon, but a personal God, known by them in his association with them by a *proper name*, JAHVEH. Hence the so-called anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms of the Old Testament, so alien to the Indo-Germanic mind that an Occidental theology must explain them away, from an incapacity to enter into that bold and sublime realism of the Hebrews. Thus, again, man is presented to us in all his naked *reality*, in his weakness and sins, in his depravity and wretchedness, as well as in his bravery and beauty, his holiness and wisdom. In the Hebrew heroes we see men of like passions with ourselves, and feel that their experience is the key to the joys and sorrows of our life. So also in their conception of nature. Nature is to the Hebrew poet all aglow with the glory of God, and intimately associated with man in his origin, history, and destiny. There is no such thing as *science*; that was for the Indo-Germanic mind; but they give us that which science never gives, that which science is from its nature unable to present us: namely, those *concrete* relations, those expressive *features* of nature that declare to man their Master's mind and character, and claim human sympathy and protection as they yearn with man for the Messianic future. Now the Hebrew language manifests this realism on its very face. Its richness in synonyms is remarkable. It is said that the Hebrew language has, relatively to the English, ten times as many roots and ten times fewer words, (Grill, in l. c. ;) and that while the Greek language has 1,800 roots to 100,000 words, the Hebrew has 2,000

roots to 10,000 words. (Böttcher, *Ausf. Lehrbuch d. Heb. Sprache*, I, s. 8. Leipzig, 1866.) This richness in synonyms is appalling to the Indo-Germanic scholar who comes to the Hebrew from the Latin and the Greek, where the synonyms are more or less accurately defined. But nothing of the kind has yet been done by any Semitic scholar, so far as I know. What will you do with a language that has fifty-five words for *destroy*, sixty for *break*, and seventy-four for *take*? (Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Test.*, p. 15. London, 1871.) It is exceedingly doubtful whether this richness of synonyms can be reduced to a system and the terms sharply and clearly defined; the differences are like those of the peculiar gutturals of the Shemitic tongues, so delicate and subtle that they can hardly be mastered by the Western tongue or ear. So these synonyms can hardly be apprehended and conveyed into languages so poor when compared with such wealth.

This richness of synonym is connected with a corresponding richness of expression in the synonymous clauses that play such an important part in Hebrew poetry, and indeed are the reason of its wonderful richness and majesty of thought. Thus the sacred poet and prophet plays upon his theme as upon a many-stringed instrument, bringing out a great variety of tone and melody, advancing in graceful steppings or stately marchings to the climax, or dwelling upon the theme with an inexhaustible variety of expression and coloring. The Hebrew language is like the rich and glorious verdure of

Lebanon, or as the lovely face of the Shunamite, dark as the tents of Kedar, yet rich in color as the curtains of Solomon, or her graceful form, which is so rapturously described as she discloses its beauties in the dance of the hosts. (Song of Songs 1:5; 7:1-7.) It is true that Hebrew literature is not as extensive as the Greek; it is confined to history, lyric poetry, and prophecy; but in these departments it presents the grandest productions of the human soul. Its history gives us the origin and destiny of our race, unfolds the story of redemption, dealing now with the individual, then with the family and nation, and at times widening so as to take into its field of representation the most distant nations of earth; it is a history in which God is the great actor, in which sin and holiness are the chief factors. Its poetry stirs the heart of mankind with hymns and prayers, with sentences of wisdom; and in the heroic struggles of a Job, and the conquering virtue of a Shunamite, there is imparted strength to the soul and vigor to the character of man and woman transcending the influence of the godlike Achilles or the chaste Lucretia; while the second half of Isaiah presents the sublimest aspirations of man. Where shall we find such images of beauty, such wealth of illustration, such grandeur of delineation, such majestic representations? It seems as if the prophet grasped in his tremendous soul the movements of the ages, and saw the very future mirrored in the mind of God.

4. The Hebrew language is remarkable for its *life* and *fervor*. This is owing to the emotional and hearty

character of the people. There is an artlessness, self-abandonment, and whole-souledness in the Hebrew tongue; it is transparent as a glass, so that we see through it as into the very souls of the people. There is none of that reserve, that cool and calm deliberation, that self-consciousness, that characterize the Greek. (Ewald, s. 33; Böttcher, s. 9. Bertheau, in Herzog. Real. Encyclopädie, v. s. 613.) The Hebrew language is distinguished by the strength of its consonants and the weakness of its vowels; so that the consonants give the word a stability of form in which the vowels have the greatest freedom of movement. The vowels circulate in the speech as the blood of the language. Hence the freedom in the varying expressions of the same root and the fervor of its full-toned forms. And if we can trust the Masoretic system of accentuation and vocalization, the inflection of the language depends upon the dislike of the recurrence of two vowelless consonants, and hence the vocal *sheva* and the half-open syllable; and on the power of the accent over the vocalization not only of the accented syllable, but also of the entire word, and hence the pretonic *kūmetz*. This gives the language a wonderful flexibility and elasticity. In the Hebrew tongue the *emotions* overpower the thoughts and carry them on in the rushing stream to the expression. Hence their literature has a power over the souls of mankind. The language is as expressive of emotion as the face of a modest and untutored child, and the literature is but the speaking face of the heart of the Hebrew people. The

Psalms of David touch a chord in every soul, and interpret the experience of all the world. The wise sentences of Solomon come to us as the home-truths, as the social and political maxims that sway our minds and direct our lives. The prophets present to us the objective omnipotent truth, which, according to the beautiful story of Zerubbabel, is the mightiest of all, flashing conviction like the sun and cutting to the heart as by a sharp two-edged sword. So with the history ; it presents to us the simple facts of the lives of individuals and of nations in the light of the Divine countenance, speaking to our hearts and photographing upon us *pictures* of real life.

These are some of the most striking features of the Hebrew language, which have made it the most suitable of all to give to mankind the elementary religious truths and facts of divine revelation. The great body of the Bible, four-fifths of the sum total of God's word, is in this tongue. It is no credit to a Christian people that the Hebrew language has no place at all in the most of our colleges and universities, so called ; that its study has been confined, for the most part, to theological seminaries and the students for the ministry. It is not strange that the Old Testament has been neglected in the pulpit, the Sabbath-school, and the family, so that many minds, even of the ministry, have doubted whether it was any longer to be regarded as the word of God. It is not strange that Christian scholars, prejudiced by their training in the languages and literature of Greece and Rome, should be unable to enter into the spirit and appreciate

the peculiar features of the Hebrew language and literature, and so fail to understand the elements of a divine revelation. Separating the New Testament and the words and work of Jesus and his apostles from their foundation and their historical preparation, they have not caught the true spirit of the gospel, nor apprehended it in its unity and variety as the fulfilment of the law and the prophets. But this is not all, for I shall now attempt to show you that the other languages of the Bible, the Aramaic and the Greek, have been moulded and transformed by the theological conceptions and moral ideas that had been developing in the Hebrew Scriptures, and which, having been ripened under the potent influence of the Divine Spirit, were about to burst forth into bloom and eternal fruitfulness in these tongues prepared by Divine Providence for the purpose. The Hebrew language is, as we have seen, the language of religion, and moulded entirely by religious and moral ideas and emotions. The Greek and the Aramaic are of an entirely different character; they were not, as the Hebrew, cradled and nursed, trained from infancy to childhood, armed and equipped in their heroic youth with divine revelation, but they were moulded outside of the realm of divine revelation, and only subsequently adapted for the declaration of sacred truth. And first this was the case with the Aramaic.

PART II.

THE ARAMAIC AND THE GREEK LANGUAGES, AND CONCLUSION.



THE ARAMAIC LANGUAGE

Goes back in its history to the most primitive times. It is the farthest developed of the Shemitic family, showing a decline, a decrepitude in its poverty of forms and vocalization, in its brevity and abruptness, in its pleonasm and incorporation of a multitude of foreign words. It was the language of those races of Syria and Mesopotamia that warred with the Egyptians and Assyrians, and perhaps, as Gladstone suggests, took part in the Trojan war, (Gladstone's *Homeric Synchronism*, N. Y. 1876, p. 173,) who, according to Sayce, (*The Hamathite Inscriptions*, *Trans. Society of Bib. Archæology*, London, 1876, p. 30,) used the earliest system of writing, and were the agents through whom both the Hebrew and the Greek alphabets were conveyed to those peoples. At all events the Aramaic became the language of commerce and intercourse between the nations during the Persian period, taking the place of the Phœnician, as it was in turn supplanted by the Greek. The children of Judah having been carried into captivity and violently separated from their sacred places and the scenes of their history,

gradually acquired this commercial and common language of intercourse, so that ere long it became the language of the Hebrew people, the knowledge of the ancient Hebrew being confined to the learned and the higher ranks of society. Hence even in the books of Ezra and Daniel, considerable portions were written in Aramaic.

This Aramaic is called the Biblical Chaldee, to distinguish it from the Chaldee of the Targums, but really gives us an older type of the language. The Aramaic continued to be the language of the Jews during the Persian, Greek, and Roman periods, and was the common speech of Palestine in the times of our Lord, (Schürer *Neutestament. Zeitgesch.*, s. 372, Leipzig, 1874,) although it had long ceased to be the language of commerce and intercourse, the Greek having taken its place, and gradually penetrated from the commercial and official circles even to the lowest ranks of society. Thus there was a mingling of a Greek population with the Shemitic races, not only in the Greek colonies of the Decapolis and the cities of the seacoast of Palestine, but also in the great centres of Tiberias, Samaria, and even in Jerusalem itself. Greek manners and customs were, under the influence of the Herodians and the Sadducees, pressing upon the older Aramaic and Hebrew, not without the stout resistance of the Pharisees. The language of our Saviour, however, in which he delivered his discourses and instructions, was undoubtedly the Aramaic, although we could hardly deny him the knowledge and use of the Greek. For not only do the Ara-

maic terms that he used, which are retained at times by the evangelists, and the proper names of his disciples, but also the very structure and style of his discourses, show the Aramaic characteristics. For our Saviour's methods of delivery and style of instruction were essentially the same as those of the Rabbins of his time. Hence we should not think it strange, that from this Aramaic literature alone we can bring forward parallels to the wise sentences and moral maxims of the Sermon on the Mount, the rich and beautiful parables, by which he illustrated his discourses, and the fiery zeal of his denunciation of hypocrisy, together with the profound depths of his esoteric instruction. Our Saviour used the Aramaic language and methods, in order thereby to reach the people of his times, and place in the prepared Aramaic soil the precious seeds of heavenly truth. Now it is the providential significance of the Aramaic language that it thus prepared the body for the thought of our Saviour. It is a language admirably adapted, by its simplicity, perspicuity, precision, and definiteness, with all its awkwardness, for the associations of every-day life. It is the language for the lawyer and the scribe, the pedagogue and the pupil; indeed, the English language of the Semitic family. (Volck Herzog. Real Encyklopædie, new edition, 1, 603.) Thus the earlier Aramaic of the Bible gives us only official documents, letters, and decrees, or else simple narrative. And as moulded by the Jewish people after the return from exile, it was through the *giving* of the *sense* of the original Hebrew Scriptures.

(Neh. 8 : 8.) The whole life of the Jewish people, subsequent to the exile, was in this giving the sense of the Hebrew Scriptures, both in the *Halacha*, of the rabbinical schools, and the *Hagada* of the synagogue and the social circle. It is true that the *Halacha* was developed in the rival schools of Shammai and Hillel into the most subtle questions of casuistry, and our Saviour often severely reproved the Pharisaic spirit for its subtlety and scholasticism ; yet not unfrequently he employed their methods, to the discomfiture of his opponents. (Weizäcker, Untersuchungen über die ev. Geschichte, s. 358 *seq.* Gotha, 1864,) as in Matt. 22 : 15-46, although his own spirit was rather that of the old prophets than of the scribes. The *Hagada* was developed by the rabbins into a great variety of forms of ethical wisdom and legend. This we see already in the apocryphal books of Wisdom, in the stories of Zerubbabel, of Judith, of Susanna, and of Tobith. (Zunz, die Gottesdienstlichen Vörtrage, der Juden, Berlin, 1832, s. 42 ; s. 100 ; s. 120 ; Etheridge, Introduction to Hebrew Literature, London, 1856, p. 102, *seq.*) This latter method was the favorite one of our Saviour, as calculated for the common people, and to it we may attribute the parables, and the sweet sentences of the Sermon on the Mount, which, though after the manner of the scribes, (Hausrath, Die Zeit Jesus, Heidelberg, 1868, s. 90,) have yet a clearness and transparency as the atmosphere of the Holy Land itself, a richness and simplicity as the scarlet flower of the fields he loved so well, a calm majesty and profound mystery as the great

deep, for he was the expositor of the divine mind, heart, and being, to mankind. (John 1:18.)

The office of the Aramaic language was still further to mediate between the old world and the new—the Hebrew and the Greek; for the *Greck language* was the chosen one to set forth the divine revelation in its completion.

THE GREEK LANGUAGE

Was born and grew to full maturity outside of the sphere of the divine revelation, and yet was predestined, to use the words of my colleague, (Schaff, Hist. of the Apostolic Church, p. 145, New York, 1859,) “as the most beautiful, rich, and harmonious language ever spoken or written” “to form the pictures of silver in which the golden apple of the gospel should be preserved for all generations.”

For as Alexander the Great broke in pieces the Oriental world-monarchies that fettered the kingdom of God, and prepared a theatre for its world-wide expansion, so did the Greek language and literature that his veterans carried with them prove more potent weapons than their swords and spears for transforming the civilization of the East and preparing a language for the universal gospel. The Greek language is the beautiful flower, the elegant jewel, the most finished masterpiece of Indo-Germanic thought. In its early beginning we see a number of dialects spoken by a brave and warlike people, struggling with one another, as well as with ex-

ternal foes, maintaining themselves successfully against the Oriental and African civilizations, while at the same time they appropriated those elements of culture which they could incorporate into their own original thought and life; a race of heroes such as the earth has nowhere else produced, fighting their way upward into light and culture until they attained the towering summits of an art, a literature, and a philosophy, that has even been the admiration and wonder of mankind. As Pallas sprang forth in full heroic stature from the head of her father Zeus, so Greek literature sprang into historical existence in the *matchless Iliad*. Its classic period was constituted by the heroism and genius of the Athenian republic, which worked even more mightily in language, literature, and art, than in the fields of politics and war, producing the histories of Thucydides and Xenophon, the tragedies of an Æschylus and Sophocles, the philosophy of a Socrates and Plato, the oratory of a Demosthenes and Æschines. Looking at the Greek language before it became the world-language, and so the language of a divine revelation, we observe that its characteristic features are in strong contrast with those of the Hebrew tongue.

1. The Greek language is *complex* and *artistic*. As the Hebrew mind perceives and contemplates, the Greek conceives and reflects. Hence the Greek etymology is elaborate in its development of forms from a few roots, in the declensions and cases of nouns, in the conjugations, tenses, and moods of the verb, giving the idea a

great variety of modifications. Hence the syntax is exceedingly complex in the varied use of the conjunctions and particles, the intricate arrangement of the sentences as they may be combined into grand periods, which require the closest attention of a practised mind to follow in their nice discriminations and adjustments of the thought. (Curtius, Griech. Gesch., Berlin, 1868, 3d Aufl. II. s. 19, 20.) Hence the complex and delicate rules of prosody, with the great variety of metres and rhythms. The Greek mind would wrestle with the external world, would search out and explore the reason of things, not being satisfied with the *phenomena*, but grasping for the *noumena*. Thus a rich and varied literature was developed, complex in character, the epos, the drama, the philosophical treatise, and scientific discussion, which are purely Greek, and could have little place among the Hebrews. (Donaldson, The New Cratylus, 3d ed., p. 153.)

2. The Greek language is characterized by its attention to the *form or style of its speech*, not to limit the freedom of the movement of thought and emotion, but to direct them in the channels of clear, definite, logical sentences, and beautiful, elegant, and artistic rhetorical figures. The Greek was a thorough artist; and as the palaces of his princes, the temples of his gods, the images of his worship, his clothing and his armor, must be most perfect in form and exquisite in finished decoration, so the language, as the palace, the dress of his thought, must be symmetrical and elegant. (Curtius,

Griech. Gesch., I., p. 20, 21.) Hence there is no language that has such laws of euphony, involving changes in vocalization and the transposition and mutation of letters; for their words must be *musical*, their clauses *harmonious*, their sentences and periods *symmetrical*. And so they are combined in the most exquisite taste in the dialogues of the philosophers, the measures of the poet, the stately periods of the historian and the orator. The sentences, as Pres. Adams beautifully expresses it, (Charge, on occasion of the induction of Dr. Shedd as Professor of Bib. Literature; New York, 1864, p. 10,) "are intricate, complex, involved like an ivory cabinet, till the discovery of its nominative gives you the key for unlocking the mechanism and admiring the ingenuity and beauty of its rhetoric."

3. The Greek language is thus *beautiful* and *finished*. The Greek mind was essentially *ideal*, not accepting the external world as its own, but transforming it to suit its genius and its taste. This was owing to its original *humanizing* genius and its central theme, man as the *heroic*, man as the *ideally perfect*. (Schaff, Apostolic Church, p. 145; Zezschwitz, Profangrätigkeit und biblischer Sprachgeist. Leipzig, 1869, p. 13.) As the language and literature of the Hebrews was inspired to describe "the righteous acts of *Jahveh's* dominion in Israel and the victories of his holy arm," (Judg. 5:11; Psa. 98:1,) and thus was *majestic* and *sublime*; so the language and literature of the Greeks were inspired to sing the exploits of the godlike Achilles, the crafty Ulysses, and the all-conquering Her-

cules ; to paint the heroic struggles of the tribes at Thermopylæ, Salamis, and Platea, to conceive a model republic and an ideal human world, and thus was *beautiful*, *stately*, and *charming*. Its gods are idealized virtues and vices and powers of nature, and conceived after the fashion of heroic men and women, arranged in a mythology which is a marvel of taste and genius. Nature is idealized, and every plant and tree and fountain becomes a living being. Indeed, everything that the Greek mind touched it clothed with its own ideals of beauty. Hence the drama is the most appropriate literature for such a people, and the dialogue the proper method of its philosophy. (Curtius, Griech. Gesch., III., s. 508.)

4. The Greek language has remarkable *strength* and *vigor*. Its stems have been compressed, vowel and consonant compacted together. Its words are complete in themselves, ending only in vowels and the consonants *n*, *r*, and *s*; they have a singular independence, as the Greek citizen and warrior, and are protected from mutilation and change. (Curtius, Griech. Gesch., I., s. 18.) It is true it has a limited number of roots, yet it is capable of developing therefrom an infinite variety of words, (Jelfs. Greek Gram., 4th ed., Oxford, 1864, p. 330;) so that although it cannot approach the wealth of synonym of the Hebrew, yet its words are trained as the *athlete*, and capable of a great variety of movements and striking effects. Its syntax is organized on the most perfect system, all its parts compacted into a solid mass, in which the individual is not lost, but gives his strength to impart

to the whole the *weight* and invincible push of the *phalanx*. Hence the Greek language is peculiarly the language of oratory that would sway the mind and conquer with invincible argument. It is the language of a Demosthenes, the model orator for the world. It wrestles with the mind, it parries and thrusts, it conquers as an armed host.

Such was the language with which Alexander went forth to subdue the world, and which he made the common speech of the nations for many generations. It is true that the Greek was required to forfeit somewhat of its elegance and refinement in its collision with so many barbarous tongues, but it lost none of its essential characteristics when it was adopted by the Egyptian, the Syrian, and the Jew. The Jews were scattered widely in the earth, engaged in commercial pursuits that required them, above all others, to master the common speech of the nations. Hence those of Europe, Asia Minor, and Africa, easily adopted the Greek as their vernacular, and it gradually became more and more the language of Syria and Palestine. This was furthered by the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek, at Alexandria, the centre of the Greek culture of the times, a translation which shows upon its face the difficulties of rendering for the first time foreign conceptions into a strange tongue, (Reuss, *Hellenistisches Idiom*, in Herzog, *Realencyklopädie*, V., s. 709,) but which nevertheless became of incalculable importance in preparing the way for the New Testament writers. The original

productions of the Jews of Alexandria and Palestine, many of which are preserved in the apocryphal books of the Old Testament, combined to produce the same result. Gradually the Jewish mind was modified by the Greek thought and culture, and the Greek language was, on the other hand, adapted to the expression of Hebrew and Aramaic conceptions. The apostles of our Lord, if they were to carry on a work and exert an influence world-wide and enduring, were required, from the very circumstances of the times, to use the Greek; for the Aramaic would have had but a narrow and ever-diminishing influence, even if their labors had been confined to the synagogues of the dispersed Jews. Hence we are not surprised that, without an exception, so far as we know, the New Testament writers composed their works in Greek, yes, even gave us the Aramaic discourses of our Saviour in the Greek tongue. Nor was this without its Providential purpose; for though our Saviour delivered his discourses in Aramaic, yet they were not taken down by the evangelists as they heard them in that tongue, but were subsequently recalled to their minds by the Holy Spirit, who, in accordance with the promise of our Lord, brought all things to their remembrance; so that they recalled the ideas, rather than the language, and gave the ideas therefore the Greek embodiment; so we have no translation of the words of Jesus, but the words of Jesus as they pass through the Hellenistic conception of the evangelists, colored by their minds and human characteristics, (Winer, *New Test. Gr.m.* Thay-

er's edit., Andover, 1872, p. 27; Bleek's *Einleit.* in *d. N. T.*, 2d Aufl., Berlin, 1866, s. 76;) for it was evidently the design of God that the Saviour's words, as well as acts and his glorious person, should be presented to the world through those four typical evangelists, who appropriately represent the four chief phases of human character and experience.

The New Testament writers used the common Greek of their time, yet as men who had been trained in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the Aramaic methods of exposition, but above all as holy men who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Hence, as the Greek language had now to perform a work for which it had providentially been preparing, and yet one which it had never yet attempted, namely, to convey the divine revelation to mankind, so it must be remoulded and shaped by the mind of the Spirit to express ideas that were new both to the Greek and the Jew, but which had been developing in the languages and literature of both nations, for each in its way prepared for the gospel of Christ. (Schaff, *Apostolic Church*, p. 146.) Hence we are not surprised that the Biblical Greek should be distinguished not only from the classic models, but also from the literary Greek of the time, although it must be confessed that, when compared with the Greek of the Septuagint and the Apocrypha, it approximates more to the literary Greek of the times, being, as Reuss states it, "not the slavish idiom of a translation, but a free, language-creating idiom, without, however, denying its cradle." (Reuss,

Hellenistisches Idiom, in Herzog, V., s. 710 ; Winer, New Test. Gram., p. 39.) It is true that much of its elegance and artistic finish has been lost, and the nicely-rounded sentences and elaborate periods, with their delicately-shaded conceptions, have disappeared, yet its distinguishing characteristics, especially its strength and beauty, its perspicuity, and its logical and rhetorical power, have been preserved, while to these have been added the simplicity and richness, the ardor and glow of the Aramaic style ; but over and above all these, the language has been employed by the Spirit of God, and transformed and transfigured, yes, glorified, with a light and sacredness that the classic literature has never possessed.

It is true that the writings of the New Testament are not all on the same level of style and language. (Immer, Hermeneutik des Neuen Testaments, Wittemberg, 1873, s. 105 f.) The gospels of Matthew and Mark, and the epistles of Peter and James, together with the Apocalypse, have stronger Aramaic coloring, which disturbs the Greek lines of beauty, the Greek form being overpowered by the life and glow of the Aramaic emotion ; yet in the writings of Luke and John, but especially of Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews, the strength and excellence of the Greek unite with the peculiarities of the Aramaic and the Hebrew in striving, under the potent influence of the Holy Spirit, to convey the new religion in the most adequate and appropriate language and style.

Here the humanizing and idealistic tendencies of the

Greek combine with the theological and realistic tendencies of the Hebrew and the Aramaic : for to these New Testament writers the person of Christ assumes the central and determining position and influence, as *Jahveh* the one God did to the Old Testament writers. Christ became the emperor of the Scriptures, to use Luther's expression, and his person irradiated its language and literature with his own light and glory. Thus when the mind now strove to conceive no longer the simple idea of the one God *Jahveh*, but the complex idea of the person of Christ and the Trinity therein involved, the Hebrew language was entirely inadequate ; and the Greek, as the most capable, must be strained and tried to the utmost to convey the idea of the *Logos*, who was in the beginning, was with God, and was God, and yet became the *Word incarnate*, the *God-man*, the interpreter in *complete* humanity of the fulness of the Deity dwelling in him ; for notwithstanding the historical preparation for this conception in the theophanies of the Hebrews, the *nous* of Plato, the *logos* of Philo, and the *wisdom* of Solomon and Sirach, it was yet an entirely *new* conception, which, notwithstanding the preparation of the Hebrew and the Greek, the world could not appropriate without the transforming and enlightening influence of the Spirit of God. (Dorner, *Entwickelungsgeschichte der Lehre von der Person Christi*. Stuttgart 1845, I., s. 64 ; Schaff, in Lange's *Com. on John*, N. Y. p. 55.) So in its anthropology the apostle Paul combines the Hebrew and Greek conceptions in order to produce a

new and perfect conception. Taking the psychology of the Greek as a system, he gave the central place to the Hebrew *ruach* or spirit, finding, to use the words of Zezschwitz, its "undisturbed centralization in living union with the Spirit of God." (Zezschwitz, Profangrätlichkeit, &c. s. 36, f.) He then brings out the strife of the *σαρξ* or flesh, with the *πνευμα*^a or spirit, and the false position of the psychical nature *ψυχῆ* over against the spirit. So also for the first he gives to the world the true conception of the conscience *συνέδησις* as "the remnant of the spirit in the psychical man," "the divine voice," the consciousness of which Socrates felt as the "summit of the knowledge of the true wisdom by the Greek spirit." (Zezschwitz, s. 55-57.) Hence the development of the doctrine of sin with its technical terms, and of holiness with its new ideas and language. How infinitely deeper and higher than the Greek are these conceptions of the New Testament language, as the Person of Christ, presented by the Omnipotent Spirit convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. (John 16:8.) Jesus, as "the only-begotten of the Father full of grace and truth," assumes the place not only of the *heroic ideal* man of the Greeks, but even of the unapproachable holy *Fakveh* of the Hebrews. Hence the elevation of the graces of meekness, patience, long-suffering, self-sacrifice, and the dethronement of the Greek virtues of strength, beauty, bravery, manhood. And so in all departments of Christian thought, there was a corresponding elevation, and degradation of terms and conceptions. We can only mention re-

generation, atonement, reconciliation, justification, sanctification, life and death, heaven and hell, the church, the kingdom of God, repentance, faith, Christian love, baptism, the Lord's Supper, the Lord's day, the advent, the judgment, the new Jerusalem, everlasting glory. (Bleeks. Einleitung s. 71; Immer Hermeneutik, s. 105; Cremer. Bib. theol. Wörterbuch der Neu-testament. Gräcität and Trench, New Testament synonyms, under the respective words.) Truly a new world was disclosed by the Greek language, and the literature of the New Testament, as the Hebrew and the Aramaic, and the Greek combined their energies and capacities in the grasp of the Divine creating and shaping Spirit, who transformed the Greek language and created a new and holy Greek literature, as the earth heaves and subsides into new forms and shapes under the energy of the great forces of its advancing epochs.

The especial literary development of the New Testament is in the sermon and the theological tract. We trace these from the first beginning on the day of Pentecost through the discourses of the Book of Acts, and parallel therewith the epistles of Peter and Paul and John. Looking at the sermons we observe that they are no longer on the Aramaic model as are the discourses of our Lord, but we see the Greek orator as well as the Aramaic rabbin. So with the epistles, especially of Paul, although he reminds us of the Rabbinical schools in his use of the *halacha* and *hagada* methods, (Gal. 4:22, seq.; Rom. 3:1 seq., etc.) yet they exhibit rather the dia-

lectic methods of the Greek philosopher. Thus the Greek orator and philosopher prepared the language and style of Paul the preacher and theologian no less than the Hebrew prophet and wise man gave him the fundamental principles of his wisdom and experience. And although the Greek literature of the New Testament has no Demosthenes' "On the crown," or Plato's Republic, as it has no Iliad or Prometheus; yet it lays the foundation of the sermon and the theological tract—those forms of literature which, however little they may appeal to the æsthetic taste, have yet been the literary means of a world-transforming power as, from the pulpit and the chair, Christian ministers have stirred the hearts and minds of mankind, and lead the van of progress of the Christian world—for the sermon combines the prophetic message of the Hebrew, with the oratorical force of the Greek; as it not only fires the heart, but strives in the council chamber of the intellect and pleads at the bar of the conscience, while the theological treatise combines the sententious wisdom of the Hebrew with the dialectic philosophy of the Greek, in order to mould and fashion the souls of men and of nations, by great vital and comprehensive principles, that constitute the invincible forces of Christian history, so that theology reigns queen of the sciences never to be dethroned by the timorous cries of baby Christians, or the clamors of conceited philosophers and scientists, who suppose that the discoveries of their minds are to overthrow the verities of the mind of God.

“Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness: but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” I Cor. 1:20-24.

THE UNITY

AND

THE VARIETY OF THE BIBLE.



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The Variety of the Bible.

MR. PRESIDENT, Friends, and Fellow-workers: It is a large and beautiful subject which we have before us this evening; and I am more than usually sensible of my incompetence to treat it fitly, in the rapidity and imperfection of extemporaneous remark, within the limits of the hour. Indeed, I was not aware, until the very close of last week, of the importance and the prominence of the service which I had rashly undertaken to perform here.

I accept for myself, and echo with all my heart, the tender and solemn words of the prayer just offered, with its request that God would give me clearness of thought and readiness of expression in exhibiting, as far as I may, this vast and attractive theme.

Of course we cannot fix rules which Omniscience shall follow in making a revelation of truth to the world. We cannot tell beforehand what methods God will be pleased in his wisdom to adopt in order to make that rev-

elation most worthy of his mind, and most impressive in its appeal to the minds and hearts of mankind. Edward Irving says somewhere that for man to attempt to criticise or prefigure the plans of Providence, is as if the little blind mole, running his tiny galleries underground, were to undertake to interpret the marchings and counter-marchings of mighty armies overhead. It would be, if possible, still more impossible, more absurd, for finite intelligences to say how God shall make the revelation of himself and of his will to the world which needs it, but which mentally and morally is unsuited to receive it. Yet there are some things which appear self-evident concerning this, and which we may confidently affirm beforehand in regard to such a revelation.

We may affirm, for example, with entire certainty, that it will be an intelligible revelation ; such that a man can, by suitable study, reflection, and thought, and by bringing his own mind into spiritual sympathy with the mind from which it comes, understand that which it declares to him. Otherwise it would be no revelation at all, but a mere vague thunder in the air, communicating no articulate thought, exciting simple astonishment in the hearer, which could be neither quickening nor purifying to intellect or to heart.

We may affirm also, with equal certainty, that such a revelation will be marked with holiness, in its discoveries of God, and its requirements of man. Otherwise it will not be consistent either with his character from whom it comes, or with the welfare of the man to whom it is

given. If we find in it, therefore, any tolerance of iniquity, if it commands or if it allows slander, perjury, lying, lust, then, no matter by what extraordinary evidence it appears to be attested, we should know beforehand that it cannot be from Him whose mind searches evil in its roots and relations, and whose heart is immutably pure and true. Even miracles themselves could not force us to attribute an impure, selfish, sensual rule of life to Him whose holiness is the glory and the guard of the intelligent creation.

We may affirm, too, beforehand, that it will be in its structure a majestic revelation. God will not bend and part the heavens that he may bring to the world a story or a song. He will not send into the earth, upon the minds of those who are to testify for him, the supreme power of his Divine Spirit, that he may give a mere argument or narrative, a maxim or a jest, to the thought of mankind. It must be an intelligible and a holy revelation; it must be also a majestic revelation, which God shall make of himself and his thought, whenever, and in what special form soever, it shall seem best to his wisdom and love to give that to the world. We cannot be mistaken in expecting these as characteristics of any book with which He shall condescend to teach, guide, and inspire mankind.

And we may go further, and affirm that it must be a revelation marked by unity within itself: containing a statement of doctrine, continuous, progressive perhaps, but essentially one, from beginning to end; even as the

mind of God is one, and cannot possibly be self-contradictory. It will be, probably, we may say—though perhaps without the same certain assurance with which we affirm the other propositions—a revelation manifold in form, made through a great variety of instruments, since this corresponds as well with the needs of man as with the eternal opulence of the Divine mind.—In the construction of the planet God gives to us not merely the soil on the surface, or the stone beneath it, or the gold or the silver hidden in their veins, or the wood of the forest, or the grasses and flowers; he gives them *all*. He gives not merely the air enveloping the earth, but the light shining through it, and the lightnings which pierce it, and the waters which rise as mists and roll as rivers. He braids the light itself, in its apparent golden simplicity, of a strand of colors, woven so intimately together that the separate hues are lost in the beauty of the perfect beam. Everywhere his mind reveals itself in his works in an abounding variety of means and forces. We shall expect it so to reveal itself in any revelation which he makes of his truth. All the more we shall expect it because by such ever-changing variety of instrument and of method he will be able to accomplish most perfectly, so far as we can conjecture or foresee, his work upon the minds of those whom he addresses. Not a monotone, but a harmony, in which different but agreeing sounds conspire, is that which the soul of man craves and answers.

Therefore we anticipate unity of truth in any revela-

tion which God shall make, with variety of method and manifold instruments. If we do not find these characteristics in the word which purports to be his, we shall surely be surprised. If we do find them, they will certainly seem harmonious with his mind, and with his works as we elsewhere explore these. And if we find them appearing under circumstances which in themselves would seem unfavorable to their presence, they will excite a strong presumption, they will fairly justify it, that the word is from God. Then, if they conspire with other evidences of the same sublime and amazing proposition, they will help to make that certain to us; so certain, that every argument against it becomes ineffectual, and shivers its force when it strikes the strength of our conviction. The evidence of God's handiwork in the Bible, derived from its own character and structure, will be to us complete, and supremely inspiring.

Let us look, then, at the Bible before us this evening, and ask ourselves whether it clearly presents these two marks which I have last specified as proper marks of its origin in God's mind: namely, Unity of doctrine, with Variety in method, and a divine Manifoldness in the instruments employed.

First, consider it in regard to its Unity.

At first sight, certainly, the Bible appears to us as little likely to possess a true and positive interior unity as any book which exists in the world. We have in it sixty and more separate pamphlets, some of them longer and some shorter, written by nearly forty different per-

sons, in widely different stages of civilization and periods of time ; some of them separated from each other by as long an interval as that which separates us to-night from the day of the Druids. We have these pamphlets written in three different languages, in different lands, among hostile peoples, and comprising the greatest possible differences of literary style, and of general or special intellectual culture. These pamphlets, stitched together by the hand of the binder, appear at first sight to possess no possible unity whatever, except that which is purely mechanical, given them by the workman who has put them into the same collection. They seem as diverse as any books carelessly intermingled on library-shelves.

Yet, when we examine them, we are impressed by the positive oneness of doctrine which is found pervading them, from the beginning to the end, and really manifest in every part.

It is a vast unity, of course ; as it must be to correspond with the mind of God. It is the unity of a cathedral, not of a hut ; of an immense mechanism, not of a billet of wood, or of the walking-stick which one carries in his hand ; the unity of a great book, crowded with immense thoughts and precepts, not that of a song or a particular argument. So, too, it is an organic and a progressive unity, not to be wholly searched out or comprehended until we have finished the entire volume through which we have traced it.

And yet how positive a unity it is ! recognized by the finest, the most careful, and most judicious of the minds

of the world which have given themselves to the study of the Scriptures; recognized by ourselves, and not successfully opposed, to any one who has once discerned it, by any argument of any skeptic. The ingenious unbeliever may find, or try to find, some apparent discrepancies between Paul's doctrine of faith and James' doctrine of works; between the narrative given by John and the narratives given by the earlier evangelists. But even these apparent and wholly superficial discrepancies turn out, when examined, to be mere hooks wherewith to hold the attention of the reader more closely to the books in which they occur; so that study and examination, more searching and more critical, may be given to these books, and so that the ultimate harmony between them may be made more plainly to appear. There is no line of conflict, which the most ingenious skeptic has discovered, between prophet and psalmist, between evangelist and lawgiver, between apostle and evangelist—no line of cleavage, even, where unity is broken, and where a different and a divergent doctrine comes in to succeed that which had been announced. We trace but one doctrine, as I have said, always onward from the beginning to the transcendent end. Observe how clear its outlines are—as the outline of a coast towering above the waves at its foot, or as that of a range of mountains on the continent!

The book begins with the instant and clear revelation of God: in his oneness, his personality, his holiness of character; in his infinitude of power, wisdom, dominion; in his eternity, of underived and sovereign existence. It

shows him as Creator, and shows all things dependent for form and force on his supreme omnific will. It shows further his moral government, exercised constantly over men; with its law of perfect holiness; with its penalties and its promises, each appropriate to the majesty and purity of the law which is to be enforced, and in which is the reflection of his character, as well as the utterance of his will to mankind. Then, it declares man's revolt against God, under the power and in the fierce habit of sin; his spiritual alienation from this holy intelligence from whom his moral being comes, and by whom this government is exercised over him. It gives illustration of this rebellion, this central alienation of the human will from God's will; not merely in flagrant, private offences, but in great public procedures of iniquity; in the devastation of territories, the subjugation of nations, the bloody destructions of public hope, the terrific idolatries overspreading the earth with their licentious and ribald rites.

In contrast with these, it reveals God's purpose to form a spiritual kingdom in the world, submissive to his government, obedient to his law, and to gather the members and the citizens of this kingdom out of all countries and peoples of the earth—a conception that was not possible to either Greek or Egyptian, and that certainly was not more possible to the Jew, except as he was enlightened concerning it by that Divine mind which was operating upon him through its ministers and messages. It reveals at length the Head of this kingdom, personal and

transcendent, unique and supreme in both character and power. At first, foreshadowed from the distance and darkness of remote ages, he is more and more distinctly brought to view, through continually increasing radiance of prophecy; through the voices of psalmists, through the solemn and significant ritual of the temple, through the office of the priesthood, through the royal majesty and supremacy of kings. More and more definite become the prophecies concerning him. First, he is the seed of the woman; then he is of the seed of Abraham; then he is the descendant of Jacob; then he is of the tribe of Judah; then he is the son of David; until prophecy begins to focus itself at last upon the very time when he shall appear, as in Daniel, upon the very place where he is to appear, as in Micah, upon the very office and character which he is to fulfil and to exhibit, as in Isaiah, in those words of prophecy which have this evening been read in our hearing; till the Old Testament closes, with the latest voice of its prophecy, through Malachi, predicting the rising of this Sun of Righteousness, predicting the sudden coming of this Lord, preceded by the prophet who is to prepare the way before him. The long series of prophecies closes here: and we are left, looking on to the histories—if such there shall be—in which these predictions shall be fulfilled.

Then comes a gap of time, but not an interruption in the sequence of thought, extending over four hundred years, and the New Testament takes up its office of divine instruction. It presents to us this king, who has

been foreshadowed from the beginning of human history, in a constantly brightening clearness of prediction. He now comes into the world, welcomed by the angelic song, yet coming as a babe in Bethlehem; growing then into maturity; accomplishing then his works of wonder, scattering miracles around his path, speaking divinest thoughts to men in human utterance, expressing before them the absolute beauty of love in life, fulfilling at last his office of priest through his sacrifice of himself, then arising from the dead, and ascending into heaven, king of the saints, predestined and glorious king of the world.

It shows the Spirit who comes afterward to represent this king in the world, and to testify of him through all ages. It conveys to us the instructions of the apostles, inspired by that Spirit to testify of Christ; instructions in truth, and in practical duty, which are to continue the law of the members of this spiritual kingdom, while they and it continue to exist. And finally it gives us the prophetic vision of the amazing closing book, the book of the Revelation, in which is shown the consummation of this kingdom, with the crash of conflict in air and earth, the tumultuous collisions and overthrow of nations, through which it marches to its ultimate assured universality in the world.

This is the book. All these separate writings, as I said, from different persons, lands, ages, are gathered in the compass of this one volume; and when examined they are found to be pervaded, from first to last, by this extraordinary unity of doctrine. Law and story, prophecy

and psalm, point forward to and interlink with the narrative and argument of the later Testament. The last verse of the Bible, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all," and the first verse of the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," are just points in the perimeter of the golden ring within which all the collected contents of this volume are comprised. It is one in its law, one in its doctrine, as God is one. And you cannot parallel that phenomenon in any literature of any people. Gather up so many writings as are here, from so many authors, disconnected by such vast intervals of time, such differences of language, such contrarieties of civilization, and put them together into a volume, and you have a collection of teachings discordant, divergent, and heterogeneous. Here the unity of the teaching shows that it came, in the final analysis, from a single mind. Why, even the Oratorio requires the presence of one supreme and regulating mind, so that harp and viol, flute and trumpet, the echoing drum and the "terrible trombone," may all conspire in the perfect ultimate musical harmony. Here the different writers—whether consciously or not—were certainly under the superintendence of one supreme mind, invisibly operating on each, and in him, bringing them into a spiritual accord which they themselves may not have anticipated, and could scarcely understand: in its final result bringing from them all that great harmonious voice of the Scripture, which is at length to fill the world.

The unity of the Scriptures is as evident as is the

unity of the planet. As I said, it is not the unity of a garden, but that of a continent. It is as the unity of the globe itself, with all these various and seemingly contradictory elements compacted into its enduring organic oneness. And when I believe that man has shaped the planet which we live on, I may believe that man unaided has shaped the Bible, and wrought into unity its many complex and separated parts.

But then we are to go still further, and observe the variety which constantly appears in connection with, and as tributary to, this majestic, astonishing, and unparalleled unity.

Observe at the outset the difficulties in the face of which such variety is secured; difficulties of language, which must be overcome; difficulties in the minds of the writers of the Book. The Hebrew language is noble and energetic, but it is rugged, rigid, and narrow, not fitted apparently for numerous distinct and delicate varieties of literary form. The Greek of the New Testament is a distinct and noble coördinate dialect of the incomparable Greek language, but it lacks the Ionic grace, the Attic purity; it is not so transparent and musical a medium of thought as is the language in which Plato wrote, or in which Homer sang. Remember, too, that the men who wrote, in these languages, the stories and the letters which we have in the Scriptures, were not for the most part highly educated men. They were not cosmopolitan in training or culture. As a general thing, especially in the Old Testament times, they were

men who dwelt apart from conversation with the world outside of Judea, who knew nothing of its literature, who had not been trained to variety, vivacity, flexibility of mind, by its schools or its commerce, and who would seem as unapt as any series of men to be found upon the earth to adopt from others or produce for themselves any great variety of literary form.

But, at the same time, observe how immense and incessant that variety is!

What form of literature is most attractive, most instructive, to the larger part of mankind? Undoubtedly we should say, Narrative—narrative in the form of history, tracing great public procedures, or narrative in the form of personal biography, giving portraits of character, outlining the striking, tragic, or fortunate events which have occurred in the career and experience of persons. Such narrative, either in the more general form of history, or in the more vivid form of biography, is that which first and most naturally attracts the attention of men, and interests their minds. Then Poetry; especially as that poetry is simple and natural, and is not artificial or elaborate in its form. It will then commend itself to the mind of the child. It will be sung in the nursery, on the street, in the fields. Those far out on the sea will recall it; those travelling by the wayside will find it still haunting the memory, and stirring the heart. To the man and the woman, of a sensitive nature, it will be equally dear. The most mature will love it like the child. It will prolong youth in the heart of the aged.

Then, Law impresses men—the authoritative expression of moral truth and moral duty, commending itself to the general conscience, grappling that conscience, calling out responses from the moral sensibility which is inherent, indestructible, in all men. Then, Proverbs; maxims of duty, maxims of prudence, which are so brief that the memory holds them without an effort; which we carry with us wherever we go, yet out of which, as we reflect upon them, come ever larger and more luminous lessons, of practical duty, and of beauty in character. Then, further on in the series, perhaps, fictitious literature has its place; presenting truth under the guise of incidents which may not actually have occurred, but which are entirely probable in themselves, and which might reasonably have been expected to occur in the circumstances described in the allegory or the parable.

These are some of the species of literature with which we are familiar, and by which we see that men are impressed; and to them may be added argumentative discussion, the clear dialectical exhibition of truth, with reasons that convince men, and an eloquence that persuades them. All these are important literary forms for conveying thought from one mind to others; and while we might not look to find them in untrained Hebrews, we may see how useful and desirable they would be in any revelation made to the world by God its author. We shall not expect arithmetical calculations in such a revelation; we shall not expect the minute exactness and the severe finish of scientific statement;

nor any other of those special forms of literary workmanship which are not intimately and naturally associated with the utterance of moral and spiritual truth. But whatever may be thus associated, we have perhaps a right to expect, certainly to desire, in a revelation which comes, or which at least purports to come to us, from God. We may anticipate beforehand that he will not put a degrading discredit upon any form of literary accomplishment which is natural to the mind, whose powers he has designed and ordained. We may expect that he will touch the soul in man by every force that is apt for the purpose, when he seeks to instruct, to exalt, to renew it.

Take up then the constitution of the Bible, and carefully observe it! At least three-fourths of it are narrative, that is the fact which strikes us first; narrative in the form of a general historical story, which tells of the public transactions of nations, of the intrigues, councils, and wars of princes, the devastation of countries, the establishment, the enlargement, or the overthrow of empires, the rising of powers against each other, their alliances, their conflicts, their commercial interactions, with the results which followed from all to the kingdom of God; or narrative in the form of personal portraiture, recording events, depicting characters, of which and of whom we should know nothing except from it. In this regard, this Bible of ours becomes a mirror of human life, the value of which we cannot overstate, the perfection of which is utterly unique. What scores and hun-

dreds of persons there are, brought to light by it, in the most various circumstances possible, in the most various exhibitions of character, who become in their names, persons, figures, as familiar to us as if we had walked and talked with them freely in our most impressible years! Abraham, Jacob, Esau, Joseph, Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Samuel, Deborah and Ruth, David and Solomon, Elijah and his more gentle successor, Ahab and his superb and fierce Phenician queen: what multitudes there are! We cannot count them. A figure stands out from the dimness of the past, only for an instant; but there it stands before us for ever! It is not painted, as a portrait. It is photographed, on a plate from which the impression can never be discharged, by the smiting on it of a radiance from on high. One's casual words, as of Isaac or Nehemiah, spoken upon the impulse of a moment, are eternized in the record; they will continue to be repeated while the planet exists. An eloquent writer has aptly said that the Scriptures are full of life-like portraits which are "like intaglios—masterpieces of artistic skill, on a field of microscopic dimensions." So the truth is incarnated. So the law is illustrated, shown in the punishment which it inflicts, if not in the fulfilment of its rules. And so, to all persons, the Bible has a constant attraction, by reason of the narrative which is in it so amply, of this personal portraiture in which it so continually abounds.

Observe how utterly fearless it is! It puts its incidental historical narratives by the side of ancient records,

wherever these are found, on brick cylinders, graven in rocks, traced upon the parchments, carved upon obelisks, built into imperial structures ; and it challenges comparison ! No matter how other records have come to us, the Scripture puts its record beside them, asserts this true, and waits for centuries for its vindication. The ancient historians tell us, for example, that the king of Babylon, when that city was taken and destroyed by the Persians, was not Belshazzar, but Nabonadius, or Labynetus, as the names are given differently in different languages ; that he was not captured in the city, or killed, but that he escaped from it ; that he fought a battle, after the capture, outside of the city ; that he was defeated, and was then taken prisoner ; that he was made satrap under the conqueror ; that he lived for years afterwards, unmolested, lived in abundance, and died in peace. Berosus and Abydenus agree in most of this ; and history laughs at the story as told in the book of Daniel. It is an unhistoric legend, idle, worthless, because contrary to the facts. The book of Daniel puts forward its record, and patiently waits. Twenty years ago, there were dug up the cylinders from the remains of the ancient Ur of the Chaldees, from the mounds which mark the almost forgotten site of that renowned city of the East, which explain at a glance the seeming inconsistency. They show that Belshazzar was the son of Nabonadius, and the Regent under him ; that Daniel's record is therefore as true as was that probably of Herodotus or Berosus. They were simply writing of different persons.

So the Scripture fearlessly challenges historians, and puts its records alongside of theirs—a characteristic which belongs to it only among the sacred books of the world. There is no other which treats so fearlessly the events of the past, and which faces such imminent continual risk of being demonstrated as untrue, if that is possible. It tells its story, amid whatever din of contradictions, and waits to be accepted, with a divine courage, imperturbable as God.

But of course the Bible is not narrative only. Remember the marvellous poetry of it, at which all the world wonders : so majestic, so pathetic, in contents so various, in its mass so vast, in its spiritual beauty so unequalled ! It is poetry unshackled by the fetters of rhyme, where the image becomes instinct with the spirit of song, where the thoughts chime as words cannot. It sings itself, therefore, through the mind alike of child and man. It utters itself in hymns and psalms, and spiritual songs, to which it has given its impulse and meaning, in all languages of the world. It becomes the source, and constant inspiration, of the great historical liturgies of the church, of which it has been computed that two-thirds are drawn directly from the sacred volume ! It quickens the fancy, stirs the imagination, soothes, solaces, or animates the heart ; and though not forming so large a part, it forms as important and as memorable a part, in the structure of the Bible ; it contributes as much to its power and spiritual impression, as do narratives and history.

Then Law addresses men, with its precise authorita-

tive instruction, its disclosures of duty, its penalties and its promises. It is inscribed on these pages in lines almost as fiery as if it were written in lightnings on the sky. It becomes almost as impressive, in its divine authorization, as if God's signature, traced in lightnings, were blazing in the heaven, beneath vast visible lines of flame. Then proverbs come, such multitudes of them, familiar to the thought of the educated world, wherever the Bible has been read, each one containing the choice treasures of practical wisdom. Argumentative discussions are not wanting, like those of Paul, which the most alert and studious mind, the most disciplined intelligence, has to bring its utmost power to examine, that it may understand their invincible force, that it may develop their fair conclusions; that it may brace and invigorate itself by contact with the mind which has uttered its thought in this majestic sweep of argument. Great luminous discourses are here as well—like those which flowed from the serene lips of the Son of God; discourses of time, and also of eternity, of life upon the earth and life in the heavens, of the soul of man, of the beauty of God, of the redemption by the cross, of the sanctification by the Divine Spirit. No feature of the Bible is so impressive as these interpreting and transcendent discourses, which use no logic and require no argument, which impress themselves, as the sun on the sod which it sprinkles with flowers, on the spiritual sense of every one who attentively reads and inwardly ponders them. Even fiction, you observe, is not overlooked in this as-

tonishing literary apparatus employed in the Bible. The parables give narratives, fictitious in form, but presenting incidents that are probable in themselves, and deriving lessons from those incidents which could not be so distinctly illustrated, or so impressed upon the mind, by any other mode of communicating thought.

In fact, it may truly be said that there is no species of literary workmanship, which is appropriate to the revelation of spiritual truth, of which the finest examples that we possess are not to be found in this ancient book. All other books are narrow in comparison, and restricted in range. They are books upon one key, and this upon many. They are books which impress truth, so far as they impress it, through one form of instrumentality, and this through a multitude. We should anticipate the oneness of the Bible, if it comes to us from God. We should anticipate a certain abundant and charming variety in the forms of the Bible, if it be his. The supremacy of his mind, the prodigal inexhaustible force of his will, as well as his certain wish and purpose if he should give a revelation at all to give it in a form to attract wide attention, and impress powerfully the minds of mankind—all these impel us to look for variety in its structure. But that which we find well-nigh surpasses our largest possible expectation!

Now, observe the important consequences of this constant variety in the literary structure of the Bible.

It becomes, by reason of it, a universal book; since there is no tribe or nation that does not enjoy story,

song, parable, eloquence; that does not therefore welcome the Bible, as opening to it new realms of thought, presenting that thought in the most engaging and fascinating forms, and giving the mind intellectual gratification, while tending all the time to irradiate and renew the moral nature. There is almost no other Oriental book which is valued and sought in the Western world. But this is just as familiar to the Western mind, as congenial to it, as if it had been prepared in Europe. There is no other book, read studiously in Europe, which is read with equal interest and gladness in the Society Islands, in India, China, and among the barbarians of South Africa, just emerging from their dense darkness. But the Bible goes to the African as to the European; goes to the Islander of the sea, to the Chinaman and the Hindoo, to the Indian and the Arab, as well as to the citizen trained by schools, expert in business, in these United States. There is, of course, a certain local color in it which makes the missionary who reads it in the East, and who interprets it into the Arabic—which makes the traveller, reading it in the East, among the localities where its writings first found their life and form—appreciate the beauty and the wonder of it the more. But it is, beyond all others, a universal book; and largely by reason of this amazing many-sidedness of its literary constitution.

Then it is, also, a comprehensive and commanding book, as addressed to any individual student; because it appeals to each faculty of the mind, interests all, and leaves none unchallenged. It appeals to men in all moods

of their feeling. It appeals to them in all stages of their life, from childhood onward, through maturity, until the extremest limit of age. It appeals to them thus, not merely by reason of the substance of the truth which it communicates, but also of this variety of means by which it conveys it—in song and story, in law and proverb, in parable, argument, mighty vision. Every faculty of the mind is therefore addressed by it, and is gratified by it. We are sometimes in trouble because certain parts or passages of the Bible are less interesting to us, at least in certain moods of feeling, than they have been before; are not as interesting to us now as they were when we were children; or have lost the celestial glow which was upon them when we read them with tears and with triumph in our grief. But the Bible is intended to furnish something for every mood, the most sorrowful and the most cheerful, when the soul is sunken in grief, and when it is rising in new-born ecstasy of strength and hope. It has parts for the little child, and parts for the aged. It is the only book in the world, because it is the only one which has this marvellous completeness of constitution, which the little child and the venerable grandparent will gladly sit down and read together; which is at home in the Sunday-school, and equally at home in the highest university; which the most disciplined mind can never exhaust, yet which the youngest and most immature can find full of attraction, instruction, inspiration. This, by reason of the marvellous manifoldness of its literary structure, as well as by reason of the grandeur and the

glory of that system of truth which is evermore contained within it.

Observe, too, what an educating book it becomes, by reason of this astonishing variety in its constitution. It requires a man to match one part against another; to read the poem in the light of the narrative; to interpret the argument by the light of that revelation of the Son of God which is given in the four matchless, divine biographies of Him; to interpret the primitive precept, even, under the radiance of that final vision of Judgment which flashes its startling splendor on us from the great white throne; to interpret Christ's declaration of forgiveness by the miracles which he works, and the doctrine of sanctification by the Spirit by the crystalline sheen of the golden streets of the new Jerusalem. We are to analyze, and combine, and reconcile parts, to bring one into a close comparison with another, so that out of all we may derive the ultimate truth which God would give us in the Scripture. The flower and the oak, the forest and the stream, the continent and the ocean, are alike parts in this manifold whole; and we cannot fully comprehend one without considering all. So it comes to be a book which educates the mind as no other can; which tasks every faculty in it; which requires in its student a moral state sympathetic with His from whom it comes, and which requires our careful perusal, from end to end, in order that we may wholly understand it.

I can understand a proposition, logically stated, whether I sympathize in temper or not with the man who de-

clares it ; but I cannot understand such an outpouring as this claims to be from the mind of the Most High, so various, so vast, so full of side-lights as it is, so covered here and there with shadows, so delicate, so tender, so majestic, so holy—I cannot understand it until my soul is also bathed in the effulgence of God's own light, until I am in the spirit of my soul sympathetic with him. If the Bible were intended only to give a scheme of intellectual gymnastics, to thoughtful readers, it would be the most wonderful book in the world. A perfect system of physical gymnastics is that which develops and trains each muscle, which quickens and educates every nerve, which makes each limb and member act in perfect accord with every other, which gives its due proportion of power to every part of this sensitive, organized human frame. A true system of mental gymnastics is that which touches, reaches, educates every faculty, every sensibility. And the Bible does it, by reason of its manifold and amazing constitution. At the same time, however, that it does this, it makes the essential truth shine from it, as the light of the diamond shines from each one of its scores of facets.

Observe, also, that by reason of this it becomes the great power which it is in civilization ; not merely by reason of the truth which it contains—though by reason of that primarily—but by reason also of the singular variety of form through which that truth is declared to mankind. It touches the historical research which explores the old world, at every point. It stimulates inquiry. It

invites comment. It invites even criticism, expects it, challenges it, offers it every possible opportunity, says nothing in reply, but simply lets it die if it is persistent and malicious. Therefore it is that the commentaries written upon the Scripture form libraries of themselves, so numerous they are, and so extensive. It touches art, science, poetry, every department of human thought and of intellectual achievement, by reason also of this variety of its constitution. Of course we are familiar with this : but it is really amazing to see how the poetry of the world, for example, takes its themes and its impulses from the Bible ; how sculpture and painting find both their subjects and their inspiration in these ancient stories, and primitive songs ; how pencil, chisel, and the skill of the architect, are made to carry the tidings and the treasures of the life of the Lord to distant lands, and through all time ; how everywhere the thought of the world is stimulated, its intelligence attracted, its power educated, through its contact with this marvellous book of God.

So it becomes the power which it is in civilization. It works itself into the life of each people, and builds up nations into order and greatness. See how it has built up the English people out of Saxons and Danes : taking our ancestors, who used to burn their captives of war in wicker baskets, as a sacrifice to their gods, and making of them the free enlightened nations which now we find, on that side of the Atlantic and on this. Because of this variety, in what may be called the physical

constitution of the Bible, it gets access to every nation in the world, as it could not otherwise: and because of this it blesses each nation as no book of narrower compass could.

Thus too it becomes an inexhaustible book, because not exhibiting thought alone, but action, character, human life. Life in its nature is inexhaustible. One may follow carefully a proposition in logic until he knows it altogether. It has no contents which he has not considered. But one never searches out a human life, in personal presence, or as presented in the vivid and life-like portraiture of the Bible, until he knows it as completely. Always there are secrets hidden within it, unfathomable recesses, shadowy tendencies, great abysses; there are passions, weaknesses, high aspirations, singular attainments, which another cannot compass. The Bible becomes inexhaustible as the heavens, because there is so much of personal life crowded into its thousand-fold story; while yet its whole spiritual lesson may be compressed into a text, and a sentence may give the substance of revelation. So Micah gives us the complete summing up of the ancient economy in his words: "What doth God require of thee, O man, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God!" So in the New Testament the whole Bible is put into that one sentence, which a child can remember: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life." The origin of redemption, in the eternal love of

God ; the unique glory and place in the universe of the Son of God, who came as Redeemer ; the one condition of eternal life, in our faith in this Redeemer ; the misery and the peril on the one hand, the vital glory and felicity on the other, which follow men's different relations to Christ—all are here compacted into a sentence. If all the rest of the Bible were lost, that sentence surviving would perpetuate its substance.

It is one of the illustrations of the divine wisdom in the surpassing constitution of the Scripture, that it is so inexhaustible, and yet that in parts it is so transparently and entirely simple. Compressed into a text, it fills a volume with infinite variations on its one supreme theme. So it enters into the life of nations. So it stimulates literature, quickens invention, fosters art. So it trains and ennobles all faculties of the soul. So it revolutionizes society peacefully, exalts it permanently, and sheds continuous force and blessing on every nation into whose possession it has come.

Observe too, still further, how, through this remarkable constitution of the Bible, it becomes really incapable of being perverted, by the interpolation of texts, by the extraction of texts which stand properly in their places, so that the revelation shall be made to teach another doctrine than that which it ought to bring from God. We do not think of this, perhaps, as often as we should.

We hear so much said of this suspected text, and that doubtful passage, of this probable interpolation from the margin, and of the long quarrel which scholars have

waged over that Greek letter, mark, or accent, that we sometimes forget that God, in his constitution of the Bible has made it impossible to seriously pervert it. Of course there will be erroneous transcriptions. The hand of the scribe is not inspired. Of course, there may be here and there insertions, of a marginal note, written into the text. Of course there may be a word dropped out, or a vowel omitted, in one passage or another. The eye of the scribe will sometimes fail to discern distinctly what it sees or what it omits ; and there must be of necessity more or less liability to minute error in making copies of so many writings. But the great course of doctrine cannot be eliminated from the Scripture, except as you tear the whole fabric into tatters. It is interwoven, every part with every other—story, law, precept, proverb, the biographies of Christ by the evangelists, and the argument of Christ by the apostles, and the vision of Christ in the Apocalypse ; until, if you throw away one part, you must equally throw away many others. You may get rid of the story of Balaam ; though, if you do, you will miss one of the most picturesque and impressive stories in all the Old Testament. But what then will you do with the references to him, in Micah, in Peter, and in the Revelation ? You may get rid, perhaps, of the miracle in the passage of the Red sea, and suppose a mere shift of the wind when Pharaoh's army was divinely destroyed. But what then are you to do with the song of Moses and of Miriam ? and what with the 76th psalm, and the 106th, and the 114th ? and what with the "song of Moses and the Lamb" in the

crowning book of the Apocalypse? They are inter-braided, like threads that have been woven so closely together that you cannot tear them apart except by destroying the entire fabric. You cannot extract one and leave the rest, with any ingenuity or by any force.

Thus it fares with the difficulties in the Biblical text, of which skeptics have sometimes made so much. Necessarily, always, by the manifold constitution of the Scripture, they must amount to very little. They are like scratches on the stones of the Milan cathedral; like the breaking of a single pane of its pictured glass, or the breaking off of a finger, or possibly a fore-arm, from one of its five thousand statues. The great structure stands unimpaired, shining, imperial, in the serene Italian air. The Bible stands, majestic, unfractured, in the same way. You may take away a vowel here, or throw away an accent there; you may pick up a word which has been dropped, or throw out a word which has been added; but God in his wisdom has made it so multiform, so many-sided and various in its parts, and has inwoven each part so perfectly with all the others, that you cannot destroy it, except by annihilating its whole structure. The Jewish counting of words and letters insured extraordinary accuracy to its copies. But no inaccuracy could touch its life, unless it were repeated hundreds of times.

Observe, still further, how it holds the attention of the world to itself, to its own text, by reason of this special structure of it. It does not allow any equal paraphrase. Erasmus, that beautiful scholar of the Reformation-pe-

riod, wrote an eloquent paraphrase of the New Testament, which was early translated by Coverdale into English, a copy of which was ordered by the Government, I think, to be placed in every parish church of England. Who now ever reads it? Who ever hears of it, except as a famous curiosity of literature? You may possibly find it in some secondhand bookshop, or on the shelves of some bibliomaniac; but you scarcely ever, probably never, see it used by one who is trying to ascertain the sense of the Scripture. Doddridge, pastor, preacher, theologian—pure, lovely, admirable, famous in all these offices—wrote a paraphrase of the New Testament. Who reads that to-day? Sometimes you may look at it for a passage, or a sentence, to see if you can get new light upon a Scripture concerning which you are in darkness. But who would undertake to read it through, leaving the text of the New Testament, and going to this paraphrase of even so eminent, so devout a man as Philip Doddridge, the perfume of whose spirit would make any work fragrant which he undertook?

No! you cannot paraphrase the Bible, for the reason that the multiform structure of it cannot be reproduced by any one mind. You must take the forty minds that made it, if you want to make another like it; and then you must have the superintending, inspiring force of the one Divine Spirit to keep them in harmony, and to keep them at that supreme exaltation of feeling and thought in which they wrote. It is this alone which gives to their words such perennial, fruitful power. If one man

were at the same time all poet and all logician, all historian and all lawgiver, all prophet and all biographer, all ethical philosopher and all maker of parables; if he were then filled to the full with the mind of God, and made equal to the Son of God—he might make another Scripture. But until then, no possible paraphrase of the Bible can ever satisfy the thought and the heart of the world.

The text of the Scripture holds the mind to itself, and out of itself propels its own energy and beauty into every treatise that would expound it, into every system that is vitally derived from it. It keeps theology itself from becoming as dry as the “ribbed sea-sand,” and makes it, as far as it adheres to the letter of God’s word, and is in harmony with its spirit, fresh and green, full of force and full of grace. It is the one Scripture which never grows old, with fountains sparkling amid its granite, and harebells wreathed around its cliffs.

And yet, by reason of this constitution, see also how capable it is of being translated into each language; not only incapable of being destroyed by mutilation or addition, or of being supplanted by any paraphrase, but capable of being physically transferred into each foreign tongue, as is no other book on the earth. Reading the best translation of a foreign work is usually like looking at the painted windows of the chapel or cathedral from the outside. You see merely the general outline, perhaps only vague and clashing blotches of color; you do not see the fine inestimable touches and traits, the harmonious beauty of delicate lines, the glory of the golden

crown, the rich crimson and blue of the robes. You see them only darkly tinted, perhaps distorted. But the Bible is capable of indefinite translation into all human tongues, because each tongue has in it of necessity the terms of narrative, of poetry, of law, of biography, and of parable; and these make up so much of the Scripture! Then, if you find that there is a final poverty in the language—which never has had the Scripture ideas as yet expressed in it—a poverty of terms to express the great facts of justification, regeneration, of redemption by Christ, and of the disciples' inner experience, language itself, when it has taken the Bible into it, becomes expanded, ennobled, spiritualized. It enlarges itself to the compass of the new treasure, it exalts itself to the height of the recent acquisition. The language is regenerated, as well as the spirit of the people who use it. It becomes heavenlier, as does their society. So it was that Eliot could take this immense and magnificent book, made by so many writers in so many ages, under the superintendence of one supreme mind, and put it into the sterile and narrow Algonquin tongue, that never before had held a conception of any one of all the facts, of any one of all the elements of spiritual experience, which the Scripture brings to light. So it is that it can go today into the language of the Chinaman, of the Japanese, the New-Zealander, the Esquimaux, the Tamil people or the Tartars, or the Bushmen of South Africa. It can go, as it has gone, into more than two hundred languages of the earth. It can go into ALL, by reason of the fact

that it is so carefully and variously made up, of story, song, law, proverb. You cannot translate other books in like manner, as I have said. The fact that this book can be thus translated, as it indeed has been, and can be made the property of the world—the fact that we have this wonderful modern gift of tongues, through these translations of the Scripture into so many languages and dialects of mankind—is owing to its marvellous literary constitution. No language will fail to give some part of it clearly and fully; and each part by itself, when fully received, will be found to be instinct with the life of the whole.

But observe, yet further, that from that whole, so various, so vast, so complete as it is, we gather a final, total impression of the truth which it brings, which is far more sufficient and far more impressive than we otherwise could have had; because we see that truth at so many angles, from so many points, and through the medium of so many styles. The Bible is like a diamond that has not one, but fifty faces, from each of which the radiance flashes. It is like a great palace, not like a wall. Many books are like walls, thin, perpendicular, alike on both sides, which are only attractive when thoroughly masked under trellis and vine. Here is a palace, with many fronts, with hospitable doorways, storied roofs, far-reaching outlooks; its whole exterior broken into different angles and gables, hanging balconies, oriel windows; its vast interior rich in saloons, music-halls, galleries, libraries, the theatre, the throne-room, all the apartments for

work and for rest, for study and for pleasure, for public ceremonial, and for serene domestic joy. Such is the Bible. And from this manifoldness of its structure we get a final impression of its truth, which is richer and more powerful than could possibly have been made if in its constitution it had been narrower and more limited.

One of our American artists, wishing to perfect for himself a portrait and a bust of Shakespeare, took the death-mask from the face of the poet, and had twenty or thirty photographs made, from every possible angle of vision, that he might get the fullest light on every point of face and head; then came the portrait on the canvas, and then the stately head in marble. So we look at the figure and face of Christ, as these are given us in the Bible: from the earliest prophecy, from the law, from the ritual, from the psalm and the song, from the evangelical prophecies of Isaiah, from the story of Matthew, and the other of Mark, and the other of Luke, and the wonderful spiritual story of John, from the argument of Paul, the exhortation of Peter, and the great vision at last of the King in the heavens—when the garden, with which the race began, has become the eternal city of God, and when the babe-prince is the Lord of the saints—we take all these, and from them all we get such a transcendent image of the Son of God as no one writer could have given. It takes forty writers, even under the inspiration of God, to portray for us that sympathizing Sovereign, that bleeding Conqueror, that crucified King, whom we are by-and-by to see, with the pierced hands

holding the sceptre, with the many diadems where was of old the crown of thorns!

So it is, Friends and Fellow-workers, that this variety in the structure of the Scripture vindicates the book in which it is found as coming from God; designed in his wisdom, accomplished by the impulse and the influence of his Spirit. It makes the book universal in its range, adapted to all men. It makes it comprehensive in its appeal to each individual student of it. It makes it the most educating book in the world, to him who would master all its contents; makes it the grandest power in civilization, by which inquiry is challenged and thought is stirred, on every side, which becomes the germ of arts and of sciences, of universities and libraries, of generous literatures, social ameliorations, enlightened governments. Because it is formed as it is, it is made impossible to destroy its integrity, or to make it teach another doctrine than that in which all its parts concur; impossible to paraphrase, yet easy to translate it, into every tongue. Because it is framed as it is, we get from it such an ultimate impression and conception of the truth, so complete and so powerful, as could not otherwise have been conveyed. And all the time it is one in its substance, in its truth, in its law, in its clear revelation of God and his government, of man and his needs, of Christ the Lord, the King of the world, and of the Divine spiritual kingdom in which he is the head, and into which all who believe in him are thereby gathered. It has a vast, multiform oneness; not like that of *Paradise Lost*, or of

Plato's Republic, or even of the Koran, which is one by limitation, because the utterance of a single mind. This is a oneness compacted out of all the varieties of experience, power, spiritual culture, in many separate and widely scattered writers. It is a unity built of variety; and it makes the Bible the supreme phenomenon of the literary world. It is like the earth. It is a book for the earth, and, as I said before, it corresponds with it: one planet, but with rivers, meadows, and mountain ranges, assembled in it; with seas and islands, the narrow isthmus, the outstretch of continents; with monitory fires underneath, and the great solemn stars above; with the moon walking the sky, as to-night, in placid brightness, and the sun shedding the splendor of day across the lands that are glad in his coming. So is the Bible. It has parable and psalm, brief story and vast legislation, mighty argument, charming incident, curt admonition. It too has its Sun of Righteousness; its Old Testament and its New, like answering hemispheres, what is latent in the one being patent in the other. Before the threat of its penalties the earth throbs. The unsearchable splendor of its promises gilds the skies.

Assuredly it is the Book of God. When you can prove to me that man has built the mountains of brickwork, and has covered the earth with a mud which he has manufactured for soil—when you can convince me that he has adjusted the planet in its poise, and set the stars upon their courses—then you may prove to me that the Bible, with its oneness and its infinite variety, its produc-

tion extending over fifteen hundred years, and with its last verse answering to its first across the dreary drift of ages, has come to us from man!

Let us study it, then, my friends, with eager reverence. Let us consider it with such thoroughness of examination as is suitable to a book which comes to us from such a source! Let us count it our grandest privilege to study it; our beautiful duty to teach its wondrous truths to others, and to spread the knowledge of itself and its contents around the world. What a mission it is to make it known! We sound again the harp of David, and put to our modern lips the golden trumpet of Isaiah; we speak again with Paul in the jostling streets of Ephesus or of Corinth, or under the matchless temples of the Acropolis; we speak with Moses, fresh from the thunder and lightnings of the mount, and with his face yet shining with a gleam from the glory of God; yea, reverently we may say it, we speak again with the Lord himself, at the well-side, at the supper, from the cross on which he died, from the throne on which he reigns—when we send this Bible around the world!

No other office is so grand. No other privilege, supreme as this, can meet us until we reach the higher levels of the universe which we dwell in, and enter the felicities which wait for those who, having loved the Lord on earth, as he is here revealed in his word, at last for ever stand before him, and do his work, and see his glory, face to face!

ANCIENT HISTORY

IN ITS CONNECTION

WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT.



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This Lecture of Dr. Crosby's was delivered with constant reference to charts and maps, which will account for the want of finish and apparent connection in some of its parts. It is printed entirely from the stenographer's notes.



ANCIENT HISTORY

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WE have had of late a great many apologies for the Bible from invertebrate Christians, and the form of the apology has been, "The Bible was not intended to teach us science!" Now, if the Bible is not to be trusted in its science, it is not to be trusted in its religion. What would you think of an inspired man who would come to you and tell you that he came from God to teach you, and should begin his address by informing you that when Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, George Washington succeeded to the Presidential chair? Would you have any confidence in his inspiration? Where the Bible teaches cosmogony, it teaches the truth; and where it teaches history, it teaches the truth; and Satan knows well that if he can undermine the truth of the science of the Scriptures, he can make all the Scriptures doubtful. The first and tenth chapters of Genesis are chapters of great similarity. The first chapter is a declara-

tion from God concerning the palæology, I may call it, of the earth on which we live, and the second chapter is just such a declaration of the palæology of our race. Neither of those chapters could have been written by untutored man. There was no science in the Mosaic age that could have been the guide of Moses in his narrations in either of those chapters, and yet in that first chapter we find a detailed order of creation which the careful and searching geology of our own time has proved to be the exact order, and the last link in the proof was only obtained three years ago. The Mosaic account puts the creation of plants before the creation of animals; but Geology, four years ago, had found that animals came first in the book of rocks, and plants were above them in the carboniferous stratum; so *there* was a varying, and the Bible, you see, was wrong; but "the Bible was not meant to teach us science"—that was the answer four years ago. But *three* years ago, down below the animals, was found an immense amount of graphite, or plumbago, which is the result of the decomposition of vegetable matter; and now the link is complete and the stories are parallel—the one told by Moses, and the other by geologists of to-day.

Let us be, therefore, a little careful of our readiness to apologize for the mistakes of the Scripture by saying "the Scripture was not made to teach us science." The tenth chapter of Genesis is a story told by Moses of the distribution of the races of men. No ethnology in his period, no history, no philology, could have taught that to Mo-

ses ; but now the historian, helped by all the monuments of Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, and Palestine, and the philologist and the ethnologist all agree, after their marvellous researches in this century, that the tenth chapter of Genesis exactly describes the distribution of the race. Where did Moses get these chapters from ? He did not get them from science. He got them from God !

I purpose this evening, in the hour you give me, briefly—but I hope as interestingly as a dry subject may be treated—to put before you some of the illustrations of the history of the Old Testament that have been brought before our notice by the discoveries in the Mesopotamian Valley during the last twenty-five years, but especially in the last ten years, and, indeed, some of them within the last twelve months.

We all knew a great deal about Greece and Rome up to twenty-five or thirty years ago, but we knew very little indeed about Egypt, and still less about the great Mesopotamian Valley. With regard to the latter we had a few fragments of Greek writers, and some slight allusions in the history of Herodotus, but beyond this we were in the dark, only having the references that are made in the Scripture, unsupported by any other evidence. For example, what did we know of the old Assyrian, Babylonian, and Chaldean empires ? They were all in confusion. The account of Ctesias, who was the court physician of Artaxerxes Mnemon, was a confused account. It left us in doubt both as to times and places, and made us quite confident, when we got

through the record, that we had been reading a romance. Of the whole Assyrian empire of a thousand years, he only mentions one or two royal personages, *e. g.*, Ninus, the founder, and Semiramis; and one of these, Semiramis, builds cities everywhere, and all of them are a mile high and one hundred miles square, and all filled with about a million of people, and she scatters them all over the country in a most remarkable, Aladdin-like way. That is all the story we have of Assyria from the old sources, nothing that we could believe in except that there was a great queen, Semiramis. Now, the whole story of the Mesopotamian Valley has been dug up out of that valley, the excavations beginning thirty-three years ago, when, in 1843, Mr. Botta, the son of the historian of the American Revolution, and relative of my honored friend, Professor Botta of this city, first began the explorations in the Mound of Koyunjik, opposite Mosul. He was followed by Layard, who made still more remarkable discoveries; and since that we have had a number who have engaged in this work of exploration, not only of the locality, but of the language and the history of that remarkable people. And now we have the history of ancient Chaldea and its successor, Assyria, almost as clearly put before us as the history of mediæval Germany and France. A library has been found in the piles at Nineveh of one of the last princes of Assyria, who died about 640 years B. C., and that library was discovered to be full of books of all kinds—arithmetics, geographies, histories, spelling-books, dictionaries, and every style of

work that the authors of those ancient days wrote. They had been preserved by the falling in of these brick buildings, carefully preserved by the destroyer, and now a large quantity of the contents of this library have been carried to the museums of Europe, the largest part, perhaps, going to the British Museum. Men have been enabled not only to find out the meaning of the remarkable cuneiform character, but also to bring out from its grave a language—nay, two, three languages—that were altogether dead, of which not one single word or syllable was known to us before ; and now those languages have their grammars and their dictionaries and their reading-books, and we can study them in our homes as we can study Hebrew or Greek. There is the Assyrian language especially, of which there is now found an immense literature, the literature especially of the kings of Assyria, a language which is the old parent of the Hebrew—the Sanscrit, so to speak, of the Semitic dialects ; and there is the Akkad language, as it is called, or one of the Turanian stock, belonging to Southern Babylonia ; and then, also, there is the Median language ; and these three languages, that thirty years ago were not known to exist, have now their full development in grammar and dictionary.

In these remarkable remains have been found the tablets written with the cuneiform character by kings some of whom reigned 2,000 years before Christ, in the time of Abraham and before him ; and in some of these tablets we have long and particular records of all the

events of their reigns; and it is interesting for us, in examining these records, to find at times the mention of Palestine and the kings with whose names we are so familiar in Holy Writ. If I take up the Bible, then, and look through it in its order, the first thing that I would call your attention to is the very name of the Southern country; and this leads me to a brief episode to explain the rough map I have put upon the blackboard. Here I have meant to portray the long straight range of the Taurus Mountains that run along the northern side of the Mediterranean Sea, north of Cilicia and Pamphylia, and run eastward until they come to the neighborhood of Mount Ararat in Armenia. Here is the Masius spur of this range. Here is the Zagros range running along east of the Tigris and Persian Gulf. This Mesopotamian plain has an elevation, perhaps, at the highest of not more than three hundred feet above the level of the sea; but when you get up these mountains, then the great plateau of Media and Persia runs far into the desert in Chinese territory, and instead of being only three hundred feet at its highest, is three thousand feet above the sea; so that a totally different climate and country is found east of this broad range, or, rather, six ranges.

West of the Euphrates you come to the Arabian desert, where but few can find subsistence; but between the Arabian desert and the Zagros Mountains you have the rich Mesopotamian Valley, watered by the twin rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris, the first running westerly from Ararat, and as if about to empty into the Mediter-

ranean, then suddenly turning and coming east until it is within twenty-five miles of the Tigris, and then passing out until it is one hundred miles away from the Tigris again, and then joining the Tigris and entering with it the Persian Gulf; the Tigris, not so long by four or five hundred miles, starting only six miles from the river Euphrates, and then pursuing a southeasterly course and then a southerly course, until it comes within twenty-five miles of the Euphrates, then again is found one hundred miles from it, joins it here and enters the Persian Gulf. Though the Tigris is the narrower river and the shorter, it carries double the amount of water into the joint rivers that the Euphrates does, because the latter has hardly any tributaries. There are two here, you see; and besides that, from the time the Chabour enters the Euphrates, the river, so to speak, slops over and its water goes out into the desert, so that there is much less water in the desert down here than there is three hundred or four hundred miles farther north. I have drawn a line here to show that there is a difference between the countries south and the countries north. The country south of this line is rich alluvial. Three crops a year, each bearing two or three hundred-fold, are obtained in that richest of all countries on the face of the earth, even richer than the Nile valley. Formerly, in historic periods, the Persian Gulf came up one hundred and twenty miles farther north than now, and the two rivers entered by different mouths. These one hundred and twenty miles have been formed since historic periods, for Ur of the

Chaldees, whence Abraham came, was a maritime city on the Persian Gulf, and is now one hundred and twenty miles away. Now that rich country we call Babylonia, or Chaldea. The country north of it, which is a somewhat different formation and is slightly higher, is Assyria, and the northern part of Assyria bears marks of volcanic action. This natural division between Babylonia and Assyria helps to account for some of the historic facts connected with the two countries.

But what was the name of this lower country, as given by the inhabitants themselves? It was not "Babylonia;" it was not even "Chaldea," although one of the tribes of men that lived down here was called in the old inscriptions, "Chald;" but the name of the country was Gun-duni. When God placed Adam and Eve upon the earth he placed them in a country that was called *Gan-Eden*, and that is the Garden of Eden, as we translate it; and *Gan-Eden* is nothing but this Gun-duni—this southern part of the Euphrates and Tigris Valley. It was very natural that the Semitic people, seeing the word "Eden," should liken it to their own word *Eden*, which meant pleasure, and call it the "Garden of Pleasure." That is the way all nations do with foreign words; they make them like their own. You know just north of London there is a village called "Shotover." That is almost the right name. The French, who called it so, spelt it "Chateau-vert," which signifies the "Green-castle;" but the English called it "Shotover," which was as near as they could get it. So with the *Gun-duni* of this country,

which was an Akkad word. The Semitic people did not know what *Gun-duni* meant, and so they gave it the name of the Garden of Pleasure, which was a very nice name to give it. So we have from the very beginning found among the old remains the name of the country the Garden of Eden, and it puts an end to all the contest as to where that garden was. It was not in Armenia, nor in India, as some thought, but there it was—the lower portion of the Tigris and the Euphrates.

Now, in the tenth chapter one of the most remarkable personages we find was Nimrod, who was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Do you find anything about Nimrod there? We find his very name existing right here at Babylon. At ancient Borsippa there is a hill bearing still the name of Nimrod. Up here, south of Nineveh not many miles, where the Little Zab joins the Tigris, there is a village which is named "Nim-rud." So Nimrod's name continues there yet from those old times shortly after the Deluge. More than that, we find that the principal god among the ancient Babylonians was *Bel-* (or lord) *Nipru*, or *Merodach*, for now they are believed to be the same god. *Bel* means the lord, or god, and *Nipru* is nothing but what the Septuagint translators of the Bible called Nimrod. They write it this way: "Nebroth." His other name is another transformation: "*Merod-ach*."

We have, then, in the greatest god of Babylon—the one who was above all others distinguished, the one that through all its history stood really at the head of the

Pantheon—Nimrod himself, the founder of the Babylonian monarchy. And, what is very curious, Bel-Merodach, or Bel-Nimrod, the great god of Babylon, is represented always as having four splendid hunting-dogs. There is the “mighty hunter before the Lord.” We are told in that tenth chapter that the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, or Babylon, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh, and we find the ruins of all those four cities now; and after a careful examination we find that the very names of some of Nimrod’s successors of that old Nimrodian dynasty are still upon the bricks of those old ruins. I cannot stop to describe them. I have to pass rapidly over them. Here is Babylon, with its wild ruins, upon the river Euphrates; here is Erech; here is Akkad, or Ur of the Chaldees, whence Abraham came; and here is Calneh, or Nipur, the same as Nipru, another Nimrod-town found in Nimrod’s old country. Out of that land—out of Babylonia, out of Chaldea, out of Gan-eden—went Ashur and built four cities: Nineveh, the city Rehoboth, Calah, and Resen; and we find now the ruins of Nineveh brought out to view by Botta. Twenty miles below we find Calneh. We are not sure but that still farther south, that which was known in the older periods by the name of Ashur, is the city Rehoboth. Now, what is that story? It is simply this, that Ashur—that is a Semitic race, for Ashur was the child of Shem—was driven out of this lower country by the Nimrodian race, and they went north and settled up here in the northern part of the Mesopotamian valley and laid the foundations of the

Assyrian kingdom, which was a Semitic kingdom, while the old Chaldean was not, but a Turanian kingdom.

Let me explain here, for the benefit of those who are not thoroughly familiar with these ethnological terms, that there are three, as philologists say, distinct races upon the earth: the Aryan, to which we belong, and which some would consider to be the descendants of Japheth; then the Semitic race, including the Hebrews and the Arabs, the descendants of Shem; and the Turanian race, which may be the descendants of Ham or may not be. But these Turanians—not the Aryans nor the Semitic people, but the other branch of the races—occupied the southern country; and it was the driving out of the Semitic people which is described in those few words. Ashur went out and built those four cities at the north; and just as we find Nimrod in the form of Bel-Nipru or Bel-Merodach, the great god of Babylonia, we find Ashur the great god of Assyria.

Another interesting fact: We find on all the ancient remains of this southern country, away back 2,000 years before Christ, that the kings are always called the kings of Sumir and Akkad, and they embrace the people of the plains and mountains. The latter were the people of the mountains, and the former of the plains. But the name of the people of the plain, as given in their own language, for Sumir is a Semitic word, was Kengi. Now Noah had a grandson whose name, if we wrote it in English exactly, would be Kenagan, or we call him Canaan, but the guttural Ayin is in there which corresponds to

the "g" in Kenagan. It shows these people of the plain were old Canaanites before, long before, this land was occupied by them. They were the old descendants of Ham, and that accounts for what Herodotus tells us, that all these people here on the Mediterranean coast came over from the Persian Gulf. So these Kenagan were afterwards driven out by the Semitic people, and they found their way over here to Canaan and became the Canaanites there. The word Kenagan signifies "the people of the plain," or "the low country," which would not have been the name given to them if Palestine had been their first habitation, which is a very high country. So we see from these discoveries where our old friends the Canaanites came from. We find also in these remains long accounts of the fall of man with much detail, and long accounts of the Deluge. The Deluge is called the overflowing flood of Na, and there is Noah. In the Deluge we read of the dove being sent out upon the seventh day and its returning, and of the raven being sent out and never coming back. We find also that the Sabbath was regularly observed. They were Sabbath people in old Babylonia. Every seventh day was a holy day before their gods. All these are interesting illustrations of Scriptural truth.

Now, if we come down to Abraham's day, say 2,000 B. C., or about that, we find in the Bible a statement given us of a very remarkable raid made upon the cities of the plain by four confederate monarchs, one of whom was Chedorlaomer, and he had with him Amraphel, king of

Shinar, and Arioch, king of Ellasar, and Tidal, king of Nations (Goim). These were the four. Until these discoveries we knew nothing about them except their names, but now we find it recorded that a dynasty came down from the mountains of Elam, conquered the whole plain and made the kings of the plain subject to it. This was the king of Elam, and here on the map you see Elam lying here between the mountains and the sea. The king of Shinar was the king of Northern Babylonia; the king of Ellasar was the king of Southern Babylonia; the king of Nations was the king of the wandering tribes here on the skirts of the Arabian Desert. These kings formed just the combination we should have expected at that time to make that wonderful raid up there through the Euphrates and down through Lebanon into Sodom. Further we find Chedorlaomer, or rather, one of his family, on the records. We find Lagamer quite frequently as one of the gods of the nation and we find Kedor, in the form of Kedor-mabuk, and whether it is the same as Chedorlaomer we cannot tell; but what is very strange he calls himself Apda Mardu, or the Conqueror of the West; and so it may be that this very Kedor-mabuk is the Chedorlaomer of whom we read in Genesis. We find the name of Arioch, his confederate, or rather, an earlier Arioch on the old clay tablets and the old bricks. Now what is very interesting is this: that the first of these Kedors brings to view a name which historians have been searching for for centuries, and tells us something which the world has been wanting to know for many

generations. We find that the first of these Kedors that came down from the mountains and conquered the whole of the Babylonian territory sometime before the day of Abraham, perhaps 100 years, had this name, "Kudur Nakhunta." Now that is an Aryan word, and when it is translated into the Semitic language, "Kudur" means the seed or the child. "Nakhunta" is the name of the goddess Ishtar or Venus. If we translate the first into the Semitic, we have "Ziru," which means the seed, and the second Ishtar; so we have Ziru-Ishtar, which we generally write in English, "Zoroaster." And so the first of those princes that came down into Babylonia was the old Zoroaster, the founder of the Zoroastrian religion, which was the religion of the Persians and Medes, who came down 1,500 years later, and took possession of the Mesopotamian plain.

From this period we hear nothing more in the Bible of this Mesopotamian country until 1,200 years later, when the kings of Israel are brought into contact with the later kings of Assyria; but meanwhile we have mention made of Egypt in the time of the Egyptian bondage. I will not dwell long on that Egyptian matter. I will just say that there are some names on which much light is shed by the knowledge we have lately obtained from Egypt by logical research. For example, how often we have wondered in our childhood, and perhaps when we grew older, at that strange name that Pharaoh or the people of Egypt gave to Joseph, which certainly was not as musical or easy to pronounce as the name that Rach-

el gave him—"Zaphnath paaneah;" and yet, when you come to translate that name, as we are now able to do with perfect safety, see what a beautiful name they gave him: "Zaf-nt-p-anch" is the name. "Zaf" meant "bread;" "nt" meant "of;" "p" is the article "the," and the last, "anch," means life; and so Joseph was called "the bread of life." [Applause.]

Moses' name in the Hebrew is "Mosheh," but now there is a Hebrew word "Mashah" of which "Mosheh" is the active participle, which means to draw out; and so when we read in the Scriptures about the birth of Moses and the name given to him by Pharaoh's daughter the skeptics had a grand occasion to find fault with the science of the Bible. Thus it is: "And she called his name Mosheh, and she said, Because I *moshah* him out of the water"—that is, "I drew him out of the water," and they say, "That is a made-up thing because mosheh is the active participle and could not mean 'drawn out' but 'drawing out,' and is not the passive participle 'drawn out'?" She would take the passive participle only and not say mosheh. It is a clumsy affair altogether, and shows how full of errors the Bible is."

Well we went to work, then, and said the Bible was not meant to teach us science, but only religion. Since then, however, we have learned something more. We have discovered that the daughter of Pharaoh did not give her son a Hebrew name at all. She very naturally gave her son an Egyptian name, and we find an Egyptian word, the passive participle of which is "Mosu," and

that was the name given to Moses. *Mosiu* means two things—first, ‘drawn out,’ but it secondly means ‘brought forth’ and is the name given to a child; and so Pharaoh’s daughter, wanting to call this her child, although it was not her own child and she could not designate it in the sense of the word ‘brought forth,’ could call it in the other sense of the word ‘drawn out’ because it was drawn out; and she said, “I drew him out of the water and have a right to call him that, although it is the common name to give to one’s own child.” And so there was a sort of pun in the thing, but the Egyptian language gives us exactly the original name.

So with Moses’ son, who was called “Ger-shom,” “Ger” means “a stranger” and “shom” means “there,” and “Gershom,” which is “a stranger there,” was a very harsh compound and no Hebrew would have thought of giving his child that name when the interpretation is “I am a stranger in a strange land.” He never would have called him “a stranger there.” But now we find that Moses gave his son an Egyptian name, and “Ger” means “stranger” and “shom” “a strange land;” and so it is just what it is called in the Bible, “a stranger in a strange land.” One other of these words and I will go to the later history of Assyria. When Joseph was made grand vizier and the robes and grandeur of the vizier’s office were put upon him, one went before and called out to the people as he rode through the streets of the city, as it is in our version, “Bow the knee!” Now the Hebrew word is “Abrech,” and nobody knew exactly what it did mean,

and some thought it was from the words meaning "tender father," but the truth is, it is not a Hebrew word at all, but it is the imperative of the Egyptian word "to rejoice." So they went ahead of Joseph's chariot, crying: "Rejoice! Rejoice! Here is the bread of life!"

What is a very remarkable thing is this, that from the time of Moses to the time of Rehoboam, 500 years, or from 1471 to 971, we find that Egypt did not in any way trouble the children of Israel, and yet, after the time of Moses, some of the most powerful of Egypt's monarchs were reigning. Now what is the reason of this, when such remarkable monarchs as Thothmes 3d and Amenoph 2d, etc., were extending their sway all over the eastern world and making conquests even here in Assyria? Why is it that little Palestine was not harmed, and that we see nothing about that at all in the records of God's holy people? The answer is found, in the first place, in the fact that it was Assyria that was the great adversary of Egypt, and it was against Assyria that they directed all their energies when they came eastward; and more than this, we are let into the secret by a little passage in 1 Chron. 4:17, where we find that the son of Ezra married Bithiah, the daughter of Pharaoh. So Pharaoh married his daughter into that noble house of Caleb, the Northumberland House of Palestine, and we find that Amenoph the 3d, one of these magnificent monarchs after the Exodus, married a Jewess. We see from these facts, that there was a close amity between Egypt and Palestine through all that period of Judges, and it was

good policy for Egypt to keep Palestine its friend as a natural barrier to prevent any raids from the East down into Egypt. Now, the last 200 years of that 500 years it is interesting to find in the records of Egypt and Assyria, (for Babylonia had been crushed and brought into subjection to Assyria,) that very weak princes sat upon the throne and those two empires were very much depressed ; as if God had purposed it so, so that this Israelitish Empire could rise under David and Solomon, and under Solomon it was far superior in wealth, power, and fame to those old monarchies of Assyria and of Egypt. Now, the first notice we have of the successors of David and Solomon upon the throne of Israel in these Oriental records is the name of Ahab, that good husband of the good Jezebel, and we find that Shalmaneser the 2d, in his story, tells us that Ahab, king of Israel, joined with Benhadad the king of Damascus and four others, and made a confederacy, and Shalmaneser went over with his troops and crushed him. And further on in these records we find the same Shalmaneser a few years after coming over and making the monarch of Israel pay him tribute. We find the monarch's name was Jehu, and so we have Ahab and Jehu, and their story is told us by the old records dug up at Nineveh. In the account in the Kings of the reign of Amaziah it is said that his kingdom was confirmed, which is a phrase only used when a kingdom is tributary to another kingdom ; and that shows that Amaziah, king of Judah, was under the orders of the king of Assyria about that time.

Now a little later in the year 770, B. C. we find the first Assyrian monarch mentioned by name. He comes as Pul, and he fights against Menahem, and brings him into tribute to Assyria. Now, Pul is identified with a monarch whose name is found on the records very often, and his name is Vul lush, and the most remarkable thing about him in history is that his wife is the only woman whose name is found in all these multitudinous records of Assyria and Babylon. Wherever Vul lush's name is put, this name of his wife is put with him, and her name was Semiramis. Babylonia was a restless province, all the while rebelling, and Pul married her and had her name put with his on the public records. Then after Pul comes Tig lath Pileser, and he, you know, at the invitation of Ahaz, comes over and conquers Syria. After him comes Shalmanezzer and fights against Hoshea, the last king of Israel, and now we see that Shalmanezzer besieged Samaria and in the third year he took it. Shalmanezzer is not said to take it, but in the third year "the king of Assyria" took it, and we find in that very year Shalmanezzer was succeeded by a usurper called Sargon. And that is the reason why the Bible is so exact and says not Shalmanezzer but the "king of Assyria" took it. We find at the same time that Hoshea tried to get help from the Egyptian king, and his name we find upon the Egyptian records with all he did. Now a very curious thing is found. When the people of Northern Palestine were taken away by the Assyrian king and put away up this river Chabor, he put a large number of people from

Babylonia in their place. Why did he take them from Babylonia? Simply because it was such a troublesome province. It remembered that it was an empire long before Assyria was, and so there was a constant insurrection, almost, in Babylonia. He took, therefore, a large number of people from Babylonia, those that were most troublesome, and put them in the place of the Israelites whom he placed over in Assyria. Many thousands, it says, of the people of Babylon whom he put over there worship a goddess whom they called Succoth-benoth. These are two Hebrew names and mean the Booths of the daughters. The goddess they worship was the great goddess of Babylon, *Zir-banit*. They have written it Succoth-benoth. We see how they made the second mistake, but how *Zir* became Succoth is more difficult to comprehend. *Zir* means "lady" and *Zar* means "booths." They thought it was *Zar*, and translated it "booths," while the real name is "Lady Creator." She was the wife of Nimrod, and her name was *Zir-banit*, or the deity which these Babylonians worshipped in Palestine when the kingdom of the north was destroyed.

Those names which occur at that time in the sacred record are not names of individuals, but of offices. *Tartan* was generalissimo; *Rab-saris* was the first eunuch; *Rab-shakeh* was the chief cup-bearer; *Rab-mag* was the chief priest; and so we are to translate those words.

Now, we come to Hezekiah's day. We find him, in the first place, making favor with Merodach-baladan, the king of Babylon, and we find from the record of that day

that Merodach Baladan rose up against the Assyrian power, threw off the yoke, called upon his countrymen in the name of their old glory and reëstablished the Babylonian power. Hezekiah thinks now, "This is a nice thing for me; I will play Babylon against Assyria. I am threatened by Sargon, the king of Assyria, and I will ally myself with Merodach Baladan." So they engage in friendship; but it turns out a very poor speculation, for you know soon after Sennacherib, Sargon's son, came and attacked Hezekiah; and the Bible says he took all the fenced cities of Hezekiah and shut up Hezekiah himself and made him pay a tribute of thirty talents of gold and three hundred talents of silver. But hear Sennacherib's own account. He says:

"In the course of my expedition I captured and subdued the spoil of his cities. Hezekiah, king of Judah, did not submit to my yoke. Forty-six of his cities, strong fortresses, and cities of their territory which were without number, I besieged, I captured and plundered as spoil. Hezekiah himself I made as a caged bird in the city of Jerusalem. In addition to previous taxes I imposed upon them a donation.

"The fear of the approach of my majesty overwhelmed him and his own soldiers whom he had caused to enter Jerusalem. He consented to the payment of tribute—thirty talents of gold; eight hundred talents of silver."

There is a difference there between 800 and 300, but how remarkable this story is! And then he goes on to say how he overthrew Merodach Baladan, the friend of

Hezekiah. Also on the second expedition when he was down here at Libnah he sent Rabshakeh to shake his fists at Hezekiah. You will remember the king of Ethiopia was coming against him, and he said, "Tell Hezekiah not to trust to these Egyptians." We find now two Egyptian kings. So or Sabaco is mentioned by name and Pharaoh. In the book of Isaiah these words of Sennacherib are written "Do n't you, Hezekiah, think Pharaoh is going to do you any good. He is a *broken reed* that will pierce the hand that leans upon it ;" and we find that Pharaoh Sethos and others of that dynasty had a *broken reed* as their emblem, so that you see what a beautiful allusion that is, and what a remarkably neat historic coincidence is presented by it. Sennacherib says: "This Pharaoh has a broken reed as his emblem. He is nothing but a broken reed, and you, Hezekiah, had better not trust him." And what is very curious is that when Rabshakeh begins to talk to them on the wall the Jews cry out: "Do n't talk in the Jewish language. Talk in the Syrian language!" Why Syrian? Why not Assyrian? Now we find, since the Assyrian language has been disintombed and explained, that the Assyrian language is the old Aramean. The Aramean language was the old original language of Assyria. Another curious thing occurred after that, when Manasseh was carried captive to Babylon. Manasseh was the son of Hezekiah and it was a pity that when Hezekiah was advised of his own coming death he should have obtained a respite and had fifteen years added to his life by the Lord. He had bet-

ter have died, for Manasseh was born in that fifteen years and became a scourge, but when Manasseh was carried captive to Babylon, what a mistake the sacred writer made there! The idea of the king of Assyria, who reigned at Nineveh, carrying his captives to Babylon! It is absurd, and you will find fifty commentators who will tell you it is absurd. The idea of an Assyrian prince carrying his captives to Babylon! He ought to have carried them to Nineveh. Undoubtedly he ought. Within the last few years we find the whole story of Esar-haddon's life written by himself, and he tells us that when his father Sennacherib died, Babylon was in such a ferment that he felt it a necessity just to go down there and live among them; and so, besides his palace at Nineveh he built a palace at Babylon and made it his headquarters during all his reign. Now we see why Manasseh was carried there. It was just for that reign, not before and not afterwards, that the king was to be found at Babylon.

I had a good many other allusions to make, but I will rapidly close with mentioning two or three. We find the son of Esar-haddon—Asshur-bani-pal, the original of the name Sardanapalus—reigning forty years with wonderful power in Assyria, although it was the flaming up of the light in the socket, for his son only reigned one year, and was the real one that was burned up in the palace with his wife. Sardanapalus did not die that way, but it was his son, whose tragic death is given in the story of Sardanapalus. Sardanapalus had a brother that he put in

his father, Esar-haddon's, place in Babylon. He did not want Babylon out of the control of the royal family, so he reigned in Nineveh, and let his brother, whose name was Saul-mugina, reign in Babylon. Saul-mugina took up the cause of the Babylonians and revolted against his brother, and a fearful conflict took place, which resulted in a victory for Sardanapalus. And what did he do? He heated a *fiery furnace* and burned his brother up there. He put his chief generals into a *den of lions*; and there you have, one hundred years before the time of Daniel, just those punishments in vogue which you find in the Book of Daniel, and against which infidels have again and again turned their bitter scorn as inconsistent with true history.

In Nebuchadnezzar's day, when the Assyrian empire was overthrown, and the Babylonish empire reinstated—and it was a glorious reign of forty years—we find in the record he gives of his own reign this remarkably entry. After giving an account of the magnificent palaces he built, and the hanging gardens and the walls—and no wonder his nature was proud: there has never been a monarch like him on the face of the earth—we find this strange record. He suddenly says: "And now I took no pleasure in building. I took no pleasure in the temples. I took no pleasure in walking or in riding. I took no pleasure in anything for a term of years;" and then he goes on with what he did afterwards. What was that? Why, it was the seven years when he was like a beast upon the earth and ate grass like an ox; and that is the

way Nebuchadnezzar refers to it in that rather delicate manner in his own record.

Now after these empires—the old Babylonian lasting until 1,300 years before Christ, and the Assyrian to about 625 before Christ, and then the new Babylonian of Nebuchadnezzar's, which only lasted eighty years—we come down to the sixth century before Christ, and then we find these mountaineers coming down from their mountains and sweeping over the country and taking possession of all; and Cyrus is their leader, or, rather, they have two leaders. One is Darius, and the other is Cyrus; Darius, or Astyages, an old man, and Cyrus, a young man. They come and sweep over that empire of 1,500 years' duration, and they find in the midst of it a people by millions called Israel. They make them a grand exception to their work of extermination. They treat them with favor and load them with riches and blessings. They send back all of them that want to go to Jerusalem with a grand army escort. Why all this honor upon the poor captive Jews? These were the people that believed in the old Zoroastrian creed—that there was but one God. They hated polytheism; they allowed no statues or pictures of gods. Only one God they worshipped. These mountaineers came down to exterminate the pagans, and they were charmed when they found in their midst a people that, like them, worshipped one true God. They were friends of the Jews. God raised up these people to come down and send his people back to their own land. These were the Persians. It is very true that

there was a ritualistic wing of the Persians that tried to take away the old Zoroastrian creed, and did succeed a little. For example: after Cyrus had died and his son Cambyses had died, these ritualistic Medes gained the throne, and as soon as they gained the throne they stopped the building of Jerusalem. That we find recorded in the Book of Ezra. They had not a love for the Jews like the real true Persians; but as soon as the Magians were set aside, and after a civil war of some years, Darius became a king of Persia, and he sent word to the Jews to go on with the building of the city, and renewed his interest in them that his great predecessor, Cyrus the Great, had.

My friends, I have given you thus far a very desultory story. I have tried to leave out details that would be uninteresting except to those that are constantly studying details; and perhaps there has not been the connection that there ought to have been in an historic lecture, but I have thrown out such facts as may lead you to further study, and confirm to your hearts the glorious truth of the Scripture of God.

THE
ADAPTATION OF THE BIBLE,
TO THE
UNIVERSAL NEEDS OF THE SOUL,
AND THE
WITNESS OF CHRISTIAN MEN
TO ITS
DIVINE AUTHORITY AND POWER.

ROBERT RUSSELL BOOTH, D. D.,
PASTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY PLACE CHURCH, NEW YORK.

THE
BIBLE AND MAN'S NEEDS;
Testimonies to its Power.

THE subject proposed as our theme, at this point in the course, is in importance second to no other, and in some respects might well claim the precedence. After we have established to our satisfaction the authority, the inspiration, and the oneness of the Bible, as revealing redemption; after we have studied the languages in which it is written, and have scrutinized the facts of ancient history which correspond to its statements, the question of its *adaptation* still remains to be tried. Is it a volume which meets man's necessities, and which can accomplish the work in him and for him, which a Divine revelation must be presumed to intend? As a matter of fact, it will generally be found true that there is more conviction and power in this line of argument than in any other. There are many questions which common minds cannot find time to investigate, many lines of argument of which they cannot remember the successive steps; but whenever the fact of an adaptation on the part of the

Bible to personal need is brought home to the consciousness, there is a sense of conviction which is established on immovable ground, and which justifies one in saying, concerning the Bible, what the blind man said of Christ to the Pharisees: "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know: that, whereas I was blind, now I see." It may be fairly asked, therefore, whether the highest kind of proof which can be adduced to support the claims of God's word is not that which is derived from its "adaptation to the universal needs of the soul." When you find a key fitting exactly to the wards of an intricate lock; when you find the clew to an otherwise unsolvable puzzle; when you find the lever which at a touch starts the motions of some vast piece of machinery, you have found enough to satisfy you that the connection involves the clearest proof of design and intended adjustment. Thus the truth of the Bible, to the inner sense of the soul, the consciousness that it is the source of light, of comfort and life, is a power against which the doubts of the skeptic and the arguments of the infidel make no headway whatever. We may illustrate the value of this kind of proof by that remarkable statement of the grounds of his belief in *Christianity* which Mr. Coleridge has given in the *Biographia Literaria*: "Its consistency with right reason I consider as the outer court of the temple, the common area within which it stands. The miracles with and through which the religion was first revealed and attested I regard as the steps, the vestibule and the portal of the temple. The sense, the inward feeling in the soul of

each believer of its exceeding desirableness, the experience that he needs something, joined with the strong foreboding that the redemption and the grace propounded to us in Christ, are what he needs—this I hold to be the true foundation of the spiritual edifice. But it is the *experience* derived from a practical conformity to the conditions of the gospel; it is the opening eye, the dawning light, the terrors and the promises of spiritual growth, the blessedness of loving God as God, the nascent sense of sin hated as sin, and of the incapability of attaining either without Christ; it is the sorrow which still rises up from beneath, and the consolation that meets it from above; in a word, it is the actual trial of the faith in Christ, with its accompaniments and results, that must form the arched roof, and faith itself is the completing keystone."

Now it is precisely to this test of experience that we are led when we consider the Bible in the light of its adaptation to the universal needs of the soul. Does it meet the demand made upon it by our complex nature? Is it the source of truth for the mind, of peace for the conscience, of light for the valley of the shadow of death? Does it lay hold of man's fallen nature with power to lift him out of the defilement of sin and raise him into the presence of God? Does man find, when he comes to this book in the attitude of an inquirer and learner, that it answers his deepest questions, enlightens his darkest hours, and puts a new joy into his heart? If this is its influence, if it is thus "adapted" to the needs of his soul,

he has solid and unimpeachable ground for his conviction that God is its author, and that in obeying its precepts he is walking in a road which is the way of life everlasting.

To confirm you in that confidence, I am to place before you this evening the leading features of this adaptation. And for the purpose of centralizing our thought on this great theme, we may fix upon an expression found in the Bible itself, an expression employed by St. Paul to set forth the very point we are about to consider. In the fourth verse of the fifteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans he makes use of this phrase to declare the value and power of the Old Testament Scriptures: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Taking this inspired word of the apostle as the equivalent of the subject before us, let us consider those characteristics of the word of God which enable it to become a comfort to the souls of men, and thereby to impart the consolations of a hope which maketh not ashamed. The fitness of this phase of the apostle to our present theme becomes the more apparent when we observe that, in the original, the teaching and assistance of the Holy Spirit are essentially connected with his meaning. He uses the genitive case of the word *paraklesis*, which in New Testament Greek carries with it, almost without exception, a reference to the agency and presence of the blessed Comforter, "the Paraclete" whose office-work it is to lead men into the knowledge of the truth in Jesus. In this sense, then, "the comfort

of the Scriptures" is their adaptation, under the ministrations of the Holy Spirit, to the several faculties and varied needs of the soul, as the result of which the light of hope shines bright and strong upon man's earthly pathway.

As a preliminary to the question thus stated, we should naturally ask, "What *are* the universal needs of the soul?" Without covering a field so extensive as this, may it not suffice for us to say that, first of all, the soul needs to find, in any system or word which addresses it, *the evidence of authority*, so that it can rest on its revelations with confidence. Following this, it seems clear that the soul needs to find in the revelation itself *such substance and point as shall provide for it a rescue from that curse of sin* which man in all ages has felt to be his sorest calamity. But it must also be recognized as a need of the soul, that the revelation presented should be *adapted to individual men in their various phases of character and in the manifold conditions of their earthly lot*. And finally, it should be able to afford *a support and a light* when they pass, as all men must pass, from these scenes of time into the presence of the eternal realities.

In the line of these widely-recognized needs of the soul, let us seek the adaptation which may commend the word of God to our souls.

First, *the solid basis of "the comfort of the Scriptures" is the clear and sufficient evidence of their Divine authority as the only and final revelation of the will of God to man*. "The word of the Lord is tried," wrote the Psalmist.

In view of the careful scrutiny, the long-continued investigation, the accumulated experience, which has attended the history of that word from David's time till ours, we may connect our confident assertion with his inspired testimony, and say with the deepest emphasis of an assured conviction, "Yea, it is tried and proved." This fact lies at the foundation of the comforting and hope-inspiring influence of the Holy Scripture, for without this they could not speak to man with the authority of God. However valuable they might be as records of the remotest history of the human race, however interesting in their narratives of personal experience, however grand and inspiring in their sublimity of sentiment and promise, the essential feature, "the one thing needful," would be lacking, unless we could turn to them with the assurance that they contain a special revelation from the God that made us, and are "able to make us wise unto salvation."

But what are the grounds of this assurance? Can we forget that there are many eminent in scholarship, exalted in position, affluent in attainments, who join issue with us at this point, and while conceding antiquity, sublimity, and moral power in an unusual degree, do still refuse to unite in the confession that the Scriptures are the special word of God to man? Certainly no one who reads or listens in these days can be ignorant that the old conflict is still carried on around this citadel of faith and hope, and that peculiar and startling methods of assault are used to overthrow it. But we remember, too,

the history of such assaults in former ages: what sieges of criticism and scholastic opposition this Bible has encountered, what hurricanes of enmity and opposition it has withstood, what new defences of evidence and moral power it has acquired from age to age, and we abate "no jot of heart or hope" amid the present conflicts of human reason with the word of God. It stands before us, in this present age, in an attitude so peculiar, so imposing, so utterly unlike that of every other volume, that it carries with it its own evidence, and commends itself to every conscience in the sight of God.

The simplest test of origin or authorship in any work is its accordance with the character or genius of him to whom it is ascribed. By this test try the Bible. What thing so Godlike does the world contain? He is the living God. This is the living word, a transcript of his holiness, an unfolding of his power, a demonstration of his love. "Older than all human histories, it has come down to us leaving a thousand fallen empires in its track. It has foretold the ruin of Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, and yet it still survives. While nations, kings, philosophies, systems, and institutions, have died away, the Bible now engages men's attention, is studied by the keenest intellects, is revered by the purest hearts, keeps progress with the advancing civilization of the world, originates the institutions of philanthropy, imparts ideas of law and liberty, reforms and elevates the fallen, sustains the faith of those who rest upon it, and utilizes every new invention and discovery to overrun the

earth.”* Thus it survives all changes, itself unchanged ; it moves all minds, and yet is moved by none ; it sees all things decay, and yet is incorruptible ; it sees myriads of other books ingulfed in the stream of time, but it is borne along triumphantly upon the wave. It is, in this grand demonstration of vitality, its own sufficient evidence. “A bad heart,” said the Earl of Rochester to Bishop Burnet, “is the great argument against this holy book.” It is the book of books for man. “It has God for its author, eternity for its object, salvation for its end, and truth, without any admixture of error, for its subject matter.”† “The word of the Lord is tried,” and “the word of the Lord endureth for ever.” Thus by the abundant evidence for its authority it is adapted to satisfy our need of certainty as to the foundation upon which it rests. But still more impressive is the proof which is presented,

Secondly, *By a consideration of the great theme which it presents to man's attention ; which is the tidings and offer of redemption.* One of the most learned and eminent of English lawyers in the seventeenth century was John Selden. Some days before his death he sent for Archbishop Usher, and said to him, “I have surveyed most of the learning that is among the sons of men, yet at this moment I can recall nothing in them on which to rest my soul, save one from the Sacred Scriptures, which rises much on my mind. It is this: ‘The grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men,

* An unknown author.

† John Locke.

teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.'”

In the same tone as this utterance of the English jurist was the confession of one of the greatest of American theologians,* when lying on his deathbed in a neighboring town. Few men of his profession or of his time had been more deeply interested in the religious controversies of the day, or had studied the Scriptures more profoundly. But when one asked him, in that sunset of his life, some question concerning one of the points of doctrine which he had earnestly supported, he made this memorable answer: “Here I find that all my theology is reduced to this: ‘Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.’”

In these simple, earnest utterances of these eminent and gifted men, we find that central theme of comfort which the Bible offers to a fallen race, and by which it is adapted to their deepest need. Manifold as is the method of its revelation, the theme is always one. It is Christ Jesus the Redeemer, “the way, the truth, and the life,” the sinner’s advocate and intercessor, the sacrifice by which God’s justice is reconciled with mercy, the refuge of the soul when burdened by its sins or trembling

* Dr. Archibald Alexander of Princeton.

in prospect of the judgment. From first to last the Bible is the history of His infinite fulness, of his ineffable compassion, of his sufficient power to save. It holds his person and his work envisaged on its myriad pages. His presence shines through all its parts like a glorious sun giving light to the worlds that circle around it. Everything in the Bible points to Christ, and helps to hold him up before the world. Its revelation of redeeming love is like the progressive shining of the day-dawn on the world which slumbers in thick darkness—at first the faintest tint of light thrown on the blackness of the sky, then the broad belt of blue and gold encircling the mountain summits, and then the radiance of the risen sun pouring down into the valleys and filling all the firmament with light. Thus, from page to page, progressively, the Bible is illuminated with the glory of the cross. The single ray, which shone in the first darkness of the fall, grows ever brighter to the perfect day. The voice which whispered comfort to the sinner flying from the Eden forfeited by sin, grows clearer, fuller, sweeter, as the ages pass, until from Calvary's height the Son of God cries, "It is finished," and until the message which that finished offering authorizes is published to the world in the last of apocalyptic visions by the ascended and triumphant Jesus: "Whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely." Now this specific declaration of God's love in Christ is the deep fulness of "the comfort of the Scriptures." This is their blessed adaptation to the burdened, guilty soul of man. Until this thought of God's infinite and

all-embracing love in Christ is known, man lives in darkness and in fear.

“Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
Because he knows some ghastly fiend
Doth still behind him tread.”

S. T. COLERIDGE.

But with this revelation, the loneliness and gloom are lifted from the soul. In Christ the mystery is solved.

“God’s thoughts are love; and Jesus is
The loving voice they find.
His love lights up the vast abyss
Of the eternal mind.”

T. D. BURNS’ VISION OF PROPHECY.

In him the promises of God are “yea.” There is assurance of redeeming love when we “behold the Lamb of God.” To read this tidings in the Bible is to understand the book. To read it, and receive it as a personal experience, is to know “the peace of God which passeth understanding.” In his old age William Wilberforce uttered these words: “I never knew happiness till I found Christ, as a Saviour. Read the Bible. Read the Bible! Through all my perplexities and distresses I never read any other book, I never knew the want of any other. It has been my hourly study and all my knowledge of the doctrines, all my acquaintance with the experience and realities of religion, I have derived from the Bible only. Books about religion are well enough, but will not do instead.” To this impressive testimony of the great English philanthropist to the soul-sustaining influence of the essential theme of the Bible, I may add that of Arthur Hallam, the gifted young man to whom the poet

laureate of England inscribes his "In Memoriam." "I find," he writes, "in the doctrine of the cross a peculiar and inexhaustible treasure for the affections, the idea of the theanthropos, the God whose goings-forth have been from everlasting, becoming visible to men for their redemption, as an earthly temporal creature; living, acting and suffering among themselves, and what is more important transferring to the unseen place of his spiritual agency the same humanity he wore on earth, so that the lapse of generations can in no way affect the conception of his identity; this is the most powerful thought that ever addressed itself to the human imagination. It was the $\pi\omicron\nu\ \sigma\tau\omega$ which alone was wanted to move the world." And we may say in turning from this part of our subject, it *has* moved the world as nothing else in the long course of history has done. Addressing man through the affections, revealing unto him the Holy One "who for us men and our salvation was incarnate and suffered on the cross to atone for sin," bearing to all guilty, burdened hearts the invitation of the Son of God—which none has ever tested to be disappointed of its promise—"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,"—this book is the holy manna of the world: it is the chart of a river in which whosoever washes is healed of the leprosy of sin and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Milton grandly describes the archangel Uriel descending to the earth in a sunbeam. The revelation of the Bible is a beam in which the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity descends to change

the night of nature into the daydawn of redemption and to draw the nations to the brightness of its rising.

But third, *when we look beyond the basis and the subject-matter of the word of God, we are at once impressed with that element of comfort in the Scriptures which springs from their adaptation to the varying individuality of mankind.* In constructing the Bible in its own peculiar form God has had special reference to the structure of the mind of man. The all-important message of salvation is commended to us and made especially attractive by the mode in which it is presented. In the compositions of human ingenuity and wisdom upon the subject of religion, we find a narrowness of adaptation which makes them interesting only to a single class of minds. The treatise of Plato upon immortality is attractive to a scholar, but obscure and dull to an unlettered man. The Rig-Veda of the Hindoo contains some striking passages, but as a whole it is unintelligible. The Koran is said to be a sealed book to the great majority of those who acknowledge its authority. Man-made books speak to the thoughts of those who are in the intellectual sphere of their composers. It is the characteristic of the highest genius that it can reach the minds of diverse multitudes and portray the passions which are stirring on that harp of many strings, the soul of man. Homer, Danté, Shakespeare, Virgil, Goethe, these were many-sided writers; and yet how much of human life, and need, and destiny, they left untouched. In contrast with all other books, the Bible fills the whole circumference of man's endow-

ment. It touches every spring of thought and feeling in this deep humanity. It is adapted to instruct the savage, to inspire the sage, to interest and guide the little child. It not only deals with all subjects which are related to man's duty and destiny in time and in eternity; but it deals with them in such a manner that every style of thought and feeling may find within its pages the nutriment or stimulus it needs. Some come to it for practical instruction: it gives them precepts of the most intense directness, proverbs which condense the meaning of a treatise into a single line. Some come to it with transient curiosity: it gives them narratives of thrilling interest and opens up before them questions which arouse the dullest minds. Some come to it with the cultivated taste which seeks rhetorical and poetic beauty: it gives them passages of the loftiest grandeur, conceptions of majesty and sublime significance which rise above the common range of human thought as the everlasting hills tower high above the valleys. Some come to it with careworn anxious, trembling hearts: it gives them messages of sympathy and tenderness which greet them as a mother's comfort soothes a timid child. In one word, not to extend details of a subject so exhaustless, the Bible comes to every one who will receive it, as a book which finds him out, and meets his wants, and guides his thoughts to duty and to God. And so, it has been said of it, "It is the king's best copy, the magistrate's best rule, the housewife's best guide, the servant's best direction, the young man's best companion. It is the schoolboy's best story-

book and the scholar's masterpiece. It contains a grammar for the novice and a mystery for the sage." "I see," wrote Hallam, "that the Bible fits into every fold and crevice of the human heart. I am a man; and I believe that this is God's book, because it is man's book." It is this far-reaching adaptation to the complex being, man; this infinite variety in the alluring power with which it draws the fallen creature to its central truth and promise, which makes the Bible the book of God for all men everywhere and gives it power to make its blessing known "far as the curse is found."

Fourth, *let us add to this fact that other element of the comfort of the Scriptures which is discovered in their relation to all the changing conditions of man's estate on earth.* Not only does the Bible meet the individuality of man, with truth adapted to all special needs or tastes, it also comes into direct connection with his circumstances and understands them and helps him whatever they may be to find through them a way to God. This is no less an element of comfort than the facts already mentioned. Diverse and startling as are the changes which pass over human life in its progressive periods, there is a deep necessity that God should spread his guiding and sustaining truth before mankind in comprehensive fulness, so that in each event of life the mind may know his will, and the heart may feel his consolation. This is the marvellous adaptation of the word of God to man's estate, whether it be one of trial or prosperity. "When thou goest it shall lead thee, when thou sleepest it shall keep

thee, when thou wakest it shall talk with thee; for the commandment is a lamp and the law is light." In this relation of "the comfort of the Scriptures," think how they are adapted to the common duties and the great emergencies of life. Here in this place to-night are gathered hundreds of human souls in all the various experience of joy or sorrow, of poverty and wealth, of exultation and depression, of burden-bearing and of ease. What human word or work could possibly provide the guidance or rebuke or consolation for so many diverse wants? But God's word comes to each just as he needs it. The all-fitting, all foreseeing truths of the Bible provide the antidote in temptation, the guide to duty, the corrective in prosperity, the solace in affliction. In your prosperity, it shows you how to use the gifts of God, so that they may promote his glory and your spiritual wealth. In your friendlessness, it tells you of "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." In your anxiety for earthly goods, it teaches you that your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. In your sharp conflicts with the world, it bids you be of good cheer for Christ has "overcome the world." In your bereavement it whispers, "For a little while I tried thee as a father his child, for thy good; yea, in faithfulness and love have I stricken thee." Oh, it is marvellous what leaves innumerable hang on this "tree of life" for the healing of the nations. No circumstances can surpass, no depth of trial can exhaust "the comfort of the Scriptures." One of the subjects often chosen by the great painters of the

middle ages was taken from the legend of Sebastian standing against a rock pierced through and through with arrows. The rock sustained him though the arrows drank his blood. So stands the man who leans upon the word of God. "When thou passeth through the waters I will be with thee and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee." "In all these things we are more than conquerors." "The comfort of the Scriptures" suits each event of life. "It is this universal applicability of the Bible," says Robertson, "which has made its influence universal. This book has held spell-bound the hearts of nations in a way in which no other book has ever held men before. States have been founded on its principles. Kings rule by a contract based upon it. Men hold it in their hands when they prepare to give solemn evidence affecting life or death. Its prayers and its psalms are the language which we use when we speak to God. If there ever has been a prayer or a hymn enshrined in the heart of a nation you are sure to find its basis in the Bible." To the same effect is the assertion of Sir William Jones, second in scholarship and learning to none who has lived during the present century. "The Scriptures contain more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence, than could be collected from all other books that were ever composed in any age or in any idiom." In this vast affluence of power and beauty, with principles and truth which embody the thoughts of God, concerning all the diverse circumstances of his

creatures, the Bible has the right to claim the recognition of the world as the true instrument of progress, culture, and reform. That scene which Robert Burns has portrayed in his poem on "The Cotter's Saturday Night," is one which vindicates the influence of the Bible in every house and every land where it is found :

"From scenes like this old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad."

When a pagan ambassador asked Queen Victoria the reason for the greatness of her realm, she gave him a Bible saying, "That is the secret of the greatness of England." And in that same strain was that sentence in the centennial letter of the President of the United States to the Sunday-schools of the land: "Hold fast to the Bible as the sheet-anchor of your liberties, write its precepts in your heart, practise them in your lives. To the influence of this book we are indebted for all the progress made in true civilization, and to it we must look as our guide in the future." On the basis of such an adaptation to the conditions of man our confidence in the hold of the Bible on the generations to come may be supreme. Kingdoms may be shaken, thrones pass away, customs and languages change; but so long as the earth endures, the morality, the doctrines, the precepts and promises of the Bible shall continue as the seed of the world's life and the lamp of the world's light, until the full harvest of the earth shall be reaped. It is hard to refrain from comparing with all this fulness of achievement and promise on the part of the Bible, the utter failure of

infidelity and skepticism in this field. In the language of a recent writer* we may ask, "As for skepticism what has it done? What immoral man has it reformed? What savage has it reclaimed? What barbarous tribe has it civilized? What wilderness has it transformed into an Eden? Over what continent has it poured out its philanthropies to ameliorate the mass of the people? What has it accomplished by its questionings, its gloom, its despair for the deliverance of our race from its sin and misery?" To ask the question is to answer it. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Fifth. A few words only may be uttered in closing, concerning that *great question* which *nature leaves well nigh unsolved, and yet upon which all the interests of our being centre*. I mean the *future of existence and the support* which is *demande*d by the soul in *passing from things seen and temporal, to things unseen and eternal*. Do you remember the story of the closing hours of Sir Walter Scott? He asked his friend Lockhardt to read to him. "What shall I read from?" "There is but one book for a man in my condition." Thus more and more clearly, as one reflects upon the mystery of life and death, upon the transient present and the great hereafter; as he desires assurance that in the rending and dissolving of this earthly tabernacle there shall remain a "building of God," for his eternal home; is he directed towards "the comfort of the Scriptures," for his hope. I do not say that nature does not tell us of a future life, but it is cer-

* Rev. William MacDill of Ireland.

tain that science, the so-called interpreter of nature, does in these days seem to verge more and more towards a denial of the soul and immortality. At any rate it is only in the light of revelation that one can move with an unfaltering trust towards the dark stream of death ; joining in the song of the conquering saints of old : " O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? " The comfort of the Scriptures shines like a star of hope when the last shadows of life's transient day are falling, and all about that star extends the firmament of light and love, in which the living God has opened worlds of life as mansions for the soul.

Now here is an element of adaptation which is conspicuous and unparalleled. Familiar, and even trite, as the subject of deathbed experience is, it is, after all, recognized on all hands as a fact that, when death comes, it is " a test of the man and a test of his principles." And that system or truth which affords support and consolation to one who stands on that last low verge of earth, is by that very fact commended to the confidence of the race. " Go where you will throughout our dying world, consult the saint, the savage, or the sage, and you will find, from the experience of them all, that faith in the word of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is himself ' the resurrection and the life,' is the only power that can take the sting from death and from the grave its victory." There is not a deathbed like that of Dudley Tyng or Alfred Cookman in the whole world outside the Bible. Compare the last end of Hume, Voltaire, Mirabeau,

Aaron Burr, or Stuart Mill, with that of Rutherford, or Payson, or Simeon Calhoun, or Henry B. Smith! We challenge the whole host of infidelity to show a single instance, well authenticated, of an intelligent man who, on infidel principles, has enjoyed real happiness in life and peace in death. And on the other hand, no fact in history is better attested than that individuals of every people and nation, of every age and rank, of every grade of intelligence and culture, of every period, from the bloom of youth to the decrepitude of age, have, through the faith of the Bible, enjoyed a happiness which the world never gave and could not take away; and have encountered death with a triumphant joy, which was a prophecy and foretaste of "the joy of the home-life of the better land" to which they knew that they were going. And thus at the supremest point of trial we find the adaptation of the Bible to man's need complete, and for the confirmation of our hope we hear the cadence of innumerable voices crying, as they pass the boundaries of this lower life, "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Here is the book which has brought life and immortality to light. This is the record that "God has given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

But we have reached our limit, and with this partial presentation of a theme so grand and so exhaustless, that to do it justice would demand an angel's pen, we leave it only summing up the matter now presented.

The adaptation of the Bible to the universal needs of

the soul is evidenced when we consider its solid basis, the authority of God ; its precious message, the tidings of salvation by the love and blood of Jesus ; its marvelous and varied diversity, which makes it a voice to every heart ; its comprehensive scope and range, which touches life at all its points ; its soul-sustaining hope, which shines upon the sepulchre and makes the grave "a pathway to the skies." Here is the "comfort of the Scriptures," which fills the soul with hope. Oh that it might be made a positive experience to all who hear me now, through the teaching of the Holy Ghost ! Receiving the Bible, thus adapted to your needs, it will become God's message of salvation to your soul. The teaching of the Scriptures will make you wise unto salvation. The comfort of the Scriptures will go with you in every scene of toil and trial. The God of the Bible will be your guide even unto death.

"Oh grant us grace, almighty Lord,
To read and mark thy holy word,
Its truths with meekness to receive,
And by its holy precepts live."

MIRACLES AND PROPHECIES

WHICH

SHOW THE BIBLE DIVINE.



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MIRACLES

AND

MODERN THOUGHT.

THAT "the age of miracles is past" is one of the tritest of commonplaces. That the age in which men believe that miracles were ever wrought is fast passing away, is the confident assertion of many who profess to discern the tendencies of modern thinking and to predict the end to which they lead. Many who assume to speak for science say that the belief in miracles has become thoroughly unscientific. Critics who believe in no other inspiration or prophecy seem inspired to discern and prophetically to declare that the moving narrations of the Christian miracles will soon be read only for the gentleness and pathos which they symbolize, but have parted for ever with the sacredness of truth. Materialists will of course believe in the reports of no miracles, except of the sudden rushing of nebulous matter into a newly-created star, or the burning out of some star into a cloud of thickening mist. They will credit no stories of healing

of the sick, except by some newly-discovered elixir of life, and no raising of the dead, except through the evolution of unorganized matter into organic life. Spiritualists will say they find miracles enough in "the blowing clover" and "the falling rain," in the tenderness of spring, the glory of summer, the sadness of autumn and the sternness of winter, and in the ever-renewed revelations of the spirit of the universe to the ever-interpreting and ever-worshipping spirit of man. Men who know the world, and claim to test the Christian story by men as they find them, explain the belief in the miraculous, partly by the warm imaginations and partly by the credulity of mystical and admiring believers. Men who aspire to penetrate the secret of all great souls, venture with bold analysis, if not with inimitable effrontery, to explain the successive steps by which the greatest miracle of all—that Being whose eyes of mingled majesty and pity have hitherto searched the hearts of men like a flame of fire—was mistaken as to his own Messiahship and his divine right to save and to rule the sinning and the lost. The time was when miracles were esteemed the strongest defence of the Christian system. The time is fast coming, it is said, when the miracles will be a decisive objection against its claims to confidence as supernatural.

All these classes of persons agree in rejecting the Christian miracles as in their nature impossible, and the Christian histories concerning them as therefore so far incredible. Most of them agree that, did not these nar-

ratives contain the record that Christ healed the sick and raised the dead, and himself rose from the dead, they would be as worthy of credence in every particular as the life of Socrates; in other respects, they are as well, if not better, supported in every particular as any narratives whatever, as of Cæsar or Napoleon. But still they reason they cannot be true because they narrate events which could not possibly have taken place as they record them. Some of you will perhaps think that I have forgotten that a certain class of writers question whether the four Gospels, in the form in which we have them, were written in the first century. For our argument, this point is of minor importance. For no man questions that we have one document, namely, Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, which was written in the year 59, twenty-six years after Christ was crucified—only nine years longer than since Fort Sumter was bombarded—and written by a man who affirms that for more than twenty years previous he had believed and preached that Christ was risen from the dead, and was just the being in supernatural power and miraculous works that these Gospels represent him to have been. Moreover, he says that not only was Christ raised from the dead twenty-six years before, but that nearly five hundred men were then living who had seen him after his resurrection. 1 Cor. 15: 1-8. There is no denying the fact that the stories of these miracles of Christ were believed as early as one or two years after Christ was put to death, by several hundreds and even

thousands of persons. This is not all. The ablest writer of the present century against the supernatural in Christianity, F. C. Baur, gives this as his opinion: "While historical criticism has nothing to do with the inquiry what the resurrection was in fact, it must hold fast to the assertion that in the belief of the first disciples it had become an established and incontrovertible certainty. In this belief Christianity had gained a firm ground for its historical development. What we must assume as the necessary foundation for this history is not the fact that Jesus rose from the dead, but the fact that it was believed that he had risen. However we may explain the faith, the resurrection had become to the first Christians a fact of conviction, and had for them all the reality of an historic fact."*

He might well say this. For it is notorious that just at this time there arose such a change in the thoughts and plans and faiths and affections of men in all the Roman empire, as could be best accounted for by their faith in just such miracles as are said to have been performed by such a human being as Jesus of Nazareth. We might add, that while we hold with this writer that the Christian church can only be accounted for by its belief in this miracle of the Resurrection, we also hold that the belief in the miracle itself can only be accounted for by its having actually taken place. Why does not this writer and all who agree with him adopt this explanation? Because he is a Pantheist, and believes a miracle

* Baur's "History of the Christian Church."

to be impossible. Those who are not Pantheists, but for other reasons reject miracles as impossible, are in the same dilemma. They concede that the early Christian church believed in miracles—that Christ must have believed himself to be the Messiah and endowed with supernatural powers; but must hold that both *were mistaken*. But how can this mistake of both be explained? So far as Christ is concerned, it is neither easy nor pleasant to attempt such an explanation; very few make the experiment; of those who do, no two give the same theory. So far as his disciples are concerned, they assert that they could not discriminate between miracles and extraordinary events; that they had no fixed scientific views such as we have attained in respect to the laws of nature, and the clearly impossible and incredible; that they were very imaginative, good, honest people enough, very fond of their Master, who was a wonderful man for piety and spiritual insight and enthusiasm; in short, a sort of man in regard to whom good sort of people might believe anything, much as piously-disposed Mormons do of their apostles.

That which gives plausibility to this theory is the fact that the first disciples had not attained to any scientific or fixed ideas in respect to the laws of nature, and that some of them believed in magic and divination. We do not question the assertion that the early Christians believed that sorcerers could work very wonderful deeds. But, on the other hand, it is just as clear from the narrative that the miracles of Christ were recognized as im-

measurably superior to any works of sorcery. The early believers had common sense enough to say, as one is reported to have said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do *these* [*i. e., such*] miracles except God be with him." The people, who were half convinced, inquired, "When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these?" The first disciples were not scientific men indeed; but it did not require much science to enable plain and even credulous people to know that since the world began "was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind." They believed implicitly in divination; and they knew enough of it to be certain that a devil could not open the eyes of the blind. They had abundant and sad experience of the hopelessness of long-continued paralysis and leprosy, and were as well persuaded as Mr. Huxley can be that the gates of the tomb had never given back a single victim under natural laws. If we read the narratives carefully, we shall find that not only the enemies of Christ were critical in respect to the miracles which they saw, but that his friends were also. It is said that Christ or his disciples, one or both, were morally great, but intellectually weak, and so one or both were unconscious deceivers or innocently deceived. How, then, can it be explained that forth from that generation came the loftiest and the loveliest, the simplest, yet the most complex ideal of a master, friend, example, Saviour of human kind, that the world has ever conceived; an ideal that, since it was furnished to man in the record,

has never been altered except for the worse ; a picture that no genius can retouch except to mar ; a gem that no polisher can try to cut except to break it ; able to guide the oldest and to sooth the youngest of mankind ; to add lustre to our brightest joys and to dispel our darkest fears ? There must certainly have been intellectual power somewhere in a generation which brought into definite form the conception of Jesus, which, whether realized in fact or regarded only as an ideal, is the greatest miracle of all the ages.

Christ's person doubtless gave wondrous dignity and character to the most trivial acts of healing, as well as to the majestic scenes of the transfiguration and the raising of Lazarus, and of the son of the widow of Nain. For this reason alone these deeds of wonder were marvellously superior to the tricks and jugglery and magic arts of the hireling and filthy conjurors which everybody suspected even when they dreaded them. Then the miracles of Christ were inspired by such love and pity as to force upon the stupid and ignorant the conviction that these wonders were the power of God. After the great miracle of the resurrection, the astounding visit of the Spirit which transformed the one hundred and twenty disciples into new men in insight and courage, and last but not least, the destruction of Jerusalem, the curtain falls over the scene and for two or three generations we have scanty means of knowing whether miracles were wrought any longer, or when or how they were withdrawn, for we have little definite and trustworthy history upon this or any

other question of facts. When we get sight of the church again, we find no positive evidence that such miracles were claimed to be wrought as had occurred in the days of Christ and the apostles. So far as we can see they would have done more harm than good. They were no longer needed, any more than we need them at this moment. But we find proof enough of the inveterate longing after magic and wonders, which lurks in the hearts of all men. We find the church, then as now, more inclined to ask for the last news from wonder-land rather than to live the spiritual life which is hidden with Christ in God. It was well that miracles proper had ceased. It is very certain that the belief that they might occur, and now and then were performed in fact, did not cease, and that priests cherished and stimulated that belief, and that for century after century, side by side with much simple trust in Christ and humble imitation of his life, there was a horrid admixture of pretended miracle-working, such as makes us faint and sick to read of, and prepares us to understand the reaction which set in against all belief in the supernatural and miracles, when learning was revived and science began to be developed and the Reformation exalted Christ into the place which the church and the priesthood had usurped. Even protestantism retained not a few of old beliefs in respect to divination, and the line was not yet sharply drawn between the extraordinary and the miraculous. But as soon as physical science began to look into the material universe, and to test its theories by experiment, the separate forces of

nature made themselves manifest, and the laws of these forces were found to be capable of definite statement. As one new discovery after another was made, and occurrences deemed the most extraordinary and marvellous were explained by these forces and laws, men began to ask themselves whether the works of magic that were still practised and many of the so-called miracles of other times could not be explained by these newly-discovered agents and others like them. Bold men said Yes, and with good reason. The next question could not be long withheld, *viz.*, whether the miracles of Christ and the apostles could endure the scrutiny of the new sciences of nature. With this suggestion began a formal attack upon the possibility of these miracles and the competence and honesty of those who reported them. These assaults were repeated for more than a century on various grounds, when David Hume first condensed the argument that had been somewhat loosely stated before into a compact and telling form, to which nothing new has been added up to the present time. All that metaphysical philosophy or physical science has been able to say in varied and imposing forms till this very moment is contained in this famous and oft-repeated argument. Briefly expressed it is this: "It is contrary to all experience that a miracle should be wrought. It is in accordance with all experience, or it is not contrary to all experience, that men should lie or be imposed on. Therefore, when a miracle is reported to me, or I am myself a witness of one, I must strike the balance against the miracle." "But it

does not follow," Hume adds with a sneer, "that we are forced to distrust the story of the Christian miracles, inasmuch as we have the supernatural grace of faith which justifies us in making an exception in their favor." In other words, a miracle is utterly incredible, and any report of it must be regarded as untrue. This argument gave a momentary shock to the Christian world. For a century previous, the contest had been earnest between the assailants and the defenders of the Christian faith, but these two or three short and direct sentences of Hume were a succession of stunning blows, which brought its defenders to a sudden pause. The reason why they were taken at a disadvantage and somewhat by surprise, is that they had committed their cause to a single line of defence. Instead of relying on the person of Christ, his work, and his message as adapted to the wants of man, the majesty of Christ's person, the superhuman in his very ideal, the truthfulness of his words, and the adaptation of himself, and his message to man as justifying and requiring the supernatural as their fitting sign and appropriate accompaniment, they considered the abstract question of testimony within the sphere of ordinary human intercourse and human history. Instead of testing the miracle by the doctrine and justifying the miracle by the doctrine, they lowered the Christian story to a level with an ordinary narration, and left it there to stand or fall by the number, the consistency, and the apparent honesty of the narrators.

We contend that the argument of Hume was sound

and ought to stand, if tried by these tests. In ordinary matters we apply it every day. Let a man tell me or you that in Union Square he saw a man raise a dead man to life, or heal a sick man by a word, I should at once reply, "I do not believe that what you say is true. I would not believe it on the testimony of a hundred honest men." Why? Because it is contrary to experience—or, as we should say in these days, it is contrary to the known laws of nature that such an event should take place. Why, then, it may be asked, do we not apply this rule to similar stories, the scene of which is Jerusalem or Bethany, and the time is some 1,850 years ago? Simply because there were reasons then and there for the occurrence of events which violate the laws of nature, such as cannot be urged here or now. This is the answer which ought to have been given to Hume. It was not overlooked by many, if not by the most of the able men who replied to him, but it was not put forth as the decisive element in the argument. Thus Paley says, "Herein I remark a want of argumentative justice that, in describing the importance of miracles, he (Hume) suppresses all those circumstances of extenuation which result from our knowledge of the existence, power, and disposition of the Deity, his concern in the creation, the end answered by the miracles, the importance of that end, and its subserviency to the plan pursued in the work of nature." "*Evidences:*" *Introduction*.

It is the more singular that the opponents of Hume

should have failed to urge this decisive argument against him, after Locke had, many years before, stated it in words so clear and emphatic :

“ Though the common experience and the ordinary course of things have justly a mighty influence on the minds of men to make them give or refuse credit to anything proposed to their belief, yet there is one case wherein the strangeness of the fact lessens not the assent to a fair testimony given of it. For when such supernatural events are suitable to ends aimed at by him who has the power to change the course of nature, then under such circumstances they may be the fitter to procure belief by how much the more they are beyond or contrary to ordinary observation. This is the proper case of miracles which, well attested, do not only find credit themselves, but give it to other truths which need such confirmation.” *Essay*, b. 4, ch. 16, § 13.

For their failure to do this, the relation of the miraculous to experience has been exposed to more or less misconstruction. The reply of Campbell to Hume is a fair example of the way in which the force of his argument was evaded. To the assertion that all miracles are contrary to experience, and therefore incapable of proof by testimony, Campbell urged that what we call experience is largely made up of human testimony, and so far is as untrustworthy as testimony ; but in this he overlooked the truth that in incorporating testimony into experience, every man tests the credibility of testimony by experience, as he throws out the testimony of one wit-

ness and modifies that of another. Another point made by Campbell was, that the argument of Hume against the Christian miracles would hold just as strongly against every narrative and all testimony concerning events that were simply extraordinary or not conformable to our experience. For example, were the king of Siam informed that in London the river Thames would, of a night, become so solid as to support a train of vehicles and a procession of men, he ought, on Mr. Hume's principles, to reject the testimony, having had, as was likely, very ample experience that men were given to lying. But that this position is not well taken is obvious to any man who reflects that the turning of water into ice could be explained as the result of a law of nature which the king of Siam could be made to understand, and therefore is in no sense a miracle, but simply an unusual, and it may be, a very surprising event, the like of which occurs in the experience of every man.

If in the time of Hume, then, his argument was irresistible as against all stories of miracles, except when a good reason can be given for their occurrence, its force has been increased a thousand-fold in modern times and in the present century. Thinking men, and especially men who have to do with physical science, have become more and more profoundly impressed with the inviolability of the laws of matter. Every time an eclipse occurs, of the sun or the moon; on the rarer occasions on which Venus walks like a dark speck across the disk of the sun; at the thousand times every day in which the navigator

finds his place on the limitless ocean by sextant and chronometer, or comes into port according to his calculations, there is a new confirmation of the belief that the forces of nature are as fresh and strong as at the first, and are as true to the laws of nature as from the beginning. More and more completely does the conviction take complete possession of the imagination that in ordinary and material life an exception is never to be thought of. Every day some fresh force or new element is discovered, or some unexpected application of familiar agencies breaks out upon the eye of the astronomer as he searches into the remotest regions of space, or is manifested to the chemist as he unties the secret chains that have hitherto held in closely-locked embrace elements before unknown, or to the student of natural history as he reads the records of long-past ages in the hitherto uninterpreted hieroglyphics which nature has impressed or imbedded in her rocky tablets. Even the secrets of the weather, which till recently were hidden from all except the village prophets whose predictions were conspicuous for their failures, have now been almost mastered, and the prophecies so curiously and yet so confidently or so cautiously ventured, are made in an instant the property of the world. Every morning bulletin issued from the signal-service, every cautionary signal that floats from headland or tower, reiterates the truth that the laws and forces of nature remain unchanged.

Nor is it alone in the sphere of matter that the reign of law extends itself more and more widely and asserts

itself with more and more positive authority. It pushes its way into spiritual phenomena as well, and asserts its right to be applied to the sciences of politics, of wealth, of manners, of culture, and of everything which we call human progress. These discoveries contribute to deepen the convictions of men in respect to the strength and the universality of law in that sphere which we call nature, including in nature spirit as truly as matter.

The second position of Hume, that men are both credulous and false, especially in all matters that relate to the supernatural or miraculous, is also more and more confirmed by the experiences of modern life. Pretended miracles are every day explained by natural agencies. The new forms in which credulity and weakness bring out their wonders are sooner or later seen through and exposed. Men are more than ever disposed to scrutinize and suspect every species of overstatement, especially by persons in whom the aptitude for wonder is predominant. I do not say that credulity is not also rampant; nor that the boldest and the most unblushing of atheists in matters of religion are not sometimes the most credulous in the matter of their private superstitions and hidden mysticisms, but that the age is, on the whole, characteristically and reasonably critical of all stories of the miraculous.

The consequences of all these influences may be thus summed up: Disbelief in the possibility of miracles under any circumstances is now positively and openly avowed by a greater number of persons who command

respect in the name of science and philosophy, of criticism, of history and literature, and of the practical knowledge of man, than at any previous period. On the other hand, I believe it is true there was never a time in which the belief in the Christian miracles was capable of being so triumphantly defended, on grounds of science, history, and criticism, as at the present moment. It is my task to show how a rational faith can justify itself by argument against the more and more confident disbelief of the times.

Of this argument I propose to give only a brief outline. As a necessary preliminary to this argument, I must define somewhat carefully the conception of the miracles which Christianity proposes for our faith.

First, the Christian miracles are more than very wonderful events or deeds. The word *miracle* means literally any event so extraordinary or strange as to excite wonder or astonishment. Every miracle is indeed worthy of wonder, but not every wonderful occurrence is a miracle. It follows that a miracle is more than a work of marvellous physical power or intellectual skill. Miracles are not infrequently called in the Scriptures mighty works or works of power. It does not follow that all events are miracles which illustrate the marvellous power or wisdom of God in nature or in history. When the Menai bridge was lifted to its place by half-hidden enginery, and deposited on abutment and pier as quietly and gently as a mother places her infant in its cradle, the wondering spectators might very naturally have shouted, "This is a miracle of

strength and skill." In other times, had the great engineer kept his secret to himself, he would have been regarded as was Simon the Sorcerer, to whom a whole city gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the great power of God." But in these times no one would call this marvellous feat a miracle, because it was known to be effected by scientific genius. When the telegraphic wires were stretched from Baltimore to Washington, the first message that was sent along the lines was, *What hath God wrought!* In these words the truth was recognized that a wonderful work of genius had been achieved by the agency of God in this extraordinary feat of human sagacity, but no man supposes that this Divine agency was miraculous. When the news of the surrender of Gen. Lee was flashed along these same lines to this city, the multitude of busy traffickers in Wall street gathered in the street, and with heads bowed and uncovered, acknowledged the hand of God in the salvation of this people, but no one believed that God saved this nation by a series of miracles because he wrought in his providence through the forces of nature and the minds of men. We may believe that God in some sense inspired Abraham Lincoln—to his wise candor, his gentle caution, his inflexible resolve and his faith in justice, as also to his words of matchless eloquence; but we pause before we assert that this inspiration was miraculous. There is nothing necessarily supernatural or miraculous in events like these.

Next, a miracle must have a definite import; it must

signify something to those for whom it is wrought. For this reason miracles are so often called *signs* in the Scriptures, whether they are false or true. Works that make man wonder, or that indicate power and skill, indicate something uncommon among men; but a real miracle indicates an agency that is superhuman. It must emphatically declare the presence and activity of a power above the forces and laws of matter or spirit. It must be an act which manifests a power that is superior to any force whatever and unbound by any law. It must even be more than an indisputable manifestation of *power*. Should the stars fly from their courses, or the sun fail to rise, and the universe be thrown into chaos, it would manifest a presence mightier than nature, and so far be a sign the import of which could not be misunderstood. But the miracles with which we have to do have a personal and moral import. While they indicate and enforce the fact of God's direct and supernatural agency, they also convey some thought or feeling from God, and enforce some response of act or feeling upon man. For both these reasons they are preëminently signs or significant acts. A wonderful event that does not signify something is no miracle.

Every miracle properly so called is also a matter of public concern, and therefore must be wrought in open day. It is not impossible that an act in all other respects miraculous should be performed in presence of a single individual and should even be to him a sign of God's power or a vehicle of God's thoughts. But if the miracle

makes any claims upon the public confidence, the act must be openly performed. This was the case with most of the Christian miracles. They challenged the criticism of open day, and were invariably performed in the sight of all the people. Whenever testimony, or the report of others, was substituted for the direct witness of a looker-on, reference was always made to bystanders, and the veracity of the reporter was supported if required by other miracles. When Paul told the story of how Jesus met him near Damascus he was ready to enforce his own veracity by miracles performed by himself in the name of Christ.

I emphasize this point in order to distinguish the Christian miracles from the miserable imitations of later years, and from the more plausible counterfeits that gain the confidence of trusting souls. When I am told that Mormon elders can heal the sick and raise the dead in Utah, I have a right to ask them to do the same in New York, and when I am told that they can do and have done similar works in New York in some very private places and upon a person who is known to no one, I not only have a right to reject the story, but I am sacredly obliged to reject the story, because the act lacks openness to public scrutiny. When I hear of private manifestations of the Virgin Mary or of Christ himself to this or that person, and of wonderful cures by the touch of sacred persons and sacred garments, I say at once, these events are not done in public, and so far as the public faith in them or any endorsement of them is con-

cerned, they should be treated as fables of imagination or impositions. When, too, a person of undoubted honesty, filled with the spirit of Christ, asserts that he or she was healed of sickness or raised from the dead, by the direct power of God in answer to prayer, I am not forced to argue that perhaps he was mistaken, or that the event lacked some of the other criteria of a true miracle. I need not take time to argue that a wonder of healing is not a miracle of healing. I might concede that as between himself and God the event was a miracle. But it is nothing to other men, because it was not done in open day. For this reason it is treasonable to the most sacred truth and the holiest cause to report it in public as a miracle. I go very much farther than many people in my views of what may happen of good to the souls and bodies of men in answer to prayer, but I protest in the name of all common sense and in the name of Christ himself against the insane desire manifested in some Christian people to exalt to the rank of miracles, events that are in no sense decisive of supernatural power and which lack the indispensable criterion of being done in the open day, and before the eyes of many lookers-on. I call the tendency insane, however well meant it may be. Its effects are fearfully pernicious in bringing into dishonor the most sacred and separate of all of God's acts to men. The Christian cause ought not to bear the burden of any of these reported works of wonder and power that are done in a corner. It follows that no action of the Holy Spirit upon the spirit of man, when most direct and powerful, can be properly

considered miraculous. Even if we allow that such action is supernatural and involves an arrest of the forces of nature, it lacks every one of the other elements of the miraculous. It may be as surprising and show as much or more of God, but it does not impart definite teaching by a public and open deed.

Last and most essential of all, in every miraculous act there must be a worthy and sufficient occasion, if the act is to be accepted as miraculous. We cannot believe, and we ought not to believe, that the laws of nature will be broken, except for such a reason. Such a reason can only be furnished in the attainment of some end, which the observance of these laws cannot reach. I would not say that the only end conceivable is to accredit a messenger or a message from God. If a work of superhuman power is required to impress men vividly and effectively with the nearness of God, or the love of God, or the tenderness of God to man, such a necessity, when made manifest, might justify the miraculous interposition of God, and my faith in such an interposition in fact. But I must believe that God will respect the forces of nature which he has made, and will conform to the laws of nature which he has imposed upon these forces, unless I discern some reason which requires him to show that he is greater than these forces, and the master of these laws. This is so obvious a truth, that it seems surprising that it should ever have been overlooked. Even the æsthetic sense of propriety taught a pagan poet to say, who might be supposed to have no special respect for the

gods of the ancient mythology, that a god should never be introduced upon the stage in a play, unless there was an occasion that required and justified his presence. How much more must this be true of the living God, in whom we have a rational faith, and of whom our conceptions are ever more and more grand and reverential, the more we bring him home to our thoughts.

Our definition of a miracle will have prepared us to appreciate the reasons for believing in the Christian miracles. First of all, such miracles are *possible*. Every man who believes in God must believe that he can suspend or override the forces which he upholds, and set aside the laws under which he causes them to act. The Atheist and the Pantheist alone can deny that a miracle is possible; the Atheist because there is no God, and the Pantheist because his God is only another phrase for the finite forces and laws which make up the universe.

There are Theists who object to the assumption that God can suspend or interrupt the laws of nature. They are so deeply possessed of the idea that law can never be broken, and that God is bound by his own prescriptions, that they explain the supernatural miracles by the displacement of one force by another, as when gravitation is overcome by muscular effort, or mental force acts against and overrules bodily tendencies. In like manner, they reason, God may have some unknown force or law in reserve, by which he brings to pass the most wonderful effects and signs. Others have gone farther,

and contended that there may be some provision in nature from the first, by which at the precise moment the hidden force required should come into action, as a clock might be supposed to play a tune once in thirty days, or a calculating machine to bring out a peculiar series of numbers at the millionth turn of a wheel. It is far more rational to say that the God who created the forces and laws of nature, never ceases to uphold its forces and enforce its laws. In this regard he is nearer to nature than the soul of man is to his body. He can therefore override every force by a higher force ; but this higher force is no created energy, but his creative fiat—his will—whose function is to suspend every other force, and to control every law.

Every disturbance that might occur in consequence he can avoid by the same energy by which he suspends any natural force. Should he arrest a planet in its orbit, he could provide all the compensations that might be required to avert or check or turn aside the results that might otherwise ensue. His hand is not only on the driving lever that starts and stops and regulates the engine, but his presence and spirit are in all the wheels, and pulsate in that vast organization which we call the universe of matter and spirit. For God to suspend a force or break a law, is, however, never a lawless or an unreasonable act. Every miracle is performed for some reason. No force of nature is ever suspended, no law is broken, except to reveal a present and personal God, and to enforce a sense of his presence which is yet above

nature, by some manifestation through nature, in order that some impressive moral or spiritual lesson may be conveyed.

It follows that a story of a miracle is credible whenever a sufficient reason for its occurrence can be given or supposed. We believe that the laws of nature may and ought to be broken for the same reason that in ordinary cases we believe that they stand fast. This may sound like a paradox, but it is nevertheless true. The question is not put to the scientists of our time half so often as it should be, nor pressed with half the urgency which is warranted, What are the grounds on which you assume that the laws of nature are unbroken, or, in the language of Hume, that a miracle is contrary to experience? Hume himself confesses that he cannot answer this question. I give his own language: "If we ask what is the foundation of all conclusions from experience, this implies a new question which may be of more difficult solution." The solution he gives in another passage, "experimental reasoning itself which we possess in common with beasts, is nothing but a species of instinct or mechanical power that acts in us, unknown to ourselves." The atheist can give no answer than that these laws never in fact have been broken. The materialistic evolutionist is in a worse plight, for on his particular theory he must assume an unbroken regularity of laws for billions of ages, during which he asserts a great many things have taken place which are entirely contradicted by the experience of the post-historic period, which are

marvels if they are not miracles, and would scarcely stand the test of Hume's argument. The theist alone has a solution for his faith in the order of nature and the fixedness of law. That explanation is the absolute necessity of both for the harmony of the universe and the well-being of its sentient creatures, and for the possibility of science itself. Without such order we could neither eat nor sleep with any confidence; we could neither light a fire nor provide our food; we could gather no wisdom from the past and provide no stores for the future; we could exercise no prudence and achieve no philosophy. It is not because we have found by experience that these forces remain and these laws are unbroken that we rest in the conclusion that the order of nature is permanent, but it is because we believe that such order ought to be observed in a universe of reason and goodness. We do indeed find that what we know ought to be is actually realized in our verified experience; but it is because of the reason why, rather than because of the fact observed, that we believe this permanent order under which our rising and our rest, our business and our pleasure, so confidently proceed.

I venture the remark by way of digression, that in point of fact this faith in law and order is the product of those conceptions of nature as related to God, which the Jewish and Christian theism have enforced upon the faith of the world by miracles. I find this doctrine in an old book: "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations, thou hast estab-

lished the earth and it abideth. They continue this day according to thine ordinances, for all are thy servants." I find also that the great physicists who developed and fixed our modern notions of the forces and laws of nature, and wrought out the theory of deduction on which modern science has been reared, were every one of them positive and even devout theists. Such were Bacon, Descartes, Leibnitz, Newton, and Locke. Very earnest efforts have been made of late to persuade the confiding if not the credulous public that Christian theology has always been the natural and persistent foe of science. It would be easy to show that the accepted theory of modern scientific research was the indirect result of that view of nature which theism implies, *viz.*, the conception of a universe which was pervaded by order and law. In other words, the theory of experimental physics was born of Christian theism.

We return to our argument. We believe that a miracle is credible whenever it is required for any worthy end which God may propose, for the same reason that we believe in the unbroken reign of law in the ordinary routine of nature, because of the ends which this dominion of law will subserve. We believe that the laws of nature may be broken when the occasion requires, for the same reason that we believe them to be unbroken in the ordinary routine of life.

Not only is a miracle credible, but it becomes probable, when the occasion justifies it. The end proposed in a miracle may not only justify our reason in believing

it, it may even *require* this faith of both reason and conscience.

The occasion for the Christian miracles was to call attention to Christ's claims as the manifestation of God to man, and to enforce these claims by deeds and events that made them good. The attention of men must first be aroused and held fast. Belief must ensue, in order that Christ's words and life and death might gain man's obedience and love. If this is so, the one and only question which we need to ask is this, Has man any such occasion for a Being like Christ, as would justify His being introduced to man's dwelling-place and his history by events clearly supernatural? To every man who asks this question I would answer, Think of what man was without Christ and think of what he has become through faith in Christ, man as a community and man singly. Look squarely in the face the fact that man is a sinner and as such is self-condemned, and needs the assurance as clear as Christ's words and life and death can make it, that God is willing to forgive him—that man is weak and needs Christ's help and sympathy—that he is going into an unknown land, where nothing is definite but the darkness made visible by the wandering ghosts of his own sins waiting to shame and torment him, and that for these needs Christ is *all*—but *no more than all*—that he wants. Think what Christ has done for all honest believers who have in good faith taken him to be the ruler and joy of their being. If man needs him so much and Christ is to man what his life and words declare him to

be, and what the simple belief in Christ, whether he be a fiction or a fact, tends to make of every man, then not only is it credible that he wrought the miracles that are reported, but the story of such a Christ would be incredible without miracles. Once admit that man is in this need, and that Christ is, and brings this help, and the miracles in the history make the history itself more credible. They strengthen the story immensely. The Christian story without the miracles ought to be rejected as untrue. Should we lower man's need to a mere incidental ignorance or want of culture in morals and civilization, and Christ's mission to a desirable but not indispensable supplement to these wants, we ought to reject the miraculous in the history, embarrassing and impossible as it confessedly is to give any rational explanation of how such a story came to be written or believed if it is false.

We are brought, then, to this issue. Is what is usually called nature the whole of the universe? Or if you enlarge the conception of nature, so as to take into it spiritual beings who are immortal, are all their interests limited to power, wealth, enjoyment, to social affection, culture, art, and civilization, and even to character—if you leave out of *character* responsibility to one's self and to God, with its results of confirmed sin or confirmed holiness—are these all that man *should care* for, or all that God *does* care for? If there is more, this outweighs all the rest. If man is responsible, then he is guilty and weak, and needs forgiveness and help. He

also needs the assurance of both in such form that he cannot doubt the reality and cannot help being moved by the love. In one word, he needs the supernatural and the miraculous Christ, just the Christ of the gospel story, and he needs him more than anything and everything besides. If there is a living and loving God, shall he not supply this want? If, in order to supply it, he must meet man with such miraculous works as break through the order of nature in order to manifest his presence, shall we believe the story the less or the more because it records supernatural deeds? Well might Coleridge say, "Evidences of Christianity! I am weary of the phrase—make a man feel his need of Christianity, and give him right conceptions of what Christianity is, and he cannot but believe it to be from God, and this by a most natural and rational judgment."

And here I leave the argument, with a single word of application to those who teach in Sunday-schools or Bible-classes. If you would relieve the difficulties which any members of your classes may feel concerning the subject of miracles, you can only do this by making them understand that they need Christ and that Christ can be something to them. This conviction, this feeling of need, must be the background to every one of your arguments concerning the truth of the Christian story. To make these truths fresh and vivid to your pupils they must be always fresh and vivid to yourselves. Strive after this, for your own sake as well as for theirs.

METHOD OF JESUS CHRIST

AS

TEACHER.



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METHOD

OF

JESUS CHRIST AS TEACHER.

“And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” MATTHEW 7: 28, 29.

JESUS CHRIST A TEACHER.

SUCH are the words with which the sacred chronicler closes his report of that group of matchless sayings to which the Christian world has given the title, “The Sermon on the Mount.” And yet this title is almost a misnomer. This group of sayings is not a discourse: it is neither an oration, nor an argumentation, nor an expostulation: it is strictly an instruction. “Seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain: and when he had sat down, [and sitting was the usual posture of the Jewish teacher,] he opened his mouth and taught them, saying.” “And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the multitude were astonished at his doctrine, *i. e.* teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”

Nor is this the only occasion on which Jesus Christ is set before us as a teacher. Forty-four other times in the Gospels is the verb teach applied to him: ten other times are his sayings spoken of as a doctrine, *i. e.*, teaching: forty times is he mentioned as master, *i. e.*, teacher: two hundred and twenty times are his followers called disciples, *i. e.*, learners. A meaningful fact surely, fairly challenging study. May the Spirit of truth then especially help us as we ponder the following theme:

THEME: THE METHOD OF JESUS CHRIST AS TEACHER.

THE TREATMENT PROPOSED.

In treating this topic we probably cannot do better than to follow the order suggested by the text, treating it first negatively and then affirmatively.

I. HOW JESUS CHRIST DID NOT TEACH.

And first, *negatively*, the way in which Jesus Christ did not teach.

HE DID NOT TEACH RABBINICALLY.

Let the text itself suggest our first point: he did not teach rabbinically, *i. e.*, as the scribes.

The scribes, you hardly need be reminded, were the authorized teachers of the land. Their principal business was to interpret the Sacred Scriptures, particularly the Law of Moses. Springing up as a separate order about the time of the return from the Babylonian captivity, when the Hebrew speech was losing itself in the Ara-

mean, they were originally a noble class of men, doing a noble service. But in the time of our Lord, they had become fearfully degenerate. In their idolatry of the letter they had lost sight of the spirit. Their interpretation had become superficial, technical, trivial, hollow, heartless. The religion of Abraham and Moses and David and Isaiah and Malachi, they had smothered beneath the lumber of traditions and the dead weight of precedents. They had become wretched casuists, raising questions ridiculously puerile, such, *e. g.*, as this: "If a man should be born with two heads, on which forehead must he wear the phylactery?" Thus they were for ever vexing the consciences of men by binding on their shoulders heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, subtly discriminating between swearing by the temple and by the gold of the temple, tithing mint and rue and anise and cummin and all manner of herbs, but passing over the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, faith, and the love of God, straining out gnats, but swallowing camels, rejecting the commandment of God and making his word of none effect, that they might keep their own tradition. In short, beneath the teaching of these scribes, who had taken the seat of Moses, all had become formal, artificial, rigid, technical, arbitrary, pedantic, microscopic, rotative, slavish, hollow, icy: every duty duly labelled and pigeon-holed.

Not so did Jesus Christ teach. No teaching was ever fresher or more vitalizing than his. So far was he from idolizing the letter that in his quotations from law or

prophet he was generally content with quoting the thought rather than the word. He did not load down the memory of his pupils with citations of traditions from Hillel the Looser, or of precedents from Shammai the Binder. Nor did he oppress their consciences with numerous and tiny regulations, or vex them with gossamer distinctions and phantom conceits: he did not turn religion into a rubric or character into a mummy. In short, he did not teach as the scribes.

NOR SYSTEMATICALLY.

Again: Jesus Christ did not teach systematically; that is to say, according to what we would call a scientific method. In his instructions there is no appearance of elaboration, no show of logic. Look at this Instruction of the Mount. It is the most formal and elaborate of his teachings, for it is his pronouncement as the new King. And yet nothing could be simpler, or more free from all signs of study. It has no firstlies, secondlies, thirdlies. It does not suggest Aristotle's Dialectics, or Calvin's Syllogisms, or Buckle's Statistics. In fact, it is so informal as to baffle any natural analysis. And so with all his teachings. Not that there is no plan in them, or no philosophy in his religion. He is profoundly systematic. But his system is the natural meandering of the river, not the artificial course of the canal. To the student of nature there is more method in a cedar of Lebanon than in the Temple of Solomon.

NOR RHETORICALLY.

Once more: Jesus Christ did not teach rhetorically. The thought does not seem to have occurred to him of substituting æsthetics for religion, literature for dogma, culture for righteousness. Look at his instructions. In vain shall you search for finely-turned sentences, ornate amplifications, brilliant flights, elegant allusions, learned quotations from the hermeneutics of Hillel, or the theology of Zoroaster, or the metaphysics of Plato, or the poetry of Virgil. His language is the language of the common people. And yet unstudied and homely as it is, it involves the lore of the eternities.

II. HOW JESUS CHRIST DID TEACH.

And so we pass to consider, secondly and *affirmatively*, the way in which Jesus Christ did teach.

HE TAUGHT AUTHORITATIVELY.

One word summarizes it: it is the word *authority*. "When Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

AUTHORITY OF CONSCIOUS AUTHORITY.

And, first: Jesus Christ taught with the authority of one who was conscious of authority.

Look at this Instruction on the Mount. How intense the personality which pervades it. Six times does

this untitled Rabbi from Nazareth plant himself in open opposition to the scribes, joining issue, be it observed, not with Moses, but with the authorized interpreters of Moses, boldly overturning the misinterpretations of centuries: "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time But I say to you." Or look at his other instructions. How sublime their egotism! Yes, look at this very word *Ἐγώ*: "I am the bread of life;" "I am the light of the world;" "Before Abraham was, I am;" "I am the resurrection and the life;" "I am the way, the truth, and the life;" "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." How imperial the sovereignty which is stamped on every saying of his. From first to last it is a very king who speaks, conjugating all life in the imperative mood. His very sayings are decisive of destinies. Dogmatic he was not, and yet he was dogmatic. Listen: "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." Listen again: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the

wrath of God abideth on him." Listen once more: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." If this is not authority, what is authority?

AUTHORITY OF ELEMENTALS.

Again: Jesus Christ taught with the authority of one who dealt in elementals.

For observe the precise purpose for which Jesus Christ came into the world as teacher. He came not to instruct men in secular matters. He came not to teach astronomy or geology or physiology or metaphysics or economics or arts. True, he might have taught all this. The Lord of nature might have anticipated the discoveries of a Copernicus, a Columbus, a Harvey, a Faraday. But he knew that all such discoveries belong to the incidental and mortal part of our being, and could sooner or later be wrought out by man's own powers, and so he left all such things to follow the law of unfolding. What he came to teach was what man could not learn without supernatural disclosure. What he came to teach was not incidentals, but essentials; not ephemerals, but eternal; not facts, but truths. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." Yes, Jesus Christ came into the world to attest the existence of unseen, elemental, eternal realities.

And how profound and radical his teachings! How

utterly free from all pettiness of details—from all that is merely incidental and transient! *e. g.*, the Lord does not tell us how often to pray, or how much to give, or when to go to church, or what to do and what not to do on the Sabbath-day. And yet many persons imagine that if they could know such things as these, they would master the chief problems of the Christian life. It is a profound misconception of the teaching of Jesus Christ. No martinet disciplinarian is he, turning life into a minute and perennial drill, where all is

“Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null.”

No, he does not tell us what to do so much as what to be; for if we are what we ought to be, he knows that we will do what we ought to do. He does not purify the stream of life by undertaking to purify each separate drop as it rushes along; he purifies life at its fountain. He grapples with living, immortal, transcendent issues, even the issue of a Godlike character: “Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

But let us take some particular specimen of the depth of Christ's method. Observe, *e. g.*, how he interprets the law of murder: “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, [worthless fellow,] shall be in danger of the council: but

whosoever shall say, Mareh, [fool,] shall be in danger of hell fire." According to the Mountain Teacher, then, murder is not an act, but a thought; not a question of standing in the eyes of the community, but of character in the eyes of the All-seeing. No murder was ever committed which did not begin in the heart: "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." The murder is not in the pistol or the bludgeon or the arsenic, nor yet in the hand that wields them, nor even in the volition that wields the hand: the murder is in the angry feeling that originates the volition. All life, good and bad, starts from germs. Thus radical is the Great Teacher's method. His teaching is more than elementary; it is elemental: his school the world's true and everlasting Seminary. Precepts he transfigures into principles, statutes into character, rules into life. Himself the true Lawgiver on the true Sinai, he transcribes the Ten Commandments from tablets of stone, writing them on tablets of heart. And so he rears an internal Sinai, whose quakings shall shake the very foundations of the soul, startling the dullest conscience and preludeing the thunder-peals of the Judgment-day.

AUTHORITY OF NATURE.

Again: Jesus Christ taught with the authority of one who appeals to nature.

Were I asked to describe, in the briefest expression possible, the method of Jesus Christ as teacher, I would

answer : He was a parable speaker. That this is a just description will be evident from a simple enumeration of some of his parables, thus : The Sower, The Tares, The Seed growing secretly, The Mustard Seed, The Leaven, The Unsought Treasure, The Sought Pearl, The Drawn Net, The Two Debtors, The Merciless Servant, The Good Samaritan, The Rich Fool, The King's Marriage Feast, The Fig-tree, The Great Supper, The Recovered Sheep, The Recovered Coin, The Recovered Son, The Dishonest Steward, Dives and Lazarus, The Unjust Judge, The Pharisee and the Publican, The Two Sons, The Vineyard Laborers, The Pounds, The Talents, The Wicked Husbandman, The Ten Virgins, The Sheep and the Goats. These are but specimens of the Great Teacher's recorded parables. And the evangelists hint that he uttered very many parables which they did not record : "All these things spake Jesus in parables to the multitudes, and without a parable he spake nothing to them ; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." In fact, erase from the records of Christ's sayings all he has said in form of parable, and figure, and metaphor, leaving only what he taught in distinct statements, and how comparatively meagre the residue !

And there are immense advantages in the parable method of instruction. In the first place, there is a deep foundation for the parable method in the very nature of

things ; that is to say, in the correspondence which exists between things spiritual and things natural. "All things," says the son of Sirach, "are double, the one against the other." It is a profound saying. The blessed truth is, there are two Bibles, both issuing from the same Divine Author ; the one, (Psa. 19 : 1-6,) the Bible of the Unwritten Word, or the *Lex non Scripta* : the other, (Psa. 19 : 7-11,) the Bible of the Written Word, or the *Lex Scripta* : or rather, the one Bible is in two volumes, the volume of Scripture and the volume of Nature, and the volume of Nature is the volume of Scripture illustrated. Yes, there is a deep foundation for the parable method in the nature all around us. Again : the visible world supplies us with the aptest and most effective illustrations of the invisible. The mass of mankind find it difficult to grasp an abstraction ; but they easily grasp a picture. For every one man who can understand a truth put in the form of an abstract proposition, there are a hundred men who will instantly understand it when sketched in a story. And the natural world furnishes us with the truest pictures of the spiritual. When, therefore, the Divine Teacher, in introducing a parable, uses his favorite formula, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like this," "The kingdom of heaven is like that," every one instantly catches his meaning, and feels that he speaks truly. Again ; these illustrations are themselves arguments. It is often said : "The Scripture parables prove nothing." Whereas they are in fact specimens of logic in its highest forms. If

things on earth are shadows, as I believe they are, of things in heaven, then there are things in heaven, for the shadows prove it, just as a shadow does prove the existence of the substance that casts it. This is why the Lord's parables are such peerless instances of argumentation. *E. g.*, In this Instruction on the Mount, the Great Teacher wishes to convince his disciples that the Heavenly Father will take care of all who put their trust in him. How does he undertake to do this? By an oracular statement to that effect? No! By evolving an elaborate process of ratiocination? No! By an analogy from nature? Yes! "Behold the birds of the air! They are not God's children; and yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Consider the lilies of the field. They are not God's children; and yet your Heavenly Father clotheth them. In those birds is my argument, in these lilies is my proof. Ye are God's children; most certainly then will your Heavenly Father feed and clothe you." What ingenuous soul can resist the logic of such an appeal? Again: parables open channels for the unperceived entrance of unpalatable truth. Like sugar-coated pills, or like the little scroll of the angel's hand, which in the mouth was sweet as honey, but which, when swallowed, was bitter, parables may convey distasteful truths, as it were, in disguise. How often did the Great Teacher graciously ensnare his adversaries in this artlessly artful way! Once more: parables have a wonderful self-adjusting power, letting into the heart just so much truth as the heart

will allow to come in. It is not so with a syllogism, or a theorem in geometry: these you either understand wholly, or you do not understand them at all: the demonstration is an indivisible thing, and you take in all of it, or none of it. How different the parables of our Lord! They have the property of an indefinite elasticity, expanding and contracting, adjusting themselves with a marvellous accuracy, not so much to our powers of understanding as to our moral susceptibility. They let into our hearts just so much light as our hearts will let in; no more, no less.

No wonder then that the Lord of nature and teacher of men was wont to speak in parables. They furnished him with the most telling illustrations and confirmations of the truth he came to disclose. They secured for him an audience which abstract statements might have repelled. They planted the responsibility for character, or absorption of spiritual truth, at the most merciful and at the same time the most decisive point—the point of free-will, or moral sympathy. And all this because parables have a deep and solid foundation in the profound connection between the realm of matter and the realm of spirit: so that we may discern in the one the meaning and the proof of the other.

And herein, brethren, we have a hint for ourselves as teachers. Nature is our great storehouse of illustration and demonstration. Instead then of eying "science" askance, let us boldly court her alliance. Her office, as in the days of magian astronomy, is still to bring her

treasures of gold and frankincense and myrrh, and lay them at the feet of the ever-unfolding Christ. By thus constantly appealing, as did the heavenly teacher himself, to the great nature around us, our teachings will evermore be fresh and fertilizing.

AUTHORITY OF INTUITION.

Again: Jesus Christ taught with the authority of one who appeals to our intuitions.

Look again at this mountain instruction. On the surface it is utterly wanting in every sign of formal logic, and yet it is profoundly logical, But it is the logic of instinct, the argument of insight, the demonstration of intuition. Listen to one of these demonstrations—the appeal to one of the radical elements of human society—the sense of fatherhood and sonhood: “What man is there of you, who, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or, if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good gifts to them that ask him?” Can you conceive an argument more resistless? Thus did Jesus Christ speak to that which is deepest and most central in man. He appealed to something higher than sensibility, higher than intellect, higher than will. He appealed to that which in man is the least human and the most divine—the bar of the moral sense, the bench of conscience. Therefore did he teach with an authority to which the scribes were strangers. They cited authority—

the authorities without; he appealed to authority—the authority within.

AUTHORITY OF CHARACTER.

Once more: Jesus Christ taught with the authority of one whose character was itself the supreme authority.

How marvellous the authority of the Galilean carpenter over the ages! How he dominates men's intellects, and affections, and consciences! At the mention of his name how many millions bow and confess that he is Lord of lords! The civilized world, in spite of the sneer of the skeptic and the wrath of the reprobate, reckons its dates from the year of his birth, heading their documents with the august words, Anno Domini. The word Christendom itself—what is it but Christ dominion? And whence came this man's authority? Not from wealth, for he had not where to lay his head. Not from social influence: for his own brothers did not believe in him, his own townsmen rejected him, his own countrymen crucified him. Not from scholarship: for he was only a Nazarene mechanic, without academic training; "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" *i. e.*, having never been trained as a Rabbi. And yet, never man spake like this man. Whence then comes this man's authority? From the majesty of personal character, from the omnipotence of daily life. Men can fight other things: they can fight wealth, rank, force, brain: but they cannot fight character. And this man's heavenly teachings were matched, buttressed, made imperial by his

heavenly life. Therefore never man spake like this man—never teacher taught with this teacher's authority. As Augustine says: "Whose life is lightning, his words are thunder."*

"And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds,
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought :

"Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef."

Such is an attempt to set forth, in part at least, Christ's method as Teacher: in part, I say: for the field is immense, and we have been able to scan but a section of it. May it not be in vain that we have scanned that section! And now a few words in way of conclusion.

THE CHURCH CHRIST'S SUCCESSOR AS TEACHER.

And first: Jesus Christ in ascending dropped his mantle as instructor on his church. From that hour the church of the living God has been the world's great teacher. Listen: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth: Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Do not imagine that these words were meant only for ministers.

* *Cujus vita est fulgur, ejus verba tonitrua.*

The classification of the church into clergy and laity is not a division in fact; it is only a distinction in form. In the sight of God ye are teachers not less than we on whose heads have been laid the ordaining hands of the presbytery. And very majestic is your office as teacher. The world's great imperial men are not those who are its millionaires, or its monarchs; they who rule the world are they who teach it. Alexander was called the Great, because he was a conqueror: but his greatness died with himself. Plato the teacher was greater, and is still Plato the Great, for he is swaying Christendom to-day. The masters of the world are those who are its masters; and master, being interpreted, is teacher. Do we not at this very day call the school-teacher master?

INTIMACY WITH CHRIST THE SECRET OF AUTHORITY.

Would you, O teacher, like the great Master himself, teach with authority? You will not gain it from the books. Commentaries, maps, blackboards, teachers' meetings, Sunday-school magazines and lectures and conventions are good. They give a certain kind of authority, but it is only the authority of the scribes. Would you have a real, conquering authority? Then, like the great Master, live in sympathy with nature, and the forces of the universe. Occupy your thoughts with the elemental, and transcendent, and immortal. Above all things, live in communion with eternal God himself. Be closeted with him in the intimacies of a celestial friendship. Like the divine man of Nazareth, have a godlike character.

Then shall men acknowledge that your doctrine, like Christ's, is not yours, but his who sent you. Then shall you teach with authority indeed. Yes, thy method, O teacher, will be the method of Jesus Christ.

CHURCH OF THE DISCIPLES.

Finally: May God give you and me grace to keep us evermore studying in the school of the Lord from heaven: for so shall we in very truth belong to the church of the disciples. Thus sitting at his feet and listening to his word, we shall grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ.

THE
RIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITY
OF THE
CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE
IN THE
STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

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THE
CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE
AND THE
STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

It is an old question I bring before you, as old as the first day of the Reformation, when the translation of the Bible was the leader of intellectual as well religious freedom ; yet as new, and perhaps more weighty, in its connections with modern thought. What is the right, and what the law of the Christian conscience in the study of the Scriptures? The subject meets us in many relations, which demand our earnest inquiry. It forces itself on the friends of public education, who must inquire to-day whether the Bible shall be excluded from the school. It meets the thoughtful believer in the grave riddles opened by the growth of Biblical criticism, and the fresh researches of science. We hear on one side the denier of any divine revelation, who claims that he is the only true champion of Protestant principle. Nor can we doubt, on the other, that the secret of most of the perversions to the church of Rome lies, as one of its best apologists

holds, in the uneasy fear which finds its refuge in the name of infallibility. Where do we stand? Is there any agreement between Protestant freedom and unity in Christian truth? What is the Protestant principle?

I wish to answer this question with an honest clearness. I believe with the fullest conviction, that the ground of the Reformation is the true and the only true one on which we can rest. Yet it is not so easy, as some think, to be stated; and it involves some points in which I shall doubtless differ from the popular view. But if I can so meet them, as to convince you that our growth in Christian knowledge is one with an unshaken faith, I shall fulfil my purpose. Nor do I speak only or chiefly to scholars: for although I shall touch on lines of thought which any students in theology who hear me may follow into deep waters, my earnest wish is to meet the wants of all thoughtful Christian men, to give them in a day of chaotic opinions that abiding truth, which to know is eternal life.

We must begin our inquiry with a clear statement of our Protestant position, and the argument urged against it by the ablest opponents. The doctrines of a justifying faith in Christ, and of the supremacy of Holy Scripture as containing all necessary truth, are the ground of the Reformation. Both are sides of one principle. It is the claim of the Protestant that no traditions of men and no outward sacramental systems can come between the personal conscience and God; and therefore the word of God alone can be the rule of faith. But it is

the position of the Roman church, that such a principle is the claim only of the most lawless freedom. Although all may profess to hold one Bible, yet as the right to examine and settle its truth belongs to every conscience ; as many questions of doctrine as well as order are involved in such study, which need Christian learning ; and as few have either the intellect or training for this, the Protestant claim is the source of unbelief or fanaticism. To talk of the inspiration of such a Book is a misnomer. If it can be interpreted by any sect or any man, it is no longer the word of God. None can state the reasoning better than a stern Protestant satirist of former days.

“What is the Bible? The book where each man seeks his own dogmas ;
Yes, and the book where each man certainly finds what he seeks.”

If there be unity of faith, then, it can only be possible when we admit the supreme authority of the church as interpreter ; and tradition, so far from being contrary to Scripture, is thus necessary to it. Protestantism has been, says the Romanist, its own fearful commentary on this fact ; for since the day of Luther it has overturned not merely the system of the church, but the Scriptures whose authority it boasts ; and to-day its Bible means anything from Strauss to the latest unbelief. Nor is it only or chiefly as the destroyer of a sound learning that it is to be feared ; it is the destroyer of the simple religion of the people, the parent of all doubt and all impiety. Such has been the argument, from the “Variations” of Bossuet to the latest of these divines. I cannot give it in more

eloquent strength than in the discourse of the greatest of modern French preachers, Lacordaire, and I am anxious to do full justice to his reasoning: "Take from the heavenly order the force Newton has consecrated under the name of attraction, and at once the globes peopling the ether would fly in contrary paths, precipitated by that other force which is the schismatic power of nature. There must be a principle of unity superior to the elements of discord which it nurses in its bosom, and this principle, it has a name: it is sovereignty. And as there is no civil society without sovereignty, there is no society of minds without an intellectual sovereignty. Should Protestants carry their doctrine over the world, what then? They would have sown the Bible, and with it some ideas it contains; but they would not have established a divine order, for they have none." This is the logic of the Roman-catholic system in a word: Unity of faith is impossible with Protestant freedom in the study of the Scriptures.

We are, then, fairly to test this question. If my purpose were merely to answer the Romish doctrine, it would be enough to say that its objection comes from an utter misstatement of the Protestant principle. The aim of the Reformers, in claiming the supremacy of Scripture, was not at all to deny a due authority in the Christian church to interpret the Scripture, but to deny any authority to impose as of faith any dogmas "not proven by warranty of Scripture." Nor is the abuse of freedom in its interpretation any argument

against its right use. We hear quoted, often with a sneer, the old watchword, "The Bible is the religion of Protestants;" but the sense in which that phrase was first uttered by Chillingworth, the most clear-headed of thinkers, was not that the Protestant faith meant whatever any self-willed theorist or ignorant enthusiast might force on the Bible, but simply that it contained all necessary truth. But I do not wish merely to answer blow by blow. I wish fairly to meet all the difficulties of the case as they are felt by every thinking mind among Protestants themselves. Let us hear them honestly. Are there not, it is asked, many questions of science and criticism utterly beyond the range of any save learned men, which are yet claimed as necessary to the faith in revelation? Is there any real difference between a Protestant confession, which demands this, and a Romish infallibility? Is not the notion of free inquiry in such a case a mockery? I cannot doubt that such questions are hard to reconcile with some of our prevailing ideas of Scripture, and the systems of doctrine identified with it. I cannot doubt that the dilemma has led many to the denial of all positive belief, and driven others into a church which rids them of a painful responsibility. And therefore I wish to consider this whole subject of the right of the conscience and the true authority it recognizes. It will lead us to that view of Scripture which makes it in the noblest sense a sure word of truth, and that view of the church which makes it a living fellowship.

Let us, then, study the principle, which was the starting-point of Protestant thought. I have said that the doctrines of a justifying faith in Christ and the supremacy of Holy Scripture are parts of one truth. What was this idea of justifying faith, which created a new life not only in theology, but in all thinking minds from a Luther to the plain Christian man? Was it another scholastic proposition to take the place of the reigning system? Surely no. It was the very contrary. It was the good tidings that Christianity was no system of scholastic notions to be received by a blind assent, but the gospel which could only be known by the living knowledge of Christ. Such a principle uprooted at once the theory on which was built the sacramental fabric of Rome. It opened that ethical and spiritual path which has distinguished Protestant thought ever since from the traditionary religion of the past. And if the doctrine of justification has sometimes since been changed into a metaphysical notion as hard as those of the schools, it was in its original idea this restoration of a living, simple Christianity. The gospel of Christ is given for one only purpose—to reveal redemption from sin, our sonship with the Father, and a life of real holiness, as the way of the life eternal. This is its substance. It is clear, therefore, that such a revelation must come to every man as a personal being endowed with thought and conscience, and must demand the personal exercise of those powers to receive its truth. Jesus Christ, the giver of pardon, grace, life, the personal revealer of the

Father, is the object of knowledge. Such a knowledge, then, must be in its essential character different to any such assent as we give to mere authority in questions of science or of history. It begins with the recognition of our moral relation to God as his children, of his law of holiness and our sin, of the love of God as it meets this want in the incarnate grace of his Son. It is a knowledge, therefore, not only intellectual, but knit with the renewed affections, and through it we receive the truth of Christ as we are made one with his own spirit of holiness. His revelation becomes to us not only a doctrine, but a life of real growth in his fellowship, of daily duty to God and men. But if this be indeed our conception of Christianity as a personal faith, it is clear, again, that it is no individual opinion, no subjective religion. It rests on the one common truth of the incarnate Son of God, whose revelation is the same for all men, because all have in their consciences the same fact of their relation to God, the same sense of sin, the same need of redemption. This was the Protestant principle; and it is plain in this view that it was and was meant to be, not a new Christianity, but the old, positive, historic faith, as it was embodied in the Apostles' Creed, which Luther and all the Reformers held; that faith, not in later dogmatic systems, but in the Gospel of the New Testament, which spoke at once to the mind of each personal believer, yet is the ground of fellowship for all who are members of the great household of God.

We have here, then, the just and the only just view of this principle, as it bears on the doctrine of the supremacy and sufficiency of the Scriptures. The incarnate Christ is the object of our faith. It is in this volume alone we have the original, pure record of the truth and grace he has bestowed ; and all the systems of men can add nothing to it. We are, then, to interpret it in accordance with the law of its divine unity. It is given in the form of history ; a history which teaches us the education of the world through its growing childhood to the birth of Him who was the fulness of times. That history, in its very structure, is mingled with many critical questions as to the creation, the annals of the early race, the development of Hebrew life, and the formation of the new Christian society. But its one essential purpose, so far as it concerns our belief as followers of Christ, is the knowledge of our redemption. Christ is the key of the Scriptures. It is "through the faith that is in Christ Jesus," the apostle says, in that much-misconceived verse of his epistle, we learn that "all Scriptures are given by divine inspiration." The spirit of his Gospel alone opens them. It gives us the knowledge that is not a scientific guess-work, but "profitable for teaching, for instruction in righteousness." If we have learned his truth, these pages from beginning to end have a living unity. The Old Testament reveals the one personal God, the creator of the world ; the origin of man as a son in his moral likeness ; the entrance of sin by the free act of transgression ; the contin-

uance of a divine grace in the long, preparatory training of the Hebrew past; the holy law, which stands alone, like Sinai, in the moral desert of history. The New Testament reveals the perfect truth and grace of God in the person, the life, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. All these parts of the sacred volume have thus their mutual connections, and all must be interpreted by their one divine purpose

Such, then, must be the clear principle which guides us in our study. Whatever belongs to these foundation truths is the divine, infallible faith of Christian men. Whatever does not touch these lies within the outer circle of scientific inquiry. I do not here dwell on the theory of verbal or plenary inspiration. If the view I have given you be clear, it will be seen that such a theory, whatever the reverence of Scripture that prompts it, leaves the deepest difficulties of the subject unanswered. For if the Bible be indeed a book which only presents to us a vast number of critical riddles, to be received as part of essential revelation, yet in their very nature beyond the decision of any save the most critical scholar, and always open to fresh controversy, then it must demand, as the Romanist asks, an infallible interpreter. Our faith, then, needs a surer ground. It rests on the knowledge of Him who is the life of the written Word. It is our deeper reverence for its inspired truth, our faith in its real unity, which point us to the principle I have laid down. Such a knowledge will teach us the right point of view, from which we shall learn the worth of

the Hebrew history, its worship, its social polity, its heroes and its saints, yet understand the far higher character of the Christian Gospel, and the Christian holiness. It will show us the due relation of all its parts, chronicle or psalm or prophecy, to the central design. It will show us the natural variety in the style of the writers, the tone of their thought, yet their true harmony. There will be no self-willed reason in this study, for it is to follow the reason of the Word itself. There will be no vague opinion, for we "hold the head, even Christ." We shall not fear the assaults of a false neology, because we shall be assured that all the results of earlier or later criticisms can no more shake the foundations than the removing of a few loose stones can shake the walls of the cathedral. Much will interest us as Christian scholars, which will not touch our Christian faith. Science will decide at last, as it did with the heresy of Copernicus, the questions of our time as to the Mosaic cosmogony, or the age of the world; yet its verdict will not disturb us, if the design of revelation be not to teach geology or astronomy, or the details of secular history, but to give us the knowledge of redemption. And as this is the plain rule for the scholar, so the simple believer will read this word without needless questions concerning that which has no bearing whatever on his faith or holiness. If we have not this knowledge of Christ's gospel, although we have sounded all the depths and shoals of criticism, we have not the alphabet of the truth; if we have this, the sacred volume is one, one in its historic and

its spiritual meaning, one for the wise and the unlettered, one for the intellect, the heart, and the life.

In such a light we pass clearly to the next weighty side of our subject, the authority of the church as the interpreter of the Scriptures. It is the claim of the Romanist and of others who deny the Protestant principle, that there must be unity of faith in regard to the truths of revelation. We grant this, nay, we affirm this unity as the very bond of fellowship. To deny it would be to make revelation a mockery. A religion or a church, which came out of no positive truth whatever, would be as like that of the New Testament, as the universe of Prof. Haeckel out of a lifeless cell is like that of the Divine Maker. But the question on which hinges the real difference is as to the nature of this unity. What is it? We have already given the answer in the conclusion we reached as to the character of the Scripture itself. The truth of the Word of God has in itself, as we sought to show, an intrinsic unity; it is the one revelation of Jesus Christ, of the sonship and fellowship of believers in him. There need be, then, no contradiction whatever, and no perplexity as to the superior claim of Bible or of church. It is said that the church existed before the Scripture, and that the canon itself rests on its authority. Undoubtedly. It is said that the Scripture is above the church. Undoubtedly. But the view which we have given, reconciles them. Jesus Christ, the living Word, is before and above both. The Incarnation is the key of the Bible; without it there remains

a dead letter. The Incarnation is the basis of our organic fellowship; without it creed and sacrament are dead. Scripture and the church, then, bear witness to one and the selfsame essential truth. The written word remains always the original, supreme and sufficing record of him, nor can any authority of human councils add anything as of necessary belief to what he has given. It is the function of the church to keep this truth in its simplicity, to embody in its creed the clear meaning of revelation, to expound it through its authorized teachers, its devout worship, and its methods of practical education.

A Christian creed is thus the growth of Christian thought. It was necessary that the truth of the Incarnate Christ should be defined in its more doctrinal form, when our religion had passed beyond the plain belief of apostolic days, and many speculative theories had beclouded its simplicity. The great doctrines of sin, atonement, grace, have been the successive expositions of the one revealed fact of God in Christ, as age after age they have employed the mind of the church. But while this is true, the unity of the faith is not the unity of a theological system. Creeds and confessions have their needful use as a bulwark against speculative errors, but they are not the living truth itself. We have in the science of astronomy the noblest work of the human mind in reckoning the orbit of the sun and the varied motion of the planets, yet the sun, not the treatise of astronomy, gives light and heat. And even so it is the personal

power of Christ's truth which gives life. The belief in his Incarnation did not rest on the vote of an assembly of bishops in the Nicene age; the common faith of believers uttered itself in the creed, and this is the truth speaking in the New Testament now and always in the divine sinless grace of his person, of which the symbol is only the scientific expression. Thus it is with each doctrine. Augustin may expound the meaning of sin, Anselm may give us a theory of the atonement, Calvin may reason of the riddle of grace and will; but it is the fact of sin in the conscience of each, the truth of redemption as it speaks in the heartfelt revelation of the Saviour, which makes believers one. And hence the chief duty of the church is, while it guards against ignorant interpretation, to keep "the healthy teaching" which St. Paul so often urges, by an appeal to the open word of Scripture. Here alone in the primitive, fresh gospel we have the touchstone by which to try the dross of all traditions; here we all, scholars or simple, have one common birthright.

Now this clear principle we are to distinguish from the false view of the church as the interpreter of the word. It is the claim of the Romanist that Scripture is the record of divine truth; but its interpretation is given to one class of teachers alone, and a Christian faith is an unquestioning assent to its decrees. Let us not mistake the difference. This claim is not only to the authority of a wise teaching, consistent with the open knowledge of the word of God, but to infallibility. And

I beg you again, to observe the ground of the claim. It is that false conception of the Scriptures which I have endeavored to expose. It is the assumption of the Romanist, that the Christian revelation is a system of abstract dogmas, of scientific riddles, which must therefore be a sealed book to all, save a few authorized expounders. I turn to one of the most subtle of modern defences, the Grammar of Assent, by Mr. Newman, for the clear statement of the doctrine. "It stands to reason that all, learned and unlearned, are bound to believe the whole revealed doctrine in all its parts and all it implies; it stands also to reason, that a doctrine so deep and various, as the revealed *depositum* of faith, cannot be brought home to us and made our own all at once." "The difficulty is removed by the dogma of the church's infallibility and of the consequent duty of implicit faith in her word. It stands in the place of all abstruse propositions in a Catholic mind, for to believe in her word is virtually to believe in them all. Even what he cannot understand, he can believe to be true, and he believes it to be true, because he believes in the church." Examine now the logic. If the word of God be such a riddle, "deep and various," and if essential faith be in this riddle, then in very deed many Protestant minds would cry, "Let us give up our torturing responsibility, and rest in the Nirvana of the infallible church. But if it be not this, if it be a revelation indeed for the mind and heart, such a claim is the most astounding of absurdities. We lay bare here the root of the sophistry. Such a faith

is not the acceptance of the truth of Christ as it meets our personal thought or affection ; it is the assent of the blind mind to a sum of abstruse propositions which we cannot know at all, but believe because we are told to believe them. If this be Christianity, then it is no revelation. The word of God is a mockery, for it can convey no light even through the glasses of its pretended interpreters. This mental assent is such as the man of science would demand, should he say, "You cannot see the stars with the naked eye; put out your eyes and then look through my telescope." If this again be Catholic unity, then the truths of our salvation are a deposit of esoteric dogma in the hands of an irresponsible priesthood. If this be Catholic certainty, then the meaning of the Scripture is not surer than when left at the mercy of a hundred sects, for we have absolutely no test left to judge between its truth and every tradition. Who does not see, that out of this root has sprung the harvest of falsehoods? The church declares as Christ's word, "this is my body," and, therefore, a bit of bread is Christ, although sense, reason, and Scripture, deny it; and for the communion that asks your intelligent faith, you must hold a senseless and soulless marvel on peril of salvation. Yet we have devout men to-day, who for fear of unbelief will choose this theory and call it the unity of faith. Strange insanity! It will make a hundredfold more unbelievers than the most destructive criticism. But let us not merely recognize here the error of a Roman-catholic system. It may lurk and does too often lurk in Protes-

tant disguise. If instead of the simple truth of the gospel of Christ, we make it an abstruse theology or a volume of scientific riddles, we shall reach a like conclusion. Whether it be Trent, or Dort, or Westminster, whether Anglo-catholic or any other, to mistake the authority of theological confessions for the unity of the faith, is the principle of infallibility. Our Christianity becomes a gospel of notions, not a living word

And if, then, we so understand the rightful relation of Scripture to the church, we can at once apply our reasoning to the conclusion before us—our right and our responsibility in this study. The law which binds our conscience, and the freedom we must maintain in the pursuit of the truth, are not contrary to each other, but one. I shall take up each of these points in its order. We have the true idea of law: not the surrender of our Christian right to any arbitrary power, but our intelligent, willing unity in the body of Christ. We recognize in our relation to the church the same organic fact we accept in all our growth. Each of us has his education from youth to manhood in this social atmosphere; and each must find this training in science or letters, under the care of the best teachers, in the studies suited to his powers, that he may gain the self-discipline for his calling. Nor is it less so with our Christian nurture. There are few, unless they have been bred in the thin air of free religion, who sit down in youth to construct a belief; and if, like Mr. Mill, any has been guarded from all religious bias, he will only accept Atheism by faith in his

father's infallibility. None ever reads the Bible "without note or comment." We receive the current ideas of doctrine from home-teaching, book, Sunday-school, pulpit; we catch many opinions, to be corrected by riper thought. But such authority is not arbitrary; it is the same deference to superior learning we pay in questions of law or natural science. I have indeed no faith in the cloistered training which keeps the young mind in the ignorance of all criticism, or in the mechanical study of the Bible, for such a mistake too often whets doubt; but I have as little in the slipshod religion that forgets the need of mental and moral discipline. We can only gain in the instruction of the Christian household the reverent reason which can enable us to pass beyond the school. If we have learned the simple truths of a Father, a Redeemer, a Sanctifier, the law of a pure conscience, the affections that bind us with Christ and men, the habits of a growing holiness, the modesty of true knowledge, we have the heart of wisdom; and whatever the mental struggles or even the doubt of after years, we shall seldom fall into a shallow or a mocking unbelief.

Such is the authority we recognize as that which binds us in the communion of Christ. It is the authority of learning. It is the authority of holiness. It is the authority of a common faith. We do not, because we hold the Protestant faith and accept the Bible as the oracle of truth, therefore make a new Christianity; but rather, we claim our share in all the wisdom that has studied its divine pages. The history

of the church is not a mere wrangle of theological opinions. The essential truths of Christ, his doctrine and sacraments, are unchanged in their real influence; nor do we confound with any systems of any teachers the faith that abides always, everywhere, and for all. It is a far truer view of catholicity which our Protestant belief gives us than that which I have cited from Lacordaire. The unity of the church, in his idea, is like the power of the sun, which masters the "schismatic force" that tends to draw the planets from the centre. But let us study this magnificent figure. If there were no centrifugal power to balance the attraction, the planets would be drawn into the scorching bosom of the sun. That is the unity of Rome. It is not there we find the attractive power that keeps the life of Christianity. Unity in the church, as in nature, combines authority and moral freedom. Where is this abiding religion? It is just where it was in the apostolic or Nicene age. It lives in the Word of God and in the fellowship of Christian men. All the controversies of the schools, all the questions that concern the critic, do not materially affect it. It is not probable that the habit of Christian prayer will die out because Mr. Tyndall has proposed his prayer gauge, or that a thousand theories will disturb the life of religion. The purpose of the gospel of Christ is for guidance in the way of daily duty, and therefore it can never lose its power. It teaches the same Father, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; it heals the conscience in its struggles with sin, ministers to rich or poor, lettered or simple,

one law of social duty, one comfort in trial, holds up the cross of Christ, and opens the gates of life eternal. And it is the truest mark of the divinity of our religion, that it has this adaptation to the mind and heart of all men. There is a science for the scholar, and a sufficing wisdom for the less-gifted believer. Few can master the Hebrew or Greek Scriptures; few can decide the nice questions of Christian evidence; but he that hath the Son of God hath the witness in himself. A Laplace can map the heavens by his *Mecanique Celeste*; but the seaman, with a simpler knowledge, shall guide his vessel by the same stars through the dangers of the ocean; and even so a Christian man, if he be not able to meet all the speculative riddles of the time, to settle the facts of geology or the law of evolution, may walk in the light of a positive truth with a faith as reasonable as it is heartfelt. Is it a blind assent to the voice of an infallible church which gives this unity? No. It is that the foundation truths of the Christian revelation are one for the conscience and the life. When I turn to Augustin, as he reasons of the loftiest problems of the providence of God and the nature of the soul, I hear him say at last, "In Cicero and Plato I meet with many things acutely spoken, but in them all I find not this: 'Come unto me, ye weary and heavyladen, and I will give you rest;'" and if I go to the humblest disciple, who has learned this faith in the Son of God amid the trials of daily life, I have the centre and sum of a Christian theology.

We may thus pass to the point which completes

our view—the freedom of inquiry in the study of the Scriptures. If the truth of revelation, as I have shown, is one and unchanging, because it lives in its original record and in the fellowship of all believers, yet the exposition of the book is human, and therefore capable of clearer and clearer knowledge. There must be always in the church of Christ a spirit of healthful growth. We are never to confound with the abiding faith the methods of Biblical interpretation. The criticism of the Word of God must, in its very nature, change with our closer study of language, the light thrown on Hebrew or Christian history from all sources of later learning, and the correction of past errors. It is impossible to find in any science, in the advance of astronomy from the rude chart of the heavens to the laws of Newton, or of anatomy from Galen to our times, a riper growth than from the allegorical methods of the early fathers to the historic criticism of our day. We love the spiritual insight of Augustin, but his fanciful interpretation of the days of creation would be thought to-day strange absurdity. This mystical exposition has been consecrated in the Latin church. But Protestantism, while it has from the first been truer to the Scripture, has only by degrees freed itself from the same methods. It has too often interpreted the Scripture by its theological systems, instead of its systems by Scripture. The Old Testament has been turned into a riddle, and the epistles of St. Paul read through our controversial glasses. We have too many to-day who follow the canon of Cocceius,

that the Bible should have all the occult meanings they can find in it. Yet each step has brought us nearer and nearer to the true method. And it is the glory of our Protestant faith that, as it claims above all to find truth in the Word of God, it has, in spite of its partial systems, encouraged that free, yet reverent study which is sure at last to correct its own errors, and lead to a living knowledge. The only condition of a healthy life, intellectual or spiritual, is in this ceaseless growth. Let there be an authority that frowns on all culture, stereotypes all belief by its theological confessions, and calls all reasonable thought rationalism, and it will end in stagnation; nay, it will always create rationalism in its own bosom. It is passing strange that readers of history, Protestant as well as Romish, so often mistake this principle. The dogmatism of one generation reacts in the heresy of the next. The pent-up reason finds its only freedom in a wild explosion. What can give us so sure a lesson as the church which boasts infallibility! No communion has held within its bosom more warring elements: Jansenist and Jesuit; rationalists like Abelard who tore up school theology by the roots, Pantheists who grafted Averroes on the stock of Catholic faith, materialists, in the age before the Reformation, who denied soul and immortality; yet all its efforts to burn out thought by the fagot, or its modern anathemas against science, have ended in an unbelief among educated minds far deadlier than any of Protestant growth. Yet we have too often forgotten the lesson. It cannot be doubted, as

Dorner has clearly shown in his history of the reformed doctrine, that the earlier neology of Germany, was the natural child of the formal theology. Where then, is the security of the faith against false science? It lies in the growth of true science. The church must keep its simple creed, its reverent training; but it must have such trust in the divine power of truth, that it can encourage a wise freedom. When I hear some of our modern dogmatists say that the Protestant principle leads to rationalism, I smile as I should at one who forbade pure water, because it holds an inflammable gas. That spirit is at bottom indifference to truth. The real secret of the power which an infallible church has over many minds, is that it satisfies their sloth and rids them of the responsibility of thought. It was well said by John Locke, that if infallibility had been best, it had been better that God should make each man infallible, since mistake would then be impossible; yet he has not done so. Christian truth is given to the church for its growth. It must keep the open word of God; it must win its victories over error by a sounder learning.

But perhaps I cannot better close this argument than by taking as my example the lesson, which the history of Biblical criticism furnishes at this day. I have no space for more than a sketch; but enough, if it teach us what I have striven to enforce, that our best Christian learning is the fruit of our struggles. We look with natural alarm at the unbelief which seeks to undermine the very ground of a divine revelation; yet if we will

study its steps, we shall have no unwise fears of the result. I have said already, that the neology, which had its birth in the church of Luther, came from the decay of theology itself, which had hid the living truth of Scripture under its formal system. There was no true study of its historic structure or its unity of design. It was an easy work for the critic to sweep away the rubbish of former interpreters, to explain the miracles by ingenious natural theory ; and for a time it seemed that every part of the Old and New Testaments would be destroyed by this piecemeal process. But it was another task when the old earthworks were demolished, and the rationalist came face to face with the central truths of revelation. A new generation of thinkers like Strauss followed the negative critics. This was the positive question they had to meet, what should explain that greatest of all miracles, the person of Christ, the central fact of both revelation and human history? And here, then, the Word of God called out the new learning of its defenders. It awoke a deeper study of the Scriptures. It has ended to-day in the noblest results. Undoubtedly our older methods of interpretation have been changed in many points ; but we have gained a larger and surer ground. The Old Testament has been studied in the light of history ; and the divine features, in which it stands above all records, its truths of one God, its stately law, its unity of design, its work in the education of the race, remain its unshaken evidence. But the result of this study is nobler yet in the New Testament. Neology has

centred its strength in the effort to explain away the historic miracle of Christ. It has sought to make him a myth; it has sought again to give a later origin to the Gospels; but each attempt has ended in clearer evidence of fact. The contest is not over. It may even seem to many in this day of a gross atheism to be fiercer than before. But it is precisely here we find the best promise of the end. For it is no longer a pretended Christianity with which we have to strive; it is an unbelief, which confesses that there is no standing ground between an unknowable God and the revelation of Jesus Christ. And more than this, it is clear that the long struggle has ended in the sounder learning, the more living faith of the Christian church. We have gained not only a truer knowledge of the Scriptures, but through this of the character of revelation itself. It is the aim of our best thought to turn away from the unreal strifes of our theological schools, and to come back to the sources; to measure systems of doctrine and church parties by the one simple truth of Christ, not Christ by them; and this will bring at last the only unity. A theology of the New Testament, a church of the New Testament is what we need. This is the result, this is the noble witness of a Christian learning. We may mourn over the strifes of error, but we are false to the cause of Christ, false to the whole history of the past, false to all the labors of the wise, false to the best hopes of the future, if we have not this unshaken faith in the victory of truth.

And thus, my friends, I may gather these thoughts

into their plain conclusion. I have shown you the relation of the Christian conscience to the gospel of Christ. I have shown you the unity of the truth given in the written word, and the method of its study: its right harmony with the doctrinal authority of the church, the abiding character of Christian belief, yet its growth in true knowledge. If my reasoning be clear, I need but a few words to enforce it on all who have an interest in the inquiries, that busy thoughtful men of our own time. I hope that my view, however imperfect, will give you such guiding principles as may keep you, in a day of many teachers and many creeds, true to the one divine Master. It is not an easy task to keep this harmony of a free conscience with authority. It is a path between the rock of tradition and the quicksand of unbelief. But if you have learned aright the living character of that truth, revealed in the New Testament, it will direct you in its study. You will not mistake for a sound reason the mind which examines it without any knowledge of its spiritual purpose, or with a merely critical keenness to dissect the letter. Such study will end only in a shallow misinterpretation. It is the book which teaches the history of God's dealing with men, the life of the Redeemer, and the law of duty; and if that be its design, it must demand of us that we approach it with a reverent heart. Such a spirit will not check the love of honest inquiry: it will inspire it. We shall, if we be scholars, whose work it is to explore this mine, carry with us the safety lamp of a devout wisdom. We shall be

able to distinguish between the essential truth it reveals, and the questions that are open to a scientific criticism ; we shall welcome every true result of learning, without being carried away by the brilliant, but unproved theories of our time. We shall hold fast the truth we know, and keep a calm trust in it amidst the changes of opinion. This is the reasonable freedom of a Christian mind. It has no kindred with the free religion, which thinks it possesses truth because it has renounced all positive creed. There is no Christian freedom save in the truth. And it is as far on the other side from the spirit, which accepts the traditions of men instead of an intelligent and honest knowledge. Let us never be of those whom Hooker describes as minds that "use reason only to disgrace reason." There may be a rationalism, which weaves its theories, and calls them revelation—a rationalism as fatal to the simplicity of Christ as unbelief. Whatever its name, whether of infallible Pontiff or Protestant system, it must never usurp the authority we can only give to our divine Master. Let us gladly promote all sound knowledge. Let us hail without fear that noblest work of our time, which will give the church a faithful revision of the Scriptures, assured that it will reveal more truly the mind of its Author. Let us defend the faith always with the weapons of fair argument, of manly learning ; for we know that "we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth."

This is our right and responsibility in the study of the Holy Scripture. It is the gift of God. The Word

is not bound ; it is free as the mind of Christ : it fears no criticism ; it asks no earthworks of false defence ; it is strong enough to conquer the traditions and the unbelief of men ; it lay buried for centuries, alive in its charmed sleep, within the sarcophagus of a Latin superstition, and it came forth, like its Lord, to the better resurrection ; it has led the march of all knowledge, all civilization, and opens to-day in fuller light the mind of Him in whom are hid all treasures of wisdom. But it is a gift which links our freedom with our obedience ; and as we use or abuse it, we shall answer to its Giver. If we obscure, if we distort, if we despise or neglect it, we can make the light darkness ; if we read, know, follow it, in his spirit who inspired its truth, we shall gain the knowledge which is eternal life.



MAJESTY AND HOLINESS
OF
THE BIBLE.

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MAJESTY

AND

HOLINESS OF THE BIBLE.

UNLIKE other books, the Bible has neither preface nor introduction. Nor has it definitions, postulates, axioms or elementary theorems on which to build its science of theology, or to prepare its students for its higher revelations or developments. Its first words bring us face to face with eternity and divinity, and solve the perplexing problem of the origin of matter. Terse as are its utterances, however, and suddenly as they come upon us, there is a sublimity and grandeur in its representations of the divine character which no other writings contain. In the words of the Psalmist, "He is clothed with majesty."

The Scriptures never attempt to prove the existence of God. To the Jew in the time of Moses, that was unnecessary. Had he not beheld the wonderful series of miracles which astonished and finally overwhelmed the mind of Pharaoh? Had he not known of the destructive tempests, and fearful darkness, and of the avenging

angel? Had he not walked through the Red sea, and joined in the triumphant song of deliverance, when the Egyptian hosts perished in the recurrent waves? Had not the pillar of fire shined on his pathway, and had he not heard the voice as of a trumpet, which, from Sinai's fiery summit, proclaimed the eternal law? He knew there was a God. Nor do the Scriptures propose to prove the attributes of God. They shine forth in his wonderful actions, which were to his ancient people familiar throughout their history. But, ever and anon, referring to these great facts, the inspired penman utters the most beautiful and enrapturing views of the divine character and government.

The majesty of these Biblical representations may be referred, chiefly to the NAMES given to the Deity, the ACTIONS which he performed, and the LANGUAGE AND SYMBOLS employed in delineating his attributes and government.

The NAMES by which he is revealed fill us with thoughts of his wonderful greatness and glory: and yet these terms so imperfectly reveal him, that a fearful mystery environs his character. "Clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." He is "In the beginning, God:" the "*Elohim*," the strong and "mighty one." Yet mystery is here. "*Elohim*" is plural; yet as he creates, the verb is singular. He is more than one, as in his soleness, from the depth of eternity, his rays of brightness burst on human vision. He is but one, as the

universe issues from the fiat of his almighty power. He is *el*, the mighty, *shaddai*, the almighty, the all-sufficient; he is *adonai*, the governor, the king, the judge.

But a thousand years have passed away, and God's promises remain unfulfilled. The seed of Abraham were to be as the stars of heaven and as the sand on the seashore for multitude. They were to possess the land of Canaan. Kings were to be of his lineage. Yet his posterity are still in bondage in Egypt. They are slaves to taskmasters: they groan under the lash; their male children are inhumanly destroyed. Moses, who sought to help, has fled to the desert. Forty years has he been a shepherd; and now, an old man, he is ready to despair. God comes in the burning bush; it is not an exhibition of power for which Moses yearned, it is to know that God will fulfil his word—that his purposes have not changed. He receives a commission to deliver the Israelites—a looking, longing, suffering people, who are crying for help and hope for a Saviour. But what shall Moses say? How beautifully simple is the narrative: “And Moses said unto God [Elohim], Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God [Elohim], said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM; and thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”

This name, *Jehovah* or *Jahveh*, *I am that I am*, signifies self existence, perpetual existence, immutability.

He remembered his covenant with Abraham, and he came to fulfil it. Four hundred and thirty years had the patriarch's posterity been in a strange land, and now about to show that,

“What his mouth in truth had said,
His own almighty arm would do.”

He declares his perpetual sameness. “He is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.” To confirm Moses more fully, he said again, “I am Jehovah. I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them; and I have also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groanings of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered my covenant, and I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”

These two elements, almightiness to do and unchanging and unchangeable purpose to accomplish, give to humanity all possible assurance. The whole line of providences recorded in the Bible but illustrates these great attributes, and teaches us to become followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Such a wonderful impression did the revelation of God, as the *I am*, make upon the Jew, that he utters not that word, but substitutes for it *Adonai*, or *Shaddai*.

It represents an ever-present God, an eye never slumbering, a promise ever borne in mind, a memory which cannot forget, a purpose that will not change, an ever-watchful Jehovah, who listens to every cry, counts every tear, fathoms the depths of every sorrow, and in due time will appear as the almighty deliverer.

This God of power and of self-existence appears "*In the beginning.*" When was that beginning? It was before creation, for he created the heavens and the earth. And in his psalm, Moses exclaims, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." And of Christ, the apostle says, "He is before all things, and by him all things consist." "All things were made by him, and for him, and without him was not anything made that was made." If the question is repeated, when was that beginning? I answer, I cannot tell. The human intellect cannot estimate distances either in space or time, but by intermediate measures or periods. Moses looks away back through the vista of time, and as he passes unnumbered periods by the way, on and on, he beholds a beginning. God is there, sole, underived, almighty. Those of you who have seen the diorama of Paris, either in that city or at our Centennial, know how almost impossible it is to distinguish distances by the unaided eye. So, as we gaze at the heavens on a cloudless night, the moon, the planets, and the fixed stars, shine on us as in the same vast expanse, and seem about equidistant. Yet, when we have reached that

moon, we have taken only a step towards the sun. Saturn, which shines so near in the western sky, is five times as distant as the sun himself; and that comet, just starting on its distant journey, so distant as to be five hundred years beyond our sight till it return again—in that flight shall not reach even the neighborhood of those fixed stars. If we refer to what was a hundred years ago the general opinion, creation was supposed to be some six thousand years old. That period is vastly distant. You step in Westminster Abbey, among the dead of a thousand years. It seems like an eternity past. You visit the pyramids of Egypt, where Napoleon saw forty centuries looking down on his troops, and still the beginning lies far beyond. Refer then to geological speculation. Read the record of vast changes—of beds of fire solidifying in ages past into granitic rocks; deposits of limestone and coal and sandstones, for long centuries, from the overflowing sea; wide-reaching beds of rock formed of shells so small the microscope alone can show their form—and the beginning retrocedes thousands, if not millions of years. Still we see “In the beginning, God.” Go to the astronomer, especially of the evolution school, and he tells you of fire-mist, and of its condensation into suns, planets, and worlds, long myriads of years before earth had her form. He fancies stars so far away, that their light would require more than five hundred thousand years to reach our earth. Be it so, yet we have “In the beginning, God.” Far as the geological period antedates the old era, far as the astronomical era pre-

cedes that, so far, nay a million times farther, antedate the time, yet both reason and revelation cry out, "In the beginning, God." "He is the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity." "Thy throne is established of old, and thou art from everlasting to everlasting." We join with the apostle and with the innumerable hosts of heaven, in saying, "To the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever."

The Bible represents God, not only as eternal, but as the creator of all things. How different is this from the fancies of ancient mythology. Jupiter, "the father of gods and men," "the omnipotent father," as he is sometimes called, was the son of Saturn, who had dethroned his father. They were born upon the earth; but matter was eternal. The heavenly court was on and above Olympus. Gods were, as Geiger well says, "a turbulent aristocracy: one mightier than the rest but not almighty." Juno, the wife of Jupiter, succeeded in putting him to sleep during a battle of the Greeks before Troy. So angry was he with her, for raising a storm to impede Hercules, that he suspended her from heaven by a chain, with anvils tied to her feet; and when her son Vulcan attempted to interfere, he hurled him headlong to the isle of Lemnos. Among the Hindoos the ancient Veda shows that the gods they worshipped were the elements, which were thus in being before their gods. The later philosophical speculations speak of a first cause, respecting which they utter some beautiful expres-

sions. Yet this first cause wakes and sleeps, has days and nights—long nights of twelve million years. He creates lower deities which form the earth and preside over the elements, himself absorbed in profound contemplation ; and of these deities which control the earth, some are patrons of evil.

The Scriptures rise infinitely beyond and above all such descriptions. Pure and holy in his majesty—the only Creator, “ He spake and it was done : He commanded and it stood fast.” “ By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.” In the Greek mythology, starry Uranus was the offspring of the earth. The earth was the grand centre around which the heavens moved. But while the ancient prophets knew not the true system of the universe, yet by them, God declares, “ Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.” Indeed, it is one of the surprising facts, that the discoveries of science and the extension of knowledge give increasing sublimity and grandeur to the Biblical representations of God ; while they completely expose the puerility and falsehood of the ancient mythology, and of other systems of error. According to the Bible, not only was the earth created, but the sun, moon, and stars, and all the “ hosts of heaven.” Neither Moses nor David probably knew much about these hosts. For many long centuries they were not comprehended by science. No telescope had been formed to gather and concentrate their distant rays. To-day that host is innumerable. The distant *nebulæ*

have been resolved, and all those worlds which appear, where light just trembles on the verge of shade, are a part of these hosts which *Elohim* created. How full and comprehensive is the declaration of Nehemiah, "Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their hosts, the earth and all things that are therein; the seas and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all, and the host of heaven worshippeth thee." The patriarch Job exclaims, "Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea; which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south."

The shepherd company, with Moses in the wilderness, knew little of the vastness of the universe. Possibly we ourselves have only yet seen the beginning of the pathway that leads to the throne. The language of Scripture, however, suits all stages of knowledge, all degrees of development. God is alike the creator, whether there be few worlds or myriads. Let us think for a moment what is involved in creation. Our whole visible sky may be but as a little island in the heavens, beyond whose surrounding seas lie grander islands, or stretch out vast continents of systems, full of their Creator's glory. In our visible sky, our solar system occupies but a little space. In our system, the earth is scarcely visible to many of its sister planets. Yet on that earth, what forms of life—what myriads of living beings walk, or fly, or creep upon the earth. The little branches of moss that scarcely tinge with color the surface of the

rock, afford shelter and sustenance for millions of animalculæ. The sea is full of life. Every drop of water teems with being. Yon phosphorescent glow on the ocean's surface is from multitudes beyond number. The air is full of living germs. Tyndall, in a recent lecture, states that in his experiments they would pass through the pressed cotton wadding in his tubes, and boiling oil did not destroy their life.

In creation, as revealed in the Scriptures, we have eternity of being. God appears uncreated, underived, sole, self-existing. He conceives creation. He thinks of matter, and chooses its properties; determines magnitudes, distances, motions, and constituents of all worlds; conceives all forms of being in heaven, earth, air, or sky—their sizes, organs, functions, appetites, instincts, desires, perpetuation—their inner structure, their food, growth, period of life, and decay. Not only all existing forms, but all possible forms lie open to his inspection. Then there is consciousness of creating power; and he wills that his thoughts shall take form. At his will, all worlds, all forms of matter, all degrees of life, from the animalcule and the worm, to the angel and seraph, spring into being, and are simply his thoughts made visible or solidified. From himself alone the matter of all worlds has issued; and yet, undiminished in power and grandeur, he is the same great and glorious Jehovah, dwelling in light, whom no man hath seen or can see. He is God over all, blessed for evermore.

A moment's consideration will show that in creation,

omniscience is involved, as well as omnipotence. God must know all that he has made; must know them not only in their existences, but in their possibilities; not only to-day, but in their future; not only in the individual's form, but in all to issue from them. Such a knowledge—how vast! He hath said, "No man can see my face and live." If this referred simply to comprehending God, in his knowledge alone, it would be literally true. No human intellect could bear one hour's grasp of God's knowledge. Fancy that to-night you were lifted above this great city, with its million of inhabitants—the roof taken from every abode—before your inspection lies open every act of every being at every moment, all which you must see. Every word reaches your ear, and you must listen to all; every form of sorrow, every cry of agony. Not only visible acts, but every secret plan of purity or vice, of virtue or wickedness, every scheme of benevolence, and every purpose of riot, theft, licentiousness, robbery, and murder; every pang of the agonizing wife, mother, or child; the anxieties of the rich, and the distresses of the poor. Multiply these by a thousand—for a thousand millions of such beings people our earth. Hold in your memory—nay, ever-present before you—all the acts of these millions in the moments past, while the present moment unfolds its vastness, and add to that a foreknowledge of the interminable future. Under such a pressure every nervous system must be prostrate, every brain must reel. God alone knows, sees, understands all; and he is never weary, he never slumbereth or sleepeth.

So, also, omnipresence is an essential attribute. God must be where he places his works. He must fill heaven and earth. He is there by his power to constitute and uphold—by his wisdom to guide, by his own essential presence to give life and breath to all that exist. For “our breath is in his hand, and his are all our ways;” “it is in him we live, and move, and have our being.” The Psalmist well exclaims, “O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me; thou knowest my downsitting and my uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thy hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain to it. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me.”

The figure of the wings of the morning is another illustration of the expansion which science gives to the symbols of the Bible. David stood on Mount Zion, or the Mount of Olives, and saw the morning coming up over the distant hills of Moab. The gentle breeze came from the Mediterranean to meet the rising sun. Far north and south the growing light spread out over the

horizon, and on and on the morning, with its outspread wings, gently moved upward and westward till it reached the Mediterranean Sea ; still on it moved over its lengthened expanse until it passed the Pillars of Hercules and reached the uttermost sea. Away in that vast ocean, the sky alone encircling and on every side kissing the boundless deep, he sat in fancy, as the lone seabird rests upon the waves. Even there God held him by his right hand. David knew nothing of this vast continent that lay beyond that uttermost sea ; nor how God in the ages to come would hold in his hand the Pilgrim Fathers, and keep them in safety as they crossed that vast ocean ; nor how he would give them this great land for the founding of a great nation, across whose wide breast the psalms of David should be read by every child. Nor did he know of that other sea beyond, which should give up its multitudinous islands to the service of Christ. Nor did he know how swiftly those wings of the morning moved, as so gently and silently they advanced, and scarcely seemed to move at all. Yet we now know that more swiftly than the locomotive at its utmost speed, more swiftly than the tempest in its fiercest fury, these wings of the morning have sped onward more than a thousand miles per hour ever since creation's dawn ; but they have never preceded God ! Were we to note a tithe of the passages that vividly portray the doings and attributes of God, the evening hour would find our work but fairly begun. He is mighty beyond description ; he looks, and the earth trembles ; he touches the hills, and they smoke ; he holds

the winds in his fists, and the sea in the hollow of his hand; he bows the heavens and comes down; he rides upon a cherub and flies on the wings of the wind; "he hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet."

Among the ancients, and in all heathen countries, there were gods many and lords many, but the Scriptures proclaim, "The Lord our God is one Lord, there is none else." Diverse elements of nature, distinctions in territory and in nations and distant worlds, gave color to the idea of a divided jurisdiction, and different heathen gods reigned like kings or emperors over their separate territory. But nature, with every advance of science, proclaims the unity of God. The earth is shaped by one hand; its different sections are composed of the same elements; currents commingle the waters of the tropics and the poles, and the streams of air are constantly passing from north to south, and returning again. Men are of one great family; multitudinous dialects and languages spring from common roots. Gravitation not only binds our earth, but sweeps the heavens. One law of motion, one power of attraction, encircles the universe. The spectroscope reveals the fact that the sun and the stars have in them many of the same substances which our earth contains. The most advanced evolutionists of our day have no trouble in resolving, by simple laws, the original fire-mist into all the various worlds. Their only trouble is in originating the fire-mist and the laws, without a Creator. Moreover, such are the traces of affinity in

all classes of animals, that they can evolve them from a protoplasm or a cell, through all the infinitude of animal being. God has written his oneness in all nature: man is liable to impute that oneness to nature's self. Science, reason, and revelation, not only unite in singing, with Addison's orbs,

"The hand that made us is divine,"

but also that we have but one Creator, the only true God.

This Jehovah of the Bible, the eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent creator and upholder, is not only presented as the one governor and director of the universe, but also as a being of boundless wisdom, justice, goodness, and love. Traces of his wisdom are everywhere seen; the fitness of things reaches us at every turn, and we can well say, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works: in wisdom hast thou made them all." So, too, he cares for, protects, and loves what his hands have made. "His tender mercies are over all his works." "The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thy hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." Language can go no farther in describing the wonderful watchfulness and care of Divine providence. Every individual, of every class of animated being, turns its eyes to God. He hears its cry, he opens his hand and supplies every want.

The majesty of God is grandly shown in his tenderness and love. That love is boundless in its subjects,

reaching in some of its forms to all creation. He is the God of the suffering, of the fatherless, and of the widow. His eye is on the minute as well as the vast; not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice; the very hairs of our head are all numbered. This love is boundless in its resources. He gives not as the world gives. He hath infinite treasures, and is ready to bestow them upon man. This love led him to give his own Son to die for rebellious man. Such is its boundlessness, that the whole character of God, with all his glorious attributes, has its grand summation in the expression, "God is love."

To all other characteristics is to be added immutability. This has already been noticed in the name of Jehovah, the everlasting I Am, the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last. Everywhere else we meet with change: the grass springs up and withers; flowers bloom and fade; trees grow and decay. Man in the pride of his glory is swept away. The seasons change, the mountains crumble, the very heavens grow old. The best of men forget their promises, or change their purposes. But God is unchangeable. Compared with creation, the inspired penman says, "They shall perish, but thou shall endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment: as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." Men have thought to assail our faith in God and his word, by attempting to prove the wonderful age of our earth and of the heavens. So far from weakening our faith, if true, it would but confirm it. Has it

been untold millions of years since God formed this earth for human habitation, or since he laid its foundation? "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world!" Nay, he hath chosen us in Christ "before the foundation of the world." Have his thoughts been on us for millions of years? Did he purpose to give his Son to die that we might be saved? Did that Son, in his omniscience, gaze on Calvary for thousands of years, and ever moving towards it, send his voice through the ages, saying, "Lo, I come"? Then why should we fear for the future? Heart and flesh may fail, but God will be the strength and portion of our heart for ever.

The majesty of the Scriptures also appears in the representation of the plans of God in his universal government. Scarcely had sin entered into the world and triumphed over man, than the purpose was announced to overthrow evil by one of Eve's descendants. To the serpent it was said, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." To Eve it was a consoling promise, though she little knew the time that must elapse. With God, in carrying out his great plans, "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." At one period centuries pass, and scarcely a change occurs; then in rapid, unbroken succession follow events so strange and startling, as if centuries were condensed into a day. After the promise to Eve, ages passed, and the results of sin cov-

ered the earth with crime. Centuries pass again, and a patriarch is sent to Canaan. To him the promise is renewed. Four hundred and thirty years elapse, and his seed have no inheritance; yet a sceptre of power ultimately rises in Judah, and a king of might in Jerusalem. Again centuries pass, and a captive people weep by the rivers of Babylon and hang their harps on the willows. Restored again just as the last feature of nationality was to pass away, and Judah was to be enrolled for taxation, Shiloh, the promised deliverer, came, and the song of the prophet was fulfilled: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, . . . and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." In all these changes God reigned as a king: he subdued and scattered nations; he governed the elements; he was the triumphant conqueror. He used nations as his scourges, and then hurled them back to oblivion. Changes of every kind were made subservient to his plans, and the powers of earth bowed before him. He is represented as sitting on a throne; that throne is high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. A sapphire firmament is under his feet, a fiery stream issues from before him. His agents are powerful and innumerable. Thousands of thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him. The kings of the earth rise against him, but "he that sitteth in the circle of the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision." After all these majestic prophecies and announcements, when

Christ came, he was the babe of Bethlehem, the man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; he was crucified, dead, and buried. Then his glorious triumphs visibly began. His church was founded, his truth spread, his kingdom enlarged, and he is sitting on the throne of government expecting until his enemies shall be made his footstool.

Jesus on earth reminds his disciples of the power and immutability of the great "*I am.*" To fulfil his covenant with Abraham, God in the burning bush announced that name to Moses. To fulfil an older promise, made in Eden, long before the time of Abraham, Jesus came to earth, and he said, "Before Abraham was I am." God to fulfil the one, appeared in fire; Jesus to fulfil the other, appeared in flesh: in his resurrection from the grave, with its wonderful precedent and accompanying phenomena—in his ascension to heaven, while the angels sang, "Lift up your heads, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in"—his sacrifice was accepted, his mission was crowned with glory, and the Spirit has been sent to enlighten and to strengthen his followers. He is himself represented as caring for his churches, walking amidst the golden candlesticks, and holding the stars in his right hand.

His great plan for the overthrow of evil involves in itself all minor plans. Here and there glimpses of his work are given. Men gather in the plain of Shinar, to build a tower which shall reach up to heaven, lest they be scattered abroad. Does God crumble it by an

earthquake, or destroy it by lightning? He simply touches their lips, and they give a slightly different vibration to the air which they exhale. Their languages are confounded, and by his breath they are scattered over the face of the earth. Again one hundred and eighty thousand men surround the capital of his people, and expect an easy victory; but the air is changed, probably noxious vapors ascend, and in the morning the magnificent host lie dead upon the plain. With him it is easy to work "by many or by few."

The years through which we have just passed are years of his power. The unification of nations, the progress of invention, art, and science, the diffusion of knowledge, communication by steamers, railroads and telegraphs, emancipation of slaves, the downfall of despotism, the overthrow of the papal temporal power, the tendency to dis sever church and state—all point to the triumph of Messiah's kingdom. The present war will be no exception. England may join with the Turk—the cross may be carried into the conflict to support the crescent, but though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished. Sooner or later Mohammedanism shall pass away, Paganism shall vanish, and the kingdoms of this world shall be the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ.

In the consummation of his plans the Scriptures tell us that Christ shall judge the world. Sublimely grand is the prophetic view given by the revelator: "And I saw a great white throne and Him that sat on it, from

whose face the earth and the heavens fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, and another book which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their work. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were judged every man according to their work; and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." Can any description be more majestically grand than those of a general resurrection and general judgment, to be succeeded by new heavens and a new earth?

Amid these descriptions of God's majesty and government we are to remember that his holiness stands pre-eminent. In its aspect, as simple purity or freedom from stain, we are commanded to seek for its attainment. The precept is written, "Be ye holy, for I am holy;" and in the life of Christ we have that holiness illustrated and exemplified. But holiness may be considered as the summation of all the attributes of God in their glorious perfection. In this we cannot be like him here. But we shall approximate that likeness, and hereafter shall see him as he is. A third aspect of holiness is frequently presented. It is the purity and goodness and benevolence of God made manifest in the working out of his plans, and in the grand triumph of everlasting righteousness. When we see with Isaiah the cherubim crying, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts!" and when with the

revelator we hear the response of hosts of redeemed joining in the same glad song, we cannot suppose that they refer simply to the purity of God. That they have known before; it is involved in the very primary conceptions of the character of God: "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil." Nor can we suppose that it was simply a clearer view of the Divine character in itself. But such exclamations follow a revelation of God's great plans for the destruction of evil and the exaltation of righteousness. As in some great battle, when we have seen scattered forces converging to one point; when we see the skill of the general displayed in massing at the proper moment, and in the proper place, just such forces as shall win the victory, we praise the grandeur of his conceptions and the triumphs of his genius; so when God arranges all agencies to discomfit the wicked, to sanction the right, to punish his enemies, and to reward his followers, and especially when we behold those grand results attained by self-sacrifice on the part of his Son and by the wonderful manifestations of heavenly love, we are prepared to join with the unnumbered hosts in saying, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts!" This holiness is active as well as passive, and Jesus seems to refer to it when he says, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." But that perfection of the Father to which he alludes was that "he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. The duty enjoined was not to love our brethren only, but to love our enemies, and

to pray for them who persecute us. Then we become the children of God ; then we share not only passive holiness in freedom from sinful stains, but also active, God-like holiness, imitating the great Father in benevolence and love, and the blessed Saviour in the sacrifice of himself, and in going about always doing good.

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