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# IS CHRISTIANITY TRUE?

*Certainly not it's a*

A SERIES OF LECTURES

DELIVERED IN THE

*King's Church  
Hall*

CENTRAL HALL, MANCHESTER



Cincinnati

JENNINGS & GRAHAM

[*pres. 1904*]

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## PREFACE.

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THE present volume owes its origin to the Rev. S. F. Collier, Superintendent of the Manchester and Salford Wesleyan Mission. He had been much impressed with the keen interest in the claims of Christianity which had been excited among the thoughtful artisans of the North by various recent attacks, and especially by the articles of Mr. Robert Blatchford in the *Clarion*. To take full advantage of this quickened interest, Mr. Collier proposed a series of Sunday afternoon lectures in the Central Hall, Oldham Street, Manchester, which is well accustomed to a crowd of some 1,600 people. Mr. Collier devoted his efforts to securing an audience of the right kind, and I was privileged to help him by selecting subjects and inviting lecturers. The lectures were advertised under the general title—adapted from the last words of Mr. Blatchford's book—'Is Christianity True?' They met with immediate success, beyond our utmost expectations. From December, 1903, to Whitsuntide of the present year, the Hall has been well filled, often crowded, and there have been generally at least a thousand working men, the majority, so far as we could judge, unaccustomed to attend Christian services of any other kind. The lecturers have been specially invited to deal with subjects which they have made their own, and to present the case for Christianity thereon. They rightly gauged the character of their audience when they went straight to the heart of an abstruse subject, stripping it of technicalities, but making no pretence of coming down to the supposed level of their hearers. The close attention with which they were followed rewarded their estimate of the intelligence they appealed to. It may be added here that every lecture was prefaced by a hymn and prayer, and by a collection for the social work of the Mission. Mr. Collier has found, from the experience of many years, that the Lancashire man prefers to pay for what he gets, and these lectures proved no exception.

A peculiarly interesting feature of the course was the Conference which followed every lecture. A large room adjoining the Hall was usually crowded with a standing audience who kept the lecturer busy with questions for any time up to an hour. We found in these Conferences just what men were thinking, their misconceptions of the Churches' teaching, at least as much as their difficulties concerning problems which no one can presume that he has solved. Generally speaking, the questions were eminently intelligent and reasonable. We have felt throughout that not a little has been gained by the mere readiness to answer all comers courteously and frankly, regarding our questioners as having an abundant right to feel difficulties and to hear how Christians would answer them. Certainly, on my own experience, not only in Manchester, I can recommend to my fellow-preachers the judicious application of the Conference idea. The safe entrenchment of the pulpit has its own uses, but it is intensely suspect with many whom we want to reach. There are thoughtful and not unsympathetic men by the thousand who would gladly listen to a presentation of Christian truth which comes to them, not on authority, but as the frank appeal of mind to mind, with every opportunity of serious question in reply.

Another fruit of our experience has been a fresh light upon the Master's words, 'Wisdom was justified by her *works*.' The teaching of the Sunday afternoon lecture has been driven home with telling force by its coincidence in time with the weekly dinner to destitute men going on in the basement of the same building. That dismal procession of 600 or 700 human wrecks filing into the lower hall, every one of them to be helped during the week to regain self-respect and find his feet again in a new and more hopeful struggle, made an incomparable object lesson, and showed the living presence of Christ as no words could do. But for Mr. Collier's physical breakdown this spring (from which he has happily returned to his work much improved in health) the concluding lecture of this series would have borne witness to 'The Miracle of Changed Lives,' seen so many thousand times in the eighteen years' history of our Manchester Mission. The fifteen thousand who listen to its preachers every Sunday evening in the year need never be told from what source springs the self-sacrifice and devotion of the great company of men and

women who, in connexion with this Mission, spend their lives in ministering to the bodies and minds, as well as the souls, of their fellows. We claim that these lectures prove Christianity true, not by mere historical and philosophical argument as to the distant past. We believe Christ to be alive, not on the sole word of five hundred brethren who fell asleep eighteen centuries ago. We bring eye-witnesses to prove that His servants, armed only with His message, can go to the cannibal savage and transform him into a gentle and civilised man—that His Book can speak to-day in hundreds of tongues and effect wonders which all the world's literature has failed to rival—that in the slums of the great city Christian workers are quietly going their rounds of mercy, winning the drunkard and the gambler and the prostitute from their degradation, and breathing new hope into the hearts that were in the grip of despair. 'The good Lord Jesus has had His day,' say some ; but here among us its morning hours are not over yet. We believe He died and rose again long ago, because His death has visibly brought life to those whom we know, and His living glory shone reflected in the eyes of thousands who thankfully tell their tale to all who will hear.

It need only be further remarked that these lectures go far to prove, not only the truth but also the essential unity of Christianity. To demonstrate the unity of the Free Churches is in these days happily superfluous ; but there are Established Churchmen here whose names are a welcome reminder that the differences of Christians are comparatively near the surface after all. Those differences are, in fact, mainly important as evidence of the intense conviction which often destroys the sense of perspective in men's minds as they scan what appeals to them as truth. The lecturers in these series differ among themselves widely on matters which none of them would allow to be trifling ; but in this book they are dealing with essentials, and there is very little here in which a careful scrutiny will reveal any serious divergence. Those who have organised the course gladly take the opportunity of expressing here their profound obligation to the distinguished men who have so readily come forward to help them.

It will be noticed that there is here not much direct reference to the arguments of the *Clarion*, which supplied the immediate occasion for this reply. Clever, and well-written as it is, few

would seriously predict that *God and my Neighbour* will have more than a passing vogue. Some of its extravagances may be remembered among the curiosities of negative criticism, but there is nothing else that is novel enough to win immortality, except the lucid and pungent literary style. It is not too much to hope that Mr. Blatchford will yet regret the publication of a book which has confessedly damaged his own cause of Socialism, and helped Christianity, by dispelling the apathy which is its only serious foe. Whether convinced or no, most people will prefer to remember him by *Merrie England*, a book written when he acknowledged Jesus Christ as the most powerful formative influence in his own life, and traced his acceptance of the brotherhood of Man to the testament of Him whose very existence he would now deny. Our own task is to present some parts of the case for Christianity constructively as it may best appeal to the thoughtful men of our own day. There is no finality in Christian apologetics, or even in the expression of Christian doctrine. Theology, the queen of the sciences, cannot be the only science to stand still. Human knowledge, even when its subject is Divine Revelation, must 'grow from more to more,' or it must die: the final and unchanging is found alone in Him who 'is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever.' To bring men's minds and souls nearer to Him, rather than to doctrines about Him, must ever be the supreme object of those who try to defend the Faith. May this book help to tune the 'jarring lyre' of some who have been sorely tried by the discords of life and thought: may it lead them to Him who has made them feel that 'our hearts are restless, until they rest in Him'!

DIDSBURY, June 24, 1904.

J. H. M.

# ‘JESUS CHRIST OR ANOTHER?’

BY

J. LEWIS PATON, M.A.

---

A SHORT time ago I met the father of a school-boy who had just left school, and I asked him, as one naturally would, how his boy was getting on, and whether yet he had found an office in which to place him. And the father told me he was glad to say that he had found exactly the place and the man that he wanted. The boy was to be an architect and surveyor ; and I suppose he could have learned all about architecture and surveying from various text-books and encyclopaedias that deal with the subject. But, as you can very well see, it is quite insufficient if you want to make a good architect and surveyor to dump down on him a lot of text-books and encyclopaedias. The only way to make him efficient in his profession is to put him with a master of his profession, to get him in an office in which there is a lot of work going on of high quality, which work is dealt with by a man of high excellence and skill ; so that your pupil will see not only what has to be done but how a man who is a master of his craft will do it, and when he is making his first attempts himself will have at every turn the advantage of a

master-hand over him correcting his mistakes, showing him how to do a thing better, raise continually the standard of his work, and 'better good with best.'

Now that is a truth which is recognized in every branch of life. I picked up at a bookstall the other day a little penny book which was entitled, 'How to Learn to Swim,' and I asked myself, 'I wonder if anybody ever learned to swim out of a book?' The way I learned to swim, and the way the most of us learned to swim, was by getting into the water and having some one with us who knew how to do it himself. It is the same all round. If you want your boy to be a good plumber, you put him with a good plumber: if you want him to be a good cricketer, you don't tell him to read Ranjitsinhji's book and then go to the wickets and score a century; but you send him to a school where there is to be obtained good tuition in cricket, and you let him have the constant influence of men who are good cricketers, who take pains to 'coach' him, as they say. If you want to reach a good style in English, there are manuals on style—enough of them; but nobody ever wrote a good style by studying manuals. If you ask Robert Louis Stevenson, or any of the great classics of English style whether in prose or in verse, how they became such masters of expression in their mother-tongue, they would tell you, one and all, that they studied perpetually, lived in the atmosphere of the great standard classical

authors who have made our English literature the greatest literature of the world.

Now, my friends, I take it we are not all going to become architects and surveyors, and we are not all ambitious to become plumbers, the ladies, possibly, are not ambitious to become cricketers, and we are not all seeking to write great books; but there is one supreme art in which I take it every one within this hall is desirous and ambitious to excel. I cannot otherwise explain our presence here this afternoon, unless every man and woman in this building has at heart a serious, earnest purpose to excel and grow day by day better and better in the supreme art of right living. And now, the question I want to put to you is simply this, 'Whom shall we take as our Master in this great art of right living? To whom shall we go? Under whose daily influence and atmosphere are you and I proposing to put ourselves?' That is the first, the great, the all-important question on which everything else depends.

'Ah well,' you say, 'the world has produced in its history many great men and women who give us examples of this art of right living, and under their tuition, under their influence, we trust day by day to excel ourselves.' Well, let us think this out. I remember, just when I left school and went to college, and saw life opening out before me, there was one great man in England who had the gift of *sight* as no other man amongst us. He could see right through the trimmings of life and the fripperies

of it, down to the sure truth behind. He could see right through our flimsy conventions and our wretched respectabilities, through to the duty that lay behind them, a dead sure thing. He had that wonderful gift of sight, and he had the wonderful gift of utterance ; and we young men in England in those days followed him as our leader, listened to his every word, saw in his leadership the hope of better things for England and the world. Just as I was going to college he died, and shortly after his death his biography appeared. We devoured that book ; but we had not got far into the story of the life, before we found in the private history of the home a record of petty temper, of irritability, of magnifying molehills into mountains, and consequent bitterness of spirit, a record which I do not hesitate to say would have been a disgrace to the humblest home in England. A great gulf fixed between the public profession and the private life !

Not long ago I stood in the studio of a great painter in London. He was showing me several of his pictures which stood there, some finished and some unfinished, and speaking freely about the subjects he had painted. Away in a dark corner behind a picture which stood there on an easel I saw a face which seemed to me familiar, and I said to him, 'Isn't that the face of Dante Gabriel Rossetti?' 'Yes,' he said ; and I noticed, as he said it, that his countenance fell and the flow of his conversation ceased ; 'I would rather not speak about Rossetti' ;

and I saw there was a veil drawn, the veil of secrecy over the home life. Here again was one whose glorious gift of utterance and richness of imagery had held all reading England entranced with the vision of its beauty; but there too, as soon as you drew the veil, the glamour of the influence was spoiled. A great gulf was fixed between the public profession and the private practice of the man.

Then there are other great men in history. Theodor Mommsen, the greatest scholar of Europe, who has just gone to his rest—and never a man in this world deserved it better—taught us to recognize as the greatest man of antiquity Julius Caesar the Roman. I think that we all recognize the wonderful power, the wonderful wisdom, the wonderful practical administrative gift and talent of that unequalled Roman; but I wonder if you have ever asked yourself whether we can take the moral standard of the twentieth century, and in its light adjudge Julius Caesar to be one of the great leaders of mankind, a man whom we should tell our boys and girls to follow as their ensample in moral life. I take down my Cicero from my shelf and read there, in one of his familiar letters, how Julius Caesar went to dine with him, and I think, 'Here surely there will be some great thing said which I am not likely to forget, when the greatest orator of the Roman world meets the greatest statesman that the world has ever produced.' I read the letter, and I find that, after so many courses have been served, Julius Caesar retires

and takes an emetic ! Cicero puts it in Greek, not Latin, just as we put ugly things in French to skim them over a bit. I say to myself, ' Ah, it is a great mistake to apply the advanced moral standard of our own refined manners and our own country to such a man as Julius Caesar.' We have to screw things back a bit, we have to adjust the instrument ; we have to make allowances for him because, after all, he was not much better than his time. It was, after all, quite a customary thing in those days to take an emetic, so that one could eat more ; and you mustn't blame Julius Caesar because he was not greater than his time. What I want to point out is you cannot take Julius Caesar as an example of the highest life. You have to make qualifications in your moral standard at every turn.

Far be it from me to depreciate or belittle great men or women ; we as English people know too little about them, and I only wish the interest that is concentrated on low things in Manchester here were devoted to the study of their lives. But let us take again such a great life as that of Oliver Cromwell, a man of whom in Manchester you are specially proud. Do you find everybody agreed with regard to Oliver Cromwell ? I ask some of my friends, men who know the facts as well as I do, what they think of Oliver Cromwell ; and they paint him—well, only a little less black, if at all, than the Prince of Darkness himself. I talk to Dr. Clifford about Oliver Cromwell, and Dr. Clifford was hardly willing to admit that he

was anything lower than an angel. Partisanship! men aren't agreed about him. You take Oliver Cromwell as your master in the art of right living, and you will find that all your true-blue friends regard you as driving at motor-car speed over the precipice. Moreover, it was not till the middle of last century that we knew the truth about Oliver Cromwell. It was only then that historians gave you the chance of knowing much about him, and even in our own memory things have come out about him which those before us did not know. Partisanship! change of fashion, change of estimate, differing verdicts by different historians!

Ah! but you say there are lives in which I think you will find it hard to find any fault. Well, I read not long ago a very saintly life, a tender, gentle, innocent life; it is a type of a good many others, and does not stand alone, I am glad to say—the life of Henry Kirke White, a young poet of my own town of Nottingham, who died all too early at my own college at Cambridge. I read that book with great interest, and when I closed it I thought about it, and I said to myself, 'A white soul that, as pure a life as any I ever read, of such is the kingdom; but had this man in him the strength and the manhood that could stand up and rebuke sin? had he the strength and the manhood to lead against the powers of evil?' We want such power, we want such men, we cannot do without them; but I do not find that positive element in the life of Henry Kirke White,

nor any promise of it. And he again may stand as the type of many others.

But I will leave this subject, and in leaving it I will say no more but this—I will say what the old Book says, that many men in many times have given us ‘in many ways and in many fractions’<sup>1</sup> fragments of the word of God, not so much in what they said as in what they were, for after all the great lesson that any man teaches is himself. But I only know one life in history which I can commend to you, or which you can commend to your children, as a perfect ensample of righteous, godly, sinless life. I only know one Master of the art of right living. There is no inconsistency in that life; there is no gulf fixed between the public profession and the private life, there is no veil which you must not lift. There is no need for us to adjust our moral standpoint, we do not have to make allowances and qualifications; we can give it our whole-hearted admiration, we can follow it without any reserve. There is no doubt about the purity and loftiness and innocence of it, every one admits them; those who reject Him are some of the first to do so. John Stuart Mill, the sceptic, was the man who told us from his chair as Moral Philosopher that if we wished to live a perfect life we must so act that every action would commend itself to Jesus of Nazareth. The best lives are lived in following His steps,

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<sup>1</sup> ‘God having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners’ (Heb i. 1, R.V.).

and those who follow closest are the first to acknowledge how far they come short of Him. Men criticize Christianity, and it is well they should. But you will notice that the standard by which men criticize us is the standard of Christ Himself. It is only in His light that critics see our faults; it is not because we are followers of Christ that they criticize us, it is because we fail to follow Him. They cannot criticize our Leader; they are forced, even against their will, to recognize 'the highest, holiest manhood' in Him. But they blame us, and they rightly blame us, because our lives are not equal to our Pattern. Not for our Christianity do men attack us, but for our lack of it.

My friends, we can search all through history, through the centuries as they pass, but we shall not find any model of excellence that can compare with Christ, we shall not find any other power or any other name given under heaven whereby we can be saved from sin. You will not expect me, and I shall not attempt this afternoon, to describe that life. Better to read it than to hear it described. I am not here to vindicate it; it vindicates itself. The greatest masters of oratory in our nation and in all civilized nations of Europe and America have attempted to describe this life to men. We have heard them, some of us; we have read what they have written; and yet I venture to say that no man or no woman who has heard those orators or read their books, if he or she have entered at all into the

spirit of Christ and been a student of His life, has yet heard a sermon or read a book which comprehended in its fullness all that they saw and felt to be in the Man Christ Jesus. The greatest painters have painted Him ; we have seen their paintings, and we have turned away and said, 'Yes! it is all true ; but the greatest part and the most of it, the depth of it and the height of it and the breadth of it, remain yet unexpressed.' So beautiful in its simplicity, so simple in its beauty, towering high above all human lives is the life, the death, the resurrection of Jesus the Carpenter of Nazareth.

If you want to know the difference between that life and all other lives, I can put it to you in a simple story of Charles Lamb. He knew the great men of letters of his day, and they were there talking together in London about this very subject that we are discussing together this afternoon ; when they had all said their say, quiet Charles Lamb came in, and, in his inimitable way, he hit the nail upon the head, and summed up in one short sentence all that the others had been trying to say at greater length. 'The fact is, gentlemen,' he said, 'that if William Shakespeare were to come into this room now, we should all rise to our feet ; but if Jesus of Nazareth were to come into this room, we should fall upon our knees.'

My friends, we do not fall upon our knees before a man ; we rise to our feet, we do honour to him. Before a God, one who is divine, we sink upon our

knees in prayer ; and if Jesus of Nazareth were to stand in our midst now, and we were to know Him by His pierced hands as He stood here, I venture to say that every man and woman in this room would sink in adoration on their knees. Those who knew Him, His enemies, what did they say of Him? There were some officers sent out by the Pharisees to take Him. They came back without their prisoner. When questioned straitly by those who employed them, the only answer they could make was this, 'Never man spake like this man.' There was something here greater than man, something that cowed them, and restrained their hands. The Roman judge upon his tribunal-seat found no fault in Him ; and the officer who superintended His execution, the execution of a malefactor, was forced to confess, 'Truly this man was the Son of God.' If you are not convinced by the life of Christ, then the death of Christ must convince you. If you are not convinced by the death of Christ, can you believe that a mere man conquered death, rose from the tomb, and showed Himself in bodily shape to His disciples afterwards ?

'Ah, but,' you say, 'it is such a long time ago that life of Jesus Christ, of which you speak. Even if we admit its perfection, it is separated from us by thousands of miles, it was lived under a Syrian sky, and very nearly two thousand years ago.' My friends, there were two boys at the last school I was at, and they were separated from their parents by more than

twice the distance which separates us from Syria. Their father and their mother were away in China, and they were being educated in London. The younger of them, if he had seen his parents, could scarcely remember what they were like. If he had met them in the street, I doubt whether he would have recognized them as his father and mother. They had the best of friends in this country, they had good tutors, they had good comrades at school; but I know that the slightest wish of father and mother there beyond the seas, separated by the whole breadth of this terrestrial globe, the slightest wish, even though not exactly expressed in so many words, but only hinted, had more power to influence those boys than anything that tutors or friends or schoolmates could have said to them. If the love of earthly father and mother has power for influence like that, what should be and what shall be the power of a heavenly Father's love with us? If love in a father and mother can transcend time and transcend space, shall we think that God's love manifested in His Son on earth two thousand years ago has ceased, and can operate no more, to lead us out of lowness of life and out of sin and wrong into pure and strong and upright living? I do not believe it. I have been told of a man in Brighton, a small shopkeeper, who, whenever he is tempted to do something that is mean or deceitful, as I dare say small shopkeepers frequently are, just steps into a little room behind and looks at a picture that hangs there of

F. W. Robertson, his old pastor of Trinity Church in Brighton, and he goes back to his counter and to his account-book fortified to do the thing which he knows to be honest and straight, even though he loses by it. If that is the power of a mere human pastor, who has been dead now many years, shall not the power be immeasurably greater of Him who is the Shepherd and the Bishop of our souls? If these men and these women who are fractions of the truth and mere channels of the Life Divine have so much influence over us, how much greater shall be the power of Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person?

I venture to say that there is not a street in Manchester, I might almost go further and say, there are not many houses in Manchester where the power of Jesus Christ has not been felt, I won't say in the creation of perfect life, that is not given to us yet, but to redeem men and women, boys and girls, from sin, to hold back the promptings of covetousness or lust, to enforce the spirit in its conflict against the flesh, to lead us into worthier life, and make strength out of weakness and joy out of misery and saints out of sinners. The best witnesses for Christ are the deeds done in His name, the lives lived in His power. I stand not for argument to-day, I stand for facts, and there before our eyes is the evidence of facts, if we will only see it.

'Now it came to pass at that time that many of the disciples went back and walked no more with

Him. And Jesus said unto them, Will ye also go away? Simon Peter answered, and said, Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.' My friends, we started with asking the question, 'To whom shall we go as a Master in the art of right living?' and I end with the words of Simon, the man of rock, 'Thou hast the words of eternal life.' Not a fraction, but the fullness thereof; not a little, but all; not a fitful, dubious, wavering light, but the radiance of the Father's glory; not a doubt, but a certainty and a truth. Receive Him. Let us all receive Him, and fix Him in our hearts and in our thoughts day by day, in all seasons, in all places, and in all cases,—on all days of the week fix Him there as the background of our life,—judge against that background ourselves and all we think and do and say,—test our lives by His, and those lives will grow unconsciously into nobler form and higher type. Setting Him always before us, we shall acknowledge Him in all our thoughts and ways, placing Him as King and Lawgiver upon the throne of our hearts as the great English poet Milton placed Him :

Him first, Him last, Him mid-most, Him without end.

# 'HOW GOD PREPARED FOR CHRISTIANITY'

BY

REV. JAMES HOPE MOULTON, M.A., D.LIT.

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**M**Y title this afternoon is 'How God prepared for Christianity.' I shall have to begin with saying that by this title I do not mean some of the thoughts which are naturally associated with it. We have only time to take a part of the field. Under this title I might have spoken of the wonderful way in which God prepared for the coming of Christ through the special training of the people of Israel; I might have spoken of the way in which He prepared for it in the providential ordering of the world up to the time of that coming. Those are subjects that are often dealt with, and which are very important; but the particular subject I want to deal with this afternoon is something which goes deeper still, a preparation for Christianity which goes down to the very roots of human nature. I want to show if I can how God made man in such a way that Christianity was the one thing that was fitted for him.

We are very familiar by this time with the birth of new sciences. Every time that a new science

arises there are sure to be a good many alarms among Christian people ; while a great many more people who are not Christians immediately tell us that this new science has sounded the knell of Christianity. Long ago, people thought it was all over with Christianity when it was discovered that the earth went round the sun. We can remember what a stir there was when Darwin discovered evolution. And now we have a new science which has come very much to the fore in the last few years, the science which is known as the Science of Man, anthropology, with its companion science of Comparative Religion. Anthropology attempts to find out, from the social conditions and customs, the magical rites and religious ceremonies, and so on, of savage people all over the world, what is the essential condition of man in the earliest times, and to trace his subsequent development.

Now, one of the greatest impulses given to this new science has come from the publication of a great book, *The Golden Bough*, by Dr. J. G. Frazer. Its second and very much enlarged edition was published only three years ago. As a Cambridge man, I feel myself peculiarly proud that it is by a great Cambridge scholar, and I feel prouder still because I am myself privileged with the friendship of its author. Recently an acute and earnest journalist, with many of whose views on social questions I am myself strongly in sympathy, said that no man should regard the subject of religion as

decided for him until he has read *The Golden Bough*.

I have nothing at all to complain of in that statement, unless perhaps it be this. I believe religion is a practical thing, if it is anything at all. I will not have anything to do with it if it is not a practical thing. It seems, therefore, perhaps rather hard to condemn us to have no opinion on the subject of religion until we have managed to buy a book which costs 36s., and to read a book which covers 1,400 pages. I hope it is not necessary to postpone our opinion upon the subject of religion until we have done that. And perhaps there is another reason why that advice is not quite sound. It is that this work of three great volumes of facts and arguments is not one for anybody to read without any previous training. It requires a certain amount of training before it can really be understood and properly weighed. You would hardly think of taking up *The Origin of Species*, and then pretending to be an authority on evolution just because you have read that one book. We must recognize that it is not every one who can judge the force of the argument of *The Golden Bough*, and perhaps I might say that some of the efforts at popularizing it have proved it possible to pose as an expert in anthropology a little prematurely.

There is one very important point which meets us at the outset, in which the argument of *The Golden Bough*, if regarded as proved, might be supposed to be fatal to the point of view of religion. In a pass-

age early in the first volume Dr. Frazer defines religion as 'a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life.' He goes on to say that 'religion assumes the world to be directed by conscious agents who may be turned from their purpose by persuasion,' and therefore 'it stands in fundamental antagonism to . . . science.' But with regard to this statement I must remind you that *The Golden Bough* does not from beginning to end attempt to prove this with regard to Christianity, nor even with regard to any of the higher religions of the world. It is superstition, not religion, with which Dr. Frazer has to deal. Christianity is not, in its essence, the 'conciliation or propitiation' of a higher power. We believe that the sinner must begin by making his peace with God. But that is not because God needs changing, but because the man needs changing; and before the man can do what God means him to do in the world he must have his attitude towards God absolutely changed. Christianity means communion with and obedience to a heavenly Father. To change the will of the heavenly Father by persuasion is not what the Christian means by prayer. Why, we believe that the will of God is the very best thing for you and me and for every one. We believe that, as Dante put it, 'In His will is our peace'; and though we cannot pretend to understand His will always, we have too much belief in the character of our heavenly Father to doubt that

the overriding of His will by the imperfect knowledge of man would be, if it were conceivable, the very greatest of disasters.

I cannot deal with the subject of Prayer this afternoon : so important a subject claims a lecture to itself. I can only say that it is a great mistake if on this ground any one here supposes that Christianity is hostile to science. The fact is that Christianity welcomes all that science can do. Christianity delights in all the triumphs of science, and some of the greatest men of science in this and in former ages have been devout Christian men ; I need only mention such names as Sir Isaac Newton, Michael Faraday, Clerk-Maxwell, Sir George Stokes, not to mention many who are still living, to remind you that there can be no antagonism between Christianity and science, for otherwise we should have to say either that these men were not Christians or else that they were not scientific men.

But there is another aspect from which I want to look at this challenge of anthropology. You will find in the great work of which I have been speaking an enormous mass of evidence, collected with the utmost care, with an amount of research which is perfectly marvellous, illustrating the manners and customs of mankind from all parts of the world. They come alike from the usages of our own country districts, from little superstitions which may still be seen in our own country, in the midst of our twentieth-century civilization, and then far away at

the other end of the scale from the life of the lowest savages that the world can show at the present time, the aborigines of Central Australia. Over the whole of this vast field there are to be seen certain common usages that are brought together in this book, and the argument from them is one that I want to put before you.

We are perhaps rather startled when we find that the most essential features of Christianity are found to be paralleled among the manners and customs of some of the lowest savages. It was a thing that startled men long ago. When the first Roman Catholic missionaries went to Mexico, they found something exactly corresponding with the Christian Eucharist going on among people who had never heard of Christianity before; and the only theory they could form about it was that the devil was making a wicked parody of the most sacred Christian rite. We find that all over the world there is an idea akin to that of Incarnation. It is a very familiar thought. Incarnation and Atonement lie at the centre of Christianity; but they may be said to lie at the centre of a great many other religions. The idea of looking upon a man as if he were a God, believing that the spirit of some divine power has got into him, has been incarnated in him, has been exceedingly common all the world over. We find that in a great many places there is a belief in a supernatural birth, the birth from a virgin. We find, again, that where there is this belief in a man-

god it generally ends with the slaying of the man-god as a sacrifice after a certain lapse of time. Sometimes this usage even went further still, and men ate the victim's flesh because they believed that his divine strength would thus come into them. When they have advanced beyond this barbarous condition, they eat his flesh in a symbol of some kind.

We find many other parallels which I have not time to deal with. For instance, there are even parallels to that doctrine of the New Birth which is preached in this and countless other centres of Christian teaching with such wonderful effects upon the lives of men to-day. We have likewise parallels in abundance to the doctrine that evil is produced within us and around us by the work of evil powers who tempt men to sin. I do not think it is strange that there have been many people who have jumped at a conclusion, after having heard these facts for the first time. They say, 'Here is the explanation of Christianity; what can be more clear? Christianity has taken all these things out of beliefs which were current among men before; and in reality all that is miraculous in Christianity is to be explained as legend arising from beliefs which are found all the world over.' So Christianity is brought down to the level of the other religions of the world: it is no more supernatural than they are.

There are others who go further, of whom it is not quite easy to speak with patience, because of their utterly unscientific prejudice. There are some amateur

anthropologists—I am not speaking of real men of science, especially not of Dr. Frazer, who has nothing of this sort in his book or in his mind—but there are amateur anthropologists who even go so far as to tell us that Christ Himself is not a real person, that He never lived, but is only a mythical figure representing the sun. We are told, for instance, that the Sermon on the Mount, after all its precepts have been explained in a very extraordinary way as having been borrowed from this, that, and the other source in various pre-Christian systems, was never really delivered at all: Jesus on the Mount is only the sun, and His twelve apostles round Him are the signs of the Zodiac. I have not seen this point made, but I will make the believers in the theory a present of it: one of the apostles was called Thomas, which means a twin, and there is one of the signs of the Zodiac called The Twins. You will agree that the theory after that needs no further proof! I am very sorry to laugh at honest beliefs held by anybody; but I cannot help feeling that nobody would have put his hand to such a theory as that if he had not been impelled by a very strong prejudice. But I should like to remind you that that particular theory, which delighted in turning historical characters into solar myths, was laughed out of court a generation ago. There were even some clever writers who, by way of parody, undertook to prove most conclusively that Shakespeare was never a real person at all: he was neither

Shakespeare nor Bacon, but only a solar myth. Another writer proved the same of Napoleon. Indeed, with a little ingenuity the author of this theory of the Sermon on the Mount might be sent down to posterity as a solar myth himself. The fact is, some materialists are so gullible, that they will just believe anything; there is nothing so foolish that they will not swallow if only it helps to discredit Christianity.

What I want to plead for is fair play. I want to ask for a rigid scientific method which is not afraid of examining everything most carefully, not afraid of the results of following truth, wherever truth may lead us. I want to ask that sensible men and women should not waste their time and their mental effort in trying to believe things which are evidently born not of science but of prejudice. Prejudice or bias is the deadliest foe science has to encounter. I ask you for a moment to come back again to this thought. Many of you were here last Sunday. You heard words about Jesus Christ. I just want to ask each of you seriously to ask yourself, if you have any doubts on the subject, whether you believe the man has yet been born or ever will be born who could invent Jesus Christ. For this purpose it does not matter how these Gospels came together. It does not matter what may lie behind them. I simply say that here they are, and the man who could invent that character is a man who is really worthy of being worshipped as a God himself.

I pass away for a few minutes from the subject of

*The Golden Bough* to deal with another kind of attack that has been made on Christianity—the attack of Comparative Religion ; that is to say, not so much the study of the primitive savage religions, but rather of the higher religions—Buddhism, Moham-medanism, and the rest. This study of Oriental religions has made great strides within recent years. Men have begun to consider these foreign religions in a much more sympathetic spirit than formerly. There used to be a time when Christians felt they could not hold their own faith without altogether condemning every other faith in the world. But we have come to recognize that, after all, millions of people were Buddhists centuries before Christ, and that since He came millions more have remained Buddhists who never had Christianity put before them. And we are now thankful to feel that there was so much that was sound and true among the religions of the world. It has been a difficulty with us to believe that all truth was cooped up as it were within that little country of Palestine. We are glad to think that there was a measure of truth all the world over ; and we are not afraid to say that wherever there is truth it is inspired by God. For truth can come from no other source ; and wherever it is, even in the mind of an agnostic, after all it was God who put it there.

Now, the study of Oriental religions has shown that there are many good points in these religions ; and we are having a good many arguments nowadays

attempting to prove that Christianity borrowed its most characteristic features from other religions. Buddhism particularly has been very much to the fore of late. Now, Buddhism at any rate in its origin was a very noble religion. The character of Buddha (who is reduced to a mere myth, of course, by people who believe the same of Christ) is one that we cannot help admiring and thanking God for. But as to saying that Christianity borrowed from Buddhism, that is another matter. The fact is, that this question of the borrowing of one religion from another is one on which those who have not had much experience are liable to go astray. It is so easy to find a similarity between one religion and another, especially when you are anything of a partisan. You can unconsciously weed out of each one of them the features that differ, and you can put the case so as to make the similarity appear most obvious. There was a German scholar the other day who tried to prove that in one point the religion of the Parsees had borrowed from the prophet Isaiah. I am not going to trouble you with the argument, but the similarity was such that it might be regarded as remarkable when you first heard of it. But as soon as you began to read what the Parsee doctrine was, when you set it out in its plain prosaic form, you saw there was nothing really to suggest that it was borrowed from Isaiah. And that, in fact, is really the case with many points in which it is alleged that

Christianity has borrowed from other religions.

For my part I should not be afraid to say that there may be elements in Judaism the suggestion of which it owes to other religions. I believe that God had many ways of fulfilling Himself, and many ways of teaching His truth to His own people. It would not trouble me at all if it were proved that there were elements from other religions thus taken, under divine guidance, into Christianity. But one thing is clear at any rate. If you are asked to believe that there are other sacred books in the world which can be for one moment compared with the Bible, and especially with the Gospels, I have only to ask you to read those sacred books. You can get them all in English now. There is a long series in the Oxford University Press of the 'Sacred Books of the East,' and if you get through them I congratulate you. Of course there are some things that are very fine and beautiful; but the very idea of comparing these books with the Gospels would never have occurred to any one who had not a pet theory that he wanted to propound.

Now I want to come to the one great central question which I propose to answer as well as I can this afternoon. You ask me how I deal with this undeniable fact, that there are parallels to Christianity. How do I treat it? Well, to begin with I ask you to allow me to make one tremendous postulate. I ask you to grant me one great fact for which I am not going to attempt to bring any pr

and that fact is nothing less than the Existence of God. I call it a *postulate* because in the very nature of things it is impossible to prove the existence of God in the same way that you can prove a proposition of Euclid. But I should like you to remember that to *disprove* the existence of God is a much more difficult thing. When you read materialistic books at the present time, you will generally find that there is a good deal of shyness in dealing with that question. People know it is absolutely impossible to explain the universe without God, so that accordingly the Christian and the non-Christian are just on the same footing. We on our side have to make a postulate which explains the facts, and the non-Christian has to do without the postulate and let the facts remain absolutely unexplained.

When I say I want to postulate the existence of God, what do I mean by God? I mean, of course, an almighty God, and I mean a good God. To say this demands that we should anticipate that very obvious but very profound difficulty as to why God allows evil in this world of His. Let me remind you that God, by the very definition that we have in our minds, aims at real ultimate good. And when we say *Good*, we do not mean machine-made goodness, goodness which is produced by the simple fear of God's almightiness, or by His forcing His creatures to be good whether they will or not. What we need to remember is the simple fact which lies at the bottom of all these problems, that there is no moral virtue in

a Yes unless it is possible for us to say No. Is not that common sense? There can be no moral virtue in a Yes unless it is possible to say No, and therefore there must be the possibility of evil. Now, supposing that we believe in a God Almighty who has set Himself to work out infinite good as the end of His creation, how would He reveal Himself to His creatures? In the physical world, as science tells us, God works mainly by evolution. I am not going to give an opinion as to the truth of the theory of evolution this afternoon. There is an old adage which says, 'A shoemaker ought to stick to his last.' It is only a biologist or a physicist who has any business to express an expert opinion on the question of evolution, and I am neither. (I only wish, by the way, that some men of science had that proverb at heart: one cannot help remembering Haeckel and Huxley, who, not content with dealing with science, stepped out of their own province and dealt with questions of 'higher criticism,' which require the training of a lifetime, and for which they were absolutely unfitted. Let the theologian stick to his last, and the men of science to theirs.) Meanwhile we may freely accept evolution, when we find the experts united in its favour, as the theory which largely explains the method of God's working in nature. We need make no reservation in this matter, and we may well believe that the theory helps us in a very wonderful way to understand the dealings of God with this world of ours.

But if we are going to accept that principle at all, we may as well accept it all round. If it works in the physical world, is there not a presumption that it may work also in the world of mind? Accordingly, when God came to teach His highest knowledge to the world, when He wished to bring to men's hearts the knowledge of Himself, is it not most likely to begin with that He would *evolve* the idea of Deity just as He evolved everything else? It came, in fact, by what men call 'natural' causes—and 'natural' they are if the word is rightly conceived—out of the deepest instincts of humanity. So there arose in every nation some witness to Himself; but in accordance with a principle seen everywhere in human progress, one single race received far more light than others, because they were specially fitted to receive and to use it for the benefit of mankind. That was the position of the people of the Jews. Just as God, wishing to give the blessings of intellect, of art and science and literature, to the world, gave them through one little nation—the people of Athens of the olden days; just as when, wishing to teach men the blessings of law and of government, He gave them through one gifted nation—the nation of ancient Rome: even so when He would teach men religion, while setting witnesses to Himself in every part of the world, He took one little nation with a special genius which was suited to this work, and in accord with this genius He guided them to a loftier apprehension of

truth, in order that they might pass it on to mankind as a whole. For it is a general principle, which applies to nations and to individuals alike, that with every privilege there comes the call from God to go and use it for the benefit of our fellow men.

This is not my doctrine : it is the doctrine of what we call Holy Scripture. You notice in the lesson that was read just now (Acts xiv. 8-18) how Paul and Barnabas at Lystra were worshipped because they healed a lame man, and how when they understood what these simple folk were doing they immediately rushed into the midst of the crowd and began to protest. And what was it that Paul said ? He said that God had 'left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness.' Do you suppose that when Paul said that he thought that the simple savage far away in Africa would be able to rise to the heights of Christianity only because he received food and rain ? The natural thing for the savage to do was to worship the sky that gave the rain and the tree which produced the fruit. Even so the Lycaonians worshipped Zeus or Jupiter, who was simply the sky-god ; while as for the worship of trees, we find it evidenced on every page of *The Golden Bough*. (We find it even amongst ourselves, in the old-world survival of the May-pole.) That is one way in which the idea of God can come-

Another way is suggested by the well-known ghost or dream theory. So again we may go to *The Golden*

*Bough*, and there find how religion was developed out of the idea of magic. I do not care in what way the idea was developed; the one thing I care about is that the idea is there. It may have arisen in one way in one people, and in a different way in another. But you have to explain it, and the Christian explanation is that God put it there. He evolved it, just as He evolved everything else in His universe, by slow and gradual stages. And so He prepared for the climax of revelation, the coming of The Man—the Man who is beyond all other men, the Man who stands out among all men who have ever been in this world, whom we call the Son of God. If we are right in so calling Him, we must of course exclude His appearing from the action of natural laws: He belongs to a world the laws of which we cannot possibly know. But the preparation for His coming was largely through natural development, through instincts independently existing in man wherever he is found.

I have been saying that we have evidence that the idea of incarnation was everywhere, that the idea of atonement was everywhere, that the idea of resurrection was everywhere; and what that means to my mind is that, man being what he is, God chose the only possible method of self-revelation to him. We could imagine God revealing Himself in many other ways. I dare say there are many who think God might have found a better way. No, He has done it in the one way which was absolutely in

accordance with the deepest and most universal instincts of men. And that is the reason why the gospel somehow contrives to touch the human heart in every part of the world: it has spoken not only to one race, like other religions, but every race throughout the world. You tell me it is a very strange thing that God should have allowed men to have such different privileges, some of them to have the power of great spiritual knowledge and others to have only the twilight to walk in. Yes, but after all God is not engaged in judging men's beliefs, but in judging their characters.<sup>1</sup> Christ tells us that He will judge men at last, not because they *believe* this or that, but because they *were* this or that. The first shall be last, and the last first; and we may well believe that in the next world God can make high use of many a simple-minded savage who had little light but did his best, when many a gifted and privileged man from the most advanced centres of civilization is cast aside as useless because he has not improved for his fellows' good the gifts with which he was dowered.

Let me further remind you that evolution had not said its last word when Christ came. The revelation of Christ was indeed something final. Christ was the very summit of humanity. There never was,

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<sup>1</sup> There are, of course, passages in the New Testament which affirm the necessity of belief. But it will always be found that belief is enjoined with a view to its practical outcome. 'Every one that *loveth* is begotten of God, and knoweth God' (1 John iv. 7).

and never will be, a man like to Him. But at the same time evolution has not stopped. If we believe in it, we must believe that to stop evolution means to stop life. And the world is yet alive, and perpetually progresses—far too slowly, but yet really—towards higher ideals of knowledge and social conditions. Hence the progressiveness of Christianity. Its enemies sneer at the readiness with which it adapts itself to the new forms of thought which arise as new generations achieve new conquests in the realm of knowledge. God has nothing higher to give to men than Christ ; but man is to be raised by a slow evolution, intellectually and morally, to the level of that great revelation. That is why Christianity is constantly progressing, why the beliefs of one generation are set aside by the fresh beliefs of another, and yet all the time the real essentials of the faith are held firm. Christianity is progress, and it is itself the main cause of the progress of science and everything else that is great in the world at the present time.

I have rested everything in my case upon one great *If*, and that is God. If you ask me whether that is reasonable, I would remind you that no less a man than Lord Kelvin, perhaps the greatest man of science now living, said the other day, 'Do not be afraid of being free thinkers. If you think strongly enough, you will be forced by science to the belief in God, which is the foundation of all religion.' But if there is a God, the very word reminds us that

we cannot expect entirely to understand Him, or indeed to understand more than a part of His ways. There is a homely saying that you cannot put the ocean into a pint pot. You cannot enclose God within the mind of man, who is necessarily finite.

Let me use a very rough illustration. Supposing I were to go into a factory the machinery of which I did not understand, and some one here who did understand it were to take me round. As I went into one room and looked at what was going on there, I might say to my friend, 'This is not very much like the finished article ; whatever has that which I see to do with it ?' His answer would be, 'Come into the next room, and you will see something more.' I might have to go through many rooms before I could understand what relation those early processes had to the perfect product which ultimately emerged. Even so we stand among the processes of the universe, and we forget that we are still in one of the first rooms. We cannot understand what there is in the other rooms that are coming. All life is a mystery ; and Christianity bids us strive to understand all we can, to use to the full the powers that God has given us, but to remember constantly that we are in the midst of the unknown.

Is not Christianity profoundly scientific when it declares that evolution has not reached its limit,—that mind, the most wonderful thing we know among all the marvels of this universe in which we live, has a future before it still when death has

claimed the body,—and that in an as yet dimly seen future we shall 'know fully even as also we have been known fully'<sup>1</sup> by Him whose Master-hand is leading us unto

one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.

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<sup>1</sup> I Cor. xiii. 12 (R.V. *margin*).

# 'Is the Bible the Word of God?'

## Why I Answer, 'Yes!'

BY

THE VEN. JAMES M. WILSON, D.D., F.G.S.

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**M**Y lecture this afternoon is one which will tax your attention severely. I am speaking on a subject of great importance. I am giving some of the reasons why Christians believe, and explaining what they mean by saying, that 'The Bible is the Word of God to Man.' And I am speaking to people of every type of mind and in every stage of thought.

Moreover, I am speaking on what has become, specially of late, a subject of controversy. None of you are unaware that there are people who are unable to feel, and think themselves bound to deny, that the Bible is, in any sense and to anybody, the Word of God. Some such are perhaps here this afternoon. Others are certain to read what I am saying. I shall deal with some of their difficulties.

The first thought that occurs to us is, 'How can such a matter be doubtful?' But it plainly is so. Honest and able men do differ in opinion. Is it because, as is so often the case when we speak of things we cannot see and handle, while we use the

same words we mean different things? I think this is partly, but only partly, the cause. There are also differences of temperament, of habits of mind, of natural gifts. With these I shall not deal.' But I will try this afternoon to make it clear, as far as words alone can make it clear, to those who sincerely desire to understand, what we Christians mean, and what we do not mean, by calling the Bible 'the Word of God.'

I begin by what we do not mean.

We do not believe the Bible to be 'the *Words* of God.' It is not, as has been recently asserted, 'the belief of Christians that the Scriptures are the actual words of God.'

That this was the belief of many, perhaps most, individual Christians in an age now past is true; that some uninstructed and truly devout Christians still suppose this to be a part of Christian faith is probably true: but it is not the authorized teaching or faith of the Church. It finds no place in our creeds. Of course the private opinions of Christians, like those of every one else, on literary and scientific subjects, depend on the literary and scientific culture of themselves and of the circle and age in which they live, and change with that culture. It is either an unfair trick in controversy, or it shows genuine but great ignorance of actual fact, to represent either the Church as teaching as a part of her faith, or Christians to-day as ordinarily believing, 'that the Bible is the actual "Words of God."'

Does, then, the 'Word of God' mean something different from 'the Words of God'? Yes! for the phrase 'Words of God' would necessarily be understood to mean 'words' spoken by Him, dictated by Him.

What, then, does the phrase 'the Word of God' mean?

I wish to lead you up to the answer, and not throw it down before you in dogmatic shape. Try each for himself to think out this difficult question: come to it with an open mind, in no controversial temper, and see whether, if the matter is quietly and humbly reflected upon, there will not follow some perception of a profound truth, and much nearer agreement among us than there is. And it is well to remember in all such matters that what we may think does not affect the fact. The Bible has, or has not, some divine message to us, whatever we may think. What we think, affects us, not the Bible. We only want to know the truth.

In calling the Bible the Word of God to man we use a *metaphor*; that is, we describe what the Bible is by saying what the Bible is *like*. But the use of metaphors requires patient and exact thought, if we intend to go at all behind them, because we may so easily misunderstand one another as to the nature and exact point of the likeness. If we say that the Bible is *like* a Word, a Word of God, we must ask in what point or points does the likeness consist.

Now, consider carefully this illustration. We

compare the Bible to a Word, a message. What I am saying now is my word, my message, to you. I am speaking to you. This may seem a very simple and direct thing. But it is really a very complex process. Try to analyse it.

Somewhere in me, if indeed it is located anywhere in space, is the unseen unimaginable mystery of my own personality. No one has ever seen it, no one can conceive it. Its existence is outside all possible proof. We judge that it exists by its effects, and by analogy. You have no hesitation in speaking of 'me,' and you do not mean my body, but 'me.' But you never saw the 'me' of which you speak. The 'me,' the personality of other men, is an inference, a probability. You infer its existence from your own consciousness of a personality of your own, and the resemblance of my actions to yours.

When 'I' speak to 'you,' if you attempt to trace out what actually takes place, this unknown unseen personality you call 'me,' acting in some unknown way by what we call thought and will, through a complicated system of nerves and muscles and physiological mechanism, sets lungs and larynx, lips and tongue to speak, or it may be directs eye and hand to write. Speak and write what? Words, the most mysterious things in the world: sounds and shapes that enable one unseen personality to produce an effect on other unseen personalities. 'I' am brought by them into a sort of contact, or communion, with 'you.'

What a mystery it is, an everyday mystery. The voice, through physical vibrations and waves of air, passes to your ears, or through ether vibrations the printed word passes to your eyes, and there is again transmuted, by a physiological mechanism, inconceivable, into nerve-vibrations. And this is the smallest part of the mystery. By a process not only unknown, but 'unthinkable,' to use Herbert Spencer's favourite phrase, these nerve-vibrations produce *thought* in that invisible unthinkable personality which is 'you'—*thought*, not indeed identical with, but having some relation to, the thought which started from 'me.'

Do you now understand, what seems at first so simple, the word of man to man? I do not understand how I, the real I, speak to you, the real you. Familiarity with a fact is no explanation. But I believe in it, I am certain of it. 'I' do speak to 'you.' There is a real though not material 'me,' and a real though not material 'you'; and there is a medium or channel by which we act on one another. This influence of invisible personality on invisible personalities exists, and is the most familiar, while it is the most mysterious, of facts.

This long explanation is necessary in order to show that when any one says, 'I speak to you,' he is compressing into a brief familiar phrase a series of processes, physical, physiological, metaphysical, some of which may some day be still

further analysed, others of which seem to lie utterly beyond our present human limitations.

Now, to say that 'God speaks to man' in the Bible, or that 'the Bible is the Word of God to man,' is an attempt to convey in human language, by the use of a metaphor, some idea of that real communion of soul with the Eternal and Invisible, which, as a matter of familiar experience, does come to many of us through the Bible. The use of that particular metaphor, calling the Bible *the Word* of God, implies that men have felt a resemblance between the action of the Personality of God on men through the Bible, and the action of the personality of one man through the voice on another man.

But now the question is, *In what points* does the resemblance lie? To the child, to the unreflecting, to the simple, the resemblance will naturally be assumed to lie in the most obvious of the physical or physiological phenomena accompanying that action, viz. the use of articulate and audible words. Such a one will think that the phrase implies a belief that God uttered articulate sounds in human language which reached the ears of men.

But this is only a mistake. The real resemblance, which justifies the use of the phrase when it is understood, is at once more general and more profound. When we call the Bible the Word of God to man, we mean that God influences man through the Bible, as man influences man by the

spoken word; but the *method* of such influence, its medium or channel, is wholly different. The point of resemblance lies, not in spoken words or written letters, but in the action of some external influence on us.

The influence that affects us in this way through man's voice we call man's personality; the influence which acts on us on all sides, in nature, in conscience, in the Bible, we call God's Personality, or simply God. We can therefore speak by a metaphor of 'the Voice of God in nature,' 'the Voice of God in history,' or in conscience, or in the Bible; and we mean in all of these expressions no more and no less than that the devout and listening mind is, as a matter of fact, brought into communion with the Infinite in these as in other ways. From the experience of these influences mankind has inferred the existence of the Personality from whom they came, in the same way as we infer the personality of other men. So deep and wide is that experience as to justify that great word 'I believe'; and enables us to say, 'I believe in God'; and I believe that God influences man through the Bible. I therefore call the Bible 'the Word of God.' This is what we do mean.

Have all men this experience? I think so. But as the sense of touch in the fingers, or an ear for music, may be either dulled or educated; so it seems as if, for a time at least, some sensitiveness to God may be either lost or developed. Moreover,

there are inborn differences in us all. Not every one is a poet ; not every one feels

a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.

To some men these words are meaningless. Not every one is at all times open to these indefinable influences coming through nature to man. So it may well be that not every one is touched by a parable of Christ, or by the story of the Cross. A man may therefore say, 'I know nothing of all this. Your experience is purely subjective, nothing but fancy ; there is no reality in it. You do but see in the Bible, or in "the light of setting suns," or anywhere else, your own fancies projected there, like your own shadow on a cloud. It is all nonsense. Give me hard facts.' And so, with a wave of the hand, he will dispose of the deepest experiences of a hundred or a thousand generations of men as only fancies, mere nonsense. The Bible is not the Word of God to him as yet ; therefore it is not the Word of God to anybody.

This is strangely unscientific, as well as dogmatic and egotistic. These religious experiences of the influence of the Bible are worldwide historic facts, resting on enormous testimony. I could wish that such men would study what the great psychologists teach, that these personal experiences are 'realities in the completest sense of the term.'

Then, if they did not share these experiences, they would at least respect them. There is also a saying of Huxley that is worth trying to understand: 'Any one who is practically acquainted with scientific work is aware that those who do not go beyond fact rarely get as far as fact.'

I have now briefly shown what we do not mean, and what we do mean, by calling the Bible the Word of God to man. We do not mean that God dictated or wrote the words of the Bible; and we do mean that the Bible is one of the channels through which the Personality of God does, as a matter of experience, influence some at least of our human personalities.

And now I come to the second part of my lecture: the reasonable difficulties felt in regarding the Bible as the Word of God to man.

Some of these difficulties, perhaps most of them, disappear altogether when it is understood, as I have endeavoured to explain, what the phrase really means. But others remain; and all turn on one point—The Bible is not 'what we might expect' it to be, if it is, even in that sense, the Word of God, a message from God, however conveyed, to man.

We might expect it, it is argued, to reveal truths of which men would otherwise be ignorant, to contain no errors of fact, to be perfectly unmis-takable, to reach all the human race without delay, and to give a complete and final system of morality. A perfect God would have given us a perfect Bible.

We have often heard this. It is part of a far wider thought. Many people have thought that if they had had the making of the world they would have made it quite different from what it is. It is true that we can imagine things quite other than they are—a world of angelic beings, not of men and women and children; a world without labour and suffering, without births and deaths, without families and nations, without injustices and sins, without doubts and controversies; and with a visible God making His commands known, and a world of created beings always happy, and always obedient to His will. We can imagine any number of such utopias.

But the actual world we live in is the only one from which we can learn anything about the actual Creator; and there is no greater waste of time than that spent in dreams of 'what we might expect' from a God of our imaginations. Let us humbly study what is; keeping in mind that we are but microscopic atoms on the surface of an insignificant planet in a universe of myriads of suns.

The most obvious fact is that the world we live in is full of imperfections, and most of all the world of man. The same reasoning from imperfections, which seems to convince some men that the Bible is not the Word of God, can quite as effectually be applied to prove that this earth and the race of men are not the work of a good and perfect Creator. If we start by assuming that the nature of God must

be such that He would create everything perfect *at once*, the conclusion necessarily follows that nothing we know is the work of God; and that there is no Creator of anything we know.

But surely this sort of reasoning is childishly unscientific. Sensible men do not argue *a priori* from 'what they might expect,' and use their assumptions as if they were admitted facts. We now know that, in every sphere of knowledge open to us, evolution is the law under which progress has taken place; and evolution means imperfection in every stage till the last.

The error that underlies the reasoning of these objectors lies in their assuming that God *ought not* to have worked by the method of evolution. But who are we to say that 'God *ought not*'? Can any absurdity be greater than for any man to say this?

One who searches for truth will patiently study a very different question: How *does* God work? And our present answer must be that, as far as man can trace the processes of creation and of the education of man, God appears to have worked, and to be working, by the method of evolution. And we may say with Archbishop Temple that we believe that 'the doctrine of evolution will prove a great help to Christian thought and Christian life.'

Let me briefly indicate one great help to Christian thought that comes with the frank and full acceptance of evolution in religion.

In every form of life, traced back into the past,

there are transitional stages, developments which drop off when no longer needed. What a monster a biologist could construct by retaining in one organism all the developments which in the long processes of evolution it had discarded! Not less of a monster in religion does he construct, whether he calls himself friend or foe, traditionalist or rationalist, who insists on retaining every past stage as permanent, and on discarding nothing as having served its purpose. Our friends ought to know better, and our foes, if they know better, ought to play fairer, than to construct such a monster of anachronisms, and call it Christianity.

In this light we see the crudity—I do not like to call it ignorance or unfairness—of stringing together quotations from the Old Testament, and asking scornfully, 'Can these be the words of God?' Of course they are not. Nobody says they are. But they represent what is now, thank God, a far bygone stage of religious evolution, in which the divine in man was struggling to express in less and less imperfect form its yearnings and cravings for its Origin. These are things of the past. It is to make a monster to insist that they are equally things of the present.

If we still hesitate at accepting evolution, with its imperfections, as God's method, and think that it attributes those imperfections to Him, let us reflect that the imperfection is really in us. Man's apprehension of God's message is limited by man's

receptive powers. We do but imperfectly receive in our finite minds some small fraction of the Infinite Wisdom of God, and we can but imperfectly represent even that fraction in words. The Word of God, as we have it in the Bible, has passed through human minds, and has been limited by their capacity and their language. The Bible bears the obvious traces of the human limitations of every author and every age.

We are right in speaking of the Bible as the Word of God, as we are right in speaking of Christ as the Word of God; but in both cases we must not forget the human limitations which condition the Manifestations of God.

May we, then, read the Bible as we read any other book? Certainly; certainly: and I will add Bishop Westcott's words—'It was because I had always tried to read the Bible just like any other book that I came to the conclusion that it was unlike any other book in the world.'

I turn to another point. It may fairly be said to me, 'You admit, then, that the Bible contains exploded views of sudden creation; statements in historical form which now appear to be in part or wholly legendary; declarations of commands as coming from God which you regard as only provisional, and as now superseded; in fact, you admit errors: how, then, can you ask men to say at ordination that they unfeignedly believe the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments?'

I will give you the Bishop of Worcester's answer to this question: 'The expression of unfeigned belief in all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments can be fairly and justly made by any one who believes heartily that the Bible as a whole records and contains the message of God in all its stages of delivery, and that each one of the books contains some element or aspect of this revelation. In other words, I believe all the Scriptures, if I believe them to contain or embody the Word of God.'<sup>1</sup>

Of course some one will say that such an interpretation is playing fast and loose with words. That is the easiest accusation to make, and is, no doubt, sometimes made in all good faith and honestly. But I do not think that those who make this accusation in such a spirit can have reflected how inevitable and universal is such a change in the use of words. In any society that is not frozen hard in the bonds of unthawed ignorance popular words and phrases will come to mean different things to different people, according to their progress in knowledge.

This is part of the law of evolution; and it is as true in science as it is in religion. We retain the word, but it means a different thing. We tell a child that the sun *rises*; we talk of a candle *burning away to nothing*, of water being composed of *atoms* of hydrogen and oxygen, of electrical *currents*, and the like. 'To the man with some elementary knowledge

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<sup>1</sup> *Ch. Cong. Report*, 1903, p. 16.

these terms convey a clear and defined meaning. But the advanced student will not allow these and similar terms to fetter the growth of knowledge. To him these names are provisional labels for imperfectly known groups of phenomena. But he uses these terms with perfect honesty in teaching, though his hearers will not mean by the words all that he does. 'It takes two to tell the truth—one to speak, and one to hear.'

Nor can students of religion and theology allow the use of terms long current to fetter the growth of thought. Continuity with the past and the requirements of united worship make the retention of ancient forms of expression a necessity; but the interpretation of these forms will grow with growing knowledge. And let it not be forgotten that theology is more closely akin to poetry than to science; and it is ancient forms of expression that best lend themselves to poetry: their poetry evaporates if you try to bring them 'up to date'; they become neither science nor poetry. It may be remembered that Darwin explained his growing distaste for poetry by his habit of restating scientific propositions in other language, and finding this to be impossible in poetry.

I want you to grasp the fact that it appears to be a condition of the evolution of all knowledge that words and phrases shall survive as links with the past, and yet change their full significance; and that it is no more dishonourable in a man to welcome in his study the Higher Criticism, and yet speak of the

Bible, when teaching religion, in the old familiar language which his hearers are used to, than it is for a chemist to talk in class of the elements while in his laboratory he is studying their transmutation, or of atoms when he is breaking them up into electrons and what else I know not.

Is truth, then, ever changing? Is it not rather that there is a changeless truth, to which by modes of expression ever changing we are approximating both in religion and in science? To an Infinite Intelligence all our statements must be provisional and imperfect; to our finite intelligences, in each succeeding age, they approximate to truth. 'Religion,' as Newman said, 'is ever changing in order to remain the same.' Both its continuity and its growth are alike assured by the law of evolution; and growth and continuity are the marks of life.

In most of this lecture I have had chiefly in view those who have difficulties in believing. I have been explaining to them what we really believe. I must conclude with a few words in a different strain, to you who without such explanation believe and know the Bible to be the Word of God to you, and who have taken the Lord Jesus Christ as your Master and Saviour.

We call the Bible the Word of God, because it has, as we believe, a message from Him for every age, every race, every individual. What a record that Book has! No words can tell, no imagination can picture, what it has been, or what it is to men,

*ubique, semper, omnibus*—everywhere, always, to all. It leads up to, and leaves off with, the Lord Jesus Christ. There are, I believe, no fanatics of secularism who do not acknowledge something above themselves in Him. We remember the 'Hats off' when the Commune, in their wild destruction of art treasures, came upon a picture of Christ.

Let us not be frightened at noisy and confident bluster with its veneer of learning. It is on experience, on the bedrock of personal experience, explained, confirmed, multiplied a millionfold by the felt, recorded, witnessed experience of others, that we rest our faith in the Bible as the Word of God to human hearts. There is no denying this evidence, and no evading it. To have seen a face brighten as a psalm was read by a sick-bed; to have heard the words of the Lord Jesus from dying lips; to have known the young and the strong called to heroic action by the words of Scripture; to have been checked in a storm of passion by the thought of Christ: these, and such as these, are experiences which prove that the words of the Bible are, at this hour, a channel through which God speaks to man. That He so speaks to man is demonstrated by the only proof available in such a matter—experience.

Do you believe this? Is it your experience? Then I am bound to ask, 'Do you read daily and study this book which you profess to regard as the Word of God to you?' Many of you are compelled

in your consciences to answer, 'No.' I tell you, in all seriousness, that the neglect of the Bible on the part of those who profess to believe it is one of the causes of infidelity.

And now I have only one word more to say to you as Christian men and women. Consider most carefully how you ought to feel towards sceptics and unbelievers. Learn to see in them much that is good. There is generally a keen desire for truth, and a hatred of shams; they rebuke ignorance, and they rebuke hypocrisy. Often there is a longing for human brotherhood which rebukes our individualism; and always a keener sense than we possess of the awful shortcomings of Christian people and Christian Churches. They cannot honour the Christ if we are His representatives. These men may teach us something of their passionate and holy discontent with a standard of conduct that seems to tolerate, with so feeble an effort to remove, the roaring evils, the deep sorrows, that surround us. We know of the wrongs, the injustices, the helplessnesses; we speak of them; we sigh over them; and we go home to tea and forget them. Remember that these men identify, rightly or wrongly, Christianity with the toleration of remediable evils. It is not a fair question to ask whether they are any better. It is *we* who profess to be the followers of Christ who came to heal the broken-hearted. Are we trying our best to make our little corner of the world less full of misery and ignorance?

Friends, believers in God, and in the Word of

God, how shall we convince and convert our opponents? Never by arguments to prove that they are wrong; never by contempt to prove that they are fools; never by denunciation to prove that they are wicked. Partly by sympathetic and truthful statements of our own faith; but most of all by creating round us, each in his little circle, a spirit of great human love for men for the sake of Christ. It is love alone that opens the eyes to the realities in which all are one; a love and active service of one another, before which opposition is silent. In a word, it is the Christlike life. The test of Christianity is the resolve and the power of Christians to solve social problems. If the Bible inspires Christians with the zeal and the wisdom and the love needed for this task, no one will dispute its claim to be verily 'The Word of God.'

# ‘DID JESUS RISE AGAIN?’

BY

PROF. A. S. PEAKE, M.A.

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WERE I addressing an audience of experts, it would not be necessary for me to begin as I think it is desirable that I should begin my lecture to-day. I should be able, were I speaking to experts, to assume as universally recognized that Jesus of Nazareth was an historical character, and that He was crucified. I am not speaking, however, to those who have made the study of these subjects their life-work, but to many who will be at the mercy of the first clever advocate who assures them that really, after all, we have no trustworthy evidence that Jesus Christ ever lived, to say nothing of His resurrection from the dead. Since I want to carry you with me as far as possible in what I say, and not to appear to assume too much, I wish at the outset to devote a very brief space of time to answering the question, ‘Why do we think that Jesus Christ was an historical character?’ This question is so large that it cannot be dealt with in any detail now, and I hope that, as this course of lectures goes on, again and again points will come up which will tend to confirm in your minds a steadfast belief in the historical existence of Jesus of Nazareth.

If I were to develop the argument, I should of course call attention to the self-consistency of the character, and the impossibility of inventing it. In the next place, I should point to the originality of the teaching of Jesus taken as a whole. We may, by ransacking the world's religious literature, accumulate parallels to this saying or that ; but we cannot match the unique combination into a consistent and coherent whole found in the Gospels. These are points which I leave with you, and do not develop. There is another on which I wish to say rather more. In our traditions of Jesus there are sayings of His which could not possibly have been invented by His followers ; and for this reason, that they were sayings which there was no temptation to invent, and which, once they had been spoken, there was considerable temptation for the Gospel narrator to suppress. When, for example, Jesus is represented as confessing that He is ignorant of the day of His own second coming, or when, again, He asks the scribe, 'Why callest thou Me good?' or when He utters the cry of desertion on the cross, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' who does not see that in utterances of that kind we have a certain proof of the authenticity of the saying and of the historicity of the speaker? because those who came to write afterwards, and who wished to set Jesus before their readers in His glory, were surely tempted to suppress, if, as we are assured by our opponents, they were open to influences of that kind

at all, such sayings as represented Jesus expressing His own ignorance or regarding Himself as deserted by God upon the cross. Sayings of that kind never could have been invented, and the later you make the Gospels the more difficult invention becomes, since more and more there was the tendency as men moved farther away from the historical Jesus to express doctrines of Him which overlooked and tried to whittle away the force of sayings of that description.

But now there is another argument on which I wish to dwell rather more fully, and for the reason that it carries us into the very heart of the problem with which I have to deal this afternoon. We know from Jewish history that in the early years of our era, and for some time before, there had been the expectation of a Messiah. This Messiah was depicted as one who should spring from the house of David, and who should carry through a great victorious campaign in which the hostile heathen power should be driven out; that He would set up on earth the kingdom of God, and that He would rule the nations with a rod of iron and shiver them like a potter's vessel. Now, the point to which I wish to draw your attention is this, that we have a movement Messianic in character, arising at some point in the first century A.D. at the latest, that could not possibly be explained out of the Messianic belief which was current among the Jews at that time. My reason for this assertion is that the

Messianic movement I have mentioned rests on the affirmation, not that the Messiah comes on earth and sets up His kingdom, but that the Messiah comes on earth, is rejected by His own people, is crucified, and postpones the founding of the Messianic kingdom until His return from heaven. There is no doubt at all that that belief was entertained; the question is, How did it originate? You can see quite clearly that, from the old Jewish Messianic belief of a conquering victorious Messiah, it was impossible to deduce the doctrine of a crucified Messiah. The only explanation of the origin of this doctrine that you can get is, that in the interval there had been a man who had been regarded by his followers as the Messiah and who had been crucified, and thus this new and startling Messianic theory had been devised in order to cover the new fact. I believe that this transformation is absolutely irrefutable evidence of the historical existence and of the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, because the conditions for the creation of this novel Messianic doctrine were otherwise entirely absent in the first century A. D.

But, of course, objections may be raised to that. In the first place, we have the theory, familiar to us, of the slain man-god. Those who have studied the marvellous accumulation of evidence that Dr. Frazer has brought together especially in the second edition of *The Golden Bough* are naturally very much impressed by it. Nevertheless, it is impossible for any

one who knows the condition of Judaism at that time to believe that such an idea of a slain man-god could have originated in a religion so fanatically monotheistic, so conscious of the gulf between God and man, or have connected itself with the Messianic idea. But you may ask if it is not the case that the Jews had a doctrine of a suffering Messiah. The point has been very greatly controverted by scholars. This is how the question stands at present. Apparently in certain rabbinical schools there was a doctrine that the Messiah might be expected to suffer; but those schools were few, and on the literature as a whole, and especially on the popular belief, that doctrine had made no impression whatever.<sup>1</sup> But even if this doctrine had been more widely diffused, there is one fact which absolutely forbids us to look to that as a refutation of what I am saying. While it was quite possible for a belief to arise that a man might suffer and still be the Messiah, what was quite impossible in Judaism was that a man should be crucified and yet be believed to be the Messiah. And for this reason, that, according to the Jewish law (Deut. xxi. 23), every one who was hanged upon a tree was regarded as accursed by God: 'He that is hanged is accursed of God.' While it was

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<sup>1</sup> Schürer concludes that, 'in the second century after Christ, the idea of a suffering Messiah, and indeed of a Messiah suffering as an atonement for human sin, was, at least in certain circles, a familiar one.' But 'it was on the whole quite foreign to Judaism in general' (*A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, div. ii. vol. ii. pp. 186-7. The reference in the [untranslated] third German edition is vol. ii. pp. 555-6).

possible for a belief in a suffering Messiah to arise, the belief in a crucified Messiah was impossible to Jewish theology, for which such a conception would have been a blasphemous contradiction in terms.<sup>1</sup> This will have very considerable importance for us later, and I shall have to return to it.

But there are one or two other points that I wish to touch with reference to the historical character of Jesus. I appeal with absolute confidence to the almost unanimous consensus of experts, including those experts who have taken up the most radical attitude towards the New Testament and the Christian facts. Even those scholars who have denied that Paul wrote any of the Epistles, which have come down to us under his name, have, for the most part, admitted that Jesus and Paul were both historical characters. Loman, who was one of those who denied the authenticity of the Pauline Epistles, at one period in his career (1881) denied also the historical existence of Jesus; but further study led him to the conviction that in this he had been overzealous in pressing his sceptical views, so in 1884 and 1887 he retracted that opinion, and confessed that Jesus of Nazareth was an historical character.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul's use, in Gal. iii. 13, of this passage from the Law shows clearly what the attitude of Judaism to a crucified claimant to Messiahship would be. But this comes out very clearly in a dialogue between Justin Martyr and Trypho, a Jew, about the middle of the second century A.D. Trypho admits the doctrine of a suffering Messiah, inasmuch as the Old Testament teaches it, but urges as an objection, which he invites Justin to answer, the fact that the form of suffering endured by Jesus was accursed in the Law (*Dialogue with Trypho*, chap. 89).

There is not living, I believe, a single expert who doubts the existence of Jesus of Nazareth. It is quite true that there are some scholars, but they are scholars who cannot claim to be experts in this particular subject, who have doubted this. I may mention Edwin Johnson, who in his last book on *The Rise of Christendom* argued that Christianity and the New Testament were all the production of the monks in the Middle Ages! In addition, I have to name one of whose learning I speak with respect, Mr. J. M. Robertson, who also takes the view that Jesus of Nazareth was not an historical character. With that single exception, I do not know of any living scholar who has any claim to speak upon this subject who doubts that fact.

The next point is, that in the Pauline literature we have a quite certain evidence of the historical existence of Christ. Now, the Pauline literature has been denied to the apostle by very few critics. Even Ferdinand Christian Baur, who may be regarded as the greatest negative critic that the nineteenth century produced, and the most influential, regarded these four Epistles—Romans 1-14, Corinthians, and Galatians—as absolutely unassailable. Of course it is true that there are scholars who have denied that Paul wrote any of the letters which have come to us under his name. If one were to try to give an exhaustive list, it would take a very short time to do it. There is Bruno Bauer, there is Steck, there is Loman, there are Pierson and Naber, there is Edwin

Johnson (whom I have already mentioned); and coming down to our own time, we have Van Manen, and also Professor W. B. Smith of Tulane University in the United States.<sup>1</sup> I believe that that is practically an exhaustive list of all the scholars who have denied the authenticity of the Pauline Epistles who have a right to speak on the subject at all. We may therefore with a very good confidence look upon these Epistles as historical documents.

And now you will remember that a few minutes ago I was saying that we find in the existence of a doctrine of a crucified Messiah an irrefutable evidence of the existence of Jesus of Nazareth. That takes us right into the very heart of our problem. For this is our problem—How was it that Jews, who had been brought up to believe that no man could hang upon a cross without falling under the ban of God, could yet suppose that this had happened to the leader of the Messianic movement and still retain their faith in his Messiahship? That is the problem, the problem of the origin of Christianity as built on a belief in a crucified Messiah. And I call your attention to the fact, which is a very impressive one, that there is no scholar who is qualified to deal with these subjects

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<sup>1</sup> A wholly fictitious importance has been given them, by the inclusion of articles from the pen of Van Manen in the last two volumes of the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, which have exhibited to the amazement of scholars a ubiquitous Jerahmeel and an evanescent Paul. The overwhelming preponderance of expert opinion of all schools is against them.

who does not recognize that in this, whether he believes in the Resurrection or not, is a problem of the gravest character. They are well aware that it is not a problem which is to be dismissed with a shrug of the shoulders, and a reference to fraud or to credulity, or to anything of that kind; but every one of them, from men like Baur down to our latest scholars like Pflleiderer and Schmiedel, all recognize that we have a problem of a most serious character to face. The Church has consistently asserted that the explanation of this strange fact, that Jews accepted a person who had been crucified as Messiah, is to be accounted for by the belief that that person had risen from the dead. Moreover, while there are very many who entirely deny that this resurrection actually occurred, very few indeed of these deny that Christianity at any rate rests upon a belief on the part of the apostles that Jesus had risen from the dead. Of course it is the validity of the belief, whether it corresponded to fact or not, that constitutes our great problem.

And now, in examining this question, the first thing that is always thrown in our face is the fact that our narratives differ so very much from each other. Well, it does not follow because narratives differ, even if one recognizes quite freely that at various points they contradict each other—it does not follow that the main fact of which they have to speak is discredited by these discrepancies. I will take a particular instance, which I choose because

Schmiedel has himself selected it recently for criticism. We know that, in the great campaign of Carthage against Rome which was led by Hannibal, at one point of it Hannibal crossed the Alps into Italy. But our two chief historians of that event, Livy and Polybius, give different and irreconcilable statements as to the route which he took. And yet no one doubts at all that Hannibal crossed the Alps. Schmiedel says we do not doubt it, because we have independent evidence from which we know that at one time he was north of the Alps and at another time south of them. Yes! but what I want to point out is this, that, if in a case of that kind you can get the central fact absolutely certain although the details are entirely contradictory, then you have a parallel to what is here said to be the case with the Resurrection narratives. I am perfectly willing to grant, if necessary, that the Resurrection narratives exhibit contradictory accounts; but that does not in any way prove that the Resurrection itself was not an historical fact. Further, we have evidence for the central fact, independent of our Gospel narratives, in the Epistles of Paul. Of course the discrepancies create a very serious problem for certain theories of inspiration, but they are theories with which I have nothing to do this afternoon; all that I shall attempt to do is to disengage the essential fact; and the essential fact is, I submit, not necessarily set aside by the difficulties and contradictions in the various narratives. I

go further. I believe it is possible to show that, even had we no New Testament at all, we should be obliged to postulate something very much like either the Resurrection or the belief in the Resurrection in order to account for Christianity. As I have already shown, it was a serious problem to the original apostles how they could still believe one who was crucified to be the Messiah. We must accordingly give some adequate explanation of what was to lift them out of that state of mind and send them forward confidently proclaiming that Jesus had risen from the dead, and that in this way the curse that the Law imposed upon Him had been removed by God.

But now how are we to account for the narratives we possess? There are some theories that may be at once eliminated, inasmuch as they are not held by any qualified scholar, whether he believes in the Resurrection or not. One is the theory of fraud on the part of the disciples. It is certain that people who themselves were crushed to the ground by a great sorrow, and before whom there lay the insoluble problem of Christ's death, were absolutely not the people to convince themselves or others that Christ had risen by stealing His dead body, or to persist in deception at the risk of persecution and death. But setting aside a vulgar solution of that kind, upon which I do not wish to waste any words, there is one which merits rather more attention, because it did gain the adhesion of perhaps the greatest theologian of the nineteenth century—I mean

Schleiermacher. This theory, of which Paulus was the great exponent, was that Jesus never died on the cross, but simply swooned and then revived in His tomb. Still, I do not need to linger on this theory, because once for all it was completely demolished in a well-known passage of Strauss. He pointed out in the most convincing way that you could not imagine that a man who had hung on a cross for several hours, and therefore was in a weak and half dead state, could still leave his grave and show himself to his disciples, and in that pitiful condition leave upon them the conviction that he was the Lord of Life who had triumphed over death and the tomb. Sorrow could not thus have been changed into enthusiasm, or reverence into worship. Besides, it would be difficult to acquit Jesus of some measure of fraud. You only need to ask yourselves what a theory like that involves to understand how desperate was the pass to which any scholar felt himself to be driven before he was willing to adopt it.

It is very strange that, in a recent work which has a large circulation and commands a very wide influence, a writer, who would not himself claim to be a scholar or an expert upon these subjects, has said that the appearances of Jesus might be accounted for by the actual resurrection; they might be accounted for by the fact that they did not occur, and that the Resurrection stories are a mere legend; or they might be accounted for by the theory of a swoon. But what is still stranger is that, while he

mentioned two theories almost universally rejected by experts,<sup>1</sup> he never brought forward the view—could it be that he was unaware of it?—which is adopted by almost all scholars nowadays who disbelieve in the Resurrection, and that is what is commonly known as the 'Vision theory.'<sup>2</sup> With the exception of perhaps two or three scholars, of whom I may name the late Dr. Martineau and Dr. W. Mackintosh, who explain the physical terms in which vision is expressed to have behind them the purely spiritual significance that Jesus in spite of crucifixion still lived in God,<sup>3</sup> practically all scholars now who deny the fact of the Resurrection admit, not that there was any actual objective appearance to the disciples, but that their imagination conjured up before them an image of the risen Christ. Usually it is believed that Peter was the

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<sup>1</sup> On legend and invention in this connexion Schmiedel's words seem not to be an over-statement: 'The historian who will have it that the alleged appearances are due merely to legend and invention must deny not only the genuineness of the Pauline Epistles, but also the historicity of Jesus altogether' (*Encyclopaedia Biblica*, vol. iii. col. 4061). It must be remembered that Schmiedel is a decided unbeliever in a physical resurrection, and reduces all the appearances to subjective illusions.

<sup>2</sup> Pfeleiderer, speaking of Weizsäcker's *Apostolic Age*, says: 'He first describes the formation of the primitive community by the appearances of Christ (which, like all critical theologians, he conceives as subjective experiences, or visions, of the apostles)' (*Development of Theology*, p. 249).

<sup>3</sup> As I had no time to touch in my lecture on this view, I add a few words in a footnote. The late Dr. William Mackintosh, in an extremely able work, *The Natural History of the Christian Religion* (1894), designed to explain the origin of Christianity on the dogmatically affirmed principle not that

first to have a vision of Christ, though Strauss thought it was the women who were the first to have this experience. The vision theory is to-day the only serious competitor to the theory of actual resurrection, and a very serious competitor it is, as we see from the large number of able scholars who have adopted it. Nevertheless, there are very grave objections to it. In the first place, visions do not arise of themselves; there is a psychological preparation for them. They presuppose a condition of expectancy on the part of those who experience them. Now, was there any expectancy among the disciples that Jesus would rise from the dead? Surely not. In the first place, the narratives show us that there was the intention of embalming His body; but people do not embalm a body unless they

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miracles do not but that they cannot happen, argued that the apostles saw no appearances of Christ. As they recovered from the shock given by the news which reached them in Galilee of Christ's death, and meditated on His life in the familiar scenes, Peter and after him the others were seized with the enthusiastic conviction that the spirit of Jesus had escaped into the heavenly life. In relating their experience, their language, owing to the limitations of expression, gave the impression of physical vision, and thus the story of the appearances arose. It is not quite easy, on this theory, to clear the apostles of a certain connivance at deception. They knew they had seen nothing, but permitted their followers to assert visions. Further, Paul, as we shall see, believed not only in visions, but in a physical resurrection. Can so keen an intellect have suffered the real truth to lie undetected when he investigated the subject as persecutor and as apostle? Is the course of events at all likely? Would not their experience oscillate between certainty in moments of enthusiasm and doubt in moments of cool reflection? The theory is an impressive testimony to the greatness of Jesus, but no real explanation of the unwavering conviction on which Christianity was founded.

expect it to remain in the grave. Then, in the second place, our narratives show us further that the disciples themselves were quite incredulous of the reports of the Resurrection. They did not believe, and they had to be convinced, that Jesus had risen from the dead. There was no reason whatever why that should have been invented. The later down you come in the history of the Church, the greater the tendency grew to idealize the apostles and tone down their faults. It was only because in the traditions which the writers had before them the disciples were represented as unbelieving, that this trait was preserved. There was no temptation to invent what would be regarded as discreditable to the apostles. There was, therefore, no condition of expectancy. Further, how could there have been, if what I have said is true that the Jews believed that a crucified man was accursed? How could they expect that God would intervene to save that man whom His law had cursed from the grip of death?<sup>1</sup> In the next place, it is a strain on our credulity, in

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<sup>1</sup> Keim did not believe in the physical resurrection, nor in an actual appearance of Jesus to the disciples. But he could not accept the vision theory, and fell back on the view that Jesus communicated to the minds of His disciples a conviction of His existence with God as glorified Messiah. This conviction he describes in the famous phrase as 'a telegram from heaven.' The visions were the result of this conviction, but were subjective illusions. Keim was driven to this position by the belief that Christianity could not have survived the accursed death of Jesus without His intervention to re-create their faith (*Jesus of Nazara*, vol. vi. pp. 360-65). I do not accept the theory, but it is a welcome confirmation of the statement in the text.

spite of everything that has been said about collective hallucination, to imagine that not simply twelve but five hundred people at once should be affected with an illusion of this kind. So great is the strain, that some of the most strenuous opponents of the Christian view have said that to them a simultaneous illusion, affecting so vast a number, is absolutely incredible ?<sup>1</sup>

The next difficulty is the assertion in the narratives of the empty grave; and, of course, strenuous attempts have been made to deny that the grave was empty. As a rule the argument is as follows: that, either after Jesus had been arrested in Gethsemane, or after He had died on the cross, the disciples had fled to Galilee, and had seen their visions in the old haunts of Jesus. There are serious objections to that view. It is perfectly true that our Gospel narratives give us apparently a double tradition, one followed by Matthew for the most part and by the incomplete ending of Mark, representing the visions as taking place in Galilee, whereas on the other side Luke and John (with the exception of the 21st chapter, which is an appendix to the Fourth Gospel) represent the visions as taking place in Jerusalem. Did the apostles go to Galilee immediately after the arrest of Jesus? Our sources know nothing whatever of it; they say that they forsook Him and fled. But they say absolutely

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, W. Mackintosh, *The Natural History of the Christian Religion*, pp. 274-5, 289.

nothing of a flight to Galilee. Not only so; but while they say they all forsook Him and fled, they represent Peter as going a little while later to the high-priest's palace: therefore, obviously, he did not go to Galilee with the rest at that time. But, assuming they did escape to Galilee that night, would there be time for them to have the vision in Galilee by the third day? The third day is a fixed point in our best tradition on the subject, that is to say in the unassailable tradition of Paul, that Jesus was raised again the third day.<sup>1</sup> But in that case how does the

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<sup>1</sup> This point is of crucial importance. If 'the third day' is allowed to stand as part of the tradition received by Paul from the apostles, those who deny the physical resurrection are on the horns of a dilemma. If they left Jerusalem after the arrest or crucifixion of Jesus, they can hardly have seen visions in Galilee on the third day. If they remained in Jerusalem, they may have seen visions on the third day; but in that case the fact of the empty grave cannot well be denied, since the apostles must have investigated this point. And, whether in Jerusalem or Galilee, subjective visions would hardly be possible so soon; they would not have recovered from their collapse. Accordingly attempts are made to show that 'the third day' was no part of the original tradition, but has come in through the influence of Scripture, especially Hos. vi. 2. This seems to me to be excluded by the terms used by Paul; but, in any case, how could he have asserted it, when he could so easily be contradicted, if it were not correct? Or are we to suppose that the disciples had forgotten the day on which the greatest experience of their lives had befallen them? Moreover, all our sources are agreed, even if some difference as to the exact time be granted, in fixing on the third day. This is confirmed by the special sacredness attaching from an early time to the first day of the week. Lastly, if Hos. vi. 2 played this remarkable part, how amazing that never once in the New Testament, not even by the First Evangelist, nor yet in Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*, is that passage quoted as receiving its fulfilment in the Resurrection! When we remember the fondness of the early Christians for such proofs of fulfilment, we shall find it hard to believe that Hos. vi. 2 was quoted in the primitive Church in this connexion at all, still more that it led to an antedating of the events.

matter stand? They go to Galilee, leaving Jesus in the hands of His enemies, and then they have visions that He has risen again. Yes! but before they have visions that He has risen again they must first of all know that He is dead; and if they went to Galilee the night before He died, how were they to know but that God Himself might have intervened at the last moment to rescue His Son from His enemies, or that in some other way His death had been prevented? They must have received the news of His death before they had the vision; but by the third day that would be impossible, the time required for the news to reach Galilee being longer than can be allowed. Now, suppose they had stayed in Jerusalem till after the death of Christ, and then gone to Galilee. Then, of course, you make the difficulty even greater, because it is highly improbable that they could get to Galilee by the third day. But further, our sources, even those which represent Jesus as appearing in Galilee, represent the disciples as staying in Jerusalem till the morning of Easter Sunday, when the message came to the women at the tomb, 'He goeth before you into Galilee,' and they are instructed so to tell the disciples. It is rather arbitrary dealing with our sources if we employ them in the first place to prove that the visions took place in Galilee and not in Jerusalem, and then set them aside when they assure us that on Easter Sunday the disciples were still in Jerusalem. Even those sources which seem most to favour the

other view really have something to say for us upon this point.

Again, did Paul know anything about the empty sepulchre? Had he known it, it is said, he must have spoken of it in 1 Cor. xv. But when Paul introduces his list of witnesses, he tells his readers that, when he preached the gospel at Corinth, he delivered to them, first of all, those statements which he is about to make. Paul is therefore not giving a detailed account in 1 Cor. xv., but is giving, so to speak, the heads of evidence as to which he had previously imparted the details to his readers. Consider, further, that, short of actual participation in the Easter experiences, Paul was in the best position to know what the actual facts were. It is true that he had not seen Jesus. But when he was a persecutor he had the keenest of all incentives to detect any misstatements of the Christians and to sift the evidence to the bottom. After he became a Christian, he had spent a fortnight with Peter, and from him at first hand he had received the evidence which Peter had to give. Now, when Paul says that Jesus not only died, but was buried, 'and hath been raised again,' there can be no doubt, I think, that he means that something had happened at the grave, because he does not identify the rising again with the appearances; they are for him two different and distinct acts. That Jesus rose was something that happened at the grave to the body that had been 'buried'; that Jesus appeared to His disciples

was, of course, quite another and separate thing. Now Paul, unfortunately, in the summary of evidence he gives us, does not tell us where the appearances took place ; but, inasmuch as we have good reason to believe that the disciples were in Jerusalem itself on the morning of Easter Sunday, we may be quite sure that they did not leave the question of the grave unexamined. They must, in order to have satisfied themselves that it was not a mere spirit or vision that they had seen, have gone to the grave in order to investigate, and all our narratives are consistent on this point, that, if not the disciples, at any rate the women, went to the grave and found that the body was not there. All these lines of evidence help us to see that the vision hypothesis is one of extreme difficulty. Moreover, when visions arise in a hysterical and imaginative condition of the subject, and are of a contagious character, the infection goes on spreading, and each new person who is affected becomes himself a centre of further dissemination. Now, we may, if we like, argue for the contagious character of the visions ; but there is this great difficulty, that the visions are confined within so brief a period of time, contrary to what we know happens in other cases. That is a fact which cannot easily be accounted for upon the hypothesis that the visions were subjective and contagious illusions. They are not spread over many years, but when they reach their culmination stop almost abruptly.

Another difficult question is, Who saw the first vision? Critics now argue, as a rule, that it must have been Peter, because Paul puts him first in his list. Renan said that the vision first came to Mary Magdalene; and Strauss decided in favour of 'the women.' Well, it is easy to understand why Renan was attracted by this view. It lent itself to sentimental rhapsody, and the fact that seven devils are said to have been cast out of her proved her mental instability, and discredited the chief witness. Is it not intelligible that Paul, so acute a reasoner, when he was proving his point, knowing what Mary Magdalene was, and how easy it was for people to say, 'Yes! she is your chief witness for the Resurrection,' should omit a mention of the fact? What he wanted to do was to prove his case by witnesses to whom no reasonable objection could be taken, and he therefore omits the woman whom other narrators represent as being the first spectator. And how likely is it that the disciples would have based their conviction on her hallucinations? They would have seen in them a return of her disorder.

Let me say, in conclusion, that we do not argue for the Resurrection as an isolated fact, and take it out of its environment. Naturally, if we are dealing with it as a pure fact in history out of its setting, we may be disposed to look at it very much in the same kind of way as some of the scholars to whom I have been referring, although that is beset with the gravest difficulties. But we are convinced that the Resur-

rection is, so to speak, of a piece with the whole character and the claims of Christ. We feel that for Him to have been left in the tomb would have been a most disastrous, tragic, and unexpected ending to that great career. The Cross without the Resurrection aggravates the dark mystery of suffering. But we also feel that it would have left His followers without that impulse which should enable them to overcome the initial difficulty they must have had in believing in one as a Messiah who seemed to be branded with the curse of God. We may well believe that for the very existence of Christianity as an historical religion it was necessary that this should come about, and that Jesus should not be left in the tomb, but should rise and appear to His disciples.

I regret that there is much of the evidence that the exigencies of time will not permit me to bring before you ; but I would conclude by saying that, after I have examined with care, and I trust with an open mind, the literature that has been accessible to me which has been written to disprove the fact of the Resurrection, my own faith in it remains sure, partly on wider grounds of Christian evidence, partly because I feel it to be the most reasonable solution of a very serious and vital problem.

# 'THE RELIGIOUS POINT OF VIEW'

BY

REV. CANON HICKS, M.A.

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THE Bible opens with what seems a very childish piece of cosmogony; sun, moon, and stars are said to be created only for the service and benefit of man. The Creator, having made the world that He may place man upon it, proceeds to illuminate his habitation for him with the light of the heavenly bodies, as a peasant might light up his cottage.

A very childish bit of cosmogony, did you say? I am not so sure. The science, the astronomy of it, may be as hopeless and childish as you please; but I think the philosophy of it is as modern as anything in human thought. For what does it imply? This, and this only: that the centre and crown of all things that exist is man; that man is the consummation of God's creative work; that in the universe, so far as we know it, man is the most wonderful object of our study. And he is so wonderful, so consummate, not by reason of his stature, strength, or agility—in which many living things excel him—but because he can think and is conscious of his thought, because he has

a will to choose or not choose the good; in a word, he is a moral agent.

It is clear that the Bible throughout regards man as the centre of things. A great tragedy is being enacted in the life and character of men; this world is its stage, and human history is the grand and marvellous working out of it. In view of this central and absorbing interest in man, all else falls into its place in the Scripture scheme as relative and subordinate, even the mighty luminaries of heaven as well as all things upon our planet: 'Thou hast put all things under his feet.' In himself, indeed, man seems but small and of little account—only a framework of dust. But his moral nature, his spiritual capacities make him unique in creation. 'Lord, what is man, that Thou hast such respect unto him? or the son of man, that Thou so regardest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels, to crown him with glory and worship.'

And in this view of man the Bible is in accord with the ripest and latest results of thoughtful philosophy.

There was a time, a generation ago, when the achievements of science in the regions of natural knowledge seemed so stupendous, that human thought was thrown, so to speak, off its balance. The splendour of men's discoveries for a time appeared to dazzle them. They could not see life steadily, nor see it whole. They saw it, as it were, in wrong perspective.

Some of us remember the following words in one of Huxley's *Lay Sermons* :—

'For as the astronomer discovers in the earth no centre of the universe, but an eccentric speck, so the naturalist finds man to be no centre of the living world, but one amidst endless modifications of life; and as the astronomer observes the mark of practically endless time set upon the arrangements of the solar system, so the student of life finds the records of ancient forms of existence peopling the world for ages which, in relation to human existence, are infinite.'

Later in life, the same great student delivered in Oxford his *Romanes Lecture*, in which he took pains to point out the unique place of man in nature, and how the 'cosmic forces' of competition and mutual destruction could teach man nothing of morality; nay, that man's chief duty as a moral being was to be in deliberate antagonism to nature and to disengage himself from the merely animal and bestial.

In all this, to be sure, there was nothing new, though it was new in the mouth of the lecturer. It is the plain doctrine of Scripture; it has been the consistent teaching of all wise men; in particular, it had been made the basis of a philosophy by the Positivist school. To Auguste Comte man was emphatically the centre of all things, and the highest duty and only noble life for man was to 'live for others'; i.e. so to order his individual life as best to serve the welfare of collective humanity. He never

tired of blaming the materialism which he found so common, 'the tendency,' as he puts it, 'of the best biologists to look upon sociology as a mere corollary of their own science.'

And in this emphatic protest, although Comte avowedly set aside the hypothesis of a divine Author of existence and the thought of a life beyond, he was undoubtedly fighting the battle of true religion. For in dealing with religion—which, for my purpose to-day, I am content to define as 'morality touched by emotion'—everything depends upon your point of view, the point of view from which you look at man.

You may look at man from the astronomical point of view, and you note that he inhabits a tiny planet which is but a quite subordinate member of this solar system; while that system itself is but one of many systems which occupy illimitable space. Or you may survey man with the eye of the chemist, and lo! he is, upon analysis, nothing but an interesting compound of known substances, so many salts, so much carbon, so many gases, and so forth. And, let me remark, these views of man are not false, but absolutely true—true so far as they go, true within their own limits, true from their special point of view.

So, again, the biologist looks upon man, and he finds him to have interesting affinities to other forms of life. His science investigates these affinities, and discovers their origin and modes of

development ; notes that each individual man recapitulates in his prenatal growth every successive stage in the biological evolution of our kind—nay, probably that the intellectual growth of every infant recapitulates the stages in the historical developments of the race from savage conditions to those of comparative culture ; nay, further, that the process of degradation which intoxication produces in any individual man probably represents in reverse order the successive developments in the elevation of the race ; the last-won qualities go first, then the last but one, and so on. Thus self-control is first lost, then shame, then speech, then the upright attitude, then locomotion altogether.

All this is wonderful enough, and highly valuable from a biological point of view. But we have not yet exhausted all the phenomena of human nature. Man is also a moral being : he has a conscience, affections, a will. The moral phenomena are as much facts of human nature as his powers of speech or of locomotion. And this higher order of things cannot be appreciated or understood by the methods and measures applicable to a lower order. New conceptions, a new way of looking at things, will be needed. We must step upwards, and adopt the ethical or spiritual point of view.

Now, the ethical point of view is the exclusive view of Scripture and of Christianity. Take that point of view, and you will begin to be in a position to understand the claims of the gospel, the meaning

and beauty of religion. Refuse to come and stand at the ethical point of view and to look at humanity in that particular way, and it is impossible to appreciate Christianity.

It is possible, indeed, for a man to be so far absorbed in the conceptions and principles of his own study and science, to have his powers of observation and attention so far prepossessed by them, his faculties so exclusively trained to learn to obey these impulses and these alone, that he is almost incapable of seeing anything else. He has only one point of view. This sort of prepossession works out very absurdly in common life. One day, I was told, a number of working men, who were members of a Bible-class, were led by their teacher to the National Gallery. To his delight he saw one of them seated before one of the Turners, with his attention, as it seemed, riveted on the masterpiece. But as the teacher approached him, hoping to hear some expression of admiration, the man exclaimed, 'What a magnificent frame !' He was a frame-maker : that was his point of view. You have heard of the old bachelor who was asked why he had never married a wife. He replied, 'Why should I support another man's daughter ?' That was due to the point of view in which he regarded matrimony. It multiplied mouths to be fed out of one man's income. He was perfectly right ; but there are other aspects of matrimony which his strictly economic prepossessions forbade him to perceive. For our prepossessions of

mind, and our ignorance and our prejudice, do really modify our vision. We cannot see more than we have the power of seeing. All depends on the point of view. When somebody said to John Ruskin, 'A cat may look at a king,' you remember how Ruskin replied—'Yes, but she cannot *see* a king.'

My friends, it is so with man. We can look at that wonderful being man, and we see only what our limitations, our prepossessions, our spiritual faculties enable us to see.

Now, at the present time, there is a remarkable spread, especially among working men, of the merely naturalistic view of man. Minds that have never until now grasped the wonderfulness and vastness of this universe, minds that often from their hard and grinding circumstances receive a bias towards materialism, are beginning (and let us rejoice to see them beginning) to think of the universe and of man's place in it. They listen to what the chemist, biologist, and astronomer have to say about existence, and life, and humanity. But they are in no humour to listen to the divine and the moralist. And yet the phenomena in man which the moralist and the divine especially study and have to deal with are more wonderful phenomena and more important and more essentially human than all the rest. And I am here to-day merely to plead for a hearing for the moralist : merely to ask my friends, working men and others, to be willing—in the name of common sense and of common fairness—to survey

man from the ethical point of view. For in the amazing and thoughtless megalomania which has seized on the minds of our younger generation to-day, it is needful to assert, and reiterate the assertion, that, in estimating the ranks of being, size and vastness are by no means the chief points of distinction. Life, on however small or humble a scale, is superior of itself to brute matter, however vast and immeasurable. And life has its hierarchy, finding its consummation and crown in man, because he is a moral agent. This fact has been once for all perfectly expressed in one of the *Thoughts* of Pascal: 'If the entire physical universe conspired to crush a man, the man would still be nobler than the entire physical universe, for he would know that he was crushed.'

I am aware how at this stage of the argument the biologist steps in to remind us that he has succeeded in discovering the origin of man's moral nature. He can trace, he assures us, how the conscience was gradually evolved, how the social sentiments grew into what they are, how the power of will came to be. Now, I am not in the least inclined to dispute what he says. Biology is a marvellous science; I have the greatest hope in the future of the modern inductive psychology. As for the science of origins, it is the most wonderful and fascinating outcome of that essentially modern instrument of inquiry, the method of comparison. Only I must be permitted to remind the biologist, or any other interlocutor at

this point, that the discovery of the mode and the stages by which man has come to be what he is, involves no denial of the fact that he is what he is. I simply insist that man is what he is, and is not anything out of which he has emerged. Man is man, and is a moral agent, and as such is unique. And, further, as such we have a right, nay, we are loose and inaccurate reasoners unless we endeavour, to look at man's qualities, to estimate him at his real value, to glance round at his relationships and obligations, and to make certain inferences from these plain and observed facts. Ascend, we say to our critics, ascend with us to the level where man actually stands to-day as a moral being, a responsible agent. Take your stand on this lofty but solid platform, and there survey man's moral and spiritual horizon. That is what I mean by the ethical, the religious point of view.

Now, this ethical view of man is maintained by the Bible throughout. It ignores all other considerations. Its point of view is always and everywhere the very opposite of the view of the biologist or the naturalist. For the Bible (I speak of the Old Testament) is the record of the consciousness of the noblest spirits of the Jewish people—I say their noblest spirits, for we know how often and how far the rank and file of the Hebrew people fell below the national ideals. But it is with gifted races as with gifted men, you must judge them, if you want to estimate them aright, not by their worst, but by

their best. And if we look in that spirit at the Jewish people—and the Jewish people and the Jewish church were one and the same—what a wonderful nation they were ! They had, we may say, a genius for holiness. As the Greek had an instinct for the beautiful, as the Roman had a genius for order and government ; so the Jew had an instinct for moral enthusiasm. His nation was chosen and predestined by divine Wisdom to conceive the idea of holiness, to work out the conception of a divine righteousness. The idea of the ethically good became to the noblest Jewish spirits the ruling passion of their lives. Israel was idealized in their thoughts as the servant of Jehovah, devoted to obedience to His perfect will. No higher conception of God was ever dreamed of than that which meets us in Isa. vi., ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord’; and the complement to that is the command of Jehovah to His people, ‘Be ye holy, for I am holy.’

We find this all-pervading sense of the righteousness of God and of the necessity of righteousness in His servants running through Scripture. The old legends of the Semites which come down from prehistoric times, when they were laid hold of by the Hebrew mind, had to transform themselves, to lose their polytheistic taint, and assume an ethical and spiritual colour, or be rejected altogether. For the Hebrew genius would allow of nothing that should be inconsistent with the unity, the spirituality, the goodness of God.

It was so with Hebrew law. The successive Hebrew codes—whether earlier or later, and however much or little of them we assign to Moses himself—have all of them this in common, that in comparison with the customs of old Eastern and Semitic life, they are humane, they are moral, they can help mankind in the direction of greater purity, greater kindness, greater self-control.

It is so with the Hebrew treatment of history. The interest is centred in religion, in morality, in the relation between the people of the Jews and their holy God. It is curious how limited is the range of the Hebrew historian's thought. We feel this limitation as we read the narrative, and perhaps we ascribe it to mere ignorance or mere Jewish exclusiveness. We think that the Hebrew writers could see nothing except with the eye of a patriot whose only interest is in the advancement or the sorrows of his race. But this apparent exclusiveness, this absorption of his interest in the fortunes of his people, has a nobler cause. It is the natural view of one who is deeply concerned with the destiny of a church, rather than of a nation, with the transmission of a revelation, with the triumph of an idea—and this idea is the righteousness of God.

For not only is the Hebrew historian unconcerned with the futures of other peoples; even within the limits of his own nation, he is really interested in one thing alone, i.e. the vindication of the righteousness of God and the spiritual

progress of God's people. The ethical interest is for ever supreme ; with this view facts are selected or omitted, and perhaps at times even strained or misinterpreted. The rise and fall of the nation is made ever to point the moral of spiritual elevation or decline.

We know that this element, this tendency in the Hebrew consciousness took its decisive shape in the prophetic spirit. We can trace its growth, its greatest ascendancy, and its decay ; or can show how its influence worked, absorbing and mastering every department of Hebrew thought and writing, so that neither art nor science, research nor adventure, had any abiding interest for the Jewish mind. All the resources of a passionate rhetoric, all the tenderness and fire of the noblest poetry, are lavished without stint on one single theme, and that is the moral grandeur of man and his relation to a righteous God.

We know also how fierce a struggle the prophetic spirit waged with two adverse influences, both of them natural to man, and as much a danger to-day as they were to the Jews of old : I mean ceremonialism on the one hand, materialism on the other. The one was a temptation from within, the other from without.

Ceremonialism is the temptation on the side of religion ; the suggestion that God will be pleased with distinctions of meat or dress or gesture, and so will disregard distinctions of purely ethical value. In reply to this temptation, there thundered from a

long line of prophets a persistent witness : 'To obey is better than sacrifice !' Later on Jewish legalism began to lean upon mere wonder-working as a proof of divine approval, although an act of thaumaturgy possesses no necessarily ethical value. 'The Jews require a sign,' says St. Paul ; and we remember his reply.

Materialism, on the other hand, was the temptation of the man of the world ; it assailed the Jew as a politician, as a statesman. Surely the Hebrew monarchy must obey the laws of social growth, must assimilate itself to other kingdoms, must seek safety in prudent alliances, and defence in chariots and horses. In answer to this came prophet after prophet, to assure Israel, if Israel would only believe it, that 'though some might put their trust in chariots and some in horses, Israel should remember the Lord their God.' The rise or decay of kingdoms and empires depends ultimately on moral causes. If Israel were right with God, then 'one of them should chase a thousand, and two should put ten thousand to flight.'

Need I point out how this purely ethical and spiritual conception of life, which dominates the Old Testament, finds its fulfilment in the New? In the person and life of our Lord we have at last the assurance that right is might, and always must be so. We knew, or we felt, that the future is on the side of the good, that the meek (and not the biggest battalions) shall inherit the earth, that morality is in the nature of

human things, that good is invincible and cannot really know either failure or defeat. But again and again, in the conflict with evil, we felt the horror of the shadow of death, for human life has often its Gethsemane. But the sufferings of that sinless Saviour, His death, His rising again—these have widened out illimitably the horizon of human hope : in the darkest hour we now can see the brightening of an eternal dawn. ‘This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.’

# 'IS A MAN A MACHINE?'

BY

REV. R. WADDY MOSS, D.D.

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I HAVE been asked to answer the question whether a man is a machine, and to give some reasons for the reply. It seems to me that, first of all, we ought to be very clear as to what we are talking about, as to what we mean, when we call a man a machine. There is no need to try to give an exact scientific definition of a machine as the word is used in the industrial science of the country; but as it occurs in the question that is put this afternoon, I think there will not be much difficulty in deciding what it means. A machine is an arrangement of rods and wheels, that must be geared up to some source of power without, or else is really no good at all. The power from without must be communicated to that arrangement before the arrangement will work. Accordingly man must be considered as something similar—as an arrangement of muscles and fibres, of levers and elastic bands, that has to be geared up to some source of power without before he can work. The question we have to look at is, whether in some such sense as that a man is a machine, destitute of power himself,

and unable to act independently of some source of influence from without. Is it absolutely necessary that there must be some connexion between him and this external source of power or influence before you can get him to work? Now, I do not hesitate myself to answer that question in the negative, for many reasons, of which several will appear before our meeting is over, and of which many more might be given if there were time, and if this were the right opportunity.

Over against this theory that a man is a machine stands an opposing theory, which makes a man a self-governing and self-determining unit in a community of units like himself, all related to and all under the gracious control of a supreme God. Each unit is composed of two parts, distinguishable in thought, though inseparable in organic life; and as long as this life lasts, those two parts are seen in conjunction, and very often in harmonious conjunction. The one part is the body, compacted of many tools and instruments, a machine than which man has not yet been able to devise one capable of more or of more exact uses. The other is something, not body, and therefore inaccessible to the senses, but able to use, and actually using, the body in a number of processes and for a variety of purposes. Concerning this something which is not body, the self of a man or the ego of a man, as it is sometimes called, several propositions might be framed.

You may say, for instance, that this self of a man is distinct from, although it underlies, and expresses itself in, the different states of consciousness. A man says 'I know,' 'I feel,' 'I will'; and therefore the man himself is not made up of conditions of knowing and feeling and willing, but is something, a vital substance, that runs through all these states, but is also transcendent over them, and not exhausted by them. One class of teachers tells us that these states, when they are put together, make a man. It is a mechanical theory. You take a certain number of bricks, and put them together, and in virtue of their collocation you obtain a wall; and accordingly you take a number of states of consciousness, states of thinking, states of feeling, states of willing, you put them all together, and by virtue of collocation you get a man, and the self of a man. Now, that is not exactly what we mean, when we say with all confidence, 'I know,' 'I feel,' and 'I will.' We distinguish between the 'I' that knows and feels and wills, and the states of knowing and feeling and willing in which that 'I' or 'self' may be for a time. The better theory seems to be that the self of a man is not exhausted by his states of consciousness; it transcends them, underlies them, knits them together, but is not by any means identical with them.

A second proposition is, that the self of a man is able to choose amongst the various influences that play upon it from without and the various suggestions that arise within, to invest any one

that he likes with superior force, and thus to make it a 'motive.' The plea is sometimes urged that the word motive is so ambiguous that no man can make much of it. Is it not possible to remove and get rid of the ambiguity, and to say exactly what a motive is, and how it is formed? Imagine, for instance, that before you lie two alternative courses or more, each recognized to some extent as dutiful, whatever you may mean by that word; and yet at first you are perplexed, and do not know exactly which course it would be better for you to take. Consider the process which goes on within you. You think of each of the two, you exercise your judgement upon it, you trace in thought the results that may follow from adopting it, the bearings upon your own happiness or success or whatever else you desire; you spend yourself upon the competing courses, and in virtue of that spending of yourself upon them you make one the motive, and reject the other. You might just as readily have adopted the other, had you constructed reasons for preferring it, and have made it your motive. The self of a man, that internal power that constitutes 'me,' that constitutes each one of us, takes the various alternatives that present themselves in any perplexity of duty, and spends itself upon them, and thereby makes one a motive, and invests it with authority and force. So, again, in industrial work there are often two ways of doing a job. How and why do you select the one, and reject the other? Sometimes it is done

carelessly and without consideration of any kind ; of course those cases need not at present be examined. In serious cases, where a man is really anxious to get the work done well, why and how does he determine to adopt one course to the exclusion of others? Is it not precisely in the same way? You think, and you ask yourselves all sorts of questions—'Is this wise and appropriate?' 'Are my tools adapted to this?' 'Will the results of this answer my purpose, and fit in with my general design?'—and so by spending yourself upon the two possible courses, both of which were neutral up to a certain point, you eventually select one, and act accordingly. I suppose it is the same in athletics. When a man is standing at the wickets and receiving balls, how does he think about them, and what process takes place rapidly in his thoughts? I imagine that he imagines, mechanism being right, and skill being sufficient, that if he adopts one course that suggests itself a certain serious contingency is awaiting him in the field, and if he adopts another course that is possible some other contingency is awaiting him. Rapidly these various alternative courses pass through his mind. He spends himself, his thought, his heart, upon them, and determines at last what he will do. That is to say, in each case he makes his own motives.

The point to be emphasized is that a man makes his own motive. Influences and courses, all neutral up to a certain point, appeal to the

man, and present themselves to him. The inner self of the man, exercising its functions of thought and emotion, spends itself upon the appeals, weighs and compares them from different points of view, their relative merits as wise or politic, their comparative contributions to the accomplishment of the purpose he has already adopted (which purpose was similarly selected in its turn before); and thus the man himself invests that which he eventually selects with controlling power over his activity, himself exalts to sovereignty the motive whose bidding he is thereupon prepared to do. He may blunder through ignorance, through defects in his instruments, through wrong adaptation of means to ends; but he makes his own motives, in virtue of the selective and ruling power that is within.

1. The question to be considered is, Which of these two theories is correct? Is the will of man free, so that it can successfully resist and master, mould and operate upon, the influences from without; or is its action necessarily determined and fixed by those influences? That question is obviously a psychological one. It relates to the constitution of the human mind, and therefore the first answer to be given is the answer given by consciousness, by the human mind itself. For these theories are in reality attempts to explain to a man what he is; and therefore the court of first instance is personal consciousness, and, when all the explanations have been made, the final

court of appeal is still personal consciousness, which, guarding itself in every possible way from error and bias, has to decide whether the explanations are valid and adequate.

What does consciousness say on the subject? In our quiet moods of reflection when we can think a thing all round, and are undisturbed and safe from interruption, when we recall the way some piece of work has been done in the past, or some social duty has been met, is it not a common feature of consciousness that we feel, 'I might have done better'? One wonders whether there is a single man amongst us who can look back upon the whole of his past life, all the alternatives in duty and in social relationship and conduct, the diverse influence of his character and activity upon others, who does not sometimes feel, 'I might have done better, I had the power.' How often, when in memory we dwell upon some passionate word that we have hastily spoken, some deed of dishonour, some treachery against a friend, some breach of the recognized code of our neighbourhood or of our guild, the tendency to excuse ourselves evaporates, and the confession is, 'I need not have done it, I could have done otherwise.' A man will sometimes come to you and say, as they are coming continually to these premises and saying, 'I was terribly tempted to do something'; and sometimes he will add with gladness, 'Something said to me Don't, and I did not.' A man is free to do as he will; and there is no mass

or accumulation of temptation against which a free will cannot put itself, and with entire stability resist and reject. Such is not simply a private conclusion of one's own, or a hasty conclusion, as some of you may be disposed to think. It can be supported by citation from the works of men of the first eminence in philosophy and in science. Henry Sidgwick, in the later years of his life, was by general acknowledgement the keenest and most expert psychologist amongst English-speaking people. This is how he writes : 'Certainly in the case of actions in which I have a distinct consciousness of choosing between alternatives of conduct, one of which I conceive as right and reasonable, I find it impossible not to think that I can now choose to do what I so conceive, however strong may be my inclination to act unreasonably, and however uniformly I may have yielded to such inclination in the past.'<sup>1</sup> It amounts to saying, and that by a teacher with a manifest leaning towards determinism, that a man cannot help feeling that his acts are his own acts. After everything that is said to him, and after every attempt that he makes to excuse himself, he has still an inextinguishable sense of property in his acts and of responsibility for them ; and that sense of property and responsibility lingers and clings, so that you cannot easily get rid of it. That is what a representative philosopher says. As a representative of the men of science may be taken Professor Macalister, of Cambridge,

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<sup>1</sup>*Methods of Ethics*, 3rd edition, p. 64.

whose rank will not be questioned. He writes: 'Anthropology recognizes the existence of free-will among men; and the assumption that a power of choice exists lies at the basis of the theory of taboo, currently adopted, and in some form or other universally accepted, by anthropologists. Whatever opinion may be formed on other grounds, anthropology has nothing to say against the theory of human free-will.'<sup>1</sup> Consciousness, philosophy, science, all in their measure support the conclusion that man has freedom of will, and may and can choose between alternatives of conduct that present themselves, and that his freedom of will is naturally inalienable.

Against such a conclusion certain objections, especially two, are raised, and each should be looked at for a moment. It is said that consciousness in this recognition of the freedom of the will is really mistaken, and that as a matter of fact man is what he is by the force of heredity, or by the force of environment, or by both forces combined. Now, is that correct? Of late years there have been three dominant theories of heredity, which in the stress of controversy have been now reduced to two. Both of them accept, and one accentuates, a radical distinction between the congenital and the acquired qualities of man; and as for the acquired qualities, one of those theories insists that they are not heritable at all. The other qualities are inherited; but the question is, Are they unalterable? Do they determine and

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<sup>1</sup> *London Quarterly Review*, July 1899, p. 6.

fix the subsequent character of the man? A man born with such a combination of ancestral germs that he is naturally quick in temper, impetuous, passionate, must he of necessity go down to the grave like that, restrained a little, it may be, by fear or force, but his passions all surging and raging hopelessly to the end? There is a life of St. Peter to be found in incidents recorded in Holy Scripture; and the changes that were wrought in the character of that apostle alone are a sufficient witness to the contrary. You hardly need other witnesses. Is a dull man bound to be dull to the end? If a man is born with such a combination of ancestral germs that he cannot help being lazy and languid as a lad, must he necessarily be lazy and languid to the end? Heredity does not give anything that is unalterable. Whatever the theory be, the life of the streets, of the industries, of the schools, is constantly showing that the forces introduced into character by heredity may be checked, quenched, or even reversed. Modern civilization, on the one hand, knows no minds that are virgin; on the other hand, it knows no minds in the early stages of development that are helplessly enslaved. The aim of all true education is not to accept the dismal opinion that man is incapable of changing for the better, or else you had better shut up all the schools in the country and all the debating clubs and similar institutions, but to arouse the mind and the will within the

man to independent and reasoned activity, and to supply sufficient materials for the use of a trained judgement, in the confident assurance that heredity can be improved upon.

Similarly with environment. The conditions of some lives are deplorable, and hamper and harass the will to an extent that can hardly be exaggerated. There is no doubt about that. But notice two facts about environment that are frequently overlooked. First of all, it never makes defeat unavoidable. The condition of success in fighting it is sometimes possibly migration into another environment, sometimes merely tenacity and resoluteness of right purpose. History is full of instances where environment has been triumphed over. Here, for example, is a man, a drunkard, and I suppose bad in many other respects. At last he finds his way into jail, a drunken tinker ; but to-day that man is known as John Bunyan, the writer of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. He managed to discover some means of effectually overcoming the deplorable and vicious and weak environment of his early days. Many a man has risen from the slums to almost every kind of eminence in the state and country. Think, too, how both heredity and environment combined have failed to secure a continuous appearance and increase, generation after generation, of the qualities one would think they must favour. A man may be born in the third or fourth generation of a series of musical households.

The environment of his home throughout his youth and early manhood may be distinctly musical ; it does not follow that he will be very musical himself. So with the chemist. Recall the biographies and careers of the great chemists. In how many cases do you find sons, grandsons, great-grandsons, distinguished successively for their promotion of the science of chemistry ? In every pursuit of life it is just the same, in trade or manufacture or any of the industries. The qualities that mean success evidently do not run in families ; and although heredity would seem to suggest they should, and environment would dispose one to imagine that bias in such a direction would be strengthened, as a matter of fact they do not. Will, and chiefly will, directed wrongly or aright from within, explains life's failures and life's successes, and explains them better than does the combination of heredity and environment.

Notice, secondly, that many writers on this subject leave out of consideration altogether the most important factors in the environment of a man. The most important factors are those that are unseen, the invisible and unobtrusive forces that play upon every man's heart and mind and conscience from the beginning. God and the Spirit of God, with the gracious influences which He pours persistently into human life, are integral parts of the environment of every man. If you leave out these unseen forces, of necessity you get into all sorts of perplexed reasonings and hopeless conclusions

But remember that the unseen influence and ready help of the Spirit of God enter into, and in due part constitute, the environment of every man, are always near at hand, to be had by every sincere man who is resolved to use them; and the whole problem of environment is altered immediately.

2. The original question as to whether a man is free, or in regard to his will merely a machine, may have light thrown upon it from other sources than that of individual consciousness. Observation of men in their intercourse with one another, whether that intercourse be easy or serious, or in their association into corporate bodies or communities or states, shows that almost the whole of our social and civil life is ordered on the assumption of freedom; and it is not likely that the entire race has in this matter gone astray. What is the use of talking about responsibility, if a man has no power to act in any but a single way? How can merit attach to a man, if he is a machine, compelled to act in a prescribed and certain way, and not free to act otherwise? You must explain away language of that kind entirely, if you accept the conclusion that a man is a machine. Similarly, in social opinion and legal administration, the strength of temptation is always weighed in a Christian country, and the tendency to do so is rightly increasing amongst us. But though the plea of compulsion even by hunger awakens pity and ensures help, it is never fully accepted either by the officials of society or by the

great body of its constituents. Public opinion always pushes personal responsibility home except in cases of youth and of mania. A man annoys you, or hits you. If you think he has done it by sheer accident, you have nothing more to say about it ; but suppose he tells you that he has done it because he was a machine, how would you be disposed to deal with him ?

Consider, again, and now compare in magnitude, in wisdom, in success, the social work done respectively under the influence of a belief that a man is free, and under the influence of a belief that a man is a machine. The advocates of the latter opinion do not hesitate to tell us that some men cannot be improved, and therefore must be restrained by force or even suppressed and cast out for ever upon the scrap-heap of humanity. That is the gospel, to debase a fine word, of one part of determinism. Punishment, not remedial, but suppressive, must be applied by one section of men, assumed to be machines, to another section equally assumed to be machines, so that you have the curious phenomenon of machine punishing machine. Not much is generally said about the method of suppression to be adopted, or about the exact qualifications for the process. But, notwithstanding the confessed impolicy and blundering of every such application of force in the past (and history knows of more than one), hopeless restraint is everything this theory has to offer as a contribution to social elevation.

On the other hand, the conviction that the will of man is free, that there is hope for the worst man if he can but be brought to bestir himself, to make up his mind once for all to master himself, has led age after age since Christ died to the regeneration of the individual, and to the multiplication of agencies for the regeneration of society. That conviction underlies the unceasing work of which these premises are the centre. Men and women come to this Manchester Mission daily; and, as Mr. Collier has already told us, four hundred of them are now under his care in connexion with the social work that is carried on here. They come daily, a steady and almost unbroken stream, of wellnigh every rank and every occupation in life; and on the assumption that each of them can become a better man or woman, all kinds of help are ministered to them readily, and as the consequence many a new life of value to the community has been begun afresh in these premises. No man need despair, so long as a single shred of humanity remains about him. If he has any power to change his purpose at all, there are aids, human and divine, awaiting him, by means of which he may triumph over himself and over every vice that cleaves to him, and become worthy in the eyes of God and of his fellows.

This belief in free will is common to and characteristic of all parts of the Bible, but receives perhaps freest expression in the teaching of Jeremiah in the Old Testament and of our Saviour

in the New. Jeremiah writes one chapter (xviii. 1-14) in which he seems to argue that a change of will on the part of a man may alter God's purpose in relation to that man. God designs a man to be something good and useful, but his blundering reason and uncertain will may make it necessary for God to alter the design. The free will of man thus determines the action of God in regard to a nation and in regard to the individual. The same prophet proceeds to teach that all things in this world, except one thing, simply have to do with the will of God. The powers that men are beginning to understand and to control have to be controlled according to laws and methods which the great Maker Himself instituted ; and the birds, and the storm, and the sunlight, all of them carry out their Maker's will. We men, if we like, are allowed to rebel. That is the extent of our freedom, the dignity and the peril of man. One of the greatest of the preachers of the last generation, or last generation but one, was accustomed to teach that the old saying, 'Man proposes, but God disposes,' was perfectly true in a sense, but that in all matters of personal character it ought to be reversed and to read, 'God proposes, but man disposes.' God proposes to make every one of us a good, upright, and honourable man ; we have to dispose and settle that question by the action of our own free will.

Side by side with this assertion of the free will of

man, Scripture offers and pledges the help of God. God, the great Father, august, terrible, holy, glorious in His holiness, says to sinful men, who are beginning to wonder and despond about themselves, 'Can a woman forget her child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, these may forget' (it does not often occur, but it does sometimes); 'yet will not I forget thee.' Every sinful, struggling man amongst us may feel that the great Father is thinking about him in that way: 'Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands.' One can imagine a sinner almost despairing of becoming a better man, of securing any grace or gift of help from God, after so many years of wandering and neglect, so many years in which the man has forgotten and ignored God. But there is that parable of the prodigal son in the New Testament, which it is not well for any man to forget. And there is the story of Christ on the cross, a story written in bold letters in the Gospels, and rewritten age after age down all the ages of humanity since Christ died. The Father loves us still, although we are sinners, and waits but to see us once resolutely turning to Him when He comes forth to meet us, and opens His arms.

All through the Bible it is the same. On the human side the one condition of forgiveness, of progress towards perfecting in reverence and purity, may be said to be the action of the free human will, never to be coerced, never in the mercy of

God to be refused. Christ says pleadingly, the Christ who loved us to the death, 'Ye will not come to Me, that ye may have life.' Will you come? Try Him; make up your minds, let the action of the will be resolute and firm, and see in actual experiment whether you are not free to will. Christ says, 'Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.' Nothing more is necessary than for the man, who is conscious of weakness and sin, to come with purpose fixed and sure. There is not a man amongst us probably who does not sometimes feel the horribleness of his own sins and long to be rid of them. Let us give God our wills, which we are free to give, and which Christ died to win. Whenever we genuinely do that, concerning the worst of us it will become true: 'In that day (why not now?) thou shalt say, I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord; for though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away. . . . Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid.'

# ‘THE ORIGINALITY OF CHRIST’S TEACHING’

BY

REV. A. L. HUMPHRIES, M.A.

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WHEN we say of a thinker or teacher that his work is original, we mean that, so far as the main principles of his system are concerned, he has thought them out for himself. It is too much to demand that he shall owe nothing at all to those who have preceded him, for there is a certain ethical and intellectual inheritance into which every man is born. But the characteristic of the original thinker is that he creates more than he inherits; by the action of his own mind he widens the bounds of his possessions; he brings new principles to light by which even old truths are set in new relations. The result is that his entire scheme of thought represents an advance, an independent enlargement of the domain of knowledge. Now, such original thinkers, be their subject what it may, manifest the possession of that peculiar quality which we call genius. It is easy for most men to see a truth after some one has discovered it and told them where to look for it; but to be the first to see the vision, that is the peculiar glory of those lofty minds which are original and creative.

From this consideration it is obvious that, where Christianity or any system of ideas is in question, its originality may be one thing and its truth another. People are so apt to confuse these two issues, and to jump hastily to the conclusion that a denial of the one involves also a denial of the other, that it is necessary to insist clearly upon their distinction. Suppose that a man, on examining all the evidence, felt bound to answer 'No' to the question, 'Is Christianity original?' he would still have to face the question 'Is Christianity true?' For originality is decided by one set of considerations, truthfulness by another. All that my imaginary doubter would have achieved would be this—he would have deposed Jesus from the place of eminence which He occupies in virtue of His reputation as an independent and original thinker; the more important question as to the truth of His thought would be still undetermined. For a statement is not necessarily true because some one utters it to-day for the first time; it is not necessarily false because it is as old as the hills and as trite as the commonplaces of the street. Originality is one thing, truthfulness is another. And so I must remind you that when men deny Christ's originality, it is the dignity of the Teacher rather than the truth of the teaching which is at stake. I do not mean, however, that we can lightly tolerate such an attack. We do not simply believe in the contents of Christ's message, we reverence Him who brings it; and we are, therefore, jealously watchful of any attempt to

impair His dignity, or to make Him appear less than we believe Him to be—the greatest of the religious teachers of the race.

You will see, then, precisely what is, and what is not, involved in the issue we are now discussing. Is Christianity a new religion, or is it only a fresh presentation of a previous one? In plain words, Did Christ, instead of creating it, borrow it? Now, a man who takes that view must prove two things: he must show, first of all, that some system of doctrine substantially identical with Christianity was already in existence before Jesus began His mission; and, next, he must prove that Jesus had opportunities of becoming acquainted with that rival system and in all probability embraced them. Not one but both of these positions must be established; and it is easy to see why. You have not upset the originality of a man's thought when you have simply proved that some one else has had that thought before him. It is one of the commonplaces of invention that men have worked out certain ideas, and, only when they have sought to patent them, have they discovered that some one has forestalled them. Gunpowder was known in China centuries before it was manufactured in Europe; but we have every reason to believe that its invention was just as original in the West as in the Far East. Sixty years ago two scholars, Adams at Cambridge and Leverrier at Paris, set themselves simultaneously to the solution of the same astronomical problem.

Certain irregularities had been noticed in the movements of Uranus, for which the known planets of the solar system did not sufficiently account. Could it be that there was a planet not yet discovered, and if so, where was it?—that was the problem which by a series of most abstruse calculations Adams and Leverrier set themselves to solve. Neither was aware of the action of the other. Both were perfectly independent in their investigation. And the result was the simultaneous yet equally original discovery of the planet Neptune. Moreover, if you have read anything concerning the history of the theory of evolution, you will remember that Sir Alfred Russel Wallace, whilst busied with scientific observations in the Malay Archipelago, had one day, 'when tossing restlessly on his couch, a series of reflections which led him to see that the principle which explained evolution as the mode of creation was that of 'the survival of the fittest.' He at once committed his discovery to paper, and sent it to Charles Darwin in England, little thinking that he too, as the result of a long course of observation and reflection, had already reached the same conclusion, and was about to publish it to the world in his epoch-making book. The discovery, though simultaneous, was equally original, and the credit of it belongs to the one scientist as well as to the other.

Such anticipations and coincidences are explicable because man, wherever we find him, is a rational being, and nature everywhere presents

to his mind much the same phenomena and propounds similar questions. But men are alike not only in that they think but in that they worship. Man everywhere is a moral as well as an intellectual being, and not under one sky only but under every sky there have been men who have pondered the mystery of God, and the not smaller mystery of man and of man's duties and destiny. And when we remember that behind that common quest for truth, whether in Palestine, India, or Greece, there has been the same gracious Spirit seeking to lead all faithful and obedient souls from the light they had into that which was clearer and more spacious, we shall cease to wonder at the occasional resemblances existing between various religious systems, and shall be less swift to conclude that one has borrowed from the other.

And so when men point out in other faiths elements that are akin to Christ's teaching, I have no disposition to dispute their assertions. It may be quite true that Buddha preached self-denial as the path of salvation, and that Lao-tsze taught the Golden Rule. I for one welcome these foregleams of Christianity. It is not at all necessary to the exaltation of Jesus among the religious teachers of the world that we should depreciate others. But when, because of these doctrinal approximations, Jesus is put on the same level as the others, and, still more, when He is spoken of as if He were but a second-hand borrower from them, it

is time to say plainly that such conclusions are not warranted by the premisses. One of the most specious ways in which hostile critics attack the originality of Christ's teaching is by producing from some other religion sayings which seem akin to His. The resemblance in some of these alleged parallels is more apparent than real, but that is not my main criticism. What any sincere mind must resent is the subtle insinuation—for the critic has not always the candour to express it openly—that the coincidences between Christianity and the rival faith which are exhibited as applying to a part apply also to the whole. A similarly fragmentary and therefore unfair comparison is, I may add in passing, applied to the lives of Jesus and Buddha; and the simple reader is, on the strength of casual coincidences here and there, practically invited to believe that the whole of the career of Jesus as told in the Gospels is but an adaptation of the story of Buddha. The significant thing is that, as regards both teaching and life, whilst resemblances are paraded, and even magnified, differences are ignored. And the critic trusts to the ignorance of his reader for the non-discovery of his unfairness. But surely it is obvious that, if any valid comparison is to be made between two religions in order to see whether one is derived from the other, the comparison must embrace the whole. By isolating parts and detaching fragments you can prove anything you please. Christ's teaching as a whole is a seamless robe, it constitutes a

unity. And if you want a complete answer to the attacks upon the uniqueness and originality of His message, my advice to you is to read through, first of all, the record of His sayings in the Four Gospels, and then, with the memory of His words fresh upon you, take up a collection of the sayings of Confucius, or the Zend Avesta of Zoroaster, or the sacred writings of Buddhism. I am absolutely sure that you will rise from that broad comparison saying of Jesus as did those men of old, 'Never man spake like this Man.'

There is another misleading mode of argument against which I desire to warn you. We must demand that Christianity, in any process of comparison, shall be confronted by other religions one by one, and not by all of them together. It is quite true that if we ransacked all the religions of the world it would be possible, by a judicious selection of this feature from one religion and that from another, to piece together a doctrinal system which would bear some resemblance to Christianity. But do you not see that the religion which we have thus conjured up has no historical reality? It never was the religion of any definite people. Part of it was believed here and part there, but the whole was never believed anywhere. It is a mosaic we have ourselves constructed, a mere figment of our fancy, a ghostly and non-existent thing. There may be some who imagine that Jesus might have constructed His teaching after that eclectic fashion; that, knowing what Confucius had taught in China, Buddha in

India, Zoroaster in Persia, and Plato in Greece, He selected the best out of all these and other systems of thought, and wove them into a new one. But I know of no scholar who believes that Christianity had such an origin, because no one believes that Jesus had the universal knowledge which that theory assumes. It is at once the wonder and the glory of the humiliation to which the Son of God stooped in the Incarnation that, so far as knowledge was concerned, He chose to become even as we. In entering into our humanity, He condescended also to our ignorance, and what He came to know He chose to learn by the same mental and spiritual processes which we have to employ. And so He grew in wisdom as well as in stature. Accordingly, to assume that He had a knowledge of other religions save such as could have come to him, and therefore to any other thoughtful Galilean peasant, by perfectly natural means, is to do violence to the facts of His incarnate experience. Moreover, even if we could believe that by some supernatural gift Jesus was aware of what all other religious teachers had said, and made His system of doctrine an amalgam of theirs, the religious genius which fastened instinctively upon the best elements in each separate faith and fused those borrowed fragments into a new and distinctive religion, would be scarcely inferior to the genius which was necessary for the creation of Christianity without any such borrowing from without.

But that theory need not detain us, because I know of no critic, friendly or hostile, who propounds it. What is claimed by some—and here we come at close grips with the subject—is that Jesus by perfectly natural means knew what was being taught by certain other religions, and that He, boldly appropriating their message, announced it as His own. Now, I readily admit that there is one religion of which that statement is in measure true, namely, Judaism. Christianity is not a perfectly independent growth. It has its roots in Judaism. Our Lord was a member of that race which for centuries had been in a special degree the recipients of the Divine Revelation. In entering that race, He entered also into possession of its Scriptures, its sacred traditions, its ethical and religious beliefs. And yet Christianity is more than a new edition of Judaism. The age-long antagonism of the Jewish people to Christianity is sufficient evidence that they at least have not so conceived it. No doubt some of Christ's sayings are to be found in the Jewish Talmud. The Rabbi Hillel, for example, is credited with the saying, 'What is unpleasing to thee, do not to thy neighbour. This is the whole law; all the rest is commentary.' That is a noble saying, though I would remark, in passing, that it lacks the breadth of the Golden Rule as enunciated by Jesus. Hillel's maxim is negative in form, and therefore limited in content. It is in effect, 'Don't do to your neighbour the evil which you would not

have him do to you.' But Christ's maxim is positive and all-embracing: 'All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. And that difference is typical. Some of you may remember Wellhausen's caustic answer to those who affirmed that all that Jesus said was to be found in the Talmud. 'Yes,' replied the German scholar, 'all, and a great deal besides.' The point of that retort will be perfectly obvious to any one who attempts to delve through the Talmud. I can conceive of no exercise more dreary and unprofitable, for the stray nuggets of gold which you find here and there are embedded in a mass of childish trivialities. If you are tempted to think that Christianity was the product of Rabbinism, read the Talmud, and you will soon be undeceived.

Nothing is more impressive than the sharp contrast which, as regards both the mode and the content of His teaching, Jesus presented to the rabbis. What struck men who heard Him was His accent of authority. Unlike the rabbis, whose constant appeal was to precedent and tradition, He was no mumblor of other men's sayings. He speaks as if He recognized no master greater than Himself. His ideas are born in the fires of personal conviction, and His words have the indefinable air of personal authority. 'They said to you of old time . . . but I say unto you,' that is how He introduces the new law which was to nullify and supersede the old. And, as regards the matter of Christ's teaching,

read, if you have patience enough, the thirty-nine chapters under which the rabbis classified possible violations of the Sabbatic Law. Follow each type of offence into its divisions and subdivisions, and watch, too, how, when the rabbis had thus entangled themselves in a mesh of detailed trivialities, they by some verbal quibble sought to evade the very regulations they had devised. How different and loftier is the region we enter when we hear Christ's simple statements: 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.' 'It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day.' Other illustrations of Christ's distinction from Judaism could be adduced, but I content myself with saying that, while Judaism is particular, Jesus is universal; where it lays down laws, He enunciates principles; where it insists upon an outward conformity to rule, He demands an inward rectitude of spirit; where it imposes a system, He seeks to create a personal affection. And therein He shows His moral supremacy and the uniqueness of His message. While of His times, He is also beyond them; a Jew, He is above racial limitations; a teacher of Israel, He is the prophet of humanity.

Christianity, then, is not Judaism tricked out in a new dress. The new faith is an advance upon the old. Christianity, as the Epistle to the Hebrews seeks to teach us, represents the final and perfect religion of which Judaism was but the shadow and the preparation. Now I come to another comparison,

on which we must linger awhile, because it is here that those who most violently assail the originality of Jesus have entrenched themselves. I refer to the resemblances between Christianity and Buddhism. These, it must be admitted, are sufficiently striking to deserve investigation ; but ere we examine them, I would recall the twofold principle I laid down. I ventured to affirm that any one claiming that Christianity is but the republication of another religion must not simply show that in all essentials there is a likeness between the two, but must indicate also a path by which a knowledge of this other religion reached the mind of Jesus. A system of religious ideas like Buddhism does not pass from India to Palestine by supernatural magic. If it travelled thither at all, it must have journeyed by paths that we can trace ; and if it reached the mind of Jesus, it must have been familiar to other Jewish thinkers. By what route, then, is Buddhism thought to have come ? Some think that it had direct contact with Judaism, and one critic, greatly daring, says, 'There is good reason to suppose that the Buddhists, who were the first and the most successful of all missionaries, reached Egypt . . . and Palestine, and made their influence felt.' 'There is good reason to suppose' no such thing. I should like the critic who makes that bold assertion to produce his evidence for it. All the facts that I have been able to discover point to a directly opposite conclusion. Buddhism was in its spirit a missionary

religion, and the course of its propagation has been fairly well traced. What we find is that it was not until the beginning of the third century B.C. that, having spread through India and Ceylon, it ventured into the regions beyond. But the limits of its advance towards the West have been determined with some degree of precision. Its missionaries penetrated into Persia and Bactria ; but we have absolutely no evidence that they ever got as far West as the Jewish colonies in the valley of the Euphrates, much less does it appear that they ever reached Palestine itself.

But may not travellers and traders have circulated a knowledge of Buddha and his teaching? Well, if they have, we have yet to discover them. We are told of an ambassador named Megasthenes who, about the year 300 B.C., lived for some time at the court of the Indian king and wrote an account of the people. But he makes no mention of Buddha, and the religious sects whom he does describe are declared by so high an authority on Indian matters as the late Professor Max Müller to belong to the Brahmans. Yet again, if there was one place in the West where we might expect Buddhism to be known, it was Egypt. Alexandria was the natural meeting-place of West and East, and into its markets there flowed the products of India. But from that quarter we get no information. Two Roman historians, living in the first century B.C., still have, when dealing with India,

nothing to tell us beyond what Megasthenes had said long before ; and one of them, Strabo, writing, I would have you remember, just about the time of the birth of Christ, openly complains that the commerce of the Red Sea brought with it no information. 'The merchants who visited India,' he says, 'were few, they were uneducated persons, and contributed nothing to the exact knowledge of the land to which they sailed.'

A century later things were no better. Pliny tells of a Red Sea tax-collector, who, no doubt greatly to the joy of the taxpayers, was, when sailing off the coast of Arabia, carried by a storm to Ceylon, then, as now, a stronghold of Buddhism. From that involuntary expedition he brought back with him certain information concerning Ceylon which Pliny records, but which is as curious as it is inaccurate. Well might Pliny say of India, like Strabo before him, that 'the merchants who sailed thither went for the sake of gain and not of knowledge' ! Such commerce as Alexandria had with India was an interchange of things, not of ideas. And if in that busy centre Buddhism was not known, it is simply idle to assume that a Jewish peasant, living in a sequestered village among the hills of Galilee, knew of this alien faith and managed under a new name to foist it upon his unsuspecting fellow countrymen. It is scarcely necessary to add that, if he had known it, others in Judaea and Galilee must have known it too ; and among a nation so exclusive and parochial

as the Jews, all that would have been needed to crush the new message was for some one to denounce it as a foreign importation. This charge was never levelled against Jesus. Must not that be because it was not true?

But if there was no direct channel between Buddha and Christ, may there not have been an indirect one? 'Yes,' say our opponents. 'Jesus was a disciple of John the Baptist, John was an Essene, the Essenes derived their ideas and practices from Persia, and the Persians had been evangelized by Buddhist missionaries.' And so communication between Jesus and Buddha is established, and, hey presto! the thing is done. But is it? Let us look a little critically at this chain of connexion. Let us test a few of its links. And, to begin with, was Jesus a disciple of the Baptist? He accepted baptism, it is true, at the hands of His forerunner; but the narrative makes it plain that John did not regard that rite as having for Jesus the same meaning as it had for others. And apart from the fact that they both announced the kingdom of God, what points of contact as regards teaching and mode of life are there between them? John shunned men, Jesus sought them; John was an ascetic, Jesus came 'eating and drinking'; John preached judgement, Jesus grace. Clearly we are dealing with two careers which are radically distinct, and the boasted connexion breaks down at the very first link.

And what about John the Baptist and the Essenes? So far as I can discover, the only points of resemblance which he had to them were that he was an ascetic and lived near to the Jordan. That he was a member of that order cannot be true, if Philo is to be trusted; for that writer tells us that, in spite of the variety of rulers who had governed Palestine, no Essene had ever come into collision with any of them—a statement which, in view of John's tragic death, cannot be maintained concerning him. And if John was not an Essene, much less was Jesus. Our chief authority on the Essenes is Josephus, who was at one time a member of their order. They were a sect of Jewish monks living chiefly in a settlement near to the shores of the Dead Sea. Their obscurity may be inferred from the fact that their name is never mentioned in either the New Testament or the Talmud. The order had small colonies in Jerusalem and other cities; but even there the Essenes by strict regulations kept themselves from the contamination of the outer world. They engaged chiefly in agriculture, and indulged in frequent ablutions. Indeed, they never sat down to a meal without having bathed themselves and put on linen garments. These washings arose with them, as also with the Pharisees, from the desire for ceremonial purity, a desire which, it has been truly said, amounted to 'an absorbing passion.' They even went so far in their scrupulousness as to avoid con-

tact with the probationers of the order. To the same cause must also be attributed their practice of celibacy. Another very pronounced characteristic was their scrupulous observance of the Sabbath, in which again they went beyond the Pharisees; for they felt it wrong even to move a vessel, carry a coin, or in some cases get out of bed. They disliked animal sacrifices, and to that extent disapproved of the temple worship; but in other respects they were strict adherents of the Mosaic law. Such, then, were the leading principles of the Essenes. They exhibit nothing that cannot be accounted for by Judaism. Even the antipathy to animal sacrifices, so far from being an echo of the Buddhist reluctance to take life, arose, as Philo says, because 'they regarded a reverent mind as the only true sacrifice.' That conviction, instead of being an importation, can be traced in the more spiritual Judaism as far back as Jeremiah, and is found in Ps. li. Essenism was Pharisaism written in capitals. It represented an extreme though in some minor respects a commendable type of Jewish piety.

There were other features in the faith of these Jewish monks which were doubtless of foreign extraction, and to them I will refer in a moment. Meanwhile, who, with this broad outline of their principles before him, and knowing at the same time the teaching and practice of Jesus, can seriously contend that Jesus was a member of that order? How can that be possible, when at every important

point He contradicts them? The Essenes were ultra-Pharisaic in their observance of the Sabbath ; Jesus set even the Pharisaic restrictions at defiance. They indulged in frequent ablutions, especially before meals ; the disciples of Jesus were attacked for eating with unwashed hands, and their Master defended them. They kept from contact with strangers and even with the novices of their own community ; Jesus plunged into the current of things, mingling freely with men, and eating even with 'publicans and sinners.' They practised a rigid asceticism ; Jesus, 'a gluttonous man and a winebibber,' was criticized because He was not an ascetic. As Lightfoot says, 'He whose first exercise of power is recorded to have been the multiplication of wine at a festive entertainment, and whose last meal was attended with the drinking of wine and the eating of flesh, could only have excited the pity, if not the indignation, of these rigid abstainers.' There are a few points where Christianity and Essenism seem to resemble one another, such as the community of goods and the common meal, which the Church at Jerusalem practised for a while, and also the partial approval of celibacy. But a closer investigation shows that in the Christian Church these things sprang from different motives, and represented a wholly different spirit. Nothing to my mind can be more certain than that Jesus was not an Essene. If any further evidence for that view be needed, I would ask how it was that the Essenes never became the objects of

Pharisaic persecution. Instead of being persecuted, they were quietly tolerated by the Pharisees and even accorded a settlement in Jerusalem. How was it, on the other hand, that Christ and Christianity met with Pharisaic hostility from the first? Read the story of the Gospels, and you will see the reason. It was the freedom of Jesus in His observance of the Sabbath, His hostility to the ceremonial regulations and traditional precepts of the Pharisees which excited their hatred and opposition. Yet these were the very points on which the Pharisees and the Essenes were at one. The Pharisaic hostility to Jesus is, therefore, only to be accounted for on the ground that, while the Essenes were so akin to the Pharisees that they could be tolerated as friends, Jesus stood so far from either sect that for Him and for His teaching there could be no quarter.

With such sharp differences between Jesus and the Essenes on the main principles of the order, I need say but little on the minor elements of their creed. They looked upon the body as a sort of prison-house of the soul, and sought, therefore, by a limitation of their needs to prepare themselves for their final emancipation from the flesh. Hence also they differed from the Pharisees in not believing in the resurrection of the body. In addition they seem to have had a highly developed angelology, and there is a certain tradition which, though the inference is disputed, seems to attribute to them the worship of the rising sun. It is generally admitted

that these elements of the Essenic creed were due to foreign influences, and the source has been defined as either Persia or Greece. For reasons, which I may not stay to discuss, Persia is probably the true solution. Persian influences had been at work all over the Orient for several centuries, and some elements of Zoroastrianism had filtered even into Judaism. All that Essenism had done was to admit of a slightly larger measure of that influence than had Pharisaism. The theory that would take us beyond Parseeism into Buddhism, and find there the source of these extraneous features, does violence to the facts. The parallels between Buddhism and Essenism are not such as to justify that view. Both systems had their monks; but while the Essene monks are workers, those of Buddhism are mendicants. Again, while the transmigration of souls is a cardinal doctrine of Buddhism, it has no place in the faith of the Essenes. But I need not labour these points. It must be perfectly obvious to any unprejudiced mind that the chain of connexion between Jesus and Buddha, which was held up before us with such assurance, turns out on investigation to be a very loose and disconnected thing indeed, something devised by the fancy rather than shaped from facts. The only conclusion that is left to us is that neither directly nor indirectly can we trace any communication between Buddha of India and Jesus of Galilee.

I should like, however, before I leave the question,

to submit it to one more test, and that shall be a direct comparison of the two religions represented by those names. I will only take two points; but they shall relate, not to minor details, but to essentials. It will, I imagine, be freely conceded that the central element of any religion is its conception of God. Let us see what Buddhism and Christianity have each to say on that matter. Happily there is no way of mistaking the teaching of Jesus concerning God. To Him the Supreme Being is a Father, infinitely tender, gracious, and good. He is the very embodiment of love, manifesting kindness even to the unthankful and the evil, giving good gifts unto them that ask Him, and welcoming even the most degraded and sinful to His feet. There is nowhere in the whole range of religious thought such a beautiful conception of God as is afforded to us by Jesus. I know that some peoples, such as, for example, our Norse ancestors, had ventured to conceive of the Supreme Being as the All-Father; but how far the conception so denoted lagged behind that of Jesus! Similarity of name does not always imply similarity of idea. There is fatherhood in the slum as well as in the home of refinement and love; but what a different meaning the word 'father' must convey to the child of the one home as compared with that which it bears to the neglected offspring of the other! The name which Jesus gave to God is not so unique as the meaning which He put into it. And the sun is

not more central to the solar system than is the Fatherhood of God to the teaching of Jesus. It gleams forth everywhere; it is the underlying element of all His teaching; it is the heart and substance of His message.

Now turn to Buddhism, and what do you find? Why, the astonishing fact emerges that it has no God at all. Buddhism is that strange thing, a religion without a God. The place of a deity seems to be taken by an impersonal principle called Karma, a sort of law of necessity which links together an act and its fruits, and ensures that both good and evil deeds receive their deserts. That was the God which Buddha offered, and it was so unsatisfying that it led Buddhists ultimately to deify Buddha himself, and make him an object of worship. I am quite aware that a few thinkers, among them Mr. Lillie, hold that Buddha, when he proclaimed his new religion, took over into it the main elements of Brahmanism. But, even if that contention be true, the cold, passionless, pantheistic abstraction which does duty for a God in Brahmanism is the very antithesis of the conception of Jesus. Moreover, even Mr. Lillie is forced to admit that later on—about the beginning of the Christian era—a great cleavage took place in Buddhism, and that the great majority of Buddha's followers discarded that fragment of the Brahmanic faith. A doctrine so easily shed can never have been more than a subsidiary and unimportant

element in Buddhism. How different it is with Christ's doctrine of the Fatherhood, and how illogical it seems, in face of this contrast, to talk of 'an Indian origin to primitive Christianity'!

My other point of comparison between the two systems is their doctrine of self-denial. That appears in both, and at first sight seems identical. But when you examine more closely, you find that it springs from different roots and has different implications. Buddha's religion has been not unfittingly described as one of pessimism. It had its birth in an overwhelming sense of the misery of existence. Life meant labour and sorrow, and the evil of this present life pursued man into and through a great series of existences, in which the same being might be now a prince and now a peasant, here a man and there an animal. The only cure that Buddha could see for this endless succession of suffering was the cessation of existence itself. Only by breaking the cycle of births could man snap the fetter which bound him to pain. And the way to escape from life was to crush the desires, since it is for their sakes that men are disposed to cling to it. So said Buddha: 'Deny yourselves, repress desire of every kind, cultivate passivity, aim to live a passionless life. So, when the last desire is dead, you shall pass into Nirvana, and the chain of existence shall be broken.' How different this is from Christ's doctrine! He, too preaches self-denial, not, however, as a means of self-extinction, but as a mode of self-

development ; not that we may escape from life, but that we may rise into the life which is 'life indeed.' 'Life' is one of the great words of Jesus. That which it stands for with Him is not a thing to be dreaded but something to be desired. He has come to give it abundantly, and He joyfully proclaims the secret of its acquisition. For to Him the highest good is not the ending but the mending of self, the realization of our true nature through its complete harmony with God. And so, whilst He calls for self-denial, it is only for the repression of those passions and desires which are secondary or sinful. Not all desire, as with Buddha, but sinful desire comes under the ban of Jesus. And this is because He sees, as He looks round upon human life, that its great curse is not suffering but sin. Suffering is there too, and Christ pities it, and His miracles are one sustained protest against it. But with a surer diagnosis than Buddha's He sees that the only real way to remove the suffering is to get rid of the sin out of which so much of it grows. And so the self-repression which is to Buddha the coveted pathway out of life, is to Christ the delectable road into it and into the realization of its supreme blessedness. Yet men talk of 'an Indian origin to primitive Christianity' !

No ! Jesus was not a disciple of Buddha. And if the great saint of India is not competent to be Christ's master, where else shall we find a teacher who is ? Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, Plato, seers

of the East and prophets of the West—ah! they may all pass before us, but no one is worthy to be matched with Him. Not that they had nothing to say which is worthy of our respect; for they, too, in their measure were prophets of God, and it is an altogether narrow and mistaken view of inspiration which would exclude them from the circle of its operation. 'The Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world' shone in them, and made them lights in the midst of the darkness of their nations and times. Our conception of God as doing most for His chosen people does not involve the notion that He did nothing for anybody else. They were the flock of His pasture, but His other sheep in 'outer cold' were not forgotten. Israel's moral receptiveness made it possible for God to reveal more to them than to others; but even the nations which sat in darkness were granted such light as their moral development made them able and willing to receive. Far be it from us to think that

the cisterns of those Hebrew brains  
Drew dry the springs of the All-Knower's thought!

He could not send to other nations Moses, Isaiah, or Jesus; but such messengers as they were able to receive they had. One feels how true are Lowell's words:

God sends His teachers unto every age,  
To every clime, . . . nor gives the realm of truth  
Into the selfish rule of one sole race.

The presence of valuable ethical and spiritual elements in all the great religions of the world confirms that view ; and to me they are a help to faith instead of a hindrance. Were these foregleams of Christianity absent from India, China, and elsewhere, I should somehow feel that these lands had been neglected by God, and that He had not acted towards them quite as the Universal Father ought to have done. But when I read the story of Comparative Religion, I see that nowhere has He left Himself without witness. Among every people He has had His prophets. In every land the Divine Spirit has been at work. Even in the poorest soil there have been sown some wholesome germs of truth. So I feel that God does not belie His name ; but that the Being who has thus given some light to all and withheld His love from none, is indeed the Father of all men, and worthy to be Lord unto the ends of the earth.

And yet we turn to Christ as the One in whom God has uttered His best and highest word. There have been many prophets, but only one Son. And He, because of His unique moral insight, has told us what no other lips have said. It was because He saw more, that He revealed more. He has spoken the last word about God, for who can declare, or even conceive, a Being more gracious and tender, more worthy at once of our love and worship, than the Father who stands unveiled to us in the gospel ? He has spoken the highest word concerning ethics ;

for what loftier standard of goodness can there be than that which He enjoined and exemplified? And as regards the future, the dark, mysterious future, we feel that about that too Jesus has uttered the surest and most hopeful message. So we hail Him as the world's greatest Teacher; and because we have tested the truth of His teaching by seeking to obey it—and no man has the right to reject Christianity until he has honestly tried to live it—we, when voices challenge Christ's supremacy, and other teachers seek to allure us, only turn to Him with a deepened sense of His peerlessness, and we say, as did Peter of old, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.'

We search the world for truth; we cull  
The good, the pure, the beautiful;  
And, weary seekers of the best,  
We come back laden from our quest,  
To find that all the sages said  
Is in the book our mothers read,  
And all our treasures of old thought  
In His harmonious fullness wrought  
Who gathers in one sheaf complete  
The scattered blades of God's own wheat,  
The common growth that maketh good  
His all-embracing Fatherhood.

# ‘Can the Gospel History be Trusted?’

BY

REV. W. F. ADENEY, M.A., D.D.

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CHRISTIANITY comes to us as an historical religion. Of course any religion that touches the life of a people enters into the history of that people; and every religion that has endured for any time has a story, if we can only discover it, or should have a story, of its origin, its development, and too often its degeneration and decay. But when I speak of Christianity as an historical religion, I mean that it is a religion which springs from history, which is rooted in events, which is based on facts; so that if the history were myth, and what we take to be facts were dreams, then the religion would only be a house without foundation, a castle in the air. Now, when we want to know the grounds for believing in the historical origin of our Christian faith, we are directed in various ways. I am only going to speak of one of these ways this afternoon—that of the facts concerning the life of Jesus Christ recorded in the four Gospels.

I do not want you to suppose that I regard these four Gospels as the only foundations of our faith.

The writings of the apostle Paul are earlier than all the Gospels, and the great facts concerning the very existence of the Christian Church and the influence of Christianity upon the world all come in to help to substantiate the position. But here is one exceedingly important line of thought, that which deals with the most ancient records of the life of Jesus Christ; and I ask you to come with me into what must necessarily be a very brief investigation into our grounds of assurance that these documents give to us valid, trustworthy history. It is an old, old story. It comes to us down the ages, across so many centuries, nearly two thousand years, I do not wonder that some people hesitate and fear, saying, 'We cannot really be assured of the actual truth; this must be indeed lost in the mists of antiquity.'

Let us see. In order to be sure that any history is trustworthy, we want to know two things about it: we want to know whether the writers were well informed, and we want to know whether they were honest. If they were not well informed, their honesty goes for nothing, because they may have been themselves deluded. If they were well informed, but not honest, their information only makes their falsehood the more guilty; it is no help to us. We want, then, to know these two things: first, that our historians were well informed; and, secondly, that they were honest, that they made a truthful use of their information.

We will look at each of these subjects; and first concerning the question whether they were well informed. How can we get at them—we who live so far away from their time? If when you are in London you make a visit to the British Museum, and just after entering turn sharp to the right into the King's Library, and for once pass the Royal Autographs and City Charters for something more valuable even than they, you will see in a case a manuscript volume; it is what is called the Alexandrian MS. of the Scriptures. This MS. has been tested by the science that bears the name Paleography, a science that has nothing to do with Christianity as such, or with any advocacy of religion, but is purely scientific, and has been carried so far that the age or at least the period of documents can be determined by the style of writing. Paleography has pronounced the Alexandrian MS. to have been written in the fifth century of the Christian era. At Rome and at St. Petersburg there are found what are called the Vatican and the Sinaitic MSS., which this same science has determined to be of the fourth century. Here, then, we have these actual documents before us, and it is not a question of nearly two thousand years: at one stride we have crossed fifteen hundred of them; we are back in the reign of Constantine the Great, and we have simply to know how the Gospel story came down to that period,

We go a little farther back into the third cen-

tury, to Alexandria in Egypt, and we find there a brilliant, scholarly thinker and author among the early Christians, whose name is Origen. We see him writing commentaries on nearly every book of the Bible. Many of these have been preserved, and among them commentaries on our Gospels. Origen not only comments on the Gospels, but he discusses textual criticism, comparing MSS., as Westcott and Hort have done later. Here, then, he not only has the books, but has them come down to him from an earlier period, in various MSS. About this time, or a little earlier, quite early indeed in the third century, farther west on the shore of the Mediterranean, at Carthage, there was Tertullian writing in Latin, using a Latin version of the Gospels, testing that by the Greek, and disputing the translation in some points—facts plainly proving not only that they existed, but that they had been turned into Latin before his time.

Now we will cross the border between the third century and the second, and come over into Europe again, to the city of Lyons. There we meet with a famous man named Irenaeus, who about the year 180 was made the pastor of the Church of Lyons; but he had lived in his early days in Asia Minor. Writing to one of his old college friends, Irenaeus reminds him of those old days, and how they both of them used to sit at the feet of a venerable teacher named Polycarp. An old man was Polycarp then; but Irenaeus remarks that old men remember

well the scenes of their youth, and well does he recollect, and his friend should recollect, how Polycarp told them that he knew John the disciple of the Lord, and what tales he used to tell about John. Irenaeus, Polycarp, John! Here is a close linking of personal connexion. Irenaeus ought to know, therefore, what he is talking about, if he has anything to say concerning the Gospels. Happily his writings have been preserved, and in them he frequently quotes from our four Gospels; indeed, he makes a quaint remark about these books, for he says that, not only are they four, but they *must* be four, and they could not be less than four, because there are four zones and four principal winds! I do not ask you to accept his logic; I think this is an instance of how people who have a good case sometimes spoil it by trying to prove it. I only give you this curious bit of reasoning on the part of Irenaeus, to show that in those days the four Gospels were well known, well accepted, and well established, so that even superstitious reverence had grown up about them.

We will now go back twenty years earlier, and travel as far as the Euphrates. There we meet an Assyrian, whose name is Tatian. This man takes the four Gospels, and combines them into a Harmony for the use of the Church at Edessa. So, indeed, several ancient writers tell us. But a very confident man, the author of a book called *Supernatural Religion*, which raised a great stir thirty years ago,

said that Tatian might have made a Harmony, but he could not have made it out of our four Gospels, for they had not all been written by his day, and certainly even those that had been written had not obtained a position such as that action implies. Dr. Lightfoot tried to argue against this assertion. But the misfortune was that Tatian's Harmony was lost, and therefore the question was left open to speculation. Since then, unfortunately for the author of *Supernatural Religion*, Tatian's Harmony has been recovered. It has been found in an Armenian text, and also in Arabic text; it has been translated into English, and I have the book here. If I had time, I could read it to you, and show you how it begins with the first words of St. John's Gospel, 'In the beginning was the Word,' and goes on weaving in bits of narrative from Matthew and Mark and Luke, combining them together exactly as those old church writers had said, proving to us that Tatian did use our four Gospels away there by the Euphrates about the year 160.

Now, Tatian was the disciple of a famous missionary named Justin Martyr, who wrote in defence of Christianity. When Justin quoted from the Gospels, he called them 'The Memoirs of the Apostles.' Some people have said these books were not our Gospels; they were some earlier gospels, because they bore this curious title. But I put it to you, Is it likely that Justin Martyr the master used some other gospels, though we know Tatian

his disciple used these four? And yet you have no hint of what these other memoirs of the apostles were! Justin Martyr actually says that 'The Memoirs of the Apostles' were 'called Gospels.' The fact is, he was writing for the Roman Senate, who would not understand the somewhat technical word, we may almost say the cant phrase, the phrase used in the religious school; so he simply described his books in terms of his own. But, it is objected, Justin Martyr tells us several things about Jesus Christ that are not in our Gospels, and therefore he must have been using some other books. He tells us, for instance, that Jesus was born in a cave; you know that has passed into church tradition, but you will find it first in Justin Martyr. True; but whenever he tells us anything that is not in our Gospels, he never says it is in 'The Memoirs of the Apostles': on the other hand, whenever he mentions anything as in 'The Memoirs of the Apostles,' you may find that in one or other of our Gospels. Is not that a pretty plain proof that his 'Memoirs' were our Gospels? Ah, but, it is said, his words do not exactly tally in all cases with the words of our Gospels. No, he quotes inaccurately; perhaps because he quotes from memory. I have heard inaccurate quotations on the part of people who have possessed printed Bibles: that the people who had only cumbrous MSS. should quote inaccurately is not surprising. Justin quotes from the Old Testament inaccurately.

Now we know he had the Old Testament ; of course that came from many years before. So the verbal inaccuracy into which he falls in quoting the Old Testament proves to us that if he is inaccurate with the New Testament that is no indication that he is using other documents.

Now we will go one step farther back. There was living in Asia Minor, in the valley of the Lycas, at the city called Hierapolis, a man named Papias, not remarkable for his ability, but certainly remarkable for his associations. He had a hunger for knowledge, and he tells us that when anybody came to him of the older generation who had known the apostles he would make inquiries about them. In particular he declares that he used to ask what John 'says'—in the present tense—implying that when he made these inquiries John was living. So close back, then, are we to the apostolic age. This man Papias wrote a book called *Expositions of the Oracles of the Lord*. It has been lost ; perhaps, like Tatian's *Harmony*, some day it may be found. There are Christian scholars searching in the East among tombs and monasteries for lost books : and if you will allow me a parenthesis, I should like to say that you ought to give these Christian scholars all credit for their honesty ; for if they had a suspicion that our faith was based on a delusion, would they not be afraid of discoveries in the tombs and among the monasteries, lest they should bring something to light that would prove it all to be a mistake? But,

as far as I know, those people who are not believers in Jesus Christ are not taking any trouble to search for these lost documents, and only Christian believers are hunting amongst the tombs and monasteries to bring more facts to light, because what they want is truth. If Christianity is not true, it should go; if it is true, the more light we have the more shall we be assured of the truth of it.

But this book has been lost. Some fragments of it, however, remain. In one which has been preserved Papias tells us that the evangelist Mark was 'the companion and interpreter of Peter.' There you get right back to our second Gospel, the fundamental Gospel, upon which Matthew and Luke were constructed. I scarcely know how any history can be better authenticated as far as our believing that the writers were in touch with the times.

Let us go on now to the second question, which I must treat but briefly. Granted that we have got back to the times, and to men in touch with the events, and therefore well informed, were they honest? Now, we have the picture of Jesus in these Gospels. If no such person as Jesus ever lived, how was that picture painted? If the model was not before the artists, how did the artists conceive the picture? They must have invented it; but they would not have wilfully invented it. The days of the old crude criticism that said the Gospels were forged by priests are gone. I do not think that

many sensible people say that now. Really it is impossible that the Gospels could have been created by priests. Do priests find much comfort in the Gospels? Spain is the most priest-ridden country in Europe, and there the priests do all that they can to keep the Gospels out of the country, because when you read the Gospels you get no excuse for priestism. Then how can the priests have invented books which are their own condemnation? But could they have been imagined in some way as beautiful pictures and stories? Well, we have *Jeanie Deans*, the creation of Scott; we have *Rochester*, the creation of Charlotte Brontë; we have *Hamlet* and many another wonderful figure, the creation of our great national genius, Shakespeare. But here is One who in the originality and the wonder of His character stands apart and above all other lives and characters the world has ever seen, and who has put His seal and His stamp upon the civilization of the world from His time downwards. Where, then, are we to find the author who out-Shakespeares Shakespeare with a genius that can create a character like that? You go to these Gospels, but you find no Shakespeare amongst the writers. The literary style is meagre and bare. I am sure a newspaper editor would complain of the baldness of it. If he had sent a reporter to the Crucifixion, he would have got a very different description of what happened there from our Gospel accounts. These simple writers merely chronicle

bare events. There is no genius about them ; they must be honest, for they could not invent what they record. The Gospels are too great for them ; the evangelists are too small to have created the picture of Christ.

Two other things I will just mention here. First, the evangelists narrate things that the later Church would not have said about Christ, such as this, 'Why callest thou Me good? none is good save one, that is God'; and again, 'Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even . . . the Son'; and this, 'I can of Mine own self do nothing.' Now, it is the greatest perversity of criticism for some one to say, as an eccentric critic has been saying lately, that these and the like are the only true sayings of Christ that have been preserved. You would not say that of any other history or life. The preservation of these self-depreciatory remarks in the Gospels is a testimony to the honesty of the writers. Then, they also chronicle the faults of the early Christians—how one of the apostles betrayed Christ, and another denied Him; how they all forsook Him and fled, and how He complained on one occasion of their little faith.

It may be asked, with these facts before us, 'Why should there be any difficulty in accepting the Gospel story as genuine history?' I suppose many people would not feel much difficulty, if it were not for the miracles. Now, I understand that the question of miracles is to be discussed here,

and I will only touch upon it in passing with this remark, that if these Gospels recorded such miracles as they contain concerning an ordinary man I should not blame you for rejecting them; and to-day I do not ask you to believe in Jesus Christ because of the miracles, but I say if you believe in Jesus Christ it becomes not so difficult afterwards to believe in the miracles. If you tell me that a little child has cut through a bar of iron with a penknife, I cannot believe it; but if you tell me that a bar of iron has been cut through with as much ease as if it were a pat of butter, in an iron-foundry, by an hydraulic chisel, I know very well the thing can happen. If you say all these Gospel wonders came from a commonplace man, then I imagine the stories can only be the outgrowth of superstition; but if the life and work of Jesus Christ indicate that He is more than man, then indeed it is not simply like going from the little child to the factory, it is going from what we know to be human to what is divine, to a power of which we have no conceivable measurement. And really, in these days of telepathy and hypnotism and radium and wireless telegraphy, I think a man must be somewhat presumptuous who ventures to declare what cannot happen when exceptional powers are being put forth.

But there is another difficulty felt by some people: there are discrepancies, differences between the statements in the Gospels. Let me mention one.

It is said that Jesus Christ was going out of the city of Jericho, when a blind man was by the wayside and was hindered by His disciples, but treated kindly by Christ and healed. Two of the Gospels say that; but the third Gospel, Luke, describes it as while Jesus was coming into Jericho. Here, then, is a discrepancy, and some people will say that if the Gospels contradict one another like that they will fling the whole story over. I do not know what faith you may have in the newspaper, but I never knew anything fully, and then saw a newspaper report of it which was perfectly correct; and yet I read the newspaper, for I am not such a sceptic as to believe that its reporting is not true in the main. I remember a deplorable accident happening at Hampstead Heath a few years ago. One Whit Monday there came on a shower of rain, and the crowd rushed into the station and down the staircase, jamming themselves together and piling themselves up one upon another until a number were suffocated. At the inquest respectable witnesses swore that the gate at the bottom of the stairs was locked, so that nobody could get out. Equally respectable witnesses swore that the gate at the bottom of the stairs was wide open, and that the people could have got out if they had not crushed one another before they reached it. To this day nobody knows whether that gate was open or locked; but, alas! everybody concerned knows that the people were killed, that the dreadful thing

happened. Now, if you will use some sense of proportion, I think that you will see that it is much the same with these discrepancies in the Gospels. Differences there will be, and must be, in the details, but the main story is essentially the same; and certainly the portrait of Jesus Christ, His life, His death, His resurrection, His character and teaching that come to us in this fourfold way, show us the one Lord and Saviour. Of course in a sense we may say this is an argument of probability. In all life we have to deal with probability; but I venture to assert that if you follow such lines as I have tried to indicate, and study the matter carefully and impartially for yourselves, you may well come to the conclusion that the probability is immeasurably in favour of the substantial accuracy of these Gospel records.

I should like to add this final word by way of practical suggestion. I should like to suggest to anybody who wants to know Jesus Christ that the true source of the knowledge is in these Gospels. A little while ago somebody wrote to one of the papers, saying, 'We want a good cheap Life of Christ.' I thought he was a sensible man who replied a day or two later, 'You can get the four best Lives of Christ for a penny, and any one of them for a halfpenny,' because these original Lives of Christ are after all the very best. I would suggest to people who want to know Christ, that it is not necessary to understand the mysterious and

metaphysical Second Person of the Trinity as He is expounded by the theologians ; but I would also say that it is not desirable to be satisfied with that superficial and sentimental idea of Jesus which is represented unhappily by some of our popular revival hymns. Too little vigour, too little manliness, too little depth and strength, do we find in that character. But go back to these Gospels, take your own photograph of that wonderful life as it is there set forth in the first instance. See this Jesus Christ, terrible to hypocrites, winsome to little children ; see Him denouncing wrongdoers, but pardoning penitents ; see Him in tender human brotherhood, and yet in awful divine majesty—this Carpenter from Nazareth, this Prophet of Galilee, this brother Man sitting at the tables of His fellow men, this Son of God, Saviour of the world, King of kings. See if He is not worthy of your homage. Try if He will not respond to your trust.

# ‘Is There a Heavenly Father?’

BY

REV. SAMUEL E. KEEBLE.

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**I**N presence of the moral indifference of Nature and the myriad injustices of human life, modern men seem very ready to impugn the character of God. It is not that they disbelieve in His existence; but they have their doubts as to His goodness and justice, His fairness and fatherliness.

It is strange that many who do this do not seem to see that to attribute injustice to God is virtually to deny His existence; for it is to attribute imperfection, moral imperfection, to the Perfect One. The character and the existence of God stand or fall together. Our alternative really is either ‘the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,’ or no God at all. But men are not governed by logic, especially in the realm of feeling, and, whilst repudiating atheism, will still go on crudely questioning the justice and goodness of the Most High God. To a few, no doubt, it is quite a congenial occupation, because it reverses a man’s customary relation to God. From being normally the judged, the person in the dock, he enjoys the sensation of judging, of being on the bench and judging the Great Judge.

In addition to that, it gratifies man's pride of intellect and heart to arraign the Almighty, and imagine himself morally superior to his Maker. But the majority who question the justice of God do so from higher motives—as a consequence of reflection, observation, and the bitter experience of life. They groan under

the heavy and the weary weight  
Of all this unintelligible world.

They would fain believe in a Heavenly Father, but feel the difficulties too great.

The first thing to remember is that the problem is no new one. The apparent 'injustice of things' has been felt in all ages of the world, but without discarding belief in the benevolence of God. The problem of physical evil is perhaps greater to us because of the revelations of modern science; but the problem of moral evil, by far the graver of the two, was infinitely greater and more painful to our forefathers, yet they did not relinquish belief in the goodness of God. It is less difficult for us to believe in the Fatherhood of God, yet we are the greater doubters! Belief in the Fatherhood of God grew up amidst all the tyranny, injustice, and suffering of the declining Roman Empire. We do not groan under a tithe of the wrongs endured by the ancients; yet we seem to believe less in the goodness of God.

It can hardly be that we are better thinkers than the ancients: the Greek thinkers for example. It is no doubt due to the fact that we to-day are more

morally sensitive, possessing a keener sense of justice, a greater passion for freedom, and a deeper sympathy for undeserved and innocent suffering, conjoined with a more highly developed nervous system, which shrinks instinctively and vicariously from pain.

But whence comes this advanced moral sensitiveness, and what is its import? Is it not itself a proof of the moral nature of God, and an indication that there is a Heavenly Father who is developing by the exigencies and experiences of life and time the moral being of His children? The moral phenomena of Nature, as revealed in the growing conscience and moral being of man, require explanation and an adequate origin. The Power, of which they, in common with all other and lower phenomena, are manifestations, must be itself—Himself—moral, as it is more rational to explain that Power by the higher than by the lower phenomena. It is therefore reasonable to hold that the Power behind phenomena—especially behind the phenomena of an ever-growing and deepening moral sensitiveness in man—is the fountain of all sympathy, justice, and love, and that He imparts these qualities in ever-increasing degree 'as men are able to bear'—in a word, that He is a Heavenly Father, and we are His children. The old Greek poets, Aratus and Cleanthes, quoted by Paul at Athens, believed, as much as this, and wrote, 'We also are His children, or, offspring.'

Moral progress, even in this persistent questioning of the justice of God, is an unconscious tribute to the goodness of God, just because it is moral and because it is progress. A high-spirited lad who mistakenly arraigns the justice of home discipline, into the wisdom of which he is not old enough to enter, and denounces it as 'tyrannical,' rebelling against rule and the established order, is, with all his faults, an illustration of the law of heredity. That passion for justice, and that high spirit, which resents imagined wrong and revolts against fancied tyranny, is a plain proof, not that the lad is right, but that he is the son of his father. In like manner, the modern earnest indictment of the injustice of God is no proof of His injustice; but it is a proof that the objectors are the children of the Heavenly Father who is evolving in them and in human society the moral qualities of justice and love.

But whilst this is true, it is obvious that specific objections made to the justice of God, to the existence of a Heavenly Father, must nevertheless be faced. Those difficulties may be, for clearness and convenience's sake, considered under three heads, although they to some extent overlap. There are difficulties in the physical world, the creaturely world, and the human world. It is strange, to utter another preliminary word, that these objections should be urged most at a time in human history when they have least force, for we are in possession of two clues to them which bring the utmost relief. Those clues are

modern evolutionary science and the Christian religion. The former casts great light on the problem of physical evil, and the latter on the problem of moral evil, and the two together bring immense relief. With these clues in hand, we may be led, if not out of the labyrinth, at least out of darkness into light.

First, the

*Difficulties in the Physical World,*

those difficulties created by the miseries and sufferings entailed upon man and the creature through storm and tempest, fire and flood, earthquake and eruption, those natural convulsions and catastrophes over which, so far, man seems to have no power whatever, and of which he and the creatures are merely helpless victims : such, for instance, as the destruction of Herculaneum and Pompeii, the earthquake at Lisbon, the catastrophe at Krakatoa, the eruption at Martinique. At the last place, in 1902, the town of St. Pierre was overwhelmed by fiery rains and floods from Mount Pelée, and forty thousand inhabitants perished in an hour, the just with the unjust. A wave of atheism is said to succeed every such catastrophe of Nature, and we can understand it. But it is rash and unjustifiable. First of all, these catastrophes occur under physical laws by which alone the earth is made habitable. By their constant operation this planet came into being, and both the earth and all the life upon it are sustained in being. As Dr.

Martineau has said, 'The same laws which are death-dealing for an hour or a day are life-giving for ever.' Now, who are we to criticize the laws by which worlds are brought into and kept in being? Can we affirm that there is a better or even any other way of creating or sustaining them? Are they not worth the occasional sacrifice of human and creaturely life involved in their existence? We think they are, especially as these natural catastrophes are so very occasional.

Then these terrible eruptions may avert worse disasters. Volcanoes are presumably earth's safety-valves, and such eruptions as those of Krakatoa and Mount Pelée may have saved the whole earth, with its hundreds of millions of living beings, from dissipation into dust. The 'few,' forty or a hundred thousand though they may have been, here suffered for the good of the many.

But what, it is naturally asked, of the 'few'? What of the unoffending victims and the sad survivors? The answer to that, in brief, is that sacrifice for others is a law of existence and of progress, doubtless the necessary condition of there being a world at all; and such vicarious suffering evokes virtue and the highest qualities in the human race; and death is not, to the individual, an utter disaster, for there is another life, with just compensations; and there is comfort and help given here to relatives, survivors, and witnesses by the Heavenly Father, as well as warning and education from the dread

events. All these points need to be taken into consideration by the men who declare that these events prove there is no Heavenly Father. One great outstanding fact, in relief of the difficulty, however, is that much suffering and loss of human life arising from natural convulsions is wholly needless. There was no necessity, for instance, for man to dwell among the eternal burnings under the shadow of Vesuvius or upon the slopes of Mount Pelée. Nature warns men off from her stormy capes and seas, and her fire-belching, ice-clad, poison-breathing lands and regions. Men obviously brave these at their peril and upon their own responsibility. If disasters overtake them, they should indict, not the goodness of their Heavenly Father, but their own courage, foolhardiness, or ignorance.

Besides this, there is every prospect that, taught by experience, men will so progress in their knowledge and mastery over the forces of Nature, as to tame and harness even the wildest of them, or at least so to learn their times and seasons, causes and methods, as to avoid disastrous collisions and consequences. If these penalties of ignorance finally issue in knowledge and lordship of Nature for beneficent ends, who shall say that disasters are incompatible with the existence of a Heavenly Father? These considerations should be given their proper weight before men rashly and cavalierly affirm, without so much as glancing at any one of them, that 'there is no Heavenly Father.' Even the

Heavenly Father should be treated justly. If the laws of the physical world, with their very occasional natural catastrophes, are necessary to the production and preservation of a planet fit for the existence and development of the creature and of man, which is the reasonable inference, are they not well worth the occasional tribute extorted, and compatible with the Divine benevolence ?

*The Difficulties in the Creaturely World.*

The universal prevalence of struggle, fear, pain, suffering, disease, and death amongst the creatures is to-day ostentatiously cited as a demonstration of the cruelty and callousness of God. We are told in vivid language that Nature is one great battle-field, or, in a revised version of a line by Tennyson, that Nature is red 'in *beak* and claw' (*sic*)! It is not obscurely indicated that, so far from God being a Father, He is vulturine, vulpine, and tigerish. So far from Nature being red 'in *beak* and claw,' we think this mere parrot-cry a most incomplete, partial, superficial, and unscientific view of the economy of Nature. Admitting that there is suffering, physical and mental, in the creaturely world, is it not easy for us to exaggerate, especially when in controversy, both its amount and its acuteness ? The implication of many popular writers is that the suffering of the creature is almost equivalent to that of human beings ; whereas, we submit, that it is widely different. Abstract from suffering the elements contributed to

it by human self-consciousness and the play of the human imagination, as well as the exquisite sensitiveness given by these to the nervous system, and you are in the presence of a quite different and inferior form of suffering—suffering which loses its main poignancy. Such is the modified, mercifully modified, suffering of all creatures. In addition to this, the sufferings and death of the hunted prey of carnivorous creatures are usually brief and unanticipated.

Pain and suffering do not predominate in Nature ; they are exceptional. Happiness there is far in excess of misery. Listen to the warbling choir in the spring woodlands ; mark the gambols of the lamb and the tiger-cubs, of the young lion and the eaglet. The very gnats dance in wailful choir in the shallows and the sun ; and 'tis my faith that every flower enjoys the air it breathes.' The struggle for existence is, in the main, a painless, unconscious, and even pleasant one, and the last Dodo or Great Auk enjoyed its existence as much as any of its predecessors.

With unfairness or ignorance men are writing to-day as if God deliberately tortured the creature, and in very wantonness gloated over the hideous shambles of Nature : yet if modern science teaches anything at all, it teaches that the pain and suffering in Nature are not wanton, but purposeful ; that they secure the safety, the existence, the preservation, and the progress of the creaturely world. They are a necessary element in that great system by which the

whole sublime economy of the organic world has slowly attained its present wonderful variety and perfection. The sufferings of the creature are not wanton, arbitrary, meaningless, and cruel ; they serve a great and wise end of the Divine Intelligence. They are sufferings which are in the interests either of the creature itself or its species, or of the general order of Nature ; they are, we say, necessary to progress.

But further, if it be correct, as it most probably is, that man came, at least upon his physical side, by way of the creature, then more than ever may we affirm that the suffering and so-called 'carnage' of Nature are compatible with belief in a Heavenly Father. If the testimony of evolutionary science be correct, that without pain and suffering, as well as other factors in the process, there could have been no physical and organic progress, no economy of differentiated orders, vegetable and animal, and that without a differentiating, developing, species-making system Man would not have been, then surely all the necessary sufferings of the creature are morally justifiable. The end, for once, justifies the necessary means. Still more are they compatible with Divine benevolence, if they be necessary to man's continued existence and preservation. So far man has necessarily been a carnivorous creature ; but even if he becomes vegetarian, the problem of sacrificing the lower creatures is not ended, for abundant and infinitesimal life inhabits vegetable and fruit (not to

discuss the question whether or not a cabbage has consciousness), which must be sacrificed to him so long as he has to eat to live. Nor must we forget the range given to this subject by modern microscopical science and germ or microbe theories. The processes of hunger and of hunting for food, with the consequent struggle and suffering, must be extended to the very veins of man himself where the phagocytes of the blood take life or yield it in the microbial struggle for existence. The old rough rhyme is correct science,—

Great fleas have little fleas  
 Upon their backs to bite 'em,  
 And little fleas have lesser fleas,  
 And so *ad infinitum*.

Sacrifice for others, involving in some degree pain and suffering, is universal, wrought into the very warp and woof of Nature; and to indict it is to indict the whole system of animated nature, nay, physical existence itself. The critic really objects to his own existence; for by this process man has been finally evolved and continues in existence—man, made in the image of God, a being looking before and after, with thoughts which wander through eternity! We submit that he is worth the price, and dare make no charge against the goodness of the Heavenly Father.

Many of these objectors to cruelty in Nature repel with much indignation the charge of cruelty against themselves, when they use up the creature in the

pursuit of war, medicine, sport, pleasure, and gain. They are even ready to justify the destruction by a cruel and suffering death of thousands of human beings in war ; yet they boggle at belief in a Heavenly Father who pursues, by more merciful means than theirs, infinitely greater and more beneficent ends. Finally, it should be remembered, in relief of this great problem, that much of the suffering of the creature in Nature is temporary, and bound up with the destiny as well as with the history of man. God is not indifferent to the sufferings of the animal world. Truly did our Lord say that 'not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice.' Shakespeare re-echoes Him—'There's a special Providence in the fall of a sparrow'; and so does the mystic William Blake,—

The bleat, the bark, bellow, and roar  
Are waves that beat on heaven's shore.

God does care for oxen, and He hath ordained it that the creatures shall benefit by the development of man's intelligence and moral nature. Slowly but certainly, man, moved by the Heavenly Father, will cease from the maltreatment of the creature, and serve as its protector and friend by his domination of Nature and his mastery of its destructive forces. In the creaturely world, under the rule of man, suffering will be reduced to its requisite minimum, to the lowest minimum necessary for the existence of creaturely and human beings upon earth. The creation itself, 'which groaneth and travaileth in

pain together until now,' shall be delivered 'from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.' When the creaturely history is finally worked out under the auspices of man at his highest, is there any reasonable doubt that we shall be able to say that all was worthy of a Heavenly Father?

But the gravest difficulty of all is the existence of moral evil, and he is a bold man who will think to solve that. Nevertheless, we hold to it that

*The Difficulties in Human Life*

are not such that we need relinquish our faith in the Heavenly Father. The injustice, the innocent suffering and hardship, and the unmerited misery endured by multitudes of human beings do indeed present a terrible problem. The victims of Turkish barbarism and misrule, Russian injustice and tyranny, German absolutism, and British and American Imperialism and Capitalism, may well feel inclined 'to curse God and die.' Often in human history have the cries arisen, 'Is there a God?' 'Why does He permit this?' 'Can He be good, a Father?' But hey are, as we have said, no new cries. The problem of human injustice and oppression is an ancient one, and really less awful now than in the past, save in so far as we bear vicariously the problems of the past as well as of the present.

The first Christians living in the days of the rotting declining Roman Empire suffered unspeak-

able injustices at the hands of their fellow men. '*Christianos ad leonem!*' But not only did they not doubt, they passionately believed in the Heavenly Father. Our precursors had really less reason for believing in a Heavenly Father than we have, from the point of view of moral evil; yet they believed in Him more!

The evil is terrible, and the problem great; but it is not just to charge all the misery and wrong of the world upon God. Most of it is due to human and not divine action; i.e. most of it is preventible, and does not exist in the nature of things. All preventible suffering and pain are contrary to the will of the Heavenly Father. If we abstract from human life the suffering and misery caused by man, by his folly, greed, and selfishness, we remove at least three-fourths of it, and the portion left may be justified. Much suffering ascribed to God is not due to God at all. Disease, for instance—epidemics, plagues, pestilences, hereditary maladies—cannot be laid to the charge of God; they are the direct or indirect results of human folly and sin, individual or social. Yet Mrs. Annie Besant renounced belief in a good God when she became a Secularist, because her child suffered agonies from whooping-cough—a malady plainly caused by human neglect of the laws of health and sanitation. What could be more irrational!

Medical science teaches that disease is man-made, not God-made, and that where purity, cleanliness,

sanitation, sobriety, intelligence, science, and a social conscience co-exist nearly all the diseases known to man will disappear. Wherever Christ, the typical, ideal Man, appeared, sickness and disease departed.

Poverty, miserable tragic poverty, is no 'divine institution.' Nine-tenths of it is of human origin, due to unbrotherliness, injustice, and greed. It is 'always with us' because individuals and society will not take the necessary steps, long since indicated by Christ, to remove it. Maurice Maeterlinck, than whom no man has written more powerfully upon the subject of the 'essential injustice of things,' admits that the three great scourges, poverty, disease, and mental weakness, are due to human injustice and not to Nature, and therefore need not exist, and that 'the relic of mystery will very nigh go into the hollow of the philosopher's hand.'

Many will admit this, but will urge the difficulty, Why should the innocent suffer? It is the spectacle of injustice done to the individual, of children suffering for the sins of their parents, of innocent women and children suffering for the wrath and wickedness of men, of society as a whole suffering for the sins of the few, which creates a feeling of the essential injustice of things, of its incompatibility with the existence of a Heavenly Father. There seems nothing but Chance, and Nature might have

darkly blundered on man's suffering soul.

But it is evident that, to obviate this, it would be necessary to reconstruct the system of things upon quite other principles. The 'injustice done to the individual'—mainly, mark, of human origin, and therefore not really inevitable—is due to 'the solidarity of the race' and to the laws of heredity. For weal or woe we are bound up in one bundle of life—mainly for weal, for it is by these things that our very existence and our progress are and have been secured. Their normal working is beneficent; but if abused, they naturally produce widespread evil and misery—surely a mighty and merciful enactment to secure respect for them.

The meanness of mankind toward God is manifested when it takes all the benefits of these facts of solidarity and heredity as a matter of course, communicating and inheriting, automatically and without relation to goodness, merit, or desert, benefits physical, moral, and social, all the comforts and virtues; and yet, the moment that these laws bring disability through their violation or abuse, the cry is raised that 'there is no Heavenly Father.' We think meanness could no farther go, nor irrationality!

Unless we are prepared to accept a system in which we are all unrelated atoms, and no social system possible—indeed no world at all such as we know—the innocent must suffer for and with the guilty, must take the bitter with the sweet; and when the balance is struck, the advantages entirely outweigh the disadvantages, and those advantages

are mainly unearned and undeserved by the recipient. There is more both in Nature and in human life after all of 'unearned increment' than of 'undeserved detriment.'

Perpetual reference is made to the power of God, and we are told that we are shut up to the alternative that either God is not all-powerful or He is not good. Were He all-powerful and good, He would intervene to prevent injustice, as in the case of the cruel treatment of witches. If He be all-powerful, then He is not good; and if He be good, He is not all-powerful. But the fallacy involved in this reasoning is that it disregards the possibility that, for far-seeing and wise reasons, God may refuse to exercise His power. Undoubtedly God would not be God were He not able perpetually to intervene and instantly readjust whatever is physically or morally wrong in the world. But it is equally obvious that, when the Divine Being has committed Himself to a system, has entered upon creation by evolutionary methods, He must refrain from perpetual interference with the system. A world in which God is perpetually exerting arbitrary might would be a wholly unsettled and incalculable world—never in one stay, never reliable, and, above all, when human actions come in question, a merely mechanical world. It is here that we come to the root of the matter: moral evil is, as Dr. Samuel Johnson once said to Boswell, 'due to the free agency of man'; it is its possible, and alas! its frequent, concomitant. The alternative

with God is, a world of human automata or a world of free moral beings. Are men to be human machines or the children of God? Now, moral freedom is a matter of consciousness, indeed a psychological necessity, every act of thought and will involving it. What God can do, and what we maintain He does, is to influence, warn, persuade, help toward the good, but never *compel*. He places man in a natural system of things which make for righteousness, but is free from compulsion; hence it is that much evil, moral and physical, is traceable to the abuse of human freedom. The possibility of such evil must exist; and, despite the sin of the world and its suffering, the whole history of the race is a demonstration that human freedom is worth both the risks taken and the price paid for it, that it is compatible with a fatherly heart in God. And human development is but beginning; as Henri Amiel says, we are still but 'candidates for humanity.'

Another consideration, arising from the foregoing, and indicative of the action of a Heavenly Father, is that this world is framed for character, not for comfort. Life is organized upon ethical, not upon Epicurean principles. Much of the complaint about injustice is due, not so much to a zeal for justice, as to a desire for comfort, ease, and happiness. A wise earthly parent does not organize life for his children upon such lines; hence often friction in families, the idle, luxurious, and languorous resenting the stirring up of the comfortable home-nest and

the thrusting forth into the battle of life. Walter Bagehot used to argue that the moral indifference of Nature is a necessity for a being like man, inasmuch as it alone affords a fair field for morality, offering no bribes to virtue. Jesus Christ Himself was quite aware that the sun shone on the just and the unjust, and the rain fell on the evil and the good; but that was to Him, not, as it is to modern men, an indication that there is 'no justice in things,' no Heavenly Father, but a proof of the Father's longsuffering, of His educative Presence in Nature, and His far-reaching, patient, all-embracing love. We know from experience that the existence of moral evil is a great occasion of good, and evokes varied and magnificent human virtues, and that to human life struggle with evil, moral and physical, becomes an ethical discipline and a school for character. 'What men learn in suffering, that they teach in song.' As Browning boldly says,—

Put pain out of the world, what room were left  
For thanks to God, for love to man?

The apparent moral indifference of Nature, its disregard of justice to the individual, may be quite in harmony with the existence of a deeper, wider, and higher justice. Maeterlinck is obliged to admit as much as this, in a passage worthy of quotation: 'Nature does not appear to be just from our point of view; but we have absolutely no means of judging whether or not she is just from her own. The fact that she pays no heed to the morality of our

actions does not warrant the inference that she has no morality, or that ours is the only one that can be. We are entitled to say that she is indifferent as to whether our intentions are good or evil, but have not the right to conclude that she has therefore no morality and no equity; for that would be tantamount to affirming that there are no more mysteries or secrets, and that we know all the laws of the universe, its origin and its end.'

We submit, then, that the foregoing considerations largely explain and greatly relieve the dark problem of physical and moral evil, and prove that there may be, despite it all, a Heavenly Father. On the other hand, it is equally obvious that the face of the Divine Father, so far as we have gone, is a stern and severe one; although there is no valid reason for doubting both that 'all's love and all's law.'

#### *Relief in the Christian Religion.*

It is here that Christianity comes in with a flood of light and the most welcome relief from the Divine austerity. Christ reveals and historical Christianity vindicates the true Fatherhood of God. The qualities of love, sympathy, compassion, and help necessary to our conception of the Divine Father are revealed to mankind in Christ.

If it be asked how it is that the Divine Fatherliness was made known in its fullness so late in human history, the answer is, that it was made known as soon as the moral and religious development of the

race permitted it. Human history is a record of gradual moral progress and of the revelation of the nature of God to men through nations and individuals qualified to receive and transmit the revelation. Christians maintain that it is more reasonable to interpret the nature of God from the higher, later, and more moral side—from Christianity—rather than from the lower, earlier, and physical side of things—from the physical universe and primitive religion. Therefore the testimony of Christianity—of Christ—is that God is a Father; and this both corroborates and supplements the testimony of evolutionary science.

That the testimony of Christ, or, as Christians prefer to put it, the revelation of Christ, as to the nature of God is credible, seems certain, from the following considerations. God is best known in the highest phenomena, more of Himself is revealed in the higher than the lower—mind reveals His nature more truly than matter, and the human personality more truly than animal intelligence. The loftiest human characters reveal God's nature more fully than the lower ones. But it must be granted that Jesus Christ is the supreme spiritual Personality of the human race, the purest fountain of religious light and knowledge. Therefore His testimony concerning the nature of God is the most authoritative and reliable, and His testimony is that He is our Heavenly Father.

The moral greatness and the spiritual altitude and

sensitiveness of Christ, who moved in the highest spiritual realm as in His native element, gives His teaching a unique and masterful authoritativeness. No other man's word, no deliverance of a generation blinded by physical science and by materialism, can for a moment stand in competition with His. Yet He who lived in the time of all the tyrannies and injustices and suffered from them, He who was quite aware of the apparent non-morality of nature—as every man in the East is—He taught, 'When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven,' Himself lived in intimate intercourse with that Father, and claimed to reveal that Father's love to men. He declared that He and the Father were one, and that His sufferings were the expression of Divine self-sacrifice.

The sublimity of Christ's sacrifice is that it demonstrates that God is no mere passive spectator of the sufferings of the world. It is here that Christianity brings such precious relief to our hearts. Its teaching is that God is a real Father, who pities His children in their misery and woe, suffers with them and comes to their relief. He cannot arbitrarily banish misery and woe: but He does not withdraw Himself from the sufferers; He is ever with them, sharing their sorrows and sufferings, and helping them. This is the comfortable revelation of the Christian religion, the true complement of that modern science which shows that the Power behind phenomena brought into being

and maintains in being a moral world, a world of free agents, slowly attaining to goodness, justice, and love. In Christ that Power, surely a Heavenly Father, bore our infirmities and carried our griefs; and the Man of Sorrows, speaking out of the heart and bosom of God, assures us that 'in all our afflictions He is afflicted.'

A daring thinker has tried to demonstrate on strictly scientific and biological evidence, not only that suffering, physical and moral, is necessary to the physical and moral progress of Nature and man, and that only so could there be the evolution of morality, of justice, and of love, but that God, being immanent in Nature, is Himself not only a spectator but a compulsory sharer in all the sufferings of Nature and man—suffering, voluntarily, though necessarily suffering, like Prometheus on the rock, for His own divine philanthropy. This constitutes God the All-Father and the great object of human gratitude, devotion, and love.

This is a daring speculation; but great revelations are yet in store for us from the realm of biology and psycho-physics as to the nature of the Ultimate Reality. One thing is certain, that the latest movements of science are in the direction of the Christian revelation of a sympathetic, self-sacrificing fatherly heart in God, as far removed as possible from a Being who is either apathetic to the sufferings of men or who is their callous and calculating torturer—the imagination of many.

Christ is the witness that the Heavenly Father has not left men to welter alone in sin and misery. By the sacrifice of Himself He has come to redeem them. 'The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.' He has not delighted in the death even of the wicked ; but would rather that they should turn from their wickedness, and live. To help them turn, He has wrought great things for them by His own sublime and vicarious self-sacrifice.

When Christianity teaches salvation by vicarious sacrifice, it proves itself to be wholly in line and in harmony with Nature. More and more does science, biological science, reveal that the whole economy of the universe is based upon vicarious sacrifice, and that the whole marvellous order of things has arrived at its present perfection and point of development by that means. Christianity completes the revelation by demonstrating that it is also the very law of the Divine Being. By the sacrifice of Himself in His Son, God the Father is redeeming men from sin, sorrow, suffering, disease, and death. Vicarious sacrifice, involuntary in the physical world, and often involuntary in the human world, against which we often cry out 'unjust,' is now seen, from both science and Christianity, to be the deep secret of the existence and progress of the world and the law of the very being of God Himself. Christianity transfigures suffering, its meaning and possibility ; and, as James Hinton long since declared, the meaning of life is only grasped when its irremovable

burdens are borne in a spirit of voluntary self-sacrifice for the good of humanity. That noble Roman Marcus Aurelius in his *Meditations* caught a glimpse of that.

It is especially here that Christianity comes to demonstrate the Fatherliness of God by the help it brings to the individual who will accept of it. History demonstrates that Christ, the Sent of the Father, is no mere sentimental Saviour, but a very practical one. He is in the world a reforming, a sustaining, comforting, helping force. To individual believers, to myriads of them, He has been, and is, the deliverer from guilt and sin, the moral renovator of their characters. He also supports and comforts them under the tyrannies and injustices of life. He keeps alive in them the sense of the dignity of their nature; affords the lowest of them a field for moral distinction, the realm of character, equips them with ideals and with moral power, and assures them of the sympathy, help, and love of the Heavenly Father, and of a personal immortality in which full compensation for injustice will yet be theirs. In this way is the individual recognized. So strongly was Emerson convinced of the reality of these things, that in a famous essay he affirms that every compensation is rendered to the individual here on earth: 'The universe is alive—all things are moral. Justice is not postponed. A perfect equity adjusts the balance in all parts of life.' Christians cannot go so far as that; they affirm that the arrears of compensation

will be paid in the future life, in the Father's house. We maintain, then, that when *all* the facts are considered, and not a part of them, the misery, sufferings, wrongs, and mysteries of life certainly, and also their source, purpose, and meaning, their trend and outcome, in the light of evolutionary science, and still more of Christianity, we may still, despite the remnant of mystery, heartily, thankfully, hopefully believe in a Heavenly Father.

In conclusion, we must allude to the

*Difficulties of Denial.*

Suppose there be no Heavenly Father, what then?

1. To deny it is practically and logically to deny the existence of God. It means materialism and atheism, and the consequent irrationality of holding that this so orderly, wonderful, and law-governed universe is the product of chance, not mind.

2. It means that there is no true basis for a real and rational belief in human brotherhood. Hence the cause of social reform, which is so dear to every enlightened Christian, suffers irreparably, as well as the dignity of human nature. The Brotherhood of Man is a mere sentiment if there be no Divine Father. For men are brothers, in a true literal sense, only when they are the sons of the same father. If there be no Heavenly Father, men are mere distant relatives, cousins only in the multi-billionth degree.

The materialistic doctrine of Brotherhood is sheer sentiment, and breaks down under the greed,

and selfishness, and keen, interested commonsense of godless men. A mere doctrine of human relationship will not suffice for the cause of social reform and the federation of mankind. This accounts for the treatment of inferior races by men who have flung away Christianity and religion for the brutal selfishness of the rich and strong. They do not believe in human brotherhood because they do not believe in the Divine Fatherhood. There is no ground for it apart from Him, and to discard the Divine Fatherhood is finally to revert to barbarism. We need a doctrine of real brotherhood; and if there is a Heavenly Father, we have one, not otherwise. Then the Boer, the Kaffir, the Coolie, and the man of the Proletariat, is own brother to every other man, be he white man, landlord, capitalist, or king; and the whole question of the treatment of the weak, inferior, and helpless amongst men assumes a new and more hopeful character.

3. If there be no Heavenly Father, and if the method of Nature be mere force, if she has attained her ends by utter indifference to justice, by ruthlessly pushing the weak to the wall, then does not this make it easy for men to say, as indeed they do say, that the scientific method of government, industry, and commerce is might not right, force not justice? 'The survival of the fittest,' 'the weak to the wall,' 'the law of struggle,' do we not grow sick of seeing their application to human life and society? But it is the natural outcome of a decay of belief in a

Heavenly Father, and has led to bastard Imperialism, to Militarism, and to the brutal Capitalism of modern times. Where men really believe in a Heavenly Father, there can be none of that.

4. The denial of a Heavenly Father falsifies utterly human and Christian experience, which affirms that to its positive knowledge there is one. Myriads upon myriads of the saintliest and sanest of human beings, the mystics of all races and religions, and devout Christians of every age, have declared that 'they knew the Father.' The 'filial consciousness' is the spiritual consciousness of myriads of mortals who upon every other subject are amongst the most reliable of men. These affirm that the 'filial consciousness' is given to all who become ethical children of God, and submit their hearts and wills to God through His Son, and that all such can cry, and do cry,—

My God is reconciled,  
His pardoning voice I hear,  
He owns me for His child,  
I can no longer fear,  
With confidence I now draw nigh,  
And Father, Abba Father! cry.

It is a larger order than we are prepared to accept to falsify all this human experience and human history, especially when it is corroborated by our own experience.

# ‘The Witness of Foreign Missions.’

BY

REV. HENRY HAIGH.

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A TREE is known by its fruit, and the appeal which I have to make on behalf of the Christian religion in this lecture is based not on its soundness as a philosophy, not on the completeness of its logical defences, but on the results that it achieves and the way in which it works out in life and history. Has Christianity made for the world’s betterment? Has it eased social conditions? Has it helped the handicapped? Has it uplifted degraded nations, and within the sphere of its influence made human life cleaner, wholesomer, and more hopeful? or has it told the other way? Now, the evidence with which I am about to deal is drawn entirely from foreign lands. There is plenty of evidence to be had in the homeland, and evidence of the most striking sort; but that will be fully dealt with in a separate lecture. Just now we are to look abroad, and ask ourselves what Christianity has attempted there, by what methods and with what results; and the real question before us is not whether we can prove Christianity, but whether in any way Christianity has proved itself.

In thinking of foreign missions, the first fact that we encounter is this—that through succeeding generations, and notably during the last century, men and women in increasing numbers have been going forth to distant lands to preach the gospel, while multitudes at home, with increasing fervour and liberality, have been encouraging and supporting them. Those who have gone forth on this enterprise have in the main stood only to lose. They have gained no wealth, and, indeed, have sought none. They have not, of intention, been pioneers of commerce, though commerce has always followed fast on their heels. They have not been missionaries of empire, for they have been rigidly non-political and non-combative. They have not waited for the safety which would be afforded by our Flag ; they have gone before the Flag, and have neither expected outward protection nor desired it. They have with resolute self-forgetfulness chosen the difficult places of the earth, and faced its most unpromising conditions. They have gone to peoples who did not invite them, and did not desire them ; peoples from whom at the best they could expect only the toleration of indifference, and by whom in many instances they were certain to be received with deep suspicion and even bitter hostility. *Yet no conditions, however menacing, have been allowed to deter these men.* Doors were closed (as in China), and they knew that they must take the risk of their temerity, and could claim no quarter there ; yet they

went. The climate was inhospitable, and more—it was downright deadly (as in Western Africa), and they knew that the chances of their returning were hardly ten to one ; yet they went.

Let me tell you here, in passing, one little bit of personal experience. When I was at college, a couple of men were sent out to West Africa to fill a vacancy, and before they had been long gone there came a cable telling us that one was dead. All too soon after that a second cable came telling us that the second man was dead. When the matter was announced to the students, and we were asked who would take their places, six men at once volunteered, and two were sent. In less than six months one of these had died, and the other was invalided home ; and again the question was asked, 'Who will go?' On that occasion every man then properly available signified his willingness to take the place twice tragically rendered vacant.

Closed doors have not prevented the heralds of the Cross, deadly climates have not dismayed them. Even though the people were savages, as in Fiji, men living on one another, and counting every stranger lawful prey for the first man that could club him, yet there also have they gone. How is it all to be explained? Judged by ordinary standards, nothing could be more wildly quixotic. Here have been thousands of people at home pouring forth their possessions, even to the point of strain and of sacrifice ; and hundreds of men and

women planting themselves abroad amid circumstances of daily uncongeniality and peril. And they have done this for the sake of people who were not merely not attractive but positively repulsive, and who had no claim whatever upon them except the claim of disability and disadvantage. How is it all to be explained? Only in one way, I think: the love of their Lord has begotten within His disciples *an enthusiasm for humanity*. There have been martyrs of science, who have counted not their lives dear to them if only they could wring from Nature another of her secrets, and thus help to 'make the bounds of knowledge wider yet.' And there have been patriot martyrs, who for the defence and glory of their land have defied danger and smiled at death. Some of these men have won undying honour from a grateful people. The missionary martyr is of another type, one that is surely not less worthy. He goes forth neither for discovery nor for defence. He has a secret which makes him strong and glad. He believes it is a secret that would bless men of all races, however low their development, however crude their civilization, if only they could hear. So *out of sheer desire to do them good* he presses it upon all whom he can reach, neither discouraged by their indifference nor dismayed by their rage. I think I may claim that the foreign mission work of the Christian Church is the highest example of organized and sustained altruism that the world has known

or is ever likely to see. That is what Christianity begets—an abiding enthusiasm for humanity.

Permit me to dwell upon this point for a moment or two longer. It seems to me to be one of the most striking things that the mission field has to say in regard to Christianity. I will not set down a string of names made great by their devotion to humanity in various parts of the world, though that would be easy and pleasant. Let me tell you of a man I knew in India—George Bowen by name. He was a classical scholar of distinction, and was at home in four of the principal languages of Europe. For years he revelled in poetry and philosophy, in romance and controversy, in all those languages. He was, besides, a fine musician; could compose as well as perform. In his early manhood Bowen was a philosophic sceptic and a rank pessimist. At last, however, there came to him a great experience, which made him feel the need and ultimately see the truth of immortality. From that point he was led on, until one night he sat down and wrote these words: 'If there is One above all who notices the desires of men, I wish He would take note of this fact, that if it please Him to make known His will concerning me I should think it my highest privilege to do that will wherever it might be and whatever it might involve.' It was a cry out of darkness, and not long after that Jesus Christ became to George Bowen the peace and enthusiasm of his being. There soon grew up in him a new sense of obligation to humanity. He was led to

leave wealth for poverty, to turn from the society of the cultured and friendly that he might care for the needs of the ignorant and prejudiced, to renounce a luxurious home for a mud-walled hut. He went to India, and for forty years, without one single change, he dwelt among the people of that land. Persecution, epidemic, and fierce enervating heat could not drive him away from the crowded streets of Bombay. For forty years the thin, frail man spent himself in varied and unwearied self-denial, among a people who were persistently irresponsive and many a time violently hostile. During that time he would accept no alleviation of his self-imposed hardships, and would permit himself to receive no human honour. He was consumed with a passion for bettering the people amongst whom he lived, and he laid down his life on their behalf. That is the enthusiasm for humanity which the foreign mission enterprise in a hundred cases proves to have been developed among those who have embraced Christianity.

One further instance must suffice. There was a lady in Birmingham, one of the most gifted women in that city. She was in charge of a large High School there, and exercising in the city a wide and noble influence. One day she told her pastor she was giving it all up and was going abroad. He at once thought she was tempted by some higher post with better pay, and said so. Judge of his surprise when he was told that she was going, not to some high educational post in India, but to live in Shansi.

Shansi, you will remember, was the very centre of the Boxer movement. Little wonder that, on hearing this, there sprang to many a lip the question, 'Wherefore is this waste?' Such a woman, product of the best English culture, going to such a place! Nothing could dissuade her. She went, and her personality presently began to make its sure impression. She was there when the Boxer movement broke out, and one day the mandarin of her city, who had learned to appreciate her very highly, went down hastily to her house, warned her to prepare for flight, and promised her an escort. At first she consented to leave; but later she asked to be allowed to take with her the Christian women of that place. This was refused, the mandarin declaring that it would be more than his life was worth to allow it. Thereupon she declined to go, and determined to face the worst with the people among whom she had chosen to dwell. Then there came a day when the Boxers entered the town, and the mandarin, in real distress, once more urged her to flee. This she did, taking her Christian women with her. But there was one lame girl who could not keep pace with the rest, and the lady lingered behind to bear her company. When at last the Boxers were upon them, and she saw that escape was hopeless, she put her arms round the girl and faced them. The rest need not be detailed. It was a ghastly business; but the English lady had loved even to the death. That is the enthusiasm for

humanity; and it has been exhibited in different forms over and over again in the history of foreign missions in all parts of the world. Now, when these things are done, human nature is scaling its highest summits. I put it to you that unselfish devotion to the welfare of others is always admirable, and a religion which prompts men, at the unrewarded cost of patience and suffering and loss, to seek to better their fellows and thus lift man to his highest, is worthy of all regard and reverence.

Now let me ask you to consider another point. Christianity assumes the *value of man as man*. He may be low in his development, and degraded and even disgusting in his manner of life; but Christianity does not on that account pass him by as beneath regard and beyond betterment. For the race is one, in spite of all superficial differences. Men everywhere, when you dig down low enough, exhibit common characteristics, common needs, and common capacities. Science teaches us that; it is one of its dogmas. But with Christianity it is fundamental. 'The Word became flesh,' and thereby took all humanity into kinship with Himself. Jesus Christ, by His incarnation, made all men, in all periods and in every land, His brother, and all men brothers in Him. That is in sober truth the Christian creed. Because of his relation to Jesus Christ every man on the face of the earth is interesting and important and worth seeking for. None emphasized this more strongly than our Lord Himself. Looking at the

multitudes that followed Him often in coarse curiosity, or simply to get a crust of bread, He had compassion on them, and said, 'The harvest is great.' He knew them well, their low ideals, their sordid satisfactions, their miserable vacillations, and yet He called them a 'harvest.' It is a wonderful word in such an application. Nobody else would have used it. Other leaders would have talked of settled blight where He talked of golden grain. But in His lips it was entirely characteristic. For He was unlike all other leaders. They select the worthiest, and leave the tainted and weak and irresponsive to contempt and death. He, on the contrary, counts no man so low that he cannot be lifted, no man so bad that he cannot be made good. It is His distinction and glory that He cares for the unpromising and the unattractive, and puts out His hand of strong brotherliness to the frail and the impotent; that He throws His mantle over the despised and neglected; that He interprets men generously, and hopes for them to the end. Jesus was the poet of humanity. He walked amid ruins, but He saw the elements out of which He could reconstruct palaces; He heard the din and dissonance of human life, but He caught also the undertones out of which He might draw forth a masterpiece of harmony. He was the world's supreme optimist; He could not otherwise have been the world's Saviour.

Now, that spirit has been transmitted, however

imperfectly, to His followers. Christianity has gone to the lowest, in the assurance that it would find something there that would repay its care and its culture. Let me recall to your memory the story of Tierra del Fuego, on the South American coast. It was in 1832 that Charles Darwin, while voyaging in the *Beagle*, approached that region. He had only words of horror and despair to use of the inhabitants there. He described them as belonging to the very lowest type of humanity ; shocking in their habits, and quite beyond the reach of civilization. But one Thomas Bridges went there, landed, and in spite of all danger stayed and worked there. Gradually he learnt their rude tongue, reduced it to writing, and translated the Gospels into it. The people became civilized and Christianized. Before his arrival there, the English Admiralty had issued orders that that part of the coasts should not be approached by their ships ; but such a change was wrought, that the orders were cancelled and ships were allowed to visit and trade there. You know how, when these facts came before Darwin, he expressed his astonishment and admiration, and forthwith became a subscriber to the South American Missionary Society. Thomas Bridges did a hero's work, and he did it in that spirit of compassion and hope that he had learned from his Master. To whom else could it have occurred, but to the Christian, that such men might be taught and saved ? Everything about them seemed to point to the impossibility of such a result. But where all

were savages, now all are Christians. You have had the same story re-enacted in Fiji, and many other islands of the South Seas. In the faith that those people were men, even though everything about them suggested that they were beasts, and desiring to give them a man's best opportunity, Hunt, Calvert, Brown, Paton, and many others went forth, stifling their natural revulsion and preached the gospel. It was Christ's compassion that stirred in their hearts, His optimism that buoyed up their spirits. In spite of all appearances to the contrary, their faith saw the 'harvest,' and they were determined to reap it. Their faith was not dishonoured. Those Fijians buried their appetites with their arrows, and voices that had shrieked in murderous jubilation began to sing praises to God. The 'harvest' theory of humanity has justified itself in the worst cases; and it is Christianity alone that has furnished the theory and demonstrated its truth. The miracle of changed civilizations has been wrought repeatedly, and is one of the 'signs' of our religion. Christianity despairs of none.

But now I would like to go one step farther in this statement, and I would say that Christianity is the leader of the forlorn hopes of the world. Where tyranny has held sway the longest, so that its very victims have grown content with it; where evil customs have so ingrained themselves into the lives of the people, that even those on whom they bear the hardest have ceased to protest and hope

for relief: there it has found its appropriate sphere. Think of the Pariahs of India. There are fifty millions of them. No social lot could be more unjust and dismal than theirs has been. They are outcastes, beings who through centuries have been denied the dignity and the responsibility of free manhood. At all points they have been the victims of the cupidity and cruelty of the caste men of that land. They have been in a veritable land of Egypt, like the Israelites, making bricks without straw. Dumbly and hopelessly they have cried for a deliverer, who should lead them forth into Canaan. Where was such a deliverer to be found but in Christ? All through the long years of the past there has arisen no Moses in their own land who had the pity and power to work out for them the great emancipation. But Christ's men have taken up their cause, and they are having a large following. The Pariahs are saying more and more, 'Let us go up out of Egypt—with its riotous injustice, its grinding tyranny, and its scanty rewards'; and there is in India a true Exodus in progress, which may well stir the interest and enthusiasm of every liberty-loving man among us. The Pariahs in large numbers are seeking education. Some among them have taken a university course with distinction, and have proved their capacity side by side with the best. It may be fearlessly claimed that the movement is wholly Christian in its inspiration and direction. What is

its true significance? It is not merely a triumph of humanity. It is forcing on India the recognition of a new principle—viz. that a man's position will be henceforth determined, not by his caste rank and relationship, but by his own personal aptitudes and powers, and that the place of honour will be accorded first and foremost to sterling character and noble performance. That is a dynamic notion. Give it play, and it will shift the centre of gravity completely, alike in society and religion. In this Pariah movement there are the seeds of a noble revolution, and you must credit it to Christianity.

There is another movement on foot in India. It is directed to the emancipation of the women of that land. The evils of child marriage are patent to all. School life is shortened, and at an age when a girl should be still playing with her dolls and toys she is introduced to the mysteries and cares of matrimony and motherhood. The deaths to be credited year by year to premature marriage reach an appalling total. Marriage, indeed, to multitudes of them spells murder. If a girl's husband dies, she is condemned, even though she has never lived with him, to perpetual widowhood. Love may never again lighten her shadowed life. It is all monstrously unjust. Happily there is springing up some activity in the direction of social reform. There are Hindus who have combined to seek the postponement of girl marriages and the amelioration of the widow's lot. The movement has proceeded slowly

and rather timorously ; but it has enlisted the active sympathy of some of India's best sons, while the attitude of a still larger number is one of benevolent neutrality. Whence does the movement spring ? Not from Hinduism. The right soil for social reform to flourish in is the soil of *hope, compassion, and a sense of obligation to others*. But Hinduism does not provide such soil. Its doctrine of transmigration, on the other hand, does three things which are inimical to social reform : it produces personal hopelessness, excludes pity, and destroys the sense of responsibility to others. Hindus are social reformers only in so far as they put aside the influence of their own religion, and open their hearts to those feelings which are in a special sense associated with Christianity. To the initiation, in spite of determined and prolonged hostility, of the Christian missionaries, must be credited that great educational activity amongst Indian girls which is destined to do so much for their true emancipation.

This record might be indefinitely extended. But let us briefly recapitulate. Christianity, where it fairly enters into a man's life, begets within him a true enthusiasm for humanity ; it meets men, even the lowest and least promising, with a message of redemption and of hope ; wherever it has gone, it has challenged cruel superstitions, fought foul tyrannies, and sought to bring healing and uplifting to all. It has been its mission 'to open blind eyes . . . and to bring those that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.'

# 'The Witness of the Bible Society.'

BY

REV. JOHN H. RITSON, M.A.

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**B**EFORE dealing with the witness of the Bible Society to Christianity, let me briefly answer the question, What is the Bible Society?

At the beginning of the nineteenth century a few men, distinguished by deep piety and works of philanthropy, were greatly impressed by the dearth of Scriptures in this country, and particularly in Wales. They found, on inquiry, that abroad the needs of men were more appalling than at home, and just a hundred years ago they were led to form a Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, with one single aim—to give to every human being in his mother tongue the Scriptures, without note or comment. It was a stupendous undertaking, an unheard-of venture of faith and courage; but the founders of the Bible Society were not easily daunted. They had experienced in their own hearts the moral and spiritual power of the Bible message, and were convinced that that message was a message for all time, a message for all men, a message from God, the only message that could save the world in its sin and sorrow. We ask, Has the experience of the Bible Society during the hundred

years of its existence confirmed or falsified the convictions of these men? To this there is only one answer : It has undoubtedly confirmed them.

*The Bible is the Book for all time.*

Hitherto it has been indestructible, and the continuity of its existence in the past leads us to believe that nothing can destroy it in the future. It is wonderful that it survived even the earliest centuries. Some portions had to be retained in the memory before they were reduced to writing, some were first engraved on clay tablets, some were committed to perishable skins or the brittle leaves of papyrus, and up to the sixteenth century new copies could only be secured by the laborious process of handwriting. Long after the Christian era came in all the forces of evil which human imagination could devise were summoned to blot out the message of the Bible from the minds of men. Pagan Rome decreed its destruction, and put to death its readers with every imaginable torture. Christian Rome ultimately followed in its steps, and practised the unspeakable cruelties of the Inquisition. In the eighteenth century, after the revival of learning, the Bible was discredited, and even ignored. But again it survived, and when the Bible Society was founded there were good reasons for the belief that no amount or kind of opposition could damage this Book. If there were good reasons then, there are better reasons now ; for during the last hundred years efforts have been

renewed again and again to destroy the Bible, but without avail. In Madagascar, during the long years of Christian persecution, to possess a Bible was to court martyrdom. But Bibles were concealed underground, and secretly brought from their hiding-places and read with profit, and their popularity did not wane. As soon as liberty of worship was granted once again men crowded in such numbers to buy copies of the Scriptures that the doors of the storehouse had to be closed and the books served through the window. In the Boxer outbreak in China Bible-readers were put to death in ways too horrible to describe. And with what result? Whereas the highest annual circulation for China before the carnage was 856,000, the lowest annual circulation after it was 872,000. The most persistent foe to Bible circulation through the century has been the Roman Church. From time to time on the Continent of Europe and in South America priests are to be found who lay hands on all copies of the Scriptures they can find, and make of them public bonfires. Such spectacles belong to the Middle Ages, and it is surprising that intelligent men do not recognize their absolute futility. Every annual report of the Bible Society has had its stories of efforts to put an end to Bible-reading by sheer brute force; but each year the Word of the Lord has continued to grow and multiply.

Besides the assaults of fanatical ignorance during the past century, the Bible has had to reckon with a wonderful advance in knowledge. It has been put

to all kinds of tests by friend and foe. Its teaching has been pitted against certain theories of natural science, more or less attested by fact, and based on geological and biological research. Then came the investigations by critics, friendly and unfriendly, dealing with problems of text, date, and authorship; and good men trembled because they thought the Word of God was in danger. But what has been the effect of progress in modern thought so far as the Bible is concerned? The reverent search for truth, whether in the field of science or of literary criticism, has been a help; of this no one ought to be suspicious. The disparagement of it by good people might do irreparable harm to the very cause they are anxious to defend. For instance, it was useless to oppose the attempt to give to the English-speaking people a more accurate rendering of the Scriptures into English. Soon after the publication of the Revised Version, a high dignitary met Mr. Horace Hart of the Oxford Press, and asked how the Revised Version was faring. 'I suppose,' said he, 'it has affected the sale of the Authorized Version?' 'Yes, it has,' replied Mr. Hart. 'What a pity,' said the clergyman. 'Oh no,' replied Mr. Hart; 'it is a very good thing, for it has sent up our sales of the Authorized Version.'

The results of honest scholarship, in this as in every case, helped to stimulate Bible-reading. We need never fear the truth, however it may differ from our preconceptions. Modern science has corrected some of our ideas of the sun, of its size, its

distance, its composition ; but we appreciate it none the less, for it still warms and lights this earth, it mellows the corn, and ripens the fruit, and cheers our hearts. So, it has been said, though some of our ideas of the Bible touching age, authorship, and even interpretation have been modified by the progress of thought, the gospel which runs from back to back, like a golden thread, is unchanged ; and we appreciate *that* none the less, for its power to-day is the same as in the days of old.

Friendly criticism helps, and even hostile criticism can do no lasting harm. The progress of God’s Word is no more impeded by the theories of men than the stars in their courses by the hypotheses of astronomy. Very often bitter assaults on the Bible have fallen out rather to ‘the furtherance of the gospel.’ There is an old story of an Irishman who built a wall three feet high and four feet thick ; and when asked for a reason, he replied that if anything knocked it over it would stand higher than it was before. This has often been true of the Bible. It has not only hitherto been indestructible, but experience seems to show that the attempt to destroy it serves only to increase its circulation. No other book may be even compared with the Bible in the number of its readers. The circulation of a hundred thousand copies of a popular novel is considered phenomenal ; but the Bible Society has ordered in a single order 400,000 copies of one edition of the Bible from the Oxford Press, and the magnitude of

such an order causes no heart-fluttering in either their staff or ours. The work is done swiftly and quietly.

The Bible is not only popular in spite of opposition, but its popularity is growing. At the end of the first 25 years of the Bible Society's work, the Society sent out 1 volume on an average in every 70 seconds; at the end of 50 years' work, 1 volume in 23 seconds; at the end of 75 years' work, 1 volume in 9 seconds; and at the end of 100 years' work, 1 volume in every 5 seconds. During the last 50 years the circulation by this one Society has been growing steadily at an average rate of 90,000 volumes per annum. During last year alone the Society circulated as many volumes of Scripture as in the first 25 years of its history. These figures do not take into account the growing circulation of smaller societies and of the trade. The increase is not entirely due to the opening up of new countries and the conversion of the heathen. If figures of circulation be taken as a test, the Bible is being more widely read in this country and on the Continent of Europe than ever before. In Germany the circulation in 1899 was 314,107; in 1900, 346,805; in 1901, 358,767; in 1902, 402,935. Surely the Book which has survived all the storms and vicissitudes of the centuries, and at the end of them multiplies itself with ever-increasing acceleration, is the 'Book for all time.'

*The Bible is a Book for all men.*

This seemed to be foreshadowed in the fact

that the inscription on the Cross was written in the three great world-languages of the day—in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. The very word 'Christian' seemed prophetic; for, while it was Greek, it got its meaning from Hebrew, and its form from Latin. On the day of Pentecost 'Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians,' all heard in their own tongues 'the wonderful works of God.'

In the second and third centuries the Bible was translated into Syriac, Coptic, and Latin; in the fifth, into Armenian; in the sixth, into Georgian; in the eighth, into Arabic and Anglo-Saxon; in the ninth, into Slavonic and Irish; in the fourteenth, into Persian and English; in the fifteenth, into German, Italian, Spanish, Flemish, Bohemian, French, and Dutch. Before the end of the eighteenth century its message was written in about forty of the world's tongues.

The nineteenth century eclipsed all others put together in the work of Bible translation. There is now no language of first importance into which the Scriptures have not been rendered, and many languages, savage and uncouth, have been reduced to writing for the first time in order to tell the gospel story. Every year sees new versions added to the list. Last year the work of translation was started in eight new tongues—Fioti, Kikuyu, Shambala,

Karanga, Nogogu, Laevo, Baffins Land Eskimo, and Madurese, making a total for the British and Foreign Bible Society's list alone of 370 different versions. Altogether the Scriptures, wholly or partially, have been rendered into about 430 of the world's languages, representing seven-tenths of the human race. The Bible Society's staff is erroneously supposed to know every language under the sun. Foreigners, who cannot find one word in common with any one on our shores, are sometimes led to the Bible House, that their nationality may be discovered ; and it is not unusual for the General Post Office to send round letters which are addressed in unrecognizable tongues in order that they may be deciphered. An inspection of the Bible House in London, with its million and a half of volumes in stock, the equivalent of three months' circulation, speaks of this world's Babel of tongues. Twice recently I made casual inquiries in the packing-room as to the day's issues. On February 5 there were consignments for all parts of this country, for St. Kitts, Colon, Valparaiso, Montreal, Queensland, Gibraltar, and Colombo. The languages represented were English, Welsh, French, Marathi, Ilocano, Japanese, Yao, Yiddish, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, and Sinhalese. On February 9, 10,706 volumes were packed and sent out to Kingston (Jamaica), Singapore, Auckland (N.Z.), Demerara, Windermere (British Columbia), St. Petersburg, and Hudson's Bay. The languages

were English, Welsh, Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Maori, Armenian, Graeco-Turki, Hebrew, Spanish, Italian, Latin, Persian, Transcaucasian-Turki, Bulgarian, Greek, Eskimo, and German.

It is a very significant fact that the Bible story can be told in so many tongues, and told with undiminished force. No book is so translatable, and no book has so great an influence on language. For many a savage tribe the Bible has not only given a written language, but purified and elevated the meanings of words, and made the language fixed and permanent. Even among people foremost in the world's civilization its influence on language has been very marked. Luther's Bible is the foundation-stone of pure German; and our Authorized Version has been the chief instrument in ennobling the English tongue. The fact that the Bible can be translated into every form of speech, and retain much of its beauty in diction, and that the translation does not diminish the influence of its message, is an argument for its universality; for these things hold true of no other book upon earth. Further, the Bible is at home in every land. We hear of the barrier between East and West, but there is no barrier to the Bible. While it is to-day the most popular book in England, it is also the most widely-read book in China. A million volumes have been sold in China during the past year by the British and Foreign Bible Society alone. Racial distinctions count for nothing in Bible circulation, nor do political frontiers. It went into

China, Korea, and Japan long before they were opened to Western peoples; and it has been going into Tibet for many years, in spite of closed doors.

Visitors who make their way to the Bible House speak as eloquently of the universality of the Bible as the books which leave it. During the Coronation of King Edward there were Fijians from the South Seas, Sinhalese from Ceylon, Negroes from the West Indies and the West Coast of Africa; there were Ras Makonnen, heir to the throne of Abyssinia, reading the Bible in Ethiopic, the Katikiro of Uganda reading it in Luganda, King Lewanika from Barotseland reading it in Suto. The Subscription List to the Centenary Fund is as impressive as the list of Coronation visitors. It contains the names of His Majesty the King of England, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, His Majesty the German Emperor, and the Viceroy of India. On the same list stand contributions from the King and Chiefs of Toro, the Christians of Manchuria, the native Churches of Korea and Japan, of Samoa, Fiji, Tahiti, the Lutheran and Reformed Churches of Central Europe, Missionary Stations among the Eskimos, and the inmates of Leper Homes in India. And so in curious mixture we find the Society has the support of all sorts and conditions of men in every section of the globe. So quickly are the Scriptures spreading themselves over the world, that soon it will be possible of say to them, as of those heavens which declare the glory of God, 'There is

no speech nor language where their voice is not heard ; their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.' The Bible Society bears witness to the universality as well as the vitality of the Holy Scriptures.

*The Bible contains a Message from God.*

We believe this because of its influence. The New Testament contains fewer words than a single daily issue of the *Times* newspaper. The words of Jesus Christ, when sifted from the narrative in which they are embedded, can be written on a few sheets of notepaper, and read within an hour ; and whoever reads them, be he friend or foe, is compelled to exclaim, ' Never man spake like this Man.'

Under the influence of the Spirit of God, the message of the Bible has had unique influence on personal character. It gave courage to the martyrs who faced the fury of lions in the Roman arena ; it led men to forsake the vanities of the world for the seclusion of the cloister in the Middle Ages ; it inspired the hearts of those who endured the horrors of the Inquisition ; it strengthened those who were burned at Smithfield and Oxford ; it effected the cleansing of the pitmen who gathered round Whitefield and Wesley. Its power has shown no sign of decay in the hundred years during which the Bible Society has been circulating it. In many a land it has led men into newness of life. We need not go into far countries to find them. There are some

here to-day who have been led by the teaching of this Book to One who has saved them from sin's guilt and power, and by giving them new hearts has changed the whole course of their life. In our varying experience, our fears and hopes, our joys and sorrows, our longings and aspirations, we find in this one Book a spring of Water, perennial in its freshness, Water of which if a man drink he shall never thirst.

The Bible is unique in its influence on family life. A short time ago one of our colporteurs in Brazil reached a remote and lonely farm, and offered a Bible for sale. The farmer, with tears in his eyes, said that long years before he had bought a Bible from another colporteur, and it had been the only book in his library. He had taught all his children to read from its pages, and from its pages they had learned to live. On the marriage of his youngest child, the last at home, he had given her, a few days before, this very Bible, the only one at hand, and the most precious thing he had. What the Bible was in that home, it is in many homes, in many lands. Homes in which there is an altar of the living God, in which the Bible is reverently read morning and evening at family worship, produce sons and daughters who are the pride and strength of the land. 'From such homes,' says the Bishop of Ripon, 'will come the men who will love honesty, and fearlessly practise it, who will scorn the smartness which knows how to steer close to the edge of a lie, and who will make business stable,

because their habitual integrity will command confidence. Such men will be ready to make large sacrifices for honour and for their country's sake: they will not fear to venture large hazards for the sake of right; for their faith in God will sustain them. National interests are rooted in the home. What our homes are, such will our nation be.'

So the influence of the Bible on national life is as great as it is on personal character and in the home circle. The foremost nations of the world owe what is best in their civilization to this Book. It has done more than all other books to stimulate learning and letters; it has suggested the highest ideals in music, poetry, and painting; it is at the foundation of modern law and government; it forms the basis of all philanthropic and charitable work. It is a commonplace truth which no fair-minded man can deny that the Bible is the secret of England's strength. This is the Book which has made us what we are, and those who make its teaching the norm of conduct are stronger bulwarks to our native land than our army, our navy, our seas, and all other defences combined. The power of the Bible on nations is well illustrated by the contrasts which exist between countries on the Continent of Europe. There are some countries, like Austria, Spain, and Portugal, where a ban is placed on the circulation of the Scriptures. The Latin peoples as a whole oppose an open Bible, and they are immeasurably behind the Teutonic. In Italy one man out of every three, and one woman out of every two, can

neither read nor write ; in Spain 68 per cent. and in Portugal 80 per cent. of the people are absolutely illiterate. Wherever the Bible is suppressed, the masses of the people are ignorant, superstitious, and backward ; whereas the people who have broken from the fetters of priestcraft, and claim for themselves liberty of conscience and the right of judgement, are in the van of civilization. The open Bible is undoubtedly the secret of the superiority of some nations over others on the Continent of Europe. If we look farther afield, the same lesson is taught. A visitor in Fiji one day ridiculed Bible-reading, when a native Christian took him to task. He said in effect, 'Sir, you owe it to that Book that your brains have not been beaten out on a stone and your body cooked in an oven. If it were not for the Bible, you would not be where you are ; you would long ago have passed down our throats.' What the Bible did for the Fijians, it did for other peoples in the South Sea Islands. The stones upon which human victims were once sacrificed have been carved into baptismal fonts and used in presses for printing Scriptures, and pulpit-rails have been constructed out of spears. Similar stories of national development might be multiplied in all parts of the world.

The Bible also provides bonds of union between divided sections of humanity, and brings them together in a common brotherhood. The Society which circulates the Bible alone, without any kind of attempt to interpret it, is the only Society

with a platform upon which men, diverse in nationality, opposed in politics, divided in churchmanship, can stand side by side. On Sunday next, March 6, Universal Bible Sunday, there will be such a spectacle on earth as has not yet been seen. The sun will rise for once on a Protestant Christendom that is united; and as the dawn steals over this globe from east to west, there will also encircle it one song of thanksgiving for the one Book upon which rest the hopes of men, and from which they derive that knowledge wherein standeth eternal life. If ever there is to be a federation of nations united by the ties of brotherhood, and looking to one Lord and Master, it will only be effected through this Book, which reveals through Christ the common Fatherhood of God. Surely the Book which stands alone in its influence on personal character, in the family circle, and in the national life, which provides the one bond which can unite the human race, must be divine?

*The Bible is the World's Great Missionary.*

Every part of it, both in the Old and the New Testament, has a missionary value. Genesis arouses the keenest interest among heathen nations, which have their own traditions of the origin of the world and of its destruction by flood. The awful battle-scenes, the treachery, the murder, the low morality to be found in the historical books, depict the everyday experiences of savage tribes, and are object-

lessons, teaching as nothing else can teach that 'the wages of sin is death.' The association of the Book of Proverbs with the name of Solomon leads many Freemasons on the Continent of Europe to read this Book of wisdom who otherwise would never look into the Word of God. The genealogical tables at the beginning of Matthew, which we, it may be, consider dry, commend that Gospel to the Chinese, accustomed to ancestor-worship. The story of the Virgin birth entices many ignorant Romanists, afraid to touch the Bible, to read the Gospel according to St. Luke. It is sometimes said that the Old Testament ought not to be circulated among the heathen; but we, who correspond with the whole world on Bible circulation, have never yet heard of its doing any harm: on the contrary, we have often heard of its doing good. We ourselves would be poorer if the characters of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, David, and the Prophets were removed from our literature; and if we had no Old Testament, we should never understand the New, for it is based on the Old. What the Old Testament is to us, it is all over the world. The Old Testament has missionary value. But while this is true, none can deny that the New Testament, containing the gospel of Jesus Christ, has a still greater value.

Missionaries themselves are the first to say that the Bible itself, the whole Bible, is the best of all missionaries. They have said more than once, 'This missionary needs no training; it can be

trusted to make no mistakes; it speaks with great plainness; it never falls sick; it never needs a furlough; "it never takes a return ticket"; it never dies.' The Bible is the great missionary, and no human being can succeed permanently in missionary work unless he gives people the Bible written in a tongue they understand. The Mission in Japan established by the Jesuits under Xavier three and a half centuries ago died out in days of persecution because when the missionaries were banished no vernacular Scriptures were left behind. In Madagascar, on the other hand, when persecution broke out, and missionaries were expelled from the island, Christianity survived, because they left behind the seed of the Word in the Malagasy tongue. In a letter written on the last day of last year by the native Christians in Tananarivo are these words, in the Malagasy language: 'When the darkness of ignorance and superstition reigned over our dear country, the light of the Bible came to shine upon us; and when the first missionaries were driven away from us, the Bible was our fathers' only guide, their counsellor in their distress, and their hope in their painful deaths. And at the present day it is only upon the Bible that the spiritual progress of our dear island depends.' The writers were evidently in earnest; for the letter goes on to say, 'Will you please receive from our hands our small gift of 125 francs as a mark of our sympathy with your Society.'

The unique missionary value of the Scriptures is

indicated by the keen desire of men to possess them. We have received at the Bible House cheques for £100, £150, £500, from islands like Tahiti and Fiji. The natives of these places ask for no reduction below cost price ; they are willing to pay full price, and yet they were cannibals not long ago. The natives of Aneityum grew arrowroot for fifteen years, and sold it for £1,200, in order to pay for the printing of the Scriptures in their mother tongue. Gospels which cost the Bible Society 1*d.* to produce are sold to the natives in India for  $\frac{1}{4}$ *d.* ; and though a farthing represents more than a day's wages for many of the poor, yet they are prepared to pay it in order that they too may know the Word of God. During the Boxer outbreak in Manchuria, there were native Christians who left home, business, land property, valuables, everything ; but they carried their Bibles with them, and when enemies were near kept them buried in the ground lest they should be taken away. The sacrifices men make to secure the Bible distinguish it from all other books.

The Bible is again unique in the sacrifices men are making to *give* it. Think of the missionaries devoting themselves to the work of translation and distribution. Look at Mr. Heyde, the veteran Moravian missionary, who has spent over fifty years on the inhospitable borders of Tibet, fifty years without a single furlough, in order that the Scriptures in Tibetan may enter into that mysterious and forbidden land. And have not the Tibetans welcomed his

sacrifice? Last December we received a letter written in Tibetan by three native Christians in the small congregation at Leh, in Little Tibet, 11,500 feet above the sea, written to thank the Bible Society for providing them with Scriptures in their own tongue. 'By your serving Jesus Christ our Saviour with all your soul and mind,' they write, 'you have not only caused us unintelligent ones great joy, but we also wish now from the bottom of our hearts to serve our Lord to our best ability.'

Look at Mr. Peck of the Church Missionary Society, who has spent twenty-six years among the poor Eskimos, far away in the Blacklead Island, Cumberland Sound. He was seven months before hearing of the death of our late beloved Queen, and so isolated is his station that at the best he can only hear from the outer world once in twelve months. He is making these sacrifices to give the gospel in the Arctic Zone, and he is beloved by the people among whom he toils.

Look at the agents, the colporteurs, the Bible-women of the Bible Society, a noble army, tramping this earth, often in perils and dangers, often in weariness and painfulness, in order to place the Scriptures in the hands of their fellow men, and to commend them to their hearts. Only last year a colporteur, a converted anarchist, was attacked in Italy, his head being laid open by a blow, and he left more dead than alive. I have met a colporteur in Spain who had had his beard plucked out by a priest.

Quite recently a colporteur called El Kaid ('the Captain,' for no one knew his name) laid down his life in Morocco. Recently in China colporteurs have been beheaded; they have been pushed while yet alive through straw-chopping machines, or put to death slowly in ways equally horrible; and they have died with the commendation of the gospel on their lips. One in Persia was recently bastinadoed until his feet were a mass of blood, and he could not walk. When, some months afterwards, the agent made up the itineraries of his men, he put down the village in which this man had received brutal treatment, to a fellow colporteur. The one who had suffered pleaded that he might return to his persecutors, and he did return, and on entering the village took off his shoes and stockings. When he was summoned before the chiefs, he quietly told them that he had done so that he might be ready once again to be beaten.

Does any other book call forth such heroism and sacrifice as the Bible?

Apart from all these sufferings, think of the sacrifice made in money. The British and Foreign Bible Society alone has spent fourteen millions sterling in order to give the world the Bible. Many are the touching gifts received for this object. Early this year the Rev. A. B. Fisher of the Church Missionary Society visited the Committee in London, and read a letter from the King and Chiefs of Toro, in Central Africa. The following is the translation :—

*Kabarole, Toro, September 30th, 1903.*

To the Chiefs of the British and Foreign Bible Society. I greet you heartily in our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you very much for our Lunyoro books. We were delighted with your endeavour to give the people the books in their own language. Thank you very much for feeding the nations with the food of life by this means. For this we praise you very much.

Bwana Fisher told us of the work that you are doing in our Church of Toro, and we rejoiced much to hear these words, and we continue to pray God to give you power and means to translate the Word of God into all languages of the people of Africa. Thus we send you a demonstration of our gratitude. Farewell. May our Father God help you in your work. I am your friend in Jesus Christ, DAUDI KASAGAMA, King of Toro.

As Mr. Fisher left Toro, the King put in his hand a bag containing 54 rupees, which he and his chiefs had subscribed as a donation towards the Bible Society's Centenary Fund. If we remember that these people were savages seven years ago, and that they were first evangelized by native Christians from Uganda, such a gift is a striking witness to the missionary power of the Bible.

The Manchurian Christians showed their appreciation by contributing 500 dollars to the Centenary Fund, and in addition they did embroidery and other work worth 500 dollars more, and sent a message worked on silk to express their thanks to the 'Universal Bible Society, through which the Bible permeates the whole world.'

These gifts of money are a striking proof of the sacrifices men are prepared to make in order to give the Bible as well as to get it. What non-Christian

people would spend so noble a sum as fourteen millions to benefit the rest of the world? and what Christian people would spend it on any other book than the Bible? The British and Foreign Bible Society is itself an answer to the question, Is Christianity true? We have not yet heard of a 'Hindu and Foreign Veda Society,' or of an 'Oriental and Foreign Koran Society.' The Bible is the world's great missionary; there were never more people making sacrifices to get it, there were never more people making sacrifices to give it.

If the Bible be not divine, the explanation of the facts to which the Bible Society bears clear witness has still to be found. The Bible is a Book for all time. No mould gathers on its sacred pages. By its survival of all other books, it proves itself to be the fittest. The Bible is a Book for all men. It is read by millions, and every year millions are added to the number of its readers in every quarter of the globe. The Bible contains a message from God. Some of us have heard through its pages His voice speaking out of eternity into our souls, speaking with authority and speaking in love. The Bible is the world's great missionary. Wherever men seek the Lord, 'if haply they may find Him' in the pages of this Book alone, their longings find satisfaction. Whoever reverently, intelligently, prayerfully, makes the Bible his guide, finds therein a 'lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his path.'

# ‘WHY PRAY?’

BY

REV. FRANK BALLARD, M.A., B.Sc., B.D.

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IT would seem as if the subject of last Sunday should have engaged our thought to-day, but the connexion between that most interesting address and our theme this afternoon is immediate and direct. Whatever else the Bible may be, or may not be, it is the Book of Prayer. The Bible and prayer stand or fall together. If the Bible be trustworthy, then all questions concerning prayer are at an end. If prayer could be shown to be a delusion, then the Bible would be discredited for evermore. It is well, therefore, that on Bible Sunday we are here to consider the reality and value of prayer. Indeed, we might answer our question—‘Why pray?’—at once, and easily, if the Bible be conceded to be what it claims to be. If I am asked why I pray, give me to assume the truth of the Bible, and I reply in a moment, because, according to the revelation of the mind of God therein enshrined, I find that prayer becomes the most natural, the most rational, the most worthy, the most helpful exercise of all the noblest faculties I possess. And that would be in itself, for every thoughtful man, a sufficient answer. But in such case our question

would be turned round, and this hour would be rather the appropriate time to ask, with all possible plainness of speech, 'Why *not* pray?' For it is to be feared that in regard to the majority of the people of our land, and especially perhaps young people, neither the reading of the Bible thoughtfully nor praying earnestly, is often the habit. There is only too much reason to believe they are both 'more honoured in the breach than in the observance.'

We are here, however, to-day, to ask why this should be so. Our friend—for I have towards him no atom of feeling except that of the kindest—who in the *Clarion* has recently done all that he can to prevent modern men and women from either reading the Bible or praying, confesses with the same breath that the condition and the tendency of young people in this day give him grave concern, and that he is very much dissatisfied with their character and outlook. I would suggest that he reverse his procedure, and instead of trying to lead our young people not to pray, should urge them thoughtfully and earnestly to prayer. For of this, I submit, we are well assured, that so long as a man is sincere in praying—we have nothing to do here and now with the hypocrite—real prayer is a guarantee for worthy character, and the young man or young woman who is truly given to prayer, in the full Christian sense, will be the very young man and young woman concerning whom we can afford to have least anxiety, and in regard to whose

moral future we have more assurances than civilization can give us in any other way.

Why not pray? There are, I fear, many here to-day who during the whole of last week never spent five minutes in prayer. And if I venture to ask you, 'Why not?' the only response, as a rule, to that question, is a dim and nebulous kind of feeling or assertion that you do not know that it is worth while. But you have had a spokesman of late who has set forth very succinctly the reasons why he thinks you and I should not pray; and as these are put so carefully and with such plausibility, I shall perhaps be using this occasion to best advantage if I take them now in hand. According to this book, entitled *God and my Neighbour*,<sup>1</sup> there are four great objections to the reality and usefulness of prayer. We are told that prayer is unnatural or unnecessary, that it is unscientific, that it is unworthy, that it is unavailing. I am here to challenge every one of these, and to endeavour to show, on the contrary, that the reason why we should pray, is because prayer is, of all the things that we can do with the noblest powers entrusted to us, the most natural and therefore the most necessary, the most rational—that is the most scientific, the most worthy of us in all our better parts, as well as the most effective and helpful, both for ourselves and for the world.

But first of all, it is very necessary that we should

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<sup>1</sup> p. 79.

be clear as to what we mean by prayer, for our friend who thus speaks for the prayerless, evidently does not understand at all. For mark what is here said—‘If God is just, will He not do justice without being entreated of men? If God is all-wise and knows all that happens, will He not know what is for man’s good better than man can tell Him?—To pray to God is to insult Him. What would a man think if his children knelt and begged for his love, or for their daily bread? He would think his children showed a very low conception of their father’s sense of duty and affection.’ Those are the words in which the *Clarion* doctrine of prayer is stated. I reply at once, and plainly, that here this is a double fallacy. For this statement is both a misrepresentation of prayer and a misrepresentation of God. The misrepresentation of prayer is in putting the seventh part for the whole; the misrepresentation of God is in suggesting that His Fatherhood is no more than stoical isolation.

### I.

What is prayer? I ask. Is it what our friend says—‘kneeling and begging’? It is no more merely begging, than one colour of the spectrum is the whole of light. For every Christian as well as every non-Christian should always remember that there are seven distinct elements in real prayer, even as there are in this light. In what we call ‘white’ light, there are seven prismatic colours always blended. They are the red, orange, yellow, green

blue, indigo, and violet. You cannot get rid of them ; they are always there, and in that order. Even so true prayer includes these seven elements, and always in their true order. First, Adoration. For no man can truly pray, unless in some degree he realizes that he is praying to God, and God who is God must needs be adored. After adoration there comes, or should come, Thanksgiving. For the apprehension of the greatness of God must be immediately followed in thought by the recognition of His goodness. Then comes, alas ! our only too clear recollection that as mortal men we have but ill requited that goodness, or, to put it in one word, the conviction of Sin. Thus the need for Penitence follows upon the recognition of the goodness of God. But after Penitence, necessarily and always, Resolution ; for penitence without resolution is vain and false. That which real repentance dreads most of all is the repetition of the sin. Then, and only then, is the time or place in true prayer for what our friend calls begging—though we may prefer to call it petition or request. It is only after adoration and thanksgiving, confession and self-consecration, that there is any place for petition in prayer. There is no more misleading conception of prayer, than that which one too often meets with—as though it simply meant that God was flooding this world of ours with indiscriminate blank cheques for every one to fill in according to their fancy. That may be a pious imagination, but it is not Christ's doctrine of prayer, nor is it even the truth

as to that element of 'petition' concerning which the apostle says that 'if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us.' The will of God herein is made plain as the light of day. If, in reality, we would approach Him, it must be in His own appointed way. And the final authority, as to that way is neither theological invention nor religious custom, but the clear teaching of the Bible itself. Even after Petition there are two other parts in prayer. For Intercession, wherein we plead for others, is as valid and as necessary in all true prayer as any sincerity or earnestness on our own behalf. And yet there is another element, and that is Submission. For this means the final recognition that after all our entreaty, and assuming all possible sincerity, seeing that we plead with God, we acknowledge that His wisdom and love and decision must ever be better than anything we can ask, either for others or ourselves. Let us repeat these seven elements, so that they may ever be remembered—Adoration, Thanksgiving, Penitence, Resolution, Petition, Intercession, Submission. If we would speak of prayer truthfully, we must mean all these. They can, indeed, be all put into one term. We may speak of them altogether as 'Communion with God,' and prayer, to be prayer, is never less than that. This, then, is the first misconception here; viz. the representation of a part as the whole—and that part, you will observe, isolated from the whole. But is there any man who will wish to shake hands with a

hand that is severed from the body? I trow not. No more have we anything to do in our Christian thought and life with 'begging,' as this writer here puts it, isolated from all the other living members that go to make up the reality of prayer.

Again, concerning the Fatherhood. What is it that is represented here—'To pray to God is to insult Him'? What! to commune with a father to insult him! Is that how our children insult us? Is there any fatherhood worth naming, is there any sonship that can ever deserve to be called such, which does not necessarily involve communion between the father and the child? This book is dedicated, I find, 'To my son Robert Corri Blatchford.' Then does this father wish his son never to commune with him, never to ask him for anything, never prefer any request, never show any loving gratitude, never to come to him in trouble or in difficulty? Surely not. Yet if ever in any unhappy home such an attitude is found, there is only one word by which it can be expressed. And that is to say that it is in the highest sense utterly unnatural. Everywhere and always the only natural relation between real fatherhood and real sonship is communion. Therefore the rightfulness and the naturalness of prayer can only be disproved by demonstrating first, either the non-existence or the non-fatherhood of God. These two subjects we are not here to-day to discuss. I am warranted now in taking them for granted,

and so long as it is true that God is, and is our Father, so long is it the most natural, and the only natural, thing that we can do, to enter into communion with Him.

Now, in the same way that misrepresentation lies at the base of that first difficulty, so is it at the root of all the others. To say that prayer is unscientific is to misrepresent both science and prayer. To assert that prayer and praise are unworthy is to misrepresent their true significance no less than our human nature; to suggest that it is unavailing, is to misrepresent hosts of real, palpable, practical facts. Now, to do justice to all these points to-day, would take more time than we have at our disposal. We must confine ourselves, therefore, to those difficulties or objections which appear to deserve most consideration.

## II.

It is said that petition is a definite part of prayer, and in so far as prayer is petition, so far is it unscientific. But why? Here we must be very careful. What is really meant when it is said that prayer is 'unscientific'? The general answer is, that a direct answer to prayer would involve an 'interference' with those laws of nature by which our whole being is surrounded and penetrated; that these make any such answer impossible. Is it so? Is it really true that the uniformity of nature, the invariability, the inviolability of law, are so established beyond

question, in modern science, as to render any answer to prayer impossible? I answer they are not. For at their best and utmost, these terms are but the expression of human hypotheses, true so far as we know, and so far as they go, but certainly not going far enough to make answers to prayer impossible or unscientific. However, it may be better perhaps—seeing that not a few people are sometimes suspicious about what they call ‘pulpit science’—that I should give them the words of some other authorities. I will therefore quote some words recently published—and so open to everybody to read—from one of our ablest and most esteemed professors of physics, a man than whom there is perhaps scarcely a greater physical expert living. What does Professor Sir Oliver Lodge say concerning these things? The question asked is, ‘Does not science make answers to prayer impossible?’ Here is what Sir Oliver Lodge says: ‘As to what is scientifically impossible or possible, anything not self-contradictory or inconsistent with other truth is possible. Speaking from our present scientific ignorance, and in spite of anything said by Professor Tyndall, this statement must be accepted as literally true for all we know to the contrary.’<sup>1</sup> Science has thus nothing to do with the impossible, except the impossible be also self-contradictory. But there is certainly nothing self-contradictory involved in the actuality of answers to petition in prayer. Let us, however, continue the

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<sup>1</sup> *Hibbert Journal*, January 1903, p. 225.

same able exponent's opinion. Listen to this: 'Religious people seem to be losing some of their faith in prayer; they think it scientific not to pray in the sense of simple petition. They may be right; it may be the highest attitude never to ask for anything specific, only for acquiescence. If saints feel it so, they are doubtless right; but so far as ordinary science has anything to say to the contrary, a more childlike attitude might turn out truer, more in accordance with the total scheme.'—'If we have an instinct for worship, for prayer, for communion with saints or with Deity, let us trust that instinct—but let us not assume that our present conscious intelligence is already so well informed that its knowledge exhausts, or determines, or bounds, the region of the true and the possible.'<sup>1</sup>

That may suffice now, in regard to what is possible. But, again, some one may say, 'after all, does not an answer to petition involve a breach of natural law? Are we not asking God to contradict Himself by violating His own law?' No, we are not. In no Christian petition whatever do we ask for that which necessarily contradicts any law of nature, known to us or unknown. In Professor Lodge's words—that you may hear rather what he thinks than what I do—'Prayer for a fancied good that might really be an injury, would be foolish; prayer for breach of law would be not foolish only but profane; but who are we to dogmatize too positively

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<sup>1</sup> Loc. cit. pp. 223-5.

concerning law?'—'Prayer we have been told is a mighty engine of achievement, but we have ceased to believe it. Why should we be so incredulous? Even in medicine, for instance, it is not really absurd to suggest that drugs and no prayer may be almost as foolish as prayer and no drugs.'<sup>1</sup> Now, this is not a 'pulpit' statement, observe, but that of a learned professor of science. Again, here is another essay written not from the pulpit standpoint at all, but from that of a scientific essay. What did Professor Romanes say in his early days, before he took in hand to write his 'Candid Examination of Theism'?—'There are several methods by which it is amply apparent, even to our limited faculties, that the Almighty may answer prayer, without in any way violating the course of natural law.'<sup>2</sup> Again, 'The question at issue is not this, Can the existence and the action of a special providence be experimentally proved? But, supposing the existence of such Providence, can its action be rationally supposed capable of eluding the scrutiny of science?'—'One quotation, however, should be laid to heart as proceeding from the father of these methods, to which science owes all her victories in the past and all her hopes for the future—"I believe that God doth (as Bacon says in his *Confession of Faith*) accomplish and fulfil His divine will in all things, great and small, singular and general, as fully and exactly by Providence, as He

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<sup>1</sup> Loc. cit. pp. 223-4.

<sup>2</sup> *Christian Prayer and General Laws*, p. 195. (Macmillan.)

could by miracle."<sup>1</sup> To which we may well add Professor Lodge's remark that 'sobriety and sanity consist in recognizing all the operative causes, spiritual, mental, and material.'<sup>2</sup>

There is room, however, for another suggestion. Those who pray may well turn the tables on objectors, in affirming that if what is wanted is a really irrational and unscientific conception in this whole matter, we have it to hand when we are asked to assume or to concede that God, who is God, in His dealing with men should necessarily be limited to our conceptions, either of His nature, or of what we are pleased to call 'natural law.' For at the utmost—and I speak as a lover of science all my life—at the utmost what is our knowledge of science, and of natural law, but the poor blind groping of tiny earthworms in contact for a very little time with a mere fragment of a boundless universe? Who are we to say that this and the other is impossible to the will of the Infinite and Eternal Father? I submit therefore, and must here leave this portion of my subject, that the balance of science, as well as the best of human nature, is on the side of those who pray.

### III.

But, further, it is suggested that, after all, prayer is not worthy of us. I must turn for this to the summary with which we are here dealing, as having

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 268.

<sup>2</sup> Loc. cit. p. 224.

been so carefully printed and so widely flung abroad throughout the kingdom. Our friend goes on to say<sup>1</sup> 'And as to praise, I cannot imagine the Creator of the Universe wanting men's praise. Does the wise man prize the praise of fools? Does the strong man prize the praise of the weak? Does any man of wisdom and power care for the praise of his inferiors? We make God into a puny man, a man full of vanity and love of approbation, when we confer upon Him the impertinence of our prayers and our adoration and our praise.' Is that so? I am sorry to say, not unkindly, but plainly, that the real 'impertinence' here is in the misrepresentation of the terms 'praise and prayer.' These two words are turned into one as though they meant mere 'applause.' Thus we are given to understand that to 'praise' God is to applaud God. Is that so? Every sincere man should know, as any Sunday scholar does know, whether this is true. For what does the Bible always mean by 'prayer and praise'? Adoration and thanksgiving. That is, never anything else than reverent love and gratitude. Where is the unworthiness, then, of these conceptions, or of such an attitude? If God be God—and this writer gives us to understand that if he did believe in God at all, He must be very, very, very great, with which we entirely agree—if God be so great, what is the only rational attitude towards Him? Surely it is that of lowly adoration. That it is also the only

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<sup>1</sup> *God and my Neighbour*, p. 81.

scientific conclusion to which a thoughtful mind can come, is well illustrated in the closing sentence of the most recent Romanes Lecture (1903), at Oxford, upon the 'Ultimate Nature of Matter'—'Even the material universe, when we know it, will be such as to elicit feelings of reverent awe and adoration.' That is the only worthy attitude of a moral being. For the man who does not humble himself in the presence of the infinite God, granted that he believes in Him as revealed by modern science, must be simply an indescribable pigmy of self-conceit and impudence. If God be, indeed, our Father, our Creator, our Preserver, our Redeemer, can there be any doubt as to what should be our feeling towards Him? Surely all parents are agreed as to what is the worthy attitude of their children towards themselves. Is it not, necessarily and always, grateful, respectful love? Does any man wish his child to become a thankless prodigal or a heartless doll? The 'worthiness' is all and only on the part of those who towards God, never for one second in their lives think of such a thing as applause, but ever cherish lowliest love, well knowing how the Bible is perfectly clear from beginning to end, that to 'praise God,' is to reverently adore Him who is at once the infinite Ruler and the eternal Father. Such an attitude of heart, moreover, is not only worthy in regard to God, but equally so as regards ourselves.

But again, here is another strange objection. Our

friend says that he thinks that even if there be any benefit in prayer, 'it is bought too dearly at the price of a decrease in our self-reliance. I do not think it is good for a man to be always asking for help, or for benefits, or for pardon. It seems to me that such a habit must tend to weaken character.' Will, then, any doctor affirm that to breathe deeply in pure air, as a habit, is to weaken the lungs? If he will say Yes to that, we may accept such a statement as is here quoted. But never until then. Rather, to look at this notion carefully but for a moment, is to see how misrepresenting it is. Indeed it is not only absurd in itself, but flatly contradictory to history, diametrically opposed to observation, utterly at variance with the experience of many here present, and contradicted entirely by the writer himself. For what does he acknowledge? 'The act of prayer gives courage and confidence in proportion to the faith of him who prays.' When he prays 'he is rousing up his dormant faculty of resistance and desire for righteousness.' Is that weakening character? So far as we know anything of human nature and human life, surely that is the kind of influence upon character which, above all else, in modern England and indeed throughout Europe, this generation needs. And as to the past, what is the name of the strongest man in English history? Does any one hesitate? Surely not for more than two seconds. Is it not one to whom we owe our

most glorious liberties, Oliver Cromwell? It may be questioned whether any stronger man is to be found in the whole history of civilization. But what do we read concerning him? I refer you to Green's *History of the English People*. Listen to what is there said about Cromwell: 'Cromwell spent much time in prayer with God before the storming of Basing House.'<sup>1</sup> This, we know, was typical of his general procedure. And what about his men? 'The regiment of a thousand men which Cromwell raised for the Eastern Counties, and which soon became known as his Ironsides, was formed strictly of men of religion. "A lovely company" he called them. No blasphemy, drinking, disorder, or impiety, was ever suffered in their ranks.' Were they, then, weaklings? If one may discern the signs of the times, what is wanted more than ever in modern England on the side of truth and righteousness, is a host of men as 'weak' as Cromwell's Ironsides and their leader. For verily if these our valiant forefathers were made what they were by prayer, and you and I have the social as well as the spiritual weal of our land at heart, then I submit that on the testimony of history the very best thing we could do would be to turn Manchester—aye, and all England too—into one vast assembly for genuine prayer. Prayer the weakener of character! Well, indeed, may we avow that such a thought is contrary alike to experience and to observation. Find me in all England a man, or a

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<sup>1</sup> pp. 537, 541, 547.

woman, or a child, who as the result of true prayer has been morally weakened. Alas! too well we know that, throughout the land, those who give earnest Christian workers so much trouble and sorrow and anxiety, as they long to save and bless them, are the weak-kneed young men and young women. 'Weak-kneed'—not merely in character and morals, but in character and morals because they are weak-kneed elsewhere. For they never pray. But if they prayed, in sincerity and truth, they would not be what they are.

Yet again. This writer says that 'work is nobler than prayer, and far more dignified.' I deny the contrast. The assumed antagonism is false. Is there any antagonism between energy and health? Shall we say that 'energy is much nobler than health and far more useful'? Is it! Can you find human energy anywhere of which the essence is not health? It may be unhesitatingly affirmed that the very soul of all the noblest work that is done in this land of ours to-day is prayer, and the noblest workers are those who know most of the worthiness of prayer. But in another strong statement—which I quote because I know too well it typifies the attitude of thousands—our friend says concerning himself, 'I never pray, and I never feel the need of prayer.' What is this, then? Logic—or testimony—or what? If this be testimony, and if the principle of the testimony be valid, then I submit that it must be valid in other matters. Let us try it.

'I never wash, and never feel the need of washing.'  
'I never read, and never feel the need of reading.'  
'I never think, and never feel the need of thinking.'  
No; and in each case we may add, you never will, on such lines. I urge that the logic, in all these instances is as fair as in the sentence quoted. What, then, is the worth of such testimony, which, alas! is only too true of many? It is merely to the effect that this writer is, on this subject, entirely disqualified to give any opinion. Is the man who never learns music, who has never touched a note and has no ear for harmony, the man to send to any Journal to be its musical critic? Is it reasonable? What, then, is this testimony? In the kindest way possible one must say that such a testimony as this is simply the prejudiced confidence of ignorance. Nay further, one is bound to add that at its best—to put it as gently as plainly—this is merely the cry of an animal. Any cow looking over a gate in the nearest lane, can say the same—'I never pray, never feel the need of prayer.' What it all comes to is the 49th Psalm—'Man that is in honour and understandeth not is like the beasts that perish.' Such an estimate is confessedly ancient, but it is much truer than some of the things we hear to-day. For this word—'Man that is in honour'—the honour of possible communion with God—expresses the difference between the man and his horse. My child is 'in honour,' for my child can commune with me, and my dog cannot. When, therefore, a man says, 'I have nothing to do

with this communion, I know nothing about it and never want to know,' we must say, with all kindness but with all plainness, that he is trampling on his honour and bringing his human nature down to the level of the brute.

## IV.

But after all, it may be urged, there is another matter. Does petition actually avail? If we agree that it is not unnatural, that it is not unscientific, that it is not unworthy to pray, it yet remains to ask whether any real answer or advantage follows upon prayer. That is a question we must now briefly consider. The final appeal undoubtedly is to fact. Yet not to facts indiscriminately. For at the outset we must distinguish between two directions in which petition may avail. Real answers to prayer may be subjective or objective, that is, they may come to pass either within us or without.

Now, as to the answers from within, our good friend confesses that there may be subjective effects as the result of prayer: 'The woman who weeps may relieve her over-charged heart. The man who prays may give himself courage or confidence.' But these, mark, are 'not because God will hear or answer, but for natural reasons.' The inference from this is that because the reasons are 'natural,' therefore they are not divine. But I deny the logic of this, and say, in reply, with the succinctness which is here inevitable, that they are rather divine because they are natural. For if there be one truth

emerging now more and more clearly—though it has been in Scripture from the beginning—it is the immanence of God in nature. This, Professor Lodge says here very plainly,<sup>1</sup> is the modern lesson for Theology, but it is also the modern lesson for Agnosticism. ‘This is the lesson that science has to teach Theology, to look for the action of Deity, not in the past alone, nor only in the future, but equally in the present.’ Our friend suggests and insinuates that because the answers to prayer may come to us along the recognized lines of psychological law, therefore they cannot be divine. Which is no more true than to say that because the dinner I ate awhile ago has passed into my system by physiological law, therefore there cannot be the ‘finger of God’ in it. Whereas we must say, in the name of science as of religion, that if there were no ‘finger of God,’ there would be no nutrition at all. Physiological law is as much the working of the divine as gravitation. So, too, is psychological law. The law which decrees that a man who prays truly and sincerely shall be blessed in his own soul, through his prayer, is not the contradiction but the expression of the reality and nearness of the divine. It is the never-failing proof that the oft-quoted words are true,—

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears,  
And Spirit with Spirit may meet ;  
Closer is He than breathing,  
And nearer than hands or feet.

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<sup>1</sup> Loc. cit. p. 214.

But real answers to prayer, it is urged, must be objective, if we are to be assured of their actuality. It does not follow, as we have seen. But we may look for a moment at the actuality and the reliableness of external or objective answers to prayer. Even in this case it is not by any means necessary, in order to prove their reality, that they should be always capable of exhibition, in what one may call cartoon fashion, for the benefit of a sceptical world. Dr. Romanes was well warranted in saying—'To those who believe in the efficacy of prayer, no single proposition can be more self-evident than that the presiding influence of Providence should not admit always of scientific demonstration.'<sup>1</sup> If results from physical laws are always conditioned upon obedience to those laws, so certainly may well be answers to prayer upon obedience to the laws of Christ. So that Professor Tyndall's famous suggestion to set apart certain hospital wards and pray for them by way of experiment, is as unjustifiable in the spiritual realm, as it would be in the physical realm for a man to seek to make ice in the hot room of a Turkish bath.

Moreover, there may well be, and doubtless are, many externally real answers to prayerful petition which may be beyond our present powers of detection or demonstration. Such scientific results as are now known in connexion with radium, or the x rays, or wireless telegraphy, would have been incredible a

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<sup>1</sup> *Physical Efficacy of Prayer*, pp. 266-7.

hundred years ago. Yet all the time, then as now, they were real enough, had we been able to discover them. So may be now many real though invisible answers to prayer.

But, beyond question, the most actual proof of definite divine response to petition must ever come on the lines of experience. The more sure it is, often the more it is alike beyond exhibition or expression. Even as Jesus Himself ever refused to do a 'mighty work' to gratify the cynical curiosity of certain scribes and Pharisees, so still we have no manner of right to call upon God to do some super-normal thing, just to oblige those who refuse or ignore other evidence of His presence. 'Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!' may well be the language of many a humble but earnest supplicant whose petition has been heard and answered. Returning health after illness is not one whit less real because it cannot be described. Nor are any of life's deeper experiences to be challenged as to their actuality, because they cannot be turned into journalistic copy or expressed in scientific formulae. The full and final proof that God does answer prayer, on the plane of our bodily and practical life, no less than in our spiritual experience, can only come to those who pray. No man can be warmed by a fire who merely surveys it from afar through a telescope. It is as rational as religious to affirm that 'the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.'

There are many other aspects of the case which cannot now be dealt with ; but I do not shrink from affirming that answers to prayer, in facts as palpable, as manifest, as practical, as even scepticism can desire, are undoubtedly to be found by those who will search for them with an open mind and a respectful sincerity.

Perhaps of all such possible responses, cash may by some people be regarded as the most practical. Here, then, is a little book, published by John Wilkinson, the well-known missionary to the Jews, which is entitled *God answers Prayer*. What is his statement?—‘Let it be told for the glory of God, that the director of this Mission has never for twenty-six years been without £1 when he has needed it, and the Mission has never incurred debt. The director, though asked more than once, has never told any one but God when his personal fund was low. All need has been supplied by the voluntary offerings of the Lord’s people, who have contributed during twenty-six years more than £170,000 for Mission work.’ Surely that is practical enough. Do you say that the writer is mistaken? There is no possibility of mistake. Do you suggest that he was moved by self-interest? He was not, seeing that he left everything he had to enter upon an untried and difficult work. Do you hint that it was easy work? Try it, go and learn to read and preach in Hebrew to the Jews, and see if you find it easy. But this instance is only one out of a host.

We could repeat this kind of testimony again and again. Every one has heard of Mr. Hudson Taylor and his great work in the China Inland Mission. Here is a published account—you will find it in the Rev. Andrew Murray's *Key to the Missionary Problem*, p. 97—how in that mission they were in want of both workers and funds; and when they did not know which way to look, they earnestly betook themselves to prayer, asking for a hundred workers and £10,000 in one year. Before the year was out there came to them £11,000, and five hundred offers of workers. But one cannot here go into such personal detail. There are very many such experiences, too solemnly, too tenderly true, to be exhibited in public.

Yet I must remind you, that most real answers to prayer are not necessarily those connected with the body, or with the purse, or with the business. The great aim of prayer—though the body is never forgotten—is to bring men made in the image of God, nearer in character to Him who made them. And in that highest realm I venture to say that, whatever may be the case amongst merely professional Christians, or amongst easy-going 'Oncers,' as Mr. Gladstone called them, there is not a single devoted church in this land without definite proof of answered prayer. I question whether there is a single earnest Christian worker, who does not prove, every year he lives, with a proof that leaves him no more in doubt than of his own existence,

that God is working with him, and is answering the petitions which are reverently addressed to Him.

Some one may say, however, 'Yes, but what about the prayers that are not answered?' To enter upon that now is impossible. But there are times when it may be tenderly, thoughtfully, frankly, faced and answered. Reverting finally to the main theme before us, I reply in answer to the question—'Why Pray?'—because in the fullest, most rational as well as most human sense, it is the only natural, and scientific, and worthy, and effective thing to do, if we are to live the Christ-life on earth; and that life I take to be the noblest possible for any man. Yet let not any, even those who are striving to be Christians indeed, go away with the impression that prayer is a mere duty. To say that prayer is a duty is very far from the truth. It was surely not a duty for us to breathe as we came here to-day. For all who have healthy lungs, and a body that has never been poisoned with either alcoholics or narcotics, every breath is a luxury. The man who eats only from a sense of duty, should at once consult some doctor. In health we breathe, we eat, both because we live thereby and because we find enjoyment in so doing. That is the way to pray. Not as a duty, but as an absolute necessity, and an unspeakable comfort. Yonder fish in the ocean could live without bringing the purifying oxygen in the water over his gills as he swims, far more easily than a man or a woman

can live the Christ-life on earth without prayer. Indeed we cannot possibly do so. We pray, therefore, both because we must, and because we may. Prayer is the very breath of our higher life. It has, moreover, to be remembered and never forgotten, that even in these great and I fear to a large extent prayerless cities of ours, the prayerless man or woman is prayerless in the everlasting presence of a waiting, yearning God. Out on the breezy bracing hillside I do not pray for an atmosphere that shall invigorate me. The atmosphere is there waiting for me to inhale. Even so are the grace and peace of God ever waiting for each of us to open our hearts to their incoming. So, if there be any man who is blind to the light of God in prayer, it is not because the light is absent, but because the poor man does not know better than to keep his eyes closed—and yet withal expect to see!

# ‘WESLEY OR VOLTAIRE?’

BY

REV. JOHN S. SIMON.

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I HAVE to speak to you to-day about two men who were conspicuous figures in the eighteenth century. You will see that the title of my lecture is a question ; its form suggests that I must draw a contrast between Wesley and Voltaire, and then ask which you will choose as your leader and example in the sphere of thought, work, and faith. In order that we may preserve the unity of our thinking, I will ask you to consider—

1. The personal character of these men. As Voltaire was born nine years before Wesley, I will take him first. He was born in Paris in 1694. His father was a notary called Arouet. His mother was a delicate woman of some refinement of character, who died when her son was seven years old. To his parents Voltaire seems to have been but slightly indebted for any training or guidance. E. G. Tallentyre, who has written the latest *Life of Voltaire*, says, ‘The man who afterwards called himself Voltaire valued his ancestry not at all, and owed it nothing.’ Speaking of the mother, he says, ‘Her great son does not mention her half a dozen times in that vast bulk of writings he left the

world. 'To him she was but a shadow; to the world she must needs be but a shadow too.' In England we have a prejudice in favour of a sound home training, and are accustomed to speak with considerable respect of our mothers. But in the case of Voltaire the genial, purifying influences were absent.

If Voltaire owed little to his ancestry, he owed something to his godfather which he might well have spared. His godfather was a priest named Châteauneuf. Tallentyre shall characterize for us this guide of youth. He says, 'It is not too much to say that at this period, and for about a hundred years afterwards, the name of abbé was synonymous with that of scoundrel. . . . Châteauneuf was not worse than most of his kind, and perhaps, if anything, was rather better. He accepted, indeed, the emoluments of a religion in which he did not only not believe, but at which he openly scoffed, in order to live at his ease a life quite profligate and disreputable.' From this representative of the Christian religion Voltaire learnt many a lesson which he afterwards taught with cynical bitterness. There can be no doubt that in Voltaire's early life his godfather was his best friend, and the association left indelible marks on his character.

Voltaire was brought up in profligate society. Is it any wonder that his life was unclean? It is customary to excuse him because of the character of the times in which he lived. Such excuses are vain. A social reformer should be superior to his times.

I do not wish to dwell on this dark side of Voltaire's character. It is better to turn away from an unedifying spectacle, and try to find out the good that was in him. You never know a man until you have seen his best side. Allow me for a few moments to be Voltaire's advocate.

In popular estimation, Voltaire is considered to have been an atheist. That is certainly a mistaken description. Tallentyre, in speaking on this point, says, 'What was his creed? It had only one article—I believe in God.' Voltaire confesses that in such a belief one finds difficulties; but he declared that in the belief that there is no God there were absurdities, and he could never bear to be absurd.

On February 28, 1778, when he believed that his last hour had come, he wrote these words: 'I die adoring God, loving my friends, not hating my enemies, and detesting superstition.' His last written sentence was, 'Whoso fears God fears to sit at ease,' a sentence which may well be pondered by luxurious Christians. These words are enough to relieve Voltaire from the charge of atheism, a charge which should be for ever dismissed.

Voltaire was not an atheist, nor was he a Christian. Some of you who are acquainted with the facts of his life may be surprised at that statement. Certain acts in his life have a Christian complexion. They look as if he wished to pose as a believer in the national religion. But it was all pose. He built a Christian church, and delivered a harangue from

the pulpit. Nay, when he was in danger of death, he was worried by the priests into making his confession. He wrote out his profession of faith. In it he declared that 'he had confessed to Gaultier that he died in the Catholic religion, in which he was born, and that if he had scandalized the church he asked pardon of God and of it.' I am thankful that, after making this confession, he declined to receive the sacrament. That would have been too great a profanity.

If I were asked to indicate the chief beauty of Voltaire's character, I should at once point to his keen sympathy with those who suffered oppression. He hated tyranny, and fought tyrants with a vehemence that never tired. It speaks volumes for him that he was more deeply touched when people spoke of him as the defender of Calas than when they hailed him as poet and dramatist. In his heart he knew that he was doing his best work when he was rescuing the innocent from the torments of the oppressor.

Voltaire was, indeed, a strange man. It is difficult to get a clear view of him. He hid his real character in a cloud of mockery at things, in himself and others, which men hold to be sacred. It has been well said that as some men never speak without a stammer, so Voltaire never spoke without a jest. No man so much needs to be defended against himself. If you can catch him in a moment of simplicity and earnestness, the self-revelation he gives provokes your admiration. What can be better than this description of his practical scheme of religion? He says, 'To

worship God ; to leave each man the liberty to serve Him in his own fashion ; to love one's neighbours, enlighten them if one can, pity them when they are in error ; to attach no importance to trivial questions which would never have given trouble if no seriousness had been imputed to them : that is my religion, which is worth all your systems and all your symbols.' These are noble words, and they spring from a heart for a moment unveiled.

I now turn to John Wesley. He was born in 1703 in the Rectory of Epworth, Lincolnshire. It is refreshing to leave the heated atmosphere of palaces and châteaux, of theatres and salons, and breathe for a while the air of a Lincolnshire village. John Wesley came of a clean, sound English stock. His father was a clergyman of the Church of England. His paternal and maternal grandfathers were both Non-conformists of high character who suffered manfully for their conscientious convictions. John Wesley's paternal grandfather belonged to 'the noble army of martyrs.' When the blood of a martyr is in a man, it reveals itself in deed and word and spirit. We have seen that Voltaire's mother was a mere 'shadow' in his life, and had not the slightest influence upon her son. Susanna Wesley, one of the noblest English women who ever lived, left an ineffaceable impression upon John Wesley. She was reproduced in him. Intellectually, morally, spiritually, she lived over again in England's great reformer.

There is only one aspect of John Wesley's

character upon which it is necessary to dwell as we place him in contrast with Voltaire. If you wish to know Wesley, you must discern in him an infinite hunger and thirst after righteousness. It was the secret of his asceticism in Oxford and Georgia ; it distressed him in the Aldersgate Street meeting-room ; it sent him to the Cross of Christ ; it was the 'even, strong desire' that kept him in the pathway of self-sacrificing work to the end of his life. I must confess that I have a prejudice in favour of a reformer of this type. If I am to be reformed, let it be by a man of clean hands and pure heart.

When I remind you that Voltaire's immoral connexion with a married woman lasted for fifteen years, and when I place in contrast with him England's great religious reformer, a pure-hearted man who constantly saw God, I know what answer you will return to the question—Wesley or Voltaire ?

2. We will next consider the work which these men set themselves to accomplish. In speaking of the work of Voltaire, I must once more act as his advocate. Let us clear away misconceptions, lest we should do him injustice.

It is commonly said that Voltaire tried to destroy Christianity. But does not that raise a serious question? What is Christianity? If it is what Voltaire attacked and damaged, then our views of Christianity will have to be revised. There was one sentence that Voltaire constantly wrote in his letters—'Crush the monster.' What was the 'monster'?

Not the Christianity of the New Testament. Mr. John Morley, whose keen mind is singularly free from delusions, says, after an exhaustive study of the writings of Voltaire, 'The Christianity that Voltaire assailed was not that of the Sermon on the Mount.' In another place he asserts, 'There is no case of Voltaire mocking at any set of men who lived good lives.' If further evidence is needed, you can find it in that appreciative sketch of the Quakers contained in Voltaire's *Letters from England*. Let us sweep aside one more misconception. Voltaire did not attempt to destroy that Christianity which finds its highest expression in the words and character of Jesus of Nazareth.

What, then, was the work he set himself to do?

Voltaire was the sworn foe of superstition. I do not think it is fair to him to say that he considered all religious observances superstitious. He made a distinction between those that were observed sincerely, and those which were observed merely as a matter of convention without any real faith in them on the part of the observer. I think, also, that he knew how to respect a sincere faith, however much it might be, in his estimation, mistaken. But he hated from his heart mock ceremonies and make-pretence belief. It was the misery of his position that, from his childhood, he saw the most unfavourable side of the Roman Catholic religion. He associated with priests who openly ridiculed religion and made it the subject of their ribald jests. French society was utterly corrupt, and yet it

attended religious functions and assumed the outward attitudes of devotion. Men and women were supposed to believe in the Christian religion, yet every act of their life contradicted its clearest commands. In the presence of the evil lives and flagrant unbelief of the so-called Christian people who surrounded him, Voltaire determined that he would attack and destroy the church which he considered an instrument of superstition.

But Voltaire was stirred not only by the superstition of the church, but by its bitter intolerance. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of Voltaire's visit to and residence in England. When he came here, he found that it was possible to think freely, and to express thought without being in danger of the hangman and the prison. Having breathed the air of liberty in England, he went back to France. Then he found that, because of his opinions, he was compelled to exile himself from his country, and to be expatriated for almost the whole of his life. The thought of the intolerance of the Roman Catholic Church was present with him every day. Is it any wonder that he fought against it? The pity of it is that he mistook the intolerance of the church for the real spirit of Christianity.

I must confess my preference for the English method of dealing with opinions which differ from those of the national church. With a great price we have obtained this freedom. In this country each man has liberty to think for himself. Truth is

constantly emerging from the conflict of minds, and steadily the Christianity of Jesus Christ is winning the respect, the admiration, the enthusiasm of the English people. In France, where the expression of thought was suppressed, men have grown sullen and defiant. They have lost faith in a religion which was withdrawn from criticism, and now they are the most contemptuously sceptical people in the world.

But there was another fact concerning the Roman Catholic Church in France which must be mentioned. I have spoken of Voltaire's hatred of oppression and cruelty. It is an undoubted fact that the intolerance of the church in Voltaire's day was associated with an almost inconceivable cruelty.

I do not think that any church should be entrusted with the weapons of the civil power. If it gets them into its hand, it will use them to compel men to conform to its own ideas concerning religious truth. The history of the persecution of the church is sad, but the history of the persecution by the church is infinitely sadder. The blackest page of Christian history is that which records the attempt to coerce men into orthodoxy by physical torment.

In Voltaire's days torture was considered to be a legitimate weapon with which to compel a confession of crime, and by the side of the torturer stood the priest. Read the story of Calas in Tallentyre's pathetic pages. Think of the innocent old man bound on the wheel, each of his limbs broken in two places by the executioner with an iron bar,

lingering for two hours in his agony, and all the time 'praying for his judges.' By that mass of anguish stood the priest exhorting him to confess! His strangled body was thrown into the fire, and the light of that fire still burns in the memory of the world. Calas was a Protestant who was accused of the murder of a son who had shown some leaning towards the Roman Catholic Church. Voltaire had no doubt that he fell a victim to religious fury, and he girded himself to fight to the death the church that had been guilty of the crime.

Nerved by a hatred of hypocrisy, superstition, intolerance, and cruelty, Voltaire deliberately set himself to attack and destroy a church which, in his eyes, was covered with infamy.

Now turn from the work of Voltaire to Wesley.

We have seen that Voltaire's work was to attack and destroy a church which he deemed guilty of unpardonable crimes. There is nothing more remarkable in Wesley's life-work than his refusal to attack the Church of England. He might have been tempted to do so. The spirit of unbelief had spread over the church and had sapped its religious earnestness. The lives of many of the clergy were utterly inconsistent. Up to its limits, it was prepared to be a persecutor. Fortunately the rougher weapons of persecution had been discarded. Their misuse by Churchmen and Puritans had discredited them; but other weapons remained, as Wesley and his fellow workers found to their cost. A mob, led by a clergy-

man, furiously assaulting a preacher, never seems to me to be an adequate representation of Christianity. But, whatever the defects of the church may have been, Wesley would not lift one of his fingers to injure it. His work was not to destroy a church, but to save a nation.

The practical sagacity of Wesley has often been extolled. It is conspicuous in his treatment of the Church of England. Aware of its condition, he bore his testimony against its barren orthodoxy. He said, 'Orthodoxy, or right opinions, is, at least, but a very slender part of religion, if it can be allowed to be any part of it at all.' And he further declared, 'Religion does not consist in negatives, in bare harmlessness of any kind, nor merely in externals, in doing good, or using the means of grace, in works of piety (so called) or of charity; it is nothing short of or different from "the mind that was in Christ"; the image of God stamped upon the heart; inward righteousness, attended with the peace of God and "joy in the Holy Ghost."' Leaving that solvent to work in the minds of Churchmen, he turned from them to the nation.

I have not time to enter upon any description of the religious, moral, and social conditions of the nation at the time when Wesley began his work. You can find in the pages of Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* materials that will enable you to construct a picture of the times. There can be no doubt that the great masses of the people were neglected by the church, and that they

were in a condition bordering on heathenism. When Whitefield preached in Bristol, and announced that he was going to America to convert the heathen, the citizens smiled and said, 'Convert the heathen! Why does he not try to convert the Kingswood colliers?' That was a reasonable question. Away yonder in the King's Wood were hundreds of men living in a state of barbarism. They had no church, they had no school; no man cared for their souls. They were a brutal, drunken, blasphemous, violent, and wretched race, the terror of the city of Bristol. When they were maddened by hunger, they streamed into the city and filled it with panic. If you will concentrate your attention upon Kingswood and examine its condition, you will get an insight into the religious and social state of many parts of England. Kingswood was reproduced on the banks of the Tyne and on the seaboard of Cornwall. Great spaces of the country were practically heathen, and Wesley set himself to work to bring it under control and to drive it out by the power of the gospel.

I do not think that it is possible to imagine a greater difference in spirit and aim and work than is presented in the lives of Voltaire and Wesley. I am sure of your suffrages to-day when I once more put the question—Wesley or Voltaire?

3. Consider the methods by which these men sought to effect their purpose.

Those which Voltaire employed were almost wholly destructive. He was filled with such a hatred

of the recognized form of Christianity, that he struck it again and again, hoping to reduce it to ruin.

In thinking of Voltaire's furious assault on the church, I am reminded of Condorcet's wise words. He says, 'It is not enough to do good ; one must do it in a good way. No doubt we should destroy all errors ; but as it is impossible to destroy them all in an instant, we should imitate a prudent architect who, when obliged to destroy a building, and knowing how its parts are united together, sets about its demolition in such a way as to prevent its fall from being dangerous.' Those are words worthy to be weighed by men whose only weapon of reform is the hammer of destruction. Voltaire never seems to have thought whether it might not be dangerous to sweep the Roman Catholic form of Christianity from the face of the earth. He overlooked the fact that systems of religion live by the amount of truth that is in them and by their adaptation to the needs of human nature. In attacking a system of religion, the wise reformer aims at removing the unessential. In removing it, he touches it with a gentle hand, shrinking from inflicting the slightest damage upon that which ministers to the need of the humblest worshipper.

But this was not Voltaire's method. 'Crush the monster.' He brought the resources of the most brilliant intellect in Europe to the task. He assailed the church with every weapon that could be pressed into the fray. Especially he used satire that was terrible in its keenness. He tried to make the

church ridiculous, and, in a storm of laughter, to drive it out of the world. Satire has its uses; but there is no intellectual weapon which should be more carefully employed. The sceptics that can only point and titter and laugh are not the men who can satisfy a soul passionately in love with truth.

I confess that it is a relief to turn from the incessant raillery of Voltaire, and to watch the methods which Wesley employed to accomplish his task. Condorcet likens the reformer to an architect. That figure is appropriate to Wesley. The wise church architect, when restoring a building, distinguishes between the essential and the unessential; he works with a reverence for the past and with a regard for the convictions and tastes of his contemporaries. Above all, he does something. He may have to pull down, but it is that he may build up; his work is not done until he has constructed a temple in which men may worship.

Before touching on Wesley's method of work, I wish to say a few words about the spirit in which he did it. Voltaire, the advocate of tolerance, was intolerant of all opinions which did not coincide with his own. I am glad that he died 'not hating his enemies'; he had hated them sufficiently while he lived. Now, Wesley was a tolerant and forgiving man. It is with pleasure I quote his words about differences of opinion concerning religion. He says, speaking to his own people, 'Lay so much stress on opinions, that all your own, if it be possible,

may agree with truth and reason; but have a care of anger, dislike, or contempt towards those whose opinions differ from yours. . . . Condemn no man for not thinking as you think. Let every one enjoy the full and free liberty of thinking for himself; let every man use his own judgement, since every man must give an account of himself to God. Abhor any approach, in any kind or degree, to the spirit of persecution. If you cannot reason or persuade a man into the truth, never attempt to force him into it. If love will not compel him to come in, leave him to God, the Judge of all.' Well might he describe the scheme of belief and conduct he preached as 'a manly, noble, generous religion, equally remote from the meanness of superstition which places religion in doing what God has not enjoined, or abstaining from what He has not forbidden; and from the unkindness of bigotry, which confines our affection to our own party, sect, or opinion.' These memorable words manifest the spirit in which Wesley attempted and accomplished the social, moral, and religious reformation of England.

John Wesley, although charitable towards those who differed from him, obeyed his own canon in respect of his own opinions. He took care that they should agree with truth and reason. Having thought them out, he announced them with intense conviction. His standard of truth was the Bible. He obeyed his conscience; he trusted his experience. He believed in God. He saw that men's

misery arose from their sin. He rejected Rousseau's theory that all that man needs is to get back to a state of nature ; he knew, by his own experience, that man must get out of a state of nature into a state of grace. Nothing could weaken the conviction that men needed to be converted, to be turned round in heart and life, and that the converting power came when the loving meaning of the sacrifice of Christ became clear to the soul sorrowful for sin. He believed that religion consisted in keeping the two great commands, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind ; and thy neighbour as thyself.' He believed that, when the love of God and man filled the soul, vice would be extirpated and virtue would grow like a tree of life. He believed in eternity. He saw the Judge upon the throne. He lived in full sight of a city whose gates were open continually, and in which there was no night.

Instead of going about questioning, ridiculing, and denying, Wesley gave up his life to persistent preaching of the doctrines which he firmly believed. His intellectual and spiritual belief was confirmed by his own experience and by the experience of myriads of people whom he gathered into his societies. When he led men out of the world, he trained them in morality of the highest order. He led many of them into a saintliness that resembled his own ; nay, into a moral and spiritual beauty that reminded those who saw them of the glory of the Lord.

Was not this method better than Voltaire's? Wesley accomplished the reformation, not only of the nation but of the church, by reforming individual men; and, while the world stands, no better mode of effecting lasting reform will be discovered.

4. Consider the results of their work.

On July 10, 1791, a sarcophagus rested on an altar which had been reared on the ruins of one of the towers of the Bastille. It was the tower in which Voltaire had been twice a prisoner. That sarcophagus contained the body of Voltaire. On the altar was the inscription, 'On this spot where Despotism chained thee, receive the homage of a free people.' That is a striking illustration of the law of poetic justice.

'A free people!' It is a pathetic sentence. At that hour the king and queen of France, having been brought back from their attempted flight from Paris, were in prison. Their trial and execution soon followed. The downfall of the monarchy in France was accompanied by massacres so horrible that the imagination still shudders as it pictures them. I am convinced that Voltaire would have been among the first to denounce the hideous crimes of the Reign of Terror. He was the friend and companion of kings, and he was an aristocrat at heart. But he had not been careful to gauge the effect of his teaching. As understood by the Revolutionists, it sanctioned their outburst of fury against the order of government; and so they bore the sar-

cophagus in triumph from the Bastille through the streets of Paris to its resting-place in the Pantheon.

I am not inclined to burden Voltaire with the responsibility for the political excesses of the Revolution. Tallentyre thinks that if Voltaire had lived until 1791 it is probable that he would have figured in another procession—a procession to the guillotine. It is very probable. But while, in justice to him, we do not too strongly insist upon the presence of his influence in the politics of the French people, in justice to truth we must point out the effect produced by his teaching on the church. He shook the faith of his countrymen in the Christian religion. When the madness of the revolution seized upon the people of Paris, scenes of the wildest irreverence were enacted in the churches. Women were placed upon the altars, and worshipped as the representatives of Reason. Sacred vessels and books were dragged through the mud of the streets and thrown into the fire ; bishops and priests were put to death with horrible cruelty. It is a dangerous thing to destroy the faith of a people, without providing some substitute which will act as a restraint when their passions are inflamed and when their sufferings drive them into rebellion.

Those who have read the story of the French Revolution are aware that it was produced, in great part, by the teaching of the men who shared with Voltaire the attack on the Christian faith. And what was the result of the Revolution? There is no

chapter in Carlyle's great book more pathetic than that in which he describes the workmen of Paris, after all their battling and suffering, sitting down in the evening light to consume their meagre supper. 'A free people!' They had earned freedom to starve, to toil, to die; but they had possessed that freedom before! They got rid of their king, and, instead of him, they found themselves in the grip of an emperor who drew their young men from the villages and strewed their bones over the battle-fields of Europe. The French Revolution, so far as the working men of France were concerned, was a dismal failure. In that failure we can read the lesson that it is not by the destruction of the faith of a nation that it is lifted out of its social miseries.

Is it necessary to insist on the fact that Voltaire's attack on the Roman Catholic Church failed? Tallentyre's verdict is worth pondering. 'It may be truly said that Voltaire did good to Roman Catholicism by attacking much that degraded it, by hooting out of it the superstition and tyranny which have made some of the noblest souls on earth decline it, and by forcing its children to give a reason for the faith that was in them.' But surely these results are not commensurate with the designs of the 'Crush the monster' programme!

I have little time to speak of the results of Wesley's work. Let me, however, point out two facts. First, his work told with great effect upon the church. The Evangelical Revival affected the church

as well as the nation. And from the Evangelical Revival sprang those wonderful agencies which have done so much to strengthen Christianity throughout the world. Missionary societies, the Bible Society, the Religious Tract Society, and numberless agencies for diffusing a knowledge of the gospel and for manifesting the spirit of Christ, are the result of the Evangelical Revival in which John Wesley was the chief instrument.

But there is a second fact upon which I must insist. John Wesley believed in reforming the nation by reforming the individuals composing the nation. He sought to secure the conversion of men. Men, when they were converted, he set to work to effect the conversion of their neighbours. His plan worked with marvellous success. Its result is seen in the Methodist Church with its millions of members in this country, in America, and throughout the world. A man who not only rescues an old church from the sleep of death, but also builds up a new church full of vigorous life, may certainly be considered to have succeeded in the highest objects that can be pursued. And this success was achieved by the simple, plain gospel, the gospel which will always succeed if men will let it speak for itself, and not confuse its message by their speculations and vain imaginings.

Standing here to-day, there is one aspect of Wesley's work which I must emphasize in closing. John Wesley was a man whose heart was wrung with pity for the poor. It was a distress to him to

see Christian people living in luxury, and loading themselves with costly ornaments, when thousands were lacking bread. His early experience had taught him a lesson he never forgot. 'Many years ago,' he says in his sermon on Dress, 'when I was at Oxford, on a cold winter's day, a young maid called upon me. I said, "You seem half starved. Have you nothing to cover you but that thin linen gown?" She said, "Sir, this is all I have!" I put my hand in my pocket, but found I had scarce any money left, having just paid away what I had. It immediately struck me, will thy Master say, "Well done, good and faithful steward; thou hast adorned thy walls with the money which might have screened this poor creature from the cold"? O justice! O mercy! are not these pictures the blood of this poor maid?' This incident burnt itself into his memory. It revealed to him a principle upon which he acted to the end of his life. He was content to remain a poor man, in order that he might relieve the wants of the poor.

The Christianity which John Wesley preached was of a practical kind. When a man joined the Society, he was told that it was expected of him to care not only for the souls, but also for the bodies of men; that he must give food to the hungry and clothes to the naked; that he must visit and help those who were sick and in prison. As a result, Methodism became a great philanthropic agency. It had a dispensary, a poor house, an orphanage; it

gave work to the unemployed ; it had its Strangers' Friend Society, its day schools, its loan society ; indeed, it is difficult to enumerate the organizations which sprang out of the fertile brain of John Wesley in his attempt to care for the 'bodies' of men. One significant fact is often noted. It is impossible to point to any modern form of Christian benevolence which does not exist, at least in an elementary state, in the philanthropic devices of John Wesley. I am convinced, if the Church will go back to Wesley and study his sermons and his methods of work, the great social problems of our day will be faced and solved.

Think, then, of the results of the work of this man. It is admitted that the Evangelical Revival did much to save this country from a revolution similar to that which devastated France. That is something to be remembered by the ever-forgetting politician. But the Christian looks upon his work with other eyes. He sees in it a testimony to the truth of Christianity. Wesley's explanation of his success was, 'The best of all is God is with us.' 'The ever-present God, working through the gospel of His Son, by the might of His Spirit, built up the waste places of English Christianity, and created a spiritual Church in the world by the instrumentality of this man. Through that Church the testimony to the righteousness and the pity of our heavenly Father is still borne, and against that Church the gates of hell shall not prevail.

# ‘The Miraculous in Christianity’

BY

PROF. G. SIMS WOODHEAD, M.A., M.D., F.R.S.E.

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I COME here this afternoon at the request of Dr. Moulton to speak to you, not as a theologian, for that I am not in any sense of the term, and cannot pretend to speak on the great question of the miracles in Christianity from the theological standpoint. I shall attack this subject only as any of you would attack it, and as one who is seeking to intensify and brighten a light of which we have already seen some rays that I, at anyrate, could ill afford not to have seen. I hope we shall discuss it individually and face to face. I, like yourselves, am seeking light, and often grope about helplessly; but we are all looking for that wider and opener day which we believe awaits all who hope and trust. We cannot afford to let the question of the miraculous go unconsidered. In it is involved something more than mere physical need; it is a matter of spiritual life and death. It is a question as to whether we shall be satisfied to remain selfish, individualistic, simply doing the work that comes to our hand, or whether we shall look forward to and attempt to grasp a great ideal, an ideal which to my mind is one of the most

miraculous things in all Christianity—that is the ideal of absolute unselfishness.

In what I have to say to-day I wish to avoid any dogmatic statements. I wish merely to put forward some of the points that have led me to my present position. I should be unable to answer some of the questions that I shall put ; I shall certainly be unable to answer many of those you will put to me. Nevertheless, I believe that it is better that we should put our questions conscientiously, and make an honest attempt to answer them, thus trying to help one another, rather than that we should slur matters over and shut our eyes to real difficulties. Every man must crystallize his own opinions for himself, he must take his own stand ; but we can help one another to take up stronger positions by doing what we can to throw a little additional light on the subjects that are troubling us.

Shortly after Dr. Moulton had suggested the subject for our consideration this afternoon, I heard a sermon by a man for whom I have great respect, the Rev. W. B. Selbie, in which it was pointed out that miracles, once the greatest of all aids to faith, are now perhaps amongst the greatest hindrances, that the miracles to some thinking men are difficult to follow and to understand, and that there are amongst us those who, whilst accepting the Bible as a guide, cannot accept it as a whole, and especially because of the miracles recorded therein. Of course there are those who maintain that the Bible

must be accepted, if at all, as the *ipsissima verba* of God. They say that we must take it as it is handed on to us as God's Word, that we must not alter our reading of it one jot or one tittle, and that we must read it now as it was read, that we must as it were take it as it was written, and as it has been read through successive ages. Sometimes these appeals come home to us very forcibly, and we say to ourselves that if we can only accept the Bible in this light we may save ourselves a great deal of trouble. I ask you, however, is it fair that we should do this, without trying first of all to understand what is and was said? Is it fair that, in the light of the experience of all intervening generations, all the experience of Christianity and Christians, all the experience of what Christ has done in and for the world—is it fair, I say, that we should accept simply the formulæ, and leave altogether out of account the spirit of the Word of God? I for one cannot believe this. Nay more, I believe that the Bible becomes a greater and a grander book every day simply because we can read more into it, and by so doing get more out of it. Professor Fairbairn of Mansfield College says that every one can get out of the Bible what he wants, because each man can read into it what he requires. If you take that in the narrow and restricted sense, some people may say we wish to do away with the Bible. Well, no doubt certain phrases, certain forms, certain translations, may have to go; but the spirit remains, it never

changes except that it is constantly developing, that it ever becomes more living and a better guide, and that it is bringing to us spiritual knowledge to which except through it we could never attain.

Not long ago, I believe in the sermon mentioned above, I heard a simile which appealed to me very forcibly, and may appeal to some of those here. When you look at a great cathedral from the outside, you see perhaps a beautiful form, grand buttresses, and graceful traceries; but if you want to see the real cathedral, you must go inside and see the glorious blaze of light as the sun shines through the wonderful windows; then you can see the marvellous beauty of the grand pile. The windows no longer seem to be smeared with dirt, covered with the accumulation of the dust of ages; but we see the radiance given to the light by the mellowed glass, reflected on the beautiful outlines of the building, until we think we see the very mind of the architect in his work. If we desire to get to know the Bible, we must get to know not merely its words and its formulæ; we must make it part of ourselves, and above all enter thoroughly into the spirit of the book and its teachings.

You may ask me why I mention this in connexion with our subject. Why did I read the portion of the chapter recording some of the miracles that were performed by Christ? Christ, it is said, never performed a miracle that had not an object; He never performed a miracle that had not

some teaching, something that would help us, that would show His compassion for those who were around Him. We are sometimes told that Christ knew everything, that Christ was omniscient and and omnipotent. From my standpoint I like to believe that Christ did not know everything, that Christ came to us as a man among men, that there were periods, perhaps long periods, in which He voluntarily came down to our level, periods during which He acted as we might have done under similar circumstances and differently at any time only because He was always controlled by the Spirit of God, and filled so full of that Spirit that He could never do but what was right, and thus become an ensample to us that we might also be so full of the Spirit of God that even as men and with our many limitations we also might overcome sin. That being the case, I cannot but believe that Christ spoke to the men of His time as a man of that time, that He would appeal to them by means of arguments and by means of thoughts and acts that would appeal to the undeveloped spiritual and intellectual life of the men with whom He had to deal. They were men of little knowledge, and He wished to awaken in them a great faith. They were men who ultimately came to great spiritual light, but who at first were men very much like ourselves, in that they were full of prejudice as well as very ignorant; they were men who were often as proud and conceited as we are to-day, and He appealed to them in the

fashion in which they could best be reached. Nothing stands out more clearly in the records of the Bible than this, that when He was speaking to His followers He used arguments and adopted methods that would appeal to them. In our time great advances as regards our knowledge of nature and of nature's laws are supposed to have been made, and we are constantly told by those who are studying nature that the mechanism of nature's working is what we should try to fathom ; yet, after all, what are the laws of nature as we know them but our own observations and deductions therefrom ? They are finite and as fallible as are men's minds, no more so and no less. Men like Huxley and Herbert Spencer have done great work in solving some of the riddles of nature. The latter, who has so recently gone from amongst us, tells us that he had devoted his life to gaining some knowledge of the mechanism of nature, but that after spending an arduous and strenuous life in attempting to solve some problems which at the outset he set himself to solve, at the end he was unsatisfied ; he had found a mechanism, he had studied the body, but he had failed to find the spirit, though he looked for and acknowledged a first great Cause. That is the way with many of us to day ; we are testing miracles, and we say there must be a first great Cause : but we are leaving out of account the greatest miracles of all ; we are leaving out the miracle of Christ Himself because we say the first

great Cause is unknown and unknowable. Whether you accept Christ as a man or as the divine Saviour, you must accept Him as a miracle. If He was human, He was a man who has changed the whole tenour of the world's history—a simple peasant, a man who came into the world in a little out-of-the-way corner of the globe. He was the founder of a great system through which a new and unselfish world has been re-created, a world on an infinitely higher plane than it could ever have been without Christianity. This would be almost as great a miracle as if we accept the divinity of Christ. The miracles of Christianity are not all included in the records of the Bible: we may accept these, especially such as are vouched for, almost as strongly as are any historical facts that have passed into common or current history; but, leaving these out of account entirely, we have in Christ and Christianity the greatest miracles that the world has ever seen.

The Bible and its miracles have been attacked from all sides. Well, you know it does not require any very great amount of ability to scoff or to criticize. The scoffer, without very much thought or difficulty, can lay hold of a few phrases, and, isolating them from their context, can make them look almost ridiculous in the eyes of those who take no trouble to think or to search for themselves. On the other hand, scholars, historians, philosophers, and even physicists who are daily engaged in the study of nature, and who study the Bible merely as

a textbook, although they may be able to put their finger on weak points of discrepancies and even on errors in regard to certain facts, all agree as to the wonderful credibility of the main narrative. I will not attempt to justify either those who believe that the Bible must be accepted *verbatim et literalim* or it cannot stand as God's Word, or those who believe that from an historical point of view there are certain things that are not entirely supported by evidence ; but I would point out that, even when this latter position is conceded, the Bible as a whole, as a great system of teaching, may be accepted as the revealed Word of God, not because of any external evidence but because of the wonderful internal evidence that remains. If we find that there is in the Bible a great thought, if we find that in it there is a great spiritual truth, is it necessary that we should go in search of something to support such thought or truth ? We are convinced that there are things in the Bible that stand by themselves ; and it is scarcely necessary to go beyond that when you know that the men who are trying to test the Bible are after all trying to convince themselves of its truth.

An honest attempt to get at the truth is never to be feared ; we need never be afraid that truth will turn out anything but truth ; and when we hear of the Higher Criticism and of men finding weak links in the Bible, we may safely say, ' Let such criticism go on ; let us help the critics to find out errors, but let us also seek the truths.' We shall thus find,

as I believe many men have found, that all those who study the Bible carefully and reverently can never be anything but gainers thereby ; and when we devote time and thought to the study of the miracles of the Bible, we shall ultimately gain a fuller and higher knowledge of our God, our Father, and His great purposes as revealed through the life and work of His Son.

It is sometimes said that miracles do not happen now, and therefore could not have happened then. Can we accept this statement ? What would not be a miracle now would have been a miracle in the days in which miracles were recorded. It may appear that in making such a statement I am speaking rashly or unadvisedly ; but we must remember that a miracle is nothing more than something that appears to be what is called supernatural. Have we any right, even from what we now know, to limit the power of God in any way, and to divide events into what we call natural or supernatural ? A thing is natural to us because we have been accustomed to it, and supernatural because it does not accord with our every-day experience. I have no doubt we have often thought to ourselves that the miracles recorded, the supernatural events put down in the Bible which we do not now understand may some day or other be explained. Some go further, and say that, should they be inexplicable, they must be rejected as impossible. But is that a rational or fair position to take ? What right have we, with our finite

minds, to claim that we should be able to explain everything? Can we, with the physical basis of our mind, controlled by certain forces which we do not even understand, maintain that we ought to be able to explain everything that we do not understand now? I hold that we have no right to take that position. Let us seek an explanation of all that we can; but let us not say that anything is impossible. Sir Oliver Lodge puts it well: 'As to what is scientifically impossible or possible, anything not self-contradictory or inconsistent with other truth is possible. Speaking from our present scientific ignorance, and in spite of anything said by Professor Tyndall, this statement must be accepted as literally true for all we know to the contrary.' Some say that it would be a great miracle if the sun were to stand still in the heavens. That they hold would be something supernatural! Is it not just as great a miracle that the sun runs his daily course in the heavens, or that we go round the sun? Is it not as great a miracle that he should rise and set with such regular irregularity? that the seasons come round in their turn, and that in their due order certain forces should be brought into play at one time, other forces at another? But we say, 'Oh, but these are every-day occurrences; we know all about them.' But do we know all about them? We have scratched the surface of such knowledge, but we have not got into the heart of it; we know little more of the cause of it all, of

the forces that are at work, than we know of some of the miracles that were recorded nearly a couple of thousand years ago. It is not for us to say that they are impossible; and even those who have called themselves agnostics in this wise argue, 'We cannot say that miracles are impossible, we do not say it; all we say is, we cannot explain them, and we know nothing about them.' With such a position we have sympathy; but we cannot accept it as final.

I remember as a lad of about eighteen reading one of Joseph Cook's Boston Monday Evening Lectures. I have not been able to lay hands on it again; but it made a very great impression upon me. The gist of his argument, I believe, was the following: You are looking at the organ, and you say, 'Oh yes, we know all about that organ, or at anyrate there is somebody here who can tell us all about it; he can tell us all about the levers and the bellows; he can tell us exactly what happens when wind is allowed to go through the pipe. But a mere knowledge of this will not enable you to get music out of the instrument; only the great mind of the skilled musician playing on the instrument can give you that.' That argument struck me very forcibly, crude and imperfect as the analogy is; and it has remained with me since. By constant study we may come to know something of what is going on in our physical bodies, and we observe what is going on in nature around us, and we then say we understand natural

laws ; but when all comes to be summed up, we have made observations only on frequently recurring phenomena, and from these have codified what we call laws.

Behind all there is a great Reasoning Power, a Power that controls, a Power infinitely above us, and one that we cannot understand. This is a thought that ever recurs to me whenever I am dealing with the problems that arise in connexion with my daily work. Let me give you an example. I have had to study, as have all doctors, the process of healing. Here one sees how in a short time after the infliction of a wound a series of phenomena of wonderful beauty but of great complexity manifest themselves. First, blood (or some of its component parts) forms a temporary stopgap, filling up the wound from top to bottom. Then the tissues around such temporary stopgap begin to undergo change. They begin to multiply, forming new and elementary tissues, or, as they are sometimes called, embryonic or imperfectly developed tissues. After a time these young tissues, at first pierced by numerous new bloodvessels, become old, and the gap is filled up with permanent tissue. If we look at this process from the merely materialistic point of view, we may say that those living cells multiplying and forming new tissue play a certain part, but we are immediately compelled to say that in all this we have factors that we do not understand ; we have to confess that we are pretending to explain things by using terms that we do

not comprehend. We say that these *living* tissues are doing certain things, but we do not know how or why they live, what they are doing or how they do it. We may attempt to explain life as a chemical or physical process ; but there always comes a point at which we get beyond our depth, and I maintain that we have just as much right to say that healing is impossible because we cannot understand its whole course as we have to say that the miracle is impossible because it does not accord with our daily experience. Indeed, the something that goes on every day in this healing process is as wonderful as any miracle. Here we have something that we cannot control, something that we cannot help or hinder except by leaving it to take its course or interfering with the usual condition of its occurrence, something about which we have learned a few facts, a few elementary details, the most important of which is that far above all that we can see there is a great Guiding Power over which we have no control, a Power which to-day is responsible for a series of events as marvellous as were any of the miracles performed in days gone by.

You will see that from my point of view I do not regard the acceptance of the recorded miracles as being any more necessary in order that we may believe in God and in Christ than are the many unrecorded miracles of to-day ; but, on the other hand, that as I accept the miraculous things that are going on around me as evidence that there is a God,

a great and beneficent Power, a Power who takes—shall I put it colloquially?—an interest in me and my doings, then I say we may accept the records of the Bible equally readily, even though we do not follow in detail the working of miracles or may not even see their necessity. Let us remember that in those days men were moved by facts and statements that may have little force now. Christ did His work in His own special way, but in one adapted to the time and conditions in and under which He worked. I put the matter to you as I should put it to myself. I do not reject these miracles, because I do not reject those of the present day.

Sometimes we in our intellectual conceit say to ourselves that we are able to explain all things of which we have some experience ; but if we will only be honest with ourselves, we find that we are not explaining at all, we are merely making statements, we are not going to the real heart of things ; we are no doubt learning something of the machinery of the world, yet in our own hearts we know that if we leave out God we have nothing left of the Power that is guiding and controlling that machinery. Now and again we may be satisfied with partial and natural explanations : far more frequently, however, we know that we are not satisfied ; we know that there is something greater, something higher, something nobler than ourselves ; we know, indeed, that God is necessary to us, and that He must reign in the world and in us before we can have any sense

of satisfaction in what we are doing and is being done for us.

It is sometimes said that we live in an age of unbelief. Is it not rather, as I have suggested above, that we live in an age of intellectual conceit? With the sudden opening out of our knowledge of nature and natural phenomena which began before Galileo, and did not end with Darwin, there has gradually grown up a tendency on the part of those who have been studying nature, who have been trying to wrest from her her hidden secrets, to accept nothing that they could not explain on the basis of their own observations and deductions and for which they could not find an immediate and demonstrable reason. Many observers and recorders have worked long and patiently, they have built up schemes and systems, and in the end have come to think that anything that cannot be fitted into one of these systems must be thrown to one side. They say, 'We have for long enough accepted authority as our guide'; and it would seem that the agnosticism of to-day, or of yesterday rather, was a reaction against the doctrines and dogmas solely based on and supported by what is known as authority.

At one time our learned men relied largely for their knowledge on the study of books; they were far more interested in the dicta and opinions of those who had gone before them than in their own observations and thoughts. A thing was accepted or rejected according to the weight of authority, not

the amount and character of evidence, by which it was supported, with the result that only a few men of each generation were regarded as being competent to give any opinion that could be relied on. Even the members of the 'learned' professions were comparatively ignorant, an accusation I am afraid that might be brought against some of us to-day. Those who were not included in the learned professions had to take their science, their philosophy, and their religion on the authority of those who, in many cases, were little better instructed than themselves, and were certainly unable to supply anything but the most meagre fare to those hungry for knowledge. When men turned from books to the study of nature, a new world was opened up to them. They became greedy for facts rather than for opinions, for realities rather than for names and terms; men's minds began to grasp the fact that natural science and philosophy constituted a great system to which it was possible to make constant additions. Here in this great book of nature were depths to be plumbed of which nothing was known before, though all could be reached by those who would work honestly and diligently; it was possible to throw aside all authority, and to depend on observation and experiment; and books, which had unfortunately hide-bound men too long, could now be relegated to their proper position as records and written words. The late Sir William Roberts,

a physician well known in Manchester, was fond of pointing out that the Oriental wisdom, like the wisdom of Athens, the ancient philosophies, and art, culminated in men and in schools, then decaying and dying out with the men who had made them. There was no advance beyond the individual. The painter or the sculptor could hand on his technique and his methods, but his inspiration died with him; even in the case of classical learning and philosophy little advance could be made. When, however, natural science came to be studied, it was found that the facts garnered by one observer formed a starting-point for the observations of his successor, until great and many-sided structures of knowledge arose.

The effects of all this upon the mind eager in its search for proof and for truth have been twofold. On the one hand, men thirsting for freedom have said, Let us cast aside all authority and all the books of those who have gone before us; let us go straight to nature for our facts; let us reason from them; let us draw up our own schemes; let us accept nothing that we cannot prove; let us reject everything that does not fit into the great plan that we have laid down. Such men after much hard work still remain unsatisfied; but can we wonder that men have taken this position? They say, Life is short, and time in which to garner all the truths of nature is all too small; let us do our duty, act justly, live righteously, and acknowledge that of the future

we know nothing. Still, one would have thought that we ought, by this time in the world's history, to have got beyond this.

There are others who are equally anxious to get at the truth, to study nature, who, as it is unfolded before their eager eyes, are so impressed by the law and order and harmony of all that passes under their review, and who, seeing effect following cause so regularly and definitely, arrive at the conviction that there is something more than the materialist can explain, and that there is something beyond the mere machinery of nature, a Power that appeals to a higher nature within us, a Divine Power that orders and controls in a great system and keeps that machinery working effectively and regularly.

I maintain that that is the standpoint from which most of us have to look at Christianity. It is the standpoint from which we can conceive of a Divine Being. We can learn something of the laws of nature which are merely a codification of our own experience and observation, we can accept them as evidence of the existence of God, with whom rests all power and law and order, to whom the supernatural is unknown except in so far as it is not orderly. Accepting the term 'miracle' in its ordinary sense as something that is above us, something that is beyond our powers of explanation but of which we hope to know more, then we shall find that in Christianity we have the greatest miracle the world has ever seen ; greater by far than any of

those recorded in the New Testament. Christ was able to found a system that has raised and altered the whole life and thought of the world. What greater moral miracle is there than the Sermon on the Mount? It was thrown down as it were amongst men, who it may be said could scarcely be prepared to receive it; but we find that its teaching was at once accepted, and men have attempted to act up to it ever since, and only so far as they have been successful in this attempt has their moral and spiritual status been raised. To my mind this is one of the greatest miracles with which we can be confronted. Moreover, to-day Christ the despised Nazarene occupies so great a place in the thought and life of the world, not because of the system founded by Him but because of His personality and teaching. His authority was accepted because of His unselfishness and self-sacrifice in all things.

Before I close I should like to mention something miraculous that appeals to me perhaps more than anything with which I have ever come into contact. I have seen a drunkard, a man who had wasted his life, a man who appeared to have nothing left to live for, and was in the very Slough of Despair; and I have seen that man, after becoming an abstainer, gradually come under the influence of the teaching of the New Testament, and gradually learning something of the doctrine of the love and sacrifice of Christ. I have seen him studying his Bible, and taking inspiration from his teachers; and now I see

that man full of the Spirit of Christ; I see him trying to do good, throwing all his heart and will into the welfare of those about him, and in that way filling his own soul and mind with a greater knowledge of God. That to my mind is one of the greatest of all miracles, one that we can never explain perhaps, but one also that we can never explain away.

It is of course quite possible to disprove anything. You may say there are certain passages of the Bible which should not have their present reading; you may say that some of the recorded miracles are not backed up by the historian, though many of them have a good deal of actual historical proof behind them; you may throw every one of these on one side, and still say that such modern miracles as that above presented are convincing enough, or should be, that God is our Father and Christ our Elder Brother. 'But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. . . . For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ' (1 Cor. ii. 9-11, 16).

# 'HOW CHRIST FULFILLED THE PROPHECIES'

BY

REV. R. MACKINTOSH, M.A., D.D.

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THE first point which it may be well for us to attend to in studying this subject is the word 'Christ.' We must remind ourselves that 'Christ' is properly and originally not a name but a title; the significance of that title constitutes the whole gist of what I have to endeavour to say. In the New Testament, no doubt, the title slowly fades into a name. At first it is used clearly and definitely as a title; in other passages it is used simply as referring to the historical person who has made it eternally His own, Jesus of Nazareth. But there are passages where the distinction is of consequence. That is one reason for the superiority of the Revised Version over the Authorized Version of our English Bible. It brings out those passages where 'the Christ' is a title, with a distinct meaning or connotation of its own. I need hardly remind you what 'the Christ' is originally. In the Hebrew, or in the form in which the Hebrew word has come to us, Christ is the Messiah; and Messiah or Christ means the anointed, the king—the Lord's anointed, the king who rules by a true and divine right. We should

say in the West, not an anointed but a crowned king. At the Coronation Service held in Westminster Abbey not so very long ago, part of the ritual was the anointing or unction. That, however, was borrowed from the Old Testament. To the Jews, anointing was the main means of installing the heir to the throne in the full enjoyment of his rights as reigning monarch : to us, crowning occupies that place ; and therefore in our hymns we sing about the rights of Jesus to His crown,—

All hail the power of Jesu's name ;  
 Let angels prostrate fall ;  
 Bring forth the royal diadem  
 To crown Him LORD OF ALL.

Hence one may say the first Christian theology is contained in the assertion that Jesus is the Christ. We have that in the New Testament. We have it in the First Epistle of John, 'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God' (1 John v. 1). We have it again from St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans ; the phraseology is slightly varied, and that variation not without significance if there were time to dwell upon it. 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord,' there is the variation ; he does not say Christ, but Lord : still, the meaning is closely the same—'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved' (Rom. x. 9). That I say is the first Christian theology, the assertion that Jesus is Christ ; one may

almost say that all Christian theology is the expounding, the explaining the meaning of that great claim. I gave as my title for this lecture, 'How Christ fulfilled the Prophecies'; I might almost as well, if not better, have given it in a different form—'Did Jesus fulfil the Prophecies?' or 'Was Jesus, Christ?' 'Is Jesus, Christ?' That then is what we have to speak of.

Now, this conception of the Christ, the King, comes to us in a very special sense from the prophets of the Old Testament. It is part of the result of their work; and therefore I have to ask you in the next place to look for a minute or two at the question, 'Who and what were the prophets of Israel?' The prophets of Israel are spoken of as men who had the Spirit of God. They are what we call inspired men. Whenever we speak of inspiration, I might say, we speak of prophets. When we affirm that the Scriptures are divinely inspired, we mean that the Scriptures are a prophetic book, that they were written by men who stood in that peculiar intimacy with God which belongs to His prophets. Prophets were men of the Spirit, men having the Spirit of God. Or, they were men knowing the mind of God; they were God's intimates, God's confidants. As one of the early great writers amongst those prophets who have left us books expressed it, 'The Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets' (Amos iii. 7). If you ask me whether the prophets perfectly understood the mind of God, well

frankly I am not concerned to assert that they did. It used to be held by evangelical Christians not so long ago that our sacred book, our Bible, was absolutely infallible in its truth. I imagine the majority of evangelical Christians to-day would hesitate to tie themselves to that assertion. Certainly, in speaking to you about the prophets, and about the fulfilment through Jesus Christ of the hopes they raised, I do not think it at all necessary for my purpose to claim that the prophets were perfectly acquainted with the mind of God. That One stood out in contrast even to all other men of God, that is precious sacred truth to us ; but that on the whole in great measure, more than their fellows, as God pleased, these men were acquainted with the truth of God—that we are concerned to assert ; that we must strongly affirm.

Then, again, it may be asked whether the prophets' knowledge imparted to them by God was knowledge dealing peculiarly with the future. We moderns have come to speak of a prophet almost narrowly in the sense of a man who is possessed of knowledge about things to come. We say with a smile to each other, 'he thinks he is a prophet.' This is what we mean—that he claims not insight but preternatural foresight. It is possible to exaggerate the consequence of this strange foreknowledge. Most modern scholars and theologians will tell you that the apologists of a century or so ago committed that error. They debated the question

of prophecy too much on these lines of inquiry, whether the prophets did not know things about times far subsequent to their own, things which could only come to them by divine illumination. Knowledge of the future was no more than a part of the gift bestowed upon the prophet. And here, again, the gift may have been incomplete ; I am not concerned to affirm that the prophets never erred in their expectations as to the future. On the other hand, it will not do to fight shy of this position, that the prophets had enlightenment from God regarding things to come. One of the very greatest of the prophetic books is found in the second half of Isaiah ; and what do we read in chapter xlii. ? God speaking through the prophet says this : ‘ Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare : before they spring forth I tell you of them ’ (Isa. xlii. 9). Yes, that is part of the prophet’s endowment. In studying and expounding prophecy, and in addressing appeals to men’s reason and conscience in the light of it, we must, while admitting that it is not necessarily unerring in detail, yet assert that by God’s enlightenment the prophets had messages of hope to give, stretching out into the future beyond where human thought could travel.

Another remarkable thing about the prophets deserves to be mentioned. The prophets addressed the nation as such, They spoke to Israel (or to Judah), to its government, and to its people as having a large influence even under autocratic forms upon

the behaviour of the government ; they spoke to rulers and people about the nation's duty. A very brilliant living student of the Old Testament, Professor George Adam Smith, has even discussed the question whether Isaiah had a gospel for the individual. Mainly, the message of that great and spiritual prophet was a message to the people as a unity, about the people's duty and about the people's sin. I understand that it is a prophet subsequent to Isaiah, the prophet Jeremiah, who is regarded as having done more under God than any other great teacher in Old Testament times to make religion a thing of the inner life—a treasure enriching the individual even in days like those of Jeremiah himself when the national life was falling into ruins and you might think that the curse of God was resting on all His people. But the prophets of those times, in dealing with the duty of the nation as such, deserve our recognition. It is partly because they have done this that study of the prophets is so helpful to ourselves. There is a danger of our religion becoming too individualistic, too purely inward. We get lessons of public duty, of serving God in our own social life, from the prophets perhaps even more than from the apostles. Now, just for clearness' sake, it may be well to remind you of a distinction. The prophets originally were preachers and speakers, preachers who I do not think wrote their sermons. Some of the very greatest prophets left a memory behind them but not a book,—men like Elijah and Elisha.

I rather fancy that when prophets began to write down their oracles there was something of what I have to speak of presently, something of despair of their own day, something of reaching forward to the days to come. If their own contemporaries would not listen to them, still hereafter should come those who would be profited by their sermons, and so they put down in writing the divine message which might find a hearing from a generation yet to be born. Of course it has been a matter of great consequence to *us*, in these latter days, that the custom of prophets putting their oracles into book shape was introduced in the providence of God. From Amos and Hosea—the earliest of these prophets—down through Isaiah and Micah to Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and on to others who lived after the exile in the time of the return, great prophets have left us great books. That must do, then, for a very brief answer to the question, Who and what were the prophets of Israel?

Just in a word of parenthesis I might be allowed to deal with the question, 'How do we know that the prophets were the men of God, whom they claimed to be, and as whom I have described them?' I have noted six points in answer to that question; but time will not suffer me to deal with them. Let me say only this: the fact that these prophetic lights did not shine alone, that one came after another, that each as it were handed on the torch to his successor as he himself fell—all this shows that there was a

divine purpose behind these human messages regarding truth and duty. Still more, the fact that that great series of noble men in the past was followed and crowned by the work of Jesus Christ verifies to us the truth that the prophets did not speak of themselves but according to God's teaching. Do not say that I am reasoning in a circle. Do not say that I am appealing to the prophets to accredit Jesus Christ, and to Jesus Christ to accredit the prophets. They are two great parts, unequally great and yet both great parts, of a supremely great and glorious whole. They are like the two ends of a broken tally ; when they are fitted into each other, we see the circle rounded and perfect so we know there was purpose there. And a purpose that runs through the centuries and fulfils its own strange and unexpected visions—what can it be but divine ?

Now, what were the messages of the prophets ? This is a difficult question to answer. Each prophet spoke very directly to the circumstances of his own time. To a large extent, the prophet dealt with the problem immediately before himself. He did not wish to expound general truths—to be a theologian setting up an abstract doctrine of God ; he wished to speak to the men of his day, and tell them what was their precise duty and their nearest danger. There is great variety in the messages of the prophets ; but this must not lead us to ignore the truth that there was a great unity running through their teaching. In the first place, then, let me say the prophets came

to men as interpreting duty. God requires of you such-and-such things! We have one great summing up of the teachings of the prophets in Mic. vi. 8, 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' These are the words of a prophet, and they give us the central gist of prophetic teaching, setting it forth specially on the lines of duty. Or again in another prophet, Hosea, we have similar words which had the honour of being cited by Jesus Christ, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice' (Hos. vi. 6; Matt. ix. 13, xii. 7). And that reminds me of one peculiarity of the teaching of the prophets about duty. The great early prophets who have left us books did not much admire the sacrifices which constituted nine-tenths of the religion of their fellow countrymen. Morality before all things; mercy and not sacrifice—that was their message, and the message of their great Successor and Fulfiller. Let me put this in different words. The prophets taught men about duty, essential moral duty; they taught that *God will condemn sin*. We have that in memorable words in Amos iii. 2: 'You only have I known of all the nations of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.' That to the average Jew or Israelite was a most startling paradox. 'We are God's peculiar people; we are God's special friends; therefore He will back us through thick and thin; or at least He will make, as

far as He can, little of our offences and much of our merits.' But, says the prophet, 'You only have I known ; therefore I will visit upon you your sins.' God's message, before all things, is a message of moral duty and of vengeance upon evil. Hence one might almost say that the first message the prophets have left us is one of despair. Their books begin by announcing the sin and ruin of the people, and the doom of exile impending over the land. That, then, is the first point we have to take out of the messages of the prophets—God requires righteousness, God avenges sin, and avenges it most of all in those who are His own.

But there is a second point. God promises salvation to His own. Recent studies of the prophets has made so much of their solemn earnest moral condemnation of sin, that really we have to fight hard to keep hold of the certainty that God spoke through those hearts and those lips messages of hope ; but we are sure that that is so. I take Isaiah, one who has spoken with great definiteness of sin and of the judgement following on it. I remind you of a passage in the 8th chapter. When everybody was talking of the conspiracy that threatened to crush the land, Isaiah said to his fellows, 'Don't be afraid of the conspiracy between North Israel and Syria ; sanctify Jehovah in your hearts, and let Him be your fear and let Him be your dread, and He shall be for a sanctuary' ; i.e. He shall be for a place of refuge, for a place of hope (Isa. viii. 12-14). I

suppose all of us have heard of the great Scottish reformer, John Knox, who was described by an enemy, the Regent Morton, as 'one who never feared the face of man.' Isaiah called his countrymen to the same courage. He bade them fear God ; but such fear was to deliver them from craven cowardice, and give them a divine well-spring of hope.

In the third place, if God's promises cannot be fulfilled at once they stretch on into the future. I imagine that, when the hope was given to Israel of a re-establishment of the state after the exile, this tendency to postpone the full realization of the promise was in God's providence beginning to work. There is a beautiful narrative in Jer. xxxii. pointing in this direction. Jeremiah was waited upon by one of his relatives who had a piece of land for sale. There were peculiar laws in Israel requiring that land should not be sold out of the family, and as a relative Jeremiah had the first right and the first duty to purchase when the possessor had to sell his land. Jeremiah had been warned by God that something of this kind was to occur, and when his relative came he recognized that the application had been made to him by God's will. But Jeremiah had often been heard to tell the people that the state was on the verge of ruin, that they were to be carried captive into foreign lands. What was the meaning of buying the family estate ? He prayed to God, and the answer came to him. In days to come, after an interval of chastening and sorrow and suffering,

the state was to be happily restored, and God's favour was again to shine upon His people. I say, then, thirdly, that the promises, if they could not be fully realized at once, must be realized after a time ; and I may also here say that I imagine, if the first great threat through the prophets was the doom of exile and the collapse of the state, the first great fulfilment of their gospel messages of hope and mercy and deliverance was the building up of the state again after the exile. And though that might seem but a poor fulfilment—though in itself, if it had stood alone, it was poor and sad and unworthy—still it was lighting up of the darkness of the present with the hope of a better future.

Now fourthly, and lastly, among the messages of the prophets, God's promises were to be fulfilled through one great king. Here at length we come to the very conception of the Messiah. You have a description of this great good king in Isa. ix. 6 : 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given ; and the government shall be upon His shoulder ; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.' You have another description of this great hoped for king in the 2nd Psalm. When Jesus was on earth, He was popularly hailed as Son of David. A lecture was given in this series a few weeks ago on 'David : the Man after God's own Heart.' Features from the life of David, features from the times of David, were no doubt used by many of the prophets

in pointing to a still better future, and in giving descriptions beforehand of 'great David's greater Son.' I do not know that in itself this prophecy was the highest type of prophecy; I do not think that this was the deepest word that was spoken through the prophets of the Old Testament. I dare say we have all heard the saying, 'If you could get hold of a thoroughly good despot, despotism would be the best form of government.' That may not be a perfectly wise saying; still, we understand how people come to say it. A great deal of Messianic prophecy is like that. Let us but have a perfectly good wise king, wise with the wisdom of God, and salvation will be accomplished! In other passages, the Old Testament speaks of salvation, not through the Messiah King but as if God Himself directly and personally were to work it out. We have that, for example, in Mal. iii. 1, where it is said, 'The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in.' Of course in the gospel of Jesus Christ these two prophecies are fulfilled together; these two hopes fuse into one in the God-man. In Him we have the realization both of the ideally good human king and of the personal presence of God with His people. I venture to say that if the hope of this ideally good king, the Son of David, is not spiritually the deepest thing in prophecy, yet it was historically the most important. It created the idea of 'the Christ'; and Jesus made Himself known to the world, Jesus gained His people's faith, as the Christ of God.

Now, may I recapitulate what I have said about the messages of the prophets? If I might steal Dr. Moulton's title and apply it in a special sense, I should say that a Christian study of the prophecies shows us how God prepared for Christ. We see not merely 'how God prepared for Christianity' in the religious thought and experience of all mankind; we see a great preparation made for Christ amongst God's ancient people. To put my points more briefly, I may say there were *three* things which thus prepared for Christ within Israel — early lessons in duty; early lessons in faith; and with these an expectation that the Christ should come, that fuller salvation, richer enjoyment of God's grace should be imparted through one who was yet to appear.

Before I speak of Christ's fulfilment, I must ask your patience while I put this question: In what sense did Jesus understand Messiahship? Because, of course, Messiahship might be understood in a great many different senses. There were many who arose claiming to be Christ besides our Lord Jesus. It might seem that the promise of a king such as is described in the 2nd Psalm meant a successful revolution — meant one who would shed much blood, and enforce the rights of His people with violence against their enemies. How did Jesus think of Messiahship? The words which I read as our lesson (Matt. xxi. 33-46) give perhaps the most striking and most satisfying answer to that question.

Jesus thought of the Messiah as God's beloved Son, as the supreme, the final messenger from heaven, taking His place in the series of the prophets and over-towering them all. Jesus also thought of the Messiah as the greatest of all gifts God could bestow upon the world. God had yet one resource left ; He had one whom He could send forth, whom He could hope they would reverence—His Son. I am bound also to add something else here. I do not think we can escape this in studying the work and life of Christ. Jesus felt that the Messiah was bound to work exclusively within Israel ; and here our Lord goes back to those prophets who spoke God's message directly to the nation. Christ appealed to the nation for faith. I do not need to tell you that there is no question whether Jesus had a gospel for the individual ; you won't ask me that ! Jesus told His disciples that not a sparrow fell to the ground without our Father knowing it, and that the very hairs of our head are all numbered. There is no doubt that He had a gospel for the individual, that He had a gospel for the world ; but as Israel's Messiah He felt His own field of work was within Israel—to win Israel, if Israel would be won ; and, if Israel would not be won—why, then it came to this, to lay down His life as Israel's rejected king.

And now to come to the centre of our subject. How did Christ fulfil these prophecies which we have roughly sketched out for ourselves ? You may remember that in Scott's *Guy Mannering*, when the

*dénouement* of the story is about to take place, Meg Merrilies confronts the villains of the plot with the cry, 'The hour has come, and the man.' If these words are not taken from too familiar a region, if they are not unworthy of such sacred application, I would venture to say them of Jesus Christ. That is the notable thing: 'The hour was come, *and the Man.*' What was expected of the Christ was great; and expectation was understood in the profoundest sense by Jesus Himself; but He rose to the height of His great destiny. That is why we say that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies.

More in detail, He fulfilled the prophecies, first because He took His place in the series of teachers and messengers sent by God, as the greatest of them all. You have had a lecture recently on 'The Originality of Christ's Teaching'; and although that was mainly taken up with showing that Christ's teaching could not be regarded as borrowed from great men in other nations, still there were remarks bearing on the point which I am here discussing. Christ followed up the earlier lessons in faith and duty which God had given through the prophets; but Christ went beyond them all. Christ summed up all their doctrines of God's goodness and glory in His revelation of God's Fatherhood. Christ summed up all their doctrines of duty in His requirement to love God and to love men, to do to others 'as we would that others should do to us, thus fulfilling the law and the prophets. Don't

let us make too little of what this—particularly of what the revelation of the Father—means. Christ was something more than one who told us that God is our Father; He was one who out of the inmost experience of Sonship revealed to us what the Divine Fatherhood is. As He said Himself, 'None knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any the Father, save the Son, and he whom the Son willeth to reveal Him' (Matt. xi. 27). I say that Christ's is the supreme teaching regarding God and duty. Christ fulfilled the prophecies for one thing, in being *the greatest prophet*. He took His place at the end of that grand series, and rose far above all His predecessors.

And then may I note secondly that Christ fulfilled the prophecies as the world's greatest saint? It is all too little to say about Jesus. But it is fact, solemn blessed fact; this was the world's greatest saint. And here I must simply send back your minds to the first of all this course of lectures, the study of 'Jesus Christ or Another?' It was no small thing for Jesus to claim when He gave Himself out as being the Christ, as being Christ in the sense of God's greatest gift. But has it not proved true? Have men not gone back age after age and found ever fresh revelation and ever fresh stimulus and impulse in the knowledge of Christ Jesus? Has He not filled the part? Has He not shown Himself worthy of this supreme place?

Thirdly, Christ claimed to be recognized as the

Messiah. In fact, Christ laid down His life because, when He was put on trial by His Jewish enemies, and when they could get no evidence against Him sufficient to convict Him on, they asked Him solemnly whether He was the Messiah or not, and He told them He was. But why should Jesus make these personal claims? Or why should we be asked to spend time on them? If He has exerted a good influence on the world, His influence has come to us and done its work, whether we pay Him personal compliments or no. So some may object. Well, my friends, I am very sure that Jesus was not one who cared about personal compliments or personal honour for their own sake. So far as it is a personal matter, He would have you treat Him as you will; and if there are those who have the spirit of Christ, and the spirit of faith in Christ, within their hearts, but who on account of intellectual difficulties are not able to pay homage to the Son of God, Jesus will not judge you harshly but tenderly. We have it in Matt. xii. 32 that a man may speak against the Son of Man and be forgiven. Only speaking against the Holy Spirit, only speaking against what we know to be pure and true and good, will bring upon us moral ruin and God's condemnation. Then, too, it must not be supposed that Jesus Christ regards the expression of faith in Himself as a substitute for obedience. He has told us about that clearly enough at the end of the Sermon on the Mount. 'Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter the king-

dom of Heaven ; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven ' (Matt. vii. 21). But taking all these thoughts with us—that He does not wish praise of Himself for its own sake, that He never regards such praise as any excuse for disobedience to His Father's will—still, can we not see why we should recognize Him as being indeed the Christ? What is the nature of moral influence exercised by one personality upon another? Does it not require, does it not imply, that we as it were open our hearts to receive what the other has to give? We must put ourselves in the stream, in the full current of Christ's redemptive love. When we call Him Lord, not speaking from the lips but from the heart, we do that. When we refuse to call Him Lord, we hinder Him. He could do no mighty works because of unbelief. If we are *unable* to call him Lord, I think we somewhat impoverish ourselves, though I trust in His mercy that we do not thereby shut ourselves out of the circle of those to whom He brings His Father's love and salvation. Anyway, Christ Jesus claims to be recognized as Christ.

And, fourthly, He has been recognized as Christ. Speaking roughly, the world has believed that Jesus is the Messiah. The Gentile world has come to His faith ; and all that Jesus has done for the blessing of the ages and of the many peoples of mankind has been bound up with this belief, that He is the divine Christ, the Son of God. He has made the turning-point in history. The ancient world passes

away with the ages B.C., 'Before Christ'; He is the Lord of the modern ages; every one of our years is an *Annus Domini*. I do not say that He has done all that He has in His heart to do; I do not say that you are to judge what Jesus is by what Christendom is or even by what Christianity is. You remember Tennyson's poem about the Children's Hospital, the poor Christian sick-nurse sneered at by the sceptical doctor,—

All very well, but the good Lord Jesus has had His day.

A moment afterwards she speaks to herself,—

Had His day! Has it come? It has only dawned; it will come by-and-by.

That is what we Christians say. Less than that we never can be content to say. It is only the dawn. The day will come hereafter, that blessed day which will still be conditioned by the faith that Jesus is Christ, that He is the fulfilment of what God had long planned, what God had slowly prepared, what God has committed to this exalted Son of Man for the world's salvation.

Perhaps some one here will say, 'This is not what I came here expecting to hear; I expected to hear something about the prophecy that Jesus was to be born at Bethlehem, and how in point of fact the gospels tell us that Jesus was born there;—about that, and things like that.' Well, my friends, I admit that detailed fulfilments of the hopes inspired by the prophets are part of our evidence; they are a help to our faith. They are not the only help. The

greatest of all helps to our faith—apart from the experience of the saving touch of Jesus, which is the Spirit's supreme witness—but the greatest help to faith among outward things is Christ's resurrection. According to St. Paul, that great interpreter of Christ, Jesus was 'born of the seed of David according to the flesh, but declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead' (Rom. i. 3, 4). And then again, the miracles worked by Christ are another aid to our faith. Of these you heard something last Sunday—wonderful things, not in themselves easy to believe, but surely fit accompaniments of so supremely wonderful a person as Jesus Christ. The detailed fulfilments of the hopes taught by the prophets take their place along with these other things which are aids to faith, helps to belief; but the essential thing about Jesus's fulfilment of the prophecies is not His being born in Bethlehem, not His being descended from good King David, no, but His being Christ, His towering above all prophets and all men, His giving us sure words, true words, unforgettable words, words which link God and man together; great words, great deeds, great sufferings.

In some points it may be confessed the prophecies do not seem to be fulfilled by Jesus Christ. He was not a king like David. David fought wars: Jesus fought no battles, spilt no blood, settled no law-suits; he declined to take that department of

life into His hands at all. I do not think any less of Jesus as King, do you? because He did not sit down on the throne of David but on the throne of God His Father. And then again—and here we touch what is a stranger point—Jesus did not secure the faith of Israel. Now, that is a difficulty; but I think it is the sort of difficulty which, when you look through it to the end, becomes the strongest of all helps to faith. Israel's Messiah was here working exclusively for the benefit of the lost sheep of the house of Israel, postponing the blessing and helping of the Gentiles; and yet Israel would not have Him! Israel cried, by its representatives, 'Away with Him, away with Him, Crucify Him!' How did Christ fulfil the prophecies? I will give it to you in one or two words from the fourth Gospel—'He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not'; but that is not the end of it. 'But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name.' 'And they beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.' *That* is how Jesus fulfilled the prophecies.

# Does Haeckel Solve the Riddles?

BY

REV. PROF. J. G. TASKER.

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THE RIDDLES OF THE UNIVERSE is the title of what Haeckel calls 'a philosophical book.' His view of the world, whether true or false, is a theory. Scientists recognize the importance of his facts, who dispute his inferences from them. The question is: Does Haeckel's theory banish all the mysteries of the world but one? He says that it does; if he establishes his claim, no reasonable critic will complain that he does not fully explain the final mystery. His contribution towards the solution of the riddles of the universe cannot easily be over-estimated, if he has really succeeded in reducing them all to what he calls 'one simple and comprehensive riddle — the problem of substance' (p. 6).<sup>1</sup> But the unity must be real, not verbal; it must be obtained neither by *omission* which takes no account of awkward factors in the problem, nor by *mixture* which fails to distinguish things that differ.

The human mind strives after unity. Haeckel, having won laurels in his own sphere of scientific research, seeks to unify the nineteenth-century additions to our stock of knowledge; his honourable

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<sup>1</sup> R.P.A. Cheap Reprint.

ambition is to prove that he is a philosopher as well as a scientist by showing that the many are included in the one. The sub-title of his book—'Popular Studies in Monistic Philosophy'—raises expectations of a 'world-view' combining philosophic insight with scientific precision. These expectations are not realized. The author's lifelong investigations and his weight of learning often lend a charm to his summaries of the progress of science in 'the wonderful century'; but fifty years of successful research in zoology have not availed to bring the philosophic mind.

Many facts as well as many riddles in the universe, *as we know it*, are left unexplained. Sometimes the problem is simplified by neglecting some of its chief elements; the solution is made easier, but a different problem is solved. Sometimes the unity has no existence except in words; the single problem comprises all the rest, and 'mixing things up is the great bad.'

'Monism' is the name of any philosophy which recognizes only one (Gk. *monos*, single) reality in the universe. It says nothing of the nature of that one reality; there is a spiritual monism, and there is a materialistic monism. Haeckel's system is an amalgam of the two. According to the exigencies of his argument, he assumes either that there is nothing real but matter, or that matter is a manifestation of spirit. His entire philosophy is baseless, unless all things—material and spiritual—are manifestations of

substance. Out of this one reality all phenomena are said to be mechanically evolved—the stars and the astronomer, the nebular theory and the 19th Psalm.

THE UNIVERSE = SUBSTANCE = GOD.

What is this 'Universal Substance' out of which the world in its infinite variety and complexity is said to have evolved? Haeckel reprints from his *Monism* an elaborate scheme of the world (p. 81); in the original work the heading is, 'The World (=Nature =Substance = the Cosmos = the Universe = God).' Haeckel's insertion of the mathematical sign of equality between these six great words certainly does not, in the Platonic sense, unify the manifold. The three words omitted in the English version are printed at the head of this paragraph, for they summarise Haeckel's suggested solution of the world-problem. A glance at his printed scheme will show that God (=Substance) is divided into ether and mass. On p. 78 the word for 'mass' is translated 'matter'; in this chapter, therefore, Haeckel gives two definitions: (1) matter is ponderable substance; (2) substance is ponderable matter. There are obscurities, but it is clear that matter is substance.

To this universal substance Haeckel ascribes 'two different aspects'; the foregoing analysis leads us to expect that these two aspects will be matter and *ether*; but we learn (p. 76) that they are matter and *spirit*. Is spirit another name for ether? On ex-

Examining the definitions of 'spirit' we discover that spirit is energy (p. 8), more specifically the energy of thought (p. 76), and that thought is energy (p. 77); whence it follows that spirit = *energy of energy!*

In the definitions of matter there is similar ambiguity. Matter is sometimes an *aspect*, sometimes an *attribute*, and sometimes a *property* of substance. That is to say, matter is either an essential quality, or a non-essential quality of substance; and matter is either an aspect of substance, or substance itself (= God). The mystery is great, for Haeckel says (p. 76) that 'on a logical analysis all the changes which have come over the idea of substance are reduced to this supreme thought.' 'Substance' is not an easy word to define; but neither theology nor metaphysics leads us into such a labyrinth as this. The 'world-substance' has no unity. It is not, of course, included among 'knowable phenomena' which Haeckel regards as the real world; in the world of ideas no clear conception of it can be formed; and in the realm of conjecture it is neither a consistent nor a suggestive speculation. Haeckel despises the metaphysicians who are 'satisfied with the mere picture of a wood,' but he offers us a flickering picture of a wood which it is impossible to focus. No wonder that his own conclusion (p. 134) is, 'This essence of substance becomes more mysterious and enigmatic, the deeper we penetrate into the knowledge of its attributes, matter and energy.' Truly,

universal substance is, as he says, an 'ideal phantom, and it does not come in 'a questionable shape.'

Mr. McCabe<sup>1</sup> displays great skill in fencing, as he replies to a few of Haeckel's numerous critics, and smoothes out some of the creases in the philosophical argument of the *Riddle*. The explanation offered of Haeckel's startling assertion—that 'we do not even clearly know whether Substance exists or not'—is that 'matter and force are the world-substance breaking upon our perception.' This statement strengthens our position. If matter and force are the realities with which we have to deal, it is not of substance but of matter and force that we acquire knowledge. Matter and force may be found in constant combination; they are not, therefore, one. There is general agreement among philosophers that Haeckel fails to reduce the riddles of the universe to one. Mr. McCabe cannot blunt the edge of their keen weapons by saying of one, 'He is not a Christian,' and of another, 'He is not a Theist.' It is a battle of philosophies. One of Haeckel's 'unanswered' critics is Professor Adickes, of Münster University, a Pantheist. Common sense estimates his judgement on these philosophical subjects as more rather than less weighty, because he is 'not inoculated with theological prejudice.' If none but Christian apologists had called

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly the Very Rev. Father Antony, O.S.F., Professor of Philosophy and Ecclesiastical History, at St. Antony's, Forest Gate. See *Haeckel's Critics Answered* (R.P.A.).

Haeckel's Monism<sup>1</sup> a fiction, they would have been dubbed theological obscurantists and disregarded. When philosophers of various creeds unite in saying so, the value of their agreement cannot be discounted by replying that they are not all Christian Theists.

#### THE SEVEN WORLD-RIDDLES.

Haeckel may fail to reduce the riddles of the universe to a unity, and yet he may make important contributions to the solution of some of them. How does he deal with the world-riddles separately? Du Bois-Reymond, who was a materialist in philosophy, said that there were seven: (1) the nature of matter and force, (2) the origin of motion, (3) the origin of simple sensation and consciousness, (4) the origin of life, (5) the orderly arrangement of nature, (6) rational thought, and the origin of the cognate faculty, speech, and (7) the freedom of the will.

In this course of lectures some of these important subjects have already been considered; hence it is as unnecessary as it is impossible to deal with each of them in this short address. All that can be attempted is a brief inquiry into the value of Haeckel's theory of Universal Substance as he applies it to the solution of the riddles summed up in the four words which form the respective headings of the four divisions of his book: Man, the Soul, the World, God.

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<sup>1</sup>Pan-psychism, materialistic Pantheism, Crypto-vitalism, Pseudo-monism, and Henism are amongst the words suggested as more accurate descriptions of his theory.

English readers are placed at a disadvantage because these significant titles are not given in the table of contents. 'ANTHROPOLOGY' includes chapters i.—v. ; 'PSYCHOLOGY' chapters vi.—xi. ; 'COSMOLOGY' chapters xii.—xv. ; 'THEOLOGY' chapters xvi.—xx. When these headings are inserted, a glance at the contents of the chapters is sufficient to show that in Haeckel's theory of human nature the soul has no place ; also that, in spite of his frequent disparagement of psychology, he devotes nearly one-third of his book to psychology so-called, introducing us to cell-souls, plant-souls, and the souls of sponges and trying to bridge the chasm between matter and spirit by the hypothesis of atom-souls, and with the help of countless centuries of evolution. By attending to these headings we learn further that Haeckel's cosmology involves such an interpretation of evolution as excludes a Divine Creator and denies the existence of God apart from the world. Yet the next section is headed 'Theology' ! It contains statements utterly unwarranted and undefended even by Haeckel's most ardent disciples ; but nothing in it is less warranted or less defensible than its title, for amidst its manifold topics no place at all—not even with a view to disproof—is given to the proper theme of theology—the divine nature and government.

#### I. ANTHROPOLOGY. *The Nature of Man.*

Both Haeckel and his defender, Mr. McCabe, complain that critics do not devote their strength to

refuting the statements of this section, which contains the exposition of the monistic doctrine of man. The reason ought to be obvious : there is an increasing desire to know the facts. Many of us read Haeckel's book, as soon as it appeared nearly five years ago, because his devotion to science and his lifelong researches entitle him to a respectful hearing—though not to unquestioning submission to his dicta—when he promises to show how the discoveries of the nineteenth century have advanced our knowledge of zoology, comparative anatomy, embryology, &c. From Haeckel and his fellow workers many who entirely disagree with his philosophy are quite willing to learn how 'the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground' (Gen. ii. 7). They can bear to be told, and are interested in much that Haeckel says, as he shows that man is a true mammal and belongs to the latest and most highly developed class of the vertebrates. There is no dispute, until it is maintained that man is nothing more than 'the frame which binds him in,' nothing more than the body which zoologists and biologists—with more or less certainty—trace to its lowly origin.

But even in this section there are passages in which Haeckel speaks with a confidence that is not justified by the evidence adduced. It is not theologians on the look out for gaps, but scientists and evolutionists who regard his attempt to construct our genealogical tree as premature. Man may be directly descended from a monkey, but it is not a 'certain

historical fact.' Nor does Haeckel write with scientific accuracy when he says that a 'fossil man-monkey' was discovered ten years ago in Java (p. 31). The truth is that only a skull-cap, a thigh-bone, and two teeth were found; Mr. McCabe states the facts carefully, though he does not attach due weight to the opinion of Virchow, who doubted if all belonged to the same skeleton. At anyrate, only six out of the twelve scientific experts who examined the remains, held that the 'missing link' had been discovered. Again, Dr. Hamann, one of Haeckel's former pupils and assistants, has cast serious doubt upon his 'theory of the gastraea' which supposes that all the higher animals are descended from a primitive extinct organism. Haeckel makes no reference to this opposition, though it gave rise to an action for libel in which he was worsted, and though Dr. Metschnikoff in his *Embryological Studies in Medusae* (Vienna, 1866) refers to Hamann's discovery as a refutation of Haeckel's gastraea theory. These are questions upon which non-experts cannot have first-hand evidence; hence they are compelled to demand testimony which is beyond dispute. (Mr. McCabe is probably unaware of all the reasons which have aroused in Germany strong indignation against Haeckel's controversial methods, or he would scarcely represent him as the innocent victim of unreasoning hatred and theological prejudice.)

In estimating the value of Haeckel's contribution to the solution of *the riddle of man*, it is especially

necessary to distinguish scientific facts from philosophical theories. Speaking as a zoologist and as a biologist he interests and often instructs his readers, but an unscientific and speculative conception of human nature underlies his arguments ; its basis is the assumption that 'anthropology is a branch of zoology.' This statement has an innocent look ; but it must be considered in the light of Haeckel's intentional postponement of the study of the soul until he has given his account of human nature. But that account is incomplete, unless the question 'What is man ?' can be fully answered by a comparative study of such sciences as anatomy, physiology, and embryology. There is a nobler view of human nature, more scientific because more true to the complex facts of human personality ; according to this view, Haeckel's scheme is topsy-turvy, for so far from anthropology being a branch of zoology, the truth is that zoology is a branch of anthropology. When everything is known that science can reveal in regard to the development of man's physical organism, his self-conscious reason and his spiritual life have yet to be explained.

Haeckel finds in the words 'God created man in His own image' nothing but an evidence of the 'boundless presumption of conceited man' (p. 6). Has he, then, at last discovered something which distinguishes man from the brutes ? Did the writer of the Book of Genesis mean that the first man transmitted presumption and conceit to his descend-

ants? (Gen. v. 1, 3.) From this perverted exegesis let us turn to Dr. Driver’s note on these words ; it is impossible to accuse him of shutting his eyes to any light which science casts upon their meaning, and his exposition will guide us in our further study of Haeckel’s conception of the rational soul of man. The image of God ‘relates to man’s immaterial nature. It can be nothing but the gift of *self-conscious reason* which is possessed by man, but by no other animal. In the various intellectual faculties possessed by him ; in the possession of a moral sense, or the faculty of distinguishing right and wrong ; in the capacity for knowing God and holding spiritual communion with Him—man is distinguished fundamentally from other animals, and is allied with the divine nature ; so that, wide as is the interval separating Him from the Creator, he may nevertheless be said to be an “image,” or adumbration of Him.’ How Haeckel explains away human personality will shortly appear ; his attempt to solve the riddle of man is a failure because he has never sounded the ‘abysmal depths’ of the soul. He prefers to search for the soul in those lowly though doubtless beautiful forms of life, which as an enthusiastic marine zoologist he discovers in his deep-sea dredging. He has never acquired what Browning in ‘Sordello’ tells us ‘poets know—the drag-net’s trick’ ; he does not ‘reach the bottom of the soul.’

We seek to know the moving of each sphere,  
 And the strange cause of th’ ebbs and floods of Nile ;  
 But of that clock within our breasts we hear,  
 The subtle motions we forget the while.

We that acquaint ourselves with every zone  
 And pass both tropics, and behold the poles,  
 When we come home are to ourselves unknown,  
 And unacquainted still with our own souls.

## II. PSYCHOLOGY. *The Soul.*

Haeckel's fundamental assumption in this section is that 'Psychology is a branch of Physiology'; spirit is defined as 'thinking substance,' or again and inconsistently as an 'attribute of substance.' In chapter ix. the gradual historical evolution of the human soul from the animal soul is traced. But what is the true theme of the chapter? It is a study of embryonic formations—a study of what can be directly observed with the help of a powerful microscope. What Haeckel really traces is not eight different stages in the evolution of mind or a soul, but eight different steps in the evolution of the brain, the organ of mind. He cannot, in this instance, complain that the critics have neglected his elaborate hypotheses; nevertheless, in his 'Appendix' written a year ago, he persists in his paradoxical affirmation that the '*psychological part*' of his work consists of 'the universally recognized facts of comparative *physiology*.'

One of the most brilliant and powerful exposures of Haeckel's unphilosophical treatment of the world-problems is by Dr. Friedrich Paulsen, Professor of Philosophy in the University of Berlin. But instead of replying to Paulsen's arguments, Haeckel descends to the level of saying that Paulsen's anxiety

is 'not to know the truth, but to demolish a hated adversary.'

The most striking feature of the latter part of the nineteenth century was the increased attention to the science of mind and the establishment of its claim to be an independent science. But Haeckel is unperturbed; with him it is a foregone conclusion that 'most of the psychological literature of the day is so much waste paper' (p. 34). Nevertheless, the true science of mind flourishes. But modern psychologists do not teach, as Haeckel does, that 'every shade of inclination, from complete indifference to the fiercest passion, is exemplified in the *chemical* relation of the various elements towards each other, just as we find in the psychology of man, and especially in the life of the sexes' (p. 79). Psychology is neither chemistry nor physiology. One quotation must suffice. The latest addition to a standard series of scientific manuals is entitled *Contemporary Psychology*; the results of historical and scientific investigation are thus summed up: 'The spiritual world exists by itself, as a psychological reality, as positive and real as any material reality. Ideas, feelings, acts of willing, and even the simplest sensations are all *sui generis*, and cannot be compared to physical phenomena.'

Haeckel's theory of substance compels him to explain feeling and thought either as matter or as motion. In his various writings there are three definitions: feeling and thought are (1) attributes of

matter, (2) movements of matter, (3) effects of the movements of matter. But the most frequent fallacy consists in confounding movements of matter with activities of mind. In his description of the process of individual development from one simple cell, he tells us (p. 55) that the cell divides, then the cells cluster, and then a hollow vesicle is formed. He has seen nothing but matter in motion, yet he maintains that he has 'directly observed psychological phenomena.' Then, on the strength of this assumption, he proceeds to distinguish the sensations of individual cells from the common sensation of the entire community of cells.

What is sensation ?—for example, the sensation of sound, when a tuning-fork is struck and we hear a musical note. Science explains that the vibrations of the tuning-fork are transferred to the air, then carried by waves of ether to the ends of the nerves of hearing in the ear, and then transmitted to the brain. The physiologist, who does not mistake inference for observation, will never profess to explain how these movements of matter become sensations, much less how the consciousness of sensation arises in the mind. If indeed we could see every step of this process, we should never see the sensation, we should see nothing but matter in motion. Haeckel explains the movements he observes from his knowledge of his own mental experience. Physiology can account for nothing more than 'the ringing of the bell at the receiving-station of the brain'; when the bell rings, if you

are 'there' you will have a sensation, but not otherwise.

Haeckel says that 'conscious perception is developed by the mirroring of the sensations in the central part of the nervous system' (p. 39). It is a misleading metaphor; a mirror does not perceive anything, even if there were any ground for supposing that the impressions resemble the reflections in a mirror. Mr. McCabe uses a still more extraordinary illustration in a vain attempt to harmonize Haeckel's contradictory statements that the brain is not only the instrument but also the producer of thought. 'None but a pedant, or a desperate critic,' he says, 'would abuse us for saying that the stomach was the instrument and producer of digestion.' (In the light of the assumption that critics, whose weapon is abuse, are in a desperate fix, Mr. McCabe might profitably rewrite many passages in his book.) When language is used unscientifically, the stomach may perhaps be called the instrument of digestion; but if the stomach could produce digestion, how many doctors would find their occupation gone! Let us be thankful if *in* the stomach not digestion but digested food is produced by the action of the gastric juice.

In the simplest sensation, the impressions made upon the sensitive organism are to be distinguished from the mind that receives and interprets the tidings brought. Haeckel, like all writers who do not admit this, often uses language which assumes the activity of the mind whose existence he denies.

An object will disappear from consciousness, he says, if 'our attention be withdrawn' (p. 61). Yes, the object may continue to start vibrations, and the nervous system may be unimpaired ; but there is no consciousness of the object, unless there is some one to attend, not merely present in the flesh, but 'all there.' Voluntary attention is a spiritual force ; as Professor James of Harvard says, 'My experience is what I attend to.'

Brief reference must be made to Mr. McCabe's attempt to parry the blows of Haeckel's philosophical opponents by assuming that the only alternative is a philosophy which denies the reality of the external world. This assumption is unwarranted. Modern idealists do not regard the heavens above and the earth beneath as mere creations of their own intelligence. They hold that the world we know best is the world within, for the simple but sufficient reason that in our consciousness we have direct access to it ; but this does not imply that the world without has no existence. From the sensations which come to us from its manifold phenomena the mind receives authentic knowledge, and out of them forms its perceptions. It is this world of our experience that the mind builds up by its own activity out of the material furnished by sensations ; such idealism is quite consistent with the acceptance of nature as 'a great fact, a mighty universe, containing myriads of things which do not enter into man's experience at all.'

There are abundant proofs of philosophical acumen in Mr. McCabe's book, so that his present misunderstanding of the attitude of modern thought warrants the hope that, having swung from one extreme of realism to another, he may discover that there are forms of idealism to which his objections do not apply. He himself explains with scientific accuracy all that takes place as he looks at a green table-cloth ; but when he says, 'I see green,' that statement involves the leaping of the chasm between matter in motion and a mental state, for there is no resemblance between the 'green' that I see, and motions of ether, the power to start which is the property in the object that gives us the sense of colour. Mr. McCabe, at a later stage, makes a concession which confirms our impression that the philosophy of Haeckel cannot permanently satisfy his mind ; an altogether different theory of human nature underlies his words : ' It is a *scientific*, a psychological fact, that we are conscious of being able to influence our character and our actions.' Let a man cleave to that consciousness and work out all that it implies, and it will lead him far. In that consciousness responsibility is involved ; from that consciousness it is only a step to the consciousness of the influence of other minds on ours. Such facts furnish a basis for true religion of which science cannot rob us ; to know that spirit rules in the world within helps us to conceive that an Infinite Spirit may rule in the world without ; and if in spite

of the fleshly veil which partly conceals us from, though it partly reveals us to, each other—if even here spirit with spirit may join, then psychology not only does not deny but helps to demonstrate the possibility of man's communing with God. In outline this is a sermon on the saying of the ancient sage, 'Man, know thyself' ; Haeckel is right in commending the wisdom of that saying.

Man is man's A B C ; there 's none that can  
Read God aright, unless he first spells man.

### III. COSMOLOGY. *The World.*

In his *Creed of Pure Reason* (Appendix) Haeckel admits that the third part of his book is 'more open to attack' than the two earlier sections ; he also confesses that 'in a certain sense' his Monism is Materialism, inasmuch as in his 'universal substance' matter and energy are inseparably combined. 'Juxtaposition, in fine ; and what is juxtaposition ?' The assumption that juxtaposition constitutes unity has already been examined and shown to be unsupported by facts. Haeckel directs special attention to his formula, 'There is no substance without sensation,' and reasserts his opposition to Kant. Haeckel's theory of sensation has already been tried and found wanting. His powerful imagination enables him to discover romances in drops of water ; he adds to the mystery of the universe by asserting that substance feels pain in the process of expansion and pleasure in the process of condensation ; he endows

the molecules with a marvellous faculty : they are ‘gifted with memory,’ but alas ! for them it is ‘unconscious memory.’ To atom-souls Haeckel ascribes, in germ, capacities for human experience, that is to say, the functions which he himself is conscious of possessing. The device of reading into atoms a primitive soul is an unsuccessful attempt to explain the known (the soul of man) by the unknown (atom-souls).

Haeckel’s disparagement of Kant’s moral philosophy calls for notice, inasmuch as only a year ago it was repeated. His depreciation of the mature work of this profound thinker aroused widespread indignation, which was not confined to Kant’s disciples. But disregarding even friendly critics Haeckel again applauds Kant the First, who wrote *Pure Reason* when he was youthful (fifty-seven years old), and denounces Kant the Second, who wrote *Practical Reason* when he was old and dogmatic (sixty-five years old — Haeckel’s age, when he published the *Riddle*). Can any reasonable man dismiss the ripe criticism of a philosopher distinguished for his plain living and high thinking by suggesting ‘gradual decay of the brain’? Kant lived nearly fifteen years after Haeckel calls him old ; yet we are asked to believe that the eight years between fifty-seven and sixty-five had transformed a keen critic into a dogmatic obscurantist who believed in God, Freedom, and Immortality. Haeckel calls them ‘three great hallucinations,’ and describes as

'a curious idol' Kant's categorical imperative — the direct command 'thou shalt' of the moral law.

Two months ago the centenary of the death of Immanuel Kant was celebrated. At a special meeting of the British Academy, Dr Shadworth Hodgson said : 'There could be no doubt that it was the moral aspect of Kant's teaching which had most profoundly affected men's minds. His abiding influence was due to his discovery of the categorical imperative as distinguished from the conditional imperative — the new kind of causality through a rational will which most of us felt to be a fundamental truth.' Kant's famous words, inscribed on his memorial tablet at Königsberg, are very familiar ; their context is not so well known. But in the light of his own interpretation those words have additional value ; indeed, they expose the fallacy of Haeckel's teaching, when he says that 'human nature has no more value for the universe at large than the ant or the fly of a summer's day.' 'Two things,' says Kant, 'fill my mind with ever new and increasing wonder and reverence . . . the starry heavens above me, and the moral law within me.' His comment is, 'The former sight of a countless number of worlds destroys my sense of importance, for I am an animal that must give back the matter out of which it was made to the planet—a mere speck in the universe—after that matter has for a short time (one knows not how) been endowed with living energy ; but the latter sight infinitely increases my value as an intelligence, with a person-

ality in which the moral law reveals to me a life that is not dependent on the animal world, nor even on the world of sense.'

Haeckel is as anxious to represent Goethe and Spinoza as holding his philosophic view of the world as he is determined to dissociate himself from the later teaching of Kant. The fact remains that Goethe honoured Kant as the greatest of philosophers; to Goethe the world was 'the living mantle of God.' Haeckel closes his book with a quotation from Goethe—'a perfect poetic expression' of 'the philosophy of unity':—

By eternal laws of iron ruled,  
Must all fulfil the cycle of their destiny.

Can Haeckel find room in his philosophy for two more lines by 'Germany's greatest thinker and poet'?—

From the power that controls all forms of substance  
The man is free who overcomes himself.<sup>1</sup>

The passages in which Haeckel represents Spinoza as agreeing with his philosophic view of God and the world led Paulsen to say that they read as if 'the compositor had disarranged the words of Spinoza.' At anyrate, Spinoza did not think that God is a word that can be exchanged for the world. Mr. McCabe does not mention Spinoza; as a former Professor of Philosophy he would probably agree that Haeckel misunderstands that remarkable genius, who was said to be 'God-intoxicated.'

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<sup>1</sup> Von der Gewalt, die alle Wesen bindet,  
Befreit der Mensch sich, der sich überwindet.

Evolution is the 'magic word' in Haeckel's Cosmology. He was one of Darwin's most enthusiastic disciples at a time when it required courage to adopt the teaching of that epoch-making work, *The Origin of Species* (1859). Seven years after its appearance, Haeckel published his *General Morphology*, an elaborate attempt to apply the new theory to all organisms. Theologians as well as scientists know that Haeckel has won lasting fame by his persevering endeavour to establish on a firmer basis the distinctive doctrine of Darwinism, viz. that evolution works by the method of natural selection. Darwin himself, in his own quiet way, says all that need be said to show that the zealous disciple, forty years ago, lacked the caution of his master. In gratefully acknowledging Haeckel's book (1868), Darwin says, 'Your boldness, however, sometimes makes me tremble; but as Huxley remarked, some one must be bold enough to make a beginning in drawing up tables of descent. Although you fully admit the imperfection of the geological record, yet Huxley agreed with me in thinking that you are sometimes rather rash in venturing to say at what periods the several groups first appeared.'

When, however, the genealogical tree is constructed on a basis of fact and not of fiction, much will remain to be explained. If theologians have in the past made the mistake of trusting to the existence of 'gaps' in the evidence, the followers of Haeckel are making a much worse blunder in announcing that

the filling up of gaps will banish a personal God from His universe. Haeckel says (p. 93) that the 'struggle for life is the great selective divinity,' but he never explains how an 'unconscious regulator' can do 'without design' what man does by 'artificial choice with a definite design.' Even if natural selection is ever accepted by the majority of evolutionists, which is not now the case, it does not destroy the 'design' argument; this world may still be a world of purposes. Kant says: 'It is absurd to hope that some day a Newton will arise who will explain even the production of a blade of grass by natural laws which no purpose has ordained.' To this statement Haeckel replies that Darwin was 'this impossible Newton,' and that natural selection is the solution of the 'insoluble riddle.'

What does science say? Exact science can trace the evolution of living forms, but it cannot prove that the process is entirely mechanical; it can define the limits within which variations take place, but it cannot prove that these variations are indeterminate, nor that they arose 'spontaneously, by random changes without purpose.' Why did some atoms of the primitive substance deny themselves the pleasure of condensation? How is it that one speck of protoplasm becomes a fish and another becomes a famous marine zoologist who says that the two germ-cells cannot be distinguished? How is it, as Max Müller once asked, that one ny cell has, as it were, a ticket for Paris, and

another a ticket for London? How is it that each arrives at its own destination, and never goes beyond it? May it not be that the predetermined goal is the true explanation of the earliest stages in the journey? After all, is not involution the mystery? What has evolution to start with? May not the chief factor in the evolution be the latent powers in the organism which enable it to its advantage to avail itself of the outward occasion? In a word, whether exact science ultimately proves or disproves that the method of evolution is natural selection, working on countless slight variations, it cannot deny that the forces of nature may be working out the thoughts of God.

But Mr. McCabe says that the forces of the universe 'no more needed guiding than a tramcar does; there was only one possible direction for them.' Nevertheless, trams have conductors; and they would need them, even if Haeckel's theory of substance accounted for the origin of motion. Though Tait affirms that the property which science ascribes to matter is inertia, Haeckel declares that matter has an innate tendency to move. Suppose, therefore, that the tramcar starts itself; what determines the direction of its movement? the mind, without which matter and force would neither have made the rails nor laid them. The inventor of trams did not try to alter or interfere with physical laws; he applied his mind to them, tried to understand their working, utilized them for our benefit, and now

they accomplish his design. As mind guides the tramcar, Mind may guide the world. Even Haeckel is driven to speak of 'purposive natural forces'; Huxley almost saw 'the hidden artist,' and Lord Kelvin recognizes 'directivity.' Up to the present moment, said Jesus, 'My Father is working' (John v. 17); therefore, as the filling up of gaps imparts fuller knowledge of nature, it will also give us deeper insight into the purposes and methods of nature's God. Science will explain the great saying with which Hegel closes his *Philosophy of History*, 'What has happened and is happening every day is not only not without God but is essentially His work.' (Mr. McCabe says: 'History has smoothed out every wrinkle of the scroll of the past in which supernatural agency might lurk.')

#### IV. THEOLOGY. *God.*

Haeckel acknowledges that the theological part of his work is 'by far the weakest' (Appendix). Would that it were only weak! Mr. McCabe owns that it contains 'undoubted errors on Haeckel's part'; but he adds, 'Haeckel has inserted in the cheap German edition of his work a notification that the authority he followed was unsound.' All that Haeckel has done is to correct, in the text of the cheap edition, blunders in regard to the number of Paul's Epistles, dates, &c. But his scandalous assertions are unchanged; the solution of the 'world-riddle of the birth of Christ' is still

said to be the 'historical statement' that a Roman soldier was the seducer of Mary and the father of Jesus. Strauss, 'the greatest theologian of the nineteenth century,' truthfully describes this 'well-known fiction' as a 'Jewish slander discredited long ago.' Haeckel still asserts that these 'historical details are carefully avoided by the official theologian.' 'The nearest approach to an apology is in the 'Appendix' where he says of Saladin, his authority, 'Certainly in many details he is just as mistaken as are all other Bible interpreters.' Yet in the same paragraph he refers to 'the critical researches of the most important Christian theologians,' and tells us their names; they are, Feuerbach, Strauss, Renan, and Saladin !

How can Mr. McCabe with all these facts before him say that Haeckel's critics are 'somehow unable to understand a pure love of truth'? A complete withdrawal of this slander and others, or a frank apology, would have been more effective arguments. Nor is it too much to expect that in the interests of 'truth, beauty, and virtue'—Haeckel's three goddesses—these false, ugly, and vicious stories should be either omitted or honestly characterized in the English edition. The translator cannot, as an ex-Professor of Church History, plead for himself the excuse he makes for Haeckel, that he was 'misled by his authority'; Mr. McCabe also knows that he has omitted some revolting details, as, e.g., the paragraph about the 'curious God' who

became his own father-in-law, and that which refers to paintings of Gabriel’s visit to Mary. If he could so far tamper with his text, he might with advantage have omitted more.<sup>1</sup>

With relief let us listen to Haeckel as he disavows all hatred of Christianity ; ‘its high merit,’ he says, ‘is that more than all other religions it has emphasized philanthropy and self-denial.’ Then, after all, Christianity may be worth preserving ; though Haeckel adds to the riddles of history by recognizing that

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<sup>1</sup> This lecture was in type when the new English Edition of the *Riddle* appeared which contains Mr. McCabe’s—not Haeckel’s—amended version of the chapter on ‘Science and Christianity.’ The withdrawal of slanderous fictions is cause for thankfulness ; but the excuse for the tardiness of the withdrawal is insufficient. ‘Until Professor Haeckel was convinced of the unreliability of the authority for his statements, the translator did not feel justified in interfering with the text.’ Either with or without justification, two years ago the text was interfered with ; yet *before* the English translation of Dr. Loofs’ *Anti-Haeckel* appeared, Mr. McCabe could say : ‘It will, no doubt, temper the extreme coarseness and ugliness of the original.’ Dr. Loofs does refer to some of Haeckel’s coarse passages, which Mr. McCabe omitted from his English translation. Moreover, it must be remembered that Dr. Loofs’ scathing exposure of Saladin—whose name, with Haeckel’s complimentary epithets, Mr. McCabe also omits—was published in 1900, or two years before the English translation of the *Riddle*. Mr. McCabe’s original contributions to the subject include the statement that ‘the founder of Babiism was a reformer of the type of Christ.’ He describes the Pantheras legend (Origen : *contra Celsum*)—that Jesus was the child of Mary and a soldier—as a ‘somewhat enlarged statement’ of the accusation brought against Jesus (*Gospel of Nicodemus*) by His Jewish enemies that ‘He was born in sin.’ In this apocryphal gospel the charge of illegitimacy is refuted by twelve pious Jews, who say : ‘We deny that he was born of fornication : for we know that Joseph espoused Mary.’ The refutation explains the nature of the charge. There is no trace of the later Pantheras slander, which Origen (c. 240 A.D.) calls a ‘fable’ of Celsus, ‘blindly concocted’ with a view to ‘overturning the miraculous conception by the Holy Ghost.’

Christianity rendered service to the classic world when it was decaying, though Jesus was below the level of classic culture, in fact inferior to Paul in 'culture and practical sense.' By their fruits in philanthropy and self-denial let Monism and Christianity be tested. Haeckel and his critics agree in their admiration of a religion of love ; but he reveals his ignorance of the human heart when he suggests as a cure for selfishness a little more knowledge. It is delightful to gaze on corals, to look up to palms, and perhaps delightful to learn all about substance. But if you had an aquarium instead of a church in every town, would the golden age have come ?

Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell.

Knowledge and reverence, science and faith may make 'one music' in our hearts and lives. To quote one scientist against another is not very helpful ; but there is much instruction in some statistics compiled by Dr. Dennert, a well-known Christian socialist in Berlin. He has collected all accessible information about the religion or irreligion of 300 of the most prominent scientists in ancient and modern times ; 242 believed in God, 38 give no information, 15 are either agnostic or inclined to disbelieve, only 5 avowed themselves to be anti-christian materialists. Such evidence should be weighed as well as counted ; Haeckel shall, therefore, hold the scales. The appeal shall be to scientists whom he singles out for special honour.

Copernicus, who introduced a new era in astronomy, says that the 'divine wisdom' was revealed to him as he studied 'the glorious order of the universe.' Vesalius, the reformer of anatomy, was a Christian Platonist; one of his sayings is, 'Let us give thanks to God, the Creator of all things, that He has given us a reasonable soul.' Cuvier, the great zoologist, who brought out what Haeckel calls a fact of 'extreme consequence'—viz. that man is a vertebrate—was a Christian believer who professed the Reformed Faith. Bichat, a French physician, who began the study of human tissues with the aid of the microscope, was a theist; and so was Schleiden, who discovered the cell in the plant world. Lamarck, whom Haeckel praises for attacking 'the dogma of fixed species,' was not a materialist, but was 'disposed to regard the evolution and upholding of the world as depending on the will of God, and not on blind chance.' Carl Ernst von Baer, a most successful embryologist, and 'the founder of the science of evolution,' expresses thus his own religious views: 'The harmony of the powers of nature leads us to one primeval cause (Urgrund), and this primeval cause can be no other than the sublime Being, to whom the religious needs of men point.' (His words are quoted, because Mr. McCabe sharply contradicts Dr. Horton, and says that Von Baer was agnostic.) Harvey, who discovered the circulation of the blood and formulated the law, 'Every living thing comes from an egg,' was a believer in Christ. Robert

Mayer, who discovered the law of the conservation of energy and thereby 'inaugurated a new epoch' in physics, says, 'If surface thinkers will not recognize a higher world than the material, sensible world, the ridiculous presumption of a few must not be laid to the charge of science, still less can it redound to their honour'; and again, 'Out of a full heart I cry: true Philosophy cannot be anything but a propaedeutic for the Christian religion.'

In view of Haeckel's estimate of the value of the scientific work of these men of faith, it is vain for him to say that faith is the great barrier to scientific progress. Faith has no fear of facts. Christian faith imparts zest to scientific and philosophic studies, and science and philosophy have often been school-masters to bring men to Christ.

'Old things need not be therefore true,  
O brother men, nor yet the new;  
Ah! still awhile the old thought retain,  
And yet consider it again.

We! what do we see? each a space  
Of some few yards before his face;  
Does that the whole wide plan explain?  
Ah, yet consider it again.

# 'The Witness of Physical Science to the Triune God.'

BY

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In this Lecture the term 'Science' is used in its popular sense to signify the ordered knowledge and theory derived from a study of what is called Nature. By 'Theology' is meant the ordered knowledge and theory of God and divine things derived mainly from the study of the Bible. I thus place side by side the Bible and Nature, Theology and Science. The word 'Physical' is used to denote the universe apart from the manifestation of life, the universe as studied in physics and chemistry.

**A**LTHOUGH I have endeavoured to make a difficult subject intelligible, I am afraid that you will hardly be able to call this a popular lecture. Its appeal is to those who have already had some training in physical science; and it attempts to relieve the great basis-mystery of religion, the trinity of God, by showing that science reveals, and accepts without demur, a similar mystery in her own domain. My topic is not only somewhat abstruse, but it also lacks that attractive warmth which drew so many to hear the comforting answer to Mr. Keeble's question, 'Is there a Heavenly Father?' No subject, however, that leads up to God can fail to appeal to both heart and intellect. Many good Christians are under the impression that the domain of science is an arctic

region, into which, if the gospel ship venture, she is certain to be frozen fast amongst the icebergs. It is equally true that some men of science look askance at theology as if the man who enters her domain must leave reason behind, shut his eyes, and be prepared to swallow both gnat and camel. The Christian without science is very much better off than the scientist without God; but God meant us to be men of science and men of God. In my opinion it is the man of God who takes the broadest, sanest, most intelligible view of the universe. It wonderfully widens a man's outlook to regard the universe as an expression of the thought, wisdom, power, glory of God. He alone is the great Original Thinker, Creator, Lawgiver, Evolver; the Master of science, who has no theories because He is the Truth. To me God is the supreme astronomer and geologist, chemist and physicist, botanist and zoologist; and to sit at His feet and try to spell out the alphabet of His fathomless wisdom and measureless might, under His own loving fatherly guidance, is to begin to grip the eternal realities, and to find that the cry 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!' falls away from knowledge with Him, as it falls away from life with Him. To those of us, then, who take nature to be the workmanship of God, the fascination of science lies in its growing revelation of Him. In painting, in poetry, in literature, a man's work is a revelation of himself. You look at a painting and you say, 'That is a Constable, a Turner, a Leighton,

a Watts.' You recognize the master in the work. The more supreme the talent of the artist, the more unique his work. So it is with God. We rightly look for the divine signature on this universe; nor are we disappointed: God's work is as unique as God.

The witness of nature and science to God is, however, so varied, and on so vast a scale, that I am obliged to limit myself to one point, and that on the lowest possible level. I do not ask to-day whether man, made in the image of God, bears any witness to his Maker. I do not even ask whether botany and zoology have any word to speak for Him. My appeal is entirely to the sciences of physics and chemistry. I wish to show that the physical universe, quite apart from life, bears remarkable testimony to its divine origin. In so doing I disclaim all originality. I desire to take advantage of this opportunity to draw the attention of theologians and scientists to a very wonderful thought that I met with more than twenty years ago, which fascinated me at once, and which I have taught ever since, but which has not yet received the attention it deserves. It forms the closing chapter of a book on 'Light,' published by Messrs. Macmillan & Co. in 1882, and written by Mr. Lewis Wright, to whose scientific culture and spiritual insight we owe this grand conception. The great secret of the physical universe when unveiled is found to be the secret of its origin, for, like man, it was made in the image of its Creator.

'The witness of physical science to God.' We must, therefore, first ask who and what God is. When man makes his own gods, we get a curious collection, whether it be the idols of Ceylon and India to-day, or the Pantheon of the intellectual Greek and Roman in times gone by. As, however, we now possess a book that professes to be a history of the revelation of the one true God to the world, it is at anyrate an interesting inquiry what that book teaches. Christian theology, with its facts and theories, is the answer to that inquiry. I am not here to-day to defend any particular creed, but to ask what do the great majority of biblical experts say about God, and what do the experts of science say about the physical universe, and then to place the two accounts side by side and compare them. As, however, three big volumes on my shelves contain only a 'Compendium' of Theology, it is plain that we must further restrict our research. It is not with the personal qualities of Deity that we are now concerned, but with what for want of adequate language we may perhaps call the method of existence of God.

The first note struck by, and consistently maintained as fundamental throughout, the Bible is the unity of God. In the midst of gods many and lords many the old Hebrews were to teach their children the words, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.' The theologian is as monotheistic as Haeckel is monistic. But, as the revelation proceeded, it became plain that the unity of God is

triunity. The doctrine of the Trinity is an induction from Scripture statements. The word has been coined to express a fact discovered by the theologian in his study of God. If true, an induction made perhaps from few data and a limited view becomes itself a light and guide, its illumination bearing witness to its truth. Of no truth is this more true than of the doctrine of the Trinity, in which the facts of Christianity find their sure foundation. Each child received into the Christian Church is baptized 'into the name'—the one glorious name—'of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Three persons (human language has no adequate word), One God. Such is the theologian's statement. Of this God, 'who only hath immortality,' it is said, 'God is spirit,' 'God is light'; and, though it is out of range of our subject to-day, 'God is love.' The theologian, then, represents God to us (1) as God the Father, in essence infinite spirit, 'dwelling in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen nor can see'; the omnipotent, self-existent centre and source of all things; the eternal, omnipresent Being who transcends all ideas of time and space. But (2) we further learn that this wonderful Being has manifested Himself in a second Person, derived from and yet coeval with Him, His eternal Son; who, as the writer of the Hebrews says, is 'the effulgence of His glory, and the very image (or impress) of His substance (or essence).' He it was who for us men and for our salvation took to

Himself our nature, became the God-Man, died for us, and rose again, and is now our living and glorified Lord. He has been seen, and heard, and touched ; is still seen by the eye of faith ; and will again reveal Himself to the world, in His glory, at the last great day. He is ever Himself the revelation of the Father. (3) The theologian also tells us of a holy, mighty, infinite Spirit, coeternal with and yet proceeding from the Father and the Son ; equally personal, equally God ; Himself the power from on high, the revealer of the unseen, the purifier of man's heart ; of whose marvellous and mystic manifestations the Bible delights to tell. This doctrine of the Trinity contains a statement of what the theologian has discovered as to the method of existence of God.

Now let us turn to the physical universe, which, according to the Bible, was made by this Triune God. What has science discovered as to its constitution ? Her philosophers are as keen to maintain its unity as the theologian the unity of God. The materialist is a monist, primarily to deny the existence of mind and spirit, but also because he firmly believes in the unity of the universe. Strange to say, however, the man of science also finds that this unity is really triunity. He tells us that the physical universe exists as a trinity of ether, matter, and energy. He cannot separate ether, matter, or energy, but together they form the whole physical universe. For a moment let us study the first element, or person, of this physical trinity—ether.

1. We are told to-day that the physical universe is filled with, or, perhaps we might more correctly say, consists of, a substance which is called ether. There is no such thing as empty space. They tell us that this universal ether is just as real as matter ; yet you can't see it, you can't weigh it, you can't measure it, you can't catch hold of it, you can't get rid of it. What it is they don't know. It appears to possess the most contradictory properties, so much so that some would suggest ethers many, as the heathen gods many ; but that is against the trend of science, which has unified energy, and is now on the way to the unification of matter. It seems rarer than the most perfect vacuum, and yet conducts vibrations as if it were a continuous elastic solid. It is supposed by many to be a uniform substance, ever present, ever quiescent, i.e. never changing its position, and yet thrilling throughout its immensity with all possible forms of living energy. It is the great illimitable storehouse of invisible light. You may well ask why the faith of the scientist thus fills the universe with an unseen presence, a mystic ether. Because he cannot explain the universe without it. He needs some medium to carry the light and heat from the sun to the earth ; he is not satisfied that gravitation is 'action at a distance,' so he fills up the space between. It is more than curious that this ether, which first came in as a sort of understudy to matter and energy, is now taking its right place as the essential basis of the physical universe. The

last has become first. The scientist thus recognizes that there are things of which sense tells us nothing, yet reason reveals and faith realizes. In spite of the great divergence of views as to its nature, in spite of its ghostly character, he nevertheless firmly believes in, and treats as real, this invisible, intangible ether. Is it not, to say the least, strange that the scientist in his study of the physical universe has so soon to fall back upon faith in the unseen, and that he does it without any mental qualms? Faith in the unseen is no specialty of the theologian, and to the scientist who thus believes in ether, against the evidence of his senses, I think Christ Himself approvingly says, 'O man, great is thy faith.' The mystery of ether—for it is a profound mystery—does not prevent our study of ether, our knowledge of ether. So when the man of science tells us that it is omnipresent and fills the universe, that it is as old as time and has neither form nor shape, that it is filled with living though invisible light, and though never presented to the senses is the great physical reality, we begin to wonder whether God the Father could have more perfectly translated into a time-symbol His essential nature, infinite spirit.

2. The second article of the physicist's creed is, 'I believe in matter.' And they do believe in it! If the corresponding creed of Christianity were as firmly grasped by Christians, it would transform the Church of to-day. Matter! Now, at anyrate,

you say, we come to something definite. Unlike ether, matter can be seen, weighed, measured. It has locality and mass, it gravitates. Appealing thus to our senses, it seems more real than the unseen, impalpable ether. Our bodies, our houses, our food, the air we breathe, the water we drink, are composed of it. Yet when you ask even the materialist what matter is, he is obliged to confess that he does not know. What matter really is remains to this day a matter of dispute. The majority of thinkers regard it as particulate—that is, as made up of almost infinitely small but definite portions. Until recently the smallest particles known were called atoms. An element, or simple substance, such as hydrogen, is supposed to consist of myriads of atoms of exactly the same kind and weight. Each element has its own peculiar atom, having its own special atomic weight. This doctrine, on which the science of chemistry is founded, we owe to our great fellow townsman John Dalton. For an able and lucid account of the present position of the question I may refer you to an article in the *Edinburgh Review* for October 1903, entitled 'The Revelations of Radium.' To give you some idea of the size of the atom, I will use the figures given by the reviewer. Take a cubical box, the sides of which measure less than half an inch each way; extract the air from it so perfectly that only one-millionth part will be left. The little cubic vacuum then only contains about twenty billion molecules, that is forty billion atoms! But now,

though these atoms still remain as chemical units, we are taught that the atom itself is a marvellously complex structure. Though the numbers are not yet exactly ascertained, the atom of hydrogen is said to consist of 1,000, the atom of radium of 258,000 minute particles, which we may for the present call electrons. How these particles behave within the atom we don't know. Professor Larmor suggests that instead of a vibratory they have a rotatory motion, so that the atom may prove to be a miniature star cluster. However that may be, the extremely interesting point is that all these electrons, from whatever kind of atom they come, appear to be of exactly the same nature as measured by their power. Hence it is most probable that all elements are really built up of one kind of substance. In short, we are coming to what some of us have long looked for, the unity of matter. But what are these particles? To this question the most opposite answers have been given. At one extreme we have the recent interesting gravitation theory advanced by Professor Osborne Reynolds, which recognizes ether as the great physical reality, and is thus far no doubt right. But surely, in actually regarding matter as a negative quantity, it hardly does justice to the latter. Theories of that type somehow suggest the man who took a bung-hole to have a new barrel put to it. Of Professor Larmor's suggestion the reviewer says, 'His definition of an electron as "a centre of convergent strains in the ether" removes perhaps the blankness of ignorance,

but conveys little of the illumination of knowledge.' Each theory rests on some fact connected with matter; but the problem is so many-sided, the mystery of matter so profound, that no intelligible account can be given of it. Do not suppose that theology has a monopoly of mystery. Even the ultimate elements of physics, the simplest bodies known, are, like their Maker, past finding out. Generally speaking, the reality of matter is assumed, negative theories failing to account for its combined peculiarities. Brer Rabbit's asparagus experience has true philosophy in it. It looks real, it sounds real, it feels real, it smells real, it tastes real—it is real! We have a real universe, and a real self, because we have a real God.

Now, it is a curious fact that modern physicists incline to the view that matter is derived from ether. Years ago Sir William Thomson, now Lord Kelvin, advanced the theory that the atoms of chemistry were vortex rings of ether, ether that had taken form and become manifest to the senses. This theory in its original dress does not now command support; but it is not the only supposition of the kind, and it reflects the thought of the scientific mind of to-day. The physicist turns to ether in his search for an explanation of matter, and in making his electrons ethereal secures the continuity of ether otherwise broken by the material particles. Now, I ask, Is it not profoundly interesting that science in her interpretation of matter should even suggest that it is

ether made manifest, that so to speak the second person of its trinity should be the first person incarnate? Science has not solved, possibly cannot solve, the mystery; but that it should hint such a solution is to me very remarkable. Quite as remarkable is the suggestion of the writer of the article in the new supplement to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, who, when discussing the relation of matter to ether, expresses physically the mysterious doctrine of the Eternal Sonship. Though ever retaining its form, matter is eternally generated; its derivation from ether is a continuous process. The universal attraction of matter, so simple yet so insoluble, known as gravitation, reminds one of that other Second Person who was to draw all men unto Himself.

3. But I must pass on, for ether and matter do not cover the whole ground. Science speaks to us of a mighty energy by which all the work of the physical cosmos is accomplished. Years ago the so-called forces of nature were supposed to be as varied as the forms of matter. We spoke of light, heat, sound, electricity, magnetism, molar motion, and so forth; and we rightly retain these names, as we retain the names of the elements of matter. But science now collects all these varied forces together under one name, energy. You may well ask, What can the deafening thunder and the blinding lightning have in common? What similarity is there between the energy of the cannon-ball as it crashes into and sinks an ironclad, and the genial light and

heat that lift up the heads of the flowers and circle the hearth with bright faces? There is a line of poetry which in our study of nature we need to keep in mind. Longfellow says, 'And things are not what they seem.' What is light? Ask the child, and he may verily laugh at the simplicity of the question. To him it is a sensation known, like his power of free will, without the shadow of a doubt, yet indescribable. Ask the philosopher, and he will tell you that in one sense physics knows nothing of light; it is a condition of mind, not matter. But you still ask, Is not the landscape before me flooded with brilliant sunshine? And he has to answer that the brilliance is all in your mind. What you interpret so vividly is nothing but movement, ether waves, themselves invisible, traversing space with lightning speed. But 'the lowing of the cattle, the song of the bird, the hum of the bee, is that nothing?' Only a few tardy waves of movement passing through the air! And so these wonderfully varied mental effects when examined are found to arise from motion in ether or motion of matter, waves of motion of various sorts and sizes. Now, any one of these modes of motion can be changed into the others. For example, chemical action in the battery gives origin to the electric current; the electric current produces the heat and light of the electric arc, the sound of the electric bell, the movement of the Manchester tram-car. This at anyrate shows that they have something in

common, that they are indeed manifestations of one and the same thing. But have I any right to call it a thing? Is it not a mere condition of matter or ether, the condition of movement? To this the scientist gives no uncertain answer. He most emphatically asserts that it is no mere condition of matter or ether, but a real existence, as real as matter or ether and as indestructible. This energy can be measured as accurately as matter can be weighed. Though often apparently destroyed, as when a hot body cools or a rolling stone stops, no iota is lost, it only changes its form or passes elsewhere. The power of the physical universe is one and indestructible, a statement known in scientific language as the conservation of energy.

What, then, does science teach about the physical universe? It consists of ether, in matter the universe is manifest, and the manifestor is a mighty energy coextensive with the universe. Let me now remind you that the modern discovery of science which unites all the powers of the physical universe into one mighty energy, thus constituting the third person of its trinity, was anticipated by the theologian in his study of the Bible many centuries ago. The third person of his Trinity, the 'Power from on high,' is also no mere indefinable influence, or collection of influences, but the working of one mighty Spirit, a holy Person as real as and coeval with the Father and the Son. Not only in His personality, but also in the wonderful variety of His

manifestations, stated again and again in Scripture, symbolized in the Revelation of St. John, and experienced by Christians, does the heavenly reality resemble the earthly symbol. But to the Christian the Holy Spirit is the great Revealer. How marvellously does energy in this respect typify its original! Only a few ether waves sent from the stars, and yet through the spectroscope they tell us of the composition and movements of those far-off orbs. Each night we receive myriads of messages from the stars telling us what and where they were it may be ten or twenty or a hundred years ago, when those ether waves first started on their long journey. At such comparative novelties we wonder, but the daily miracle of the presentation of the external world to us through our sense organs by this same energy is an equal marvel. But what, I ask, does energy reveal? Primarily it reveals matter. We know matter through energy, the second person of the physical trinity through the third, as the theologian also holds. That mote we call the moon would float unseen in the midnight sky did not the light fall upon it and reveal it. The sun himself is revealed to us through his dazzling energy, and so becomes 'the light of the world.' Matter is made real to us through energy; so Christ presents Himself to the consciousness of the Christian through the Holy Spirit: 'He shall testify of Me.'

Thus the physical trinity of ether, matter, and energy is revealed as a universe of matter, it shows

itself in its second person, just as the Triune God manifests Himself in the Son, the second Person. So striking is the manifestation in each case, that the believer in the Triune God is called after the second person of this Trinity, a Christian ; whilst the man who makes the triune physical universe his god is also called after its second person, a materialist. It is a curious fact that when energy takes the form of sound it employs matter alone as its medium of communication. Sound is not transmitted as such by ether. We do not hear either the explosions in the sun or a bell ringing *in vacuo*. When the spoken word is sent forth, its mouthpiece is ever the second person of the physical trinity.

But I must not dwell further on this energy, though I might point to it as the purifier and regenerator. I might remark on its unseen and rapid action, its measureless might, its mysterious manifestations, through which the students of science are providing us with continual surprises. In the telephone, the phonograph, wireless telegraphy, x rays, &c., the fairy tales of our forefathers have come true ; and what the future may bring to light even the imagination of a Jules Verne would fail to suggest.

We have now briefly studied the three elements of the physical universe. But although ether, matter, and energy are three real things, as real in their realm as Father, Son, and Spirit, nevertheless they form one universe, just as we have one God. You

can separate them in thought, but not in fact. Theology discusses in different sections the Father, the Son, and the Spirit; the consideration of each person raises different problems, presents unique aspects of truth; but we worship one God. The physicist discusses separately the problems of ether, matter, and energy; but when he faces the facts, the three are ever before him as one. If it were not for this triunity, God and the universe could not be known. We can in abstract thought talk of ether existing by itself, but such existence would be physically unknown and unknowable. Matter, if its ethereal origin be true, cannot even be imagined alone; it involves ether as truly as Son involves Father, and, whatever its origin, without energy it also would be unknowable. Energy is not known apart from matter and ether; it at least involves ether, and would need matter for its manifestation: it proceeds from both. Curiously I cannot find any word which more exactly expresses the relation of energy to ether and matter than the one used in the Bible to express the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son. Any one of the physical elements taken apart from the others is unknowable. It is only through its triunity that the physical universe is revealed. So it is with God. The first person of the Divine Trinity considered alone is no longer Father, for He is only Father in Christ; He is no longer manifest, for He is only manifest in Christ by the Holy Spirit; He is only infinite spirit.

So when a man makes his God an infinite essence, and then tells me such a god is unknowable, taking my stand by science I quite agree with him. But that is not the God of the Bible. He is a Triune God, and therefore, like the triune universe, is knowable as God the Father, by God the Son, through God the Spirit.

Again, the physical triunity, though ever the same in its physical bases, elements, essence, through its very triunity is revealed as a universe of ever-varying wonders. We see a glorious procession of glowing suns and shining planets; we have the ineffable beauty of an Alpine sunrise, the gorgeous grandeur of the sunset. If you have not read Ruskin's *Stormcloud of the Nineteenth Century*, read it, and you will ever after revel in the scenery of the skies. You may have seen the moonlight on the Sound of Mull, or, when the rainbowed stormcloud passed by, you may have watched the play of light and shade on loch and mountain as you entered Oban Bay. Snowclad mountain, sunlit lake, fairy fountain, these, and a thousand other telescopic and microscopic beauties, all arise from the interaction of ether, matter, and energy. The physical universe has thus, even apart from life, within itself endless possibilities of glorious revelation. But if this be so with the physical elements, the mere garment of God, what must be the glory and beauty of the life within that other and higher triunity of Father, Son, and Spirit? The physical universe

suggests faintly and far off something of the wonders of that which the theologian reverently calls the interior life of God, into which we have even now a glimpse, but the marvels of which eternity will only make more marvellous as He opens out the secrets of His own being to His children. It suggests that though He is the only God, He is not the lonely God ; for triunity allows interaction, which here becomes communion because personal, and the Father has fellowship with the Son through the Spirit, so that even in this respect God is self-sufficient.

We have a wonderful universe, because we have a still more wonderful God. God has seen fit to stamp on this universe something of the depth of His own being, so that, like Him, it is past finding out. When, therefore, you say that you can see no limit to the physical universe in time or space, that it seems to be from everlasting to everlasting and infinite, I say, Could God have more effectively shadowed forth His own immensity and eternity? When you say that the apparent indestructibility and unchangeableness of the ultimate elements of the physical universe, in spite of the flux of worlds and the rise and fall of forms of life, suggests to you self-existence, I say, They are the adequate time-symbols of Him who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever, and whose name alone is 'I AM.' When you say the physical universe is one and the only one, and the deeper you go the more sure you are of the

fact, I also say, So is God, He is one, and there is none else. On His unity the unity and stability of this physical universe rest. Now, whatever the theories of the scientist may be as to the nature and relations of ether, matter, and energy, and whatever the theories of the theologian may be as to the nature and relations of the Father, Son, and Spirit, the triunity of the physical universe and the triunity of God remain. The similitude is between things, not theories. The method of existence of the physical universe reflects the method of existence of God.

Time forbids my treating this fascinating subject in detail. It opens out on all sides avenues of thought, curious, mystic, startling. To place the one broad fact before you and leave it for your meditation is all I can do to-day. Let us, therefore, pause a moment in review. For centuries the theologian has taught that the true God is a Triune God ; that the Eternal Father, Himself invisible infinite spirit, is manifest in the Eternal Son by the Eternal Spirit. The theologian acknowledges that this three-one God, revealed in Christ, is a profound fathomless mystery, incomprehensible but not unknowable ; Himself, indeed, our great object of adoration and study to all eternity ; of whom 'knowledge shall grow from more to more, and more of reverence in us dwell.' Now, I for one am deeply grateful that God is set before me as so wonderful a being. If I am to live for ever, and heaven is not to pall, my God must be a God of infinite depth, infinite perfection, infinite power,

abounding love. I would not have Him a whit less great, less wonderful, less mysterious. There is a fascination in mystery, as the novelists know. Do you want a world where everything can be catalogued and labelled? I don't. Nor do I want a God that my intellect and heart can compass and look over, but one that I can for ever look up to and into with marvelling delight, and whose eternal freshness will be reflected in works that are ever new. Such a God, in triune mystery, Christianity gives me.

The theologian has ransacked nature to find some symbol to illustrate this triunity, and so far in vain. When a mere boy, I remember well the preacher calling to his aid the white light split up by the prism into its rainbow colours, and even then I felt, and perhaps the preacher also felt, the futility of the illustration. The theologian failed, firstly, because he did not take a broad enough view. The writing was in capitals too big to be seen. Secondly, he failed because science in her study of nature had not then progressed so far as theology in her study of God. But now the man of science tells us that it is the physical universe as a whole that bears this signature of God; that the physical universe exists as a mysterious triunity of ether, matter, and energy. We recognize at once that we have in it an adequate time-symbol of the method of existence of God. It is no hole-and-corner illustration. It is a ground likeness. The triunity of God and the triunity of the physical universe are not surface truths, and were

not reached by man in the infancy of theology and science. They are the fundamental verities of the Bible and Nature. If, then, truth at the very foundation in both realms thus matches truth, surely we cannot mistake the significance of the fact, it is the witness of the physical universe, tendered by science, to its origin in God. But if the mere physical elements of the universe bear such profound testimony, not merely to the thought and wisdom but to the very being of God, may we not reasonably look for that witness right through creation from base to apex? On every plane of existence, as we rise tier above tier, we are justified in expecting a growing manifestation of the Creator. Ages ago the psalmist said, 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork.' It was not the mountain-tops of creation that alone caught and reflected the light of the sun in those days. All nature was ablaze with that glory. And when we get back again full spiritual eyesight, we also shall see that 'earth is crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire of God.' It was Jesus Christ who bade us consider the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, that we might learn of the good providence of the Father. He ever found 'tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and' God 'in everything.' In so doing He raised science from the mere drudge who records and compares so-called facts into a student of and witness for God. The final, the ultimate fact of nature is not a

mere concurrence or sequence, but a divine thought, a divine revelation. The man who limits himself to the observation and registration of the former stunts his nature, however he may exercise his intellect, as Charles Darwin himself found.

Theology has to thank science for new facts and new methods which have helped her in her study of the Bible. The revelations of geology, the developments of the doctrine of evolution (for science has her doctrines), have thrown light on biblical statements and guided theological thought and interpretation, as the theologians of to-day gratefully acknowledge. But has theology nothing to give in return? Can she supply no suggestions beyond the revelation of that first great Cause which science can neither find nor do without? It will doubtless amuse to laughter most scientists if I express the belief that a stiff course of theology would repay the scientific philosopher! It is when the earthly symbols of science are brought to confess their origin in the heavenly realities that the degree of likeness, and therefore of truth attained, is made manifest. On the one hand, the triunity of the physical universe is Christian evidence; on the other hand, this scientific discovery in so far as it reflects the divine original receives the hallmark of God; so far it is stamped as truth. The modern doctrine of the conservation of energy, the doctrine that makes it as real as matter and ether, and no mere condition of matter and ether, receives its confirmation in the

personality of the Holy Spirit. Usually such a correspondence is an *arrière pensée* ; we are wise after the event. But there is no reason, where theology is in advance of science, why the scientist should not, in anticipation of future agreement, venture his theories along the line which theology suggests. It favours, for example, the ethereal origin of matter. At present, when science is exercised by the behaviour of matter in relation to ether and energy in connexion with radio-activity, &c., and a restatement, or new reading, of the doctrine of energy may be called for, it is not amiss to state that theology would hint that both ether and matter have power in themselves. Many such thoughts will come to the student of science as he ponders the truths of theology, which is itself the Royal Science.

Though the Bible and Nature are complete, as the word and works of God, Theology and Science are progressive. They each have their solid ground of established fact and their surging sea of theory. As the dry land emerges on either side the workers may with advantage look across to see in which direction the other continent is developing. The natural and the spiritual are correlate, and the labourers in the two realms are meant to be help-meets, not antagonists. They should work together for one end—the discovery of truth ; that kingdom whose King acknowledged Himself before Pilate ; that truth which was incarnate in Him who in taking to Himself man's nature, the summation and

crown of the natural world, and thus becoming God-Man, literally summed up all things, both worlds, in Himself.

I should be untrue to the traditions of this hall if, in conclusion, I did not go one step farther. This is no mere academic discussion. If the Lord be God, serve Him; but if matter, matter. It cannot be said that the physical triunity gave rise to the idea of the triunity of God, that the universe cast its shadow on the clouds and made a giant ghost, a Brocken spectre, which weak-minded scared men have mistaken for reality. The Triune God came first. Science was not in at the birth of the doctrine of the Trinity. It lay in the Bible an open secret from the beginning, and for fifteen hundred years and more it has formed the basis of the creed of Christendom. It is at the very foundation of the great and glorious doctrine of the Atonement. The mystery of the triunity of God has provoked antagonism and proved an intellectual stumbling-block to some of the greatest thinkers, as, for example, the late Dr. Martineau. It has been pronounced impossible, unthinkable. But now science, though she does not profess to solve or lessen the mystery, comes to tell us that she also believes in triunity, for she has found a triune universe. Does not the faith of science help the way to a higher faith? May we not reasonably lift our eyes from the triune universe to the Triune God? Without that God the origin and end, nay the very being of

the physical universe, is left unexplained, and we ourselves are the sport of fate and the creatures of a day. But if it be true that the things that are seen are temporal but the things that are not seen are eternal; if behind the triune universe there is the great Triune God, 'of whom are all things, and through whom are all things, and to whom are all things,' then we can give a soul-inspiring answer to William Watson's pathetic question as, looking on towards death, he asks for each one of us,—

Whether 'tis ampler day, divinelier lit,  
Or homeless night without?

Believe me, there is a spiritual world, which is the original and abiding world. To enter that is to share the nature and life of God, life eternal, life that is in Jesus Christ. Then, when a man lets God take entire possession of him, the full beauty and significance of this world begin to dawn upon him; for he sees it through God's eyes. We got a glimpse of it to start with. When Jesus Christ wanted to teach His grown-up family, He set a little child in their midst. Have you forgotten the fairy land into which you were born?—the mystic depths of the sky? the fascination of the flowers? the eternal freshness of the world? the loveliness of love? Perhaps the mystery and the fairies have gone, because the child has gone. It was God who put the halo round things to start with; but it was not God who took it off. He meant it to be a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. If it be gone, no one can bring

it back but God. He alone makes all things new, and by a new and spiritual birth He can bring back a new childhood. I tell you that, when I let myself go and rested my life entirely in God, the old mystic beauty and unearthliness came back to this world, and from it there now shines out the fairest of all visions, the vision of God, who 'in the beginning made the heaven and the earth.'

# ‘ DAVID : THE MAN

## AFTER GOD’S OWN HEART ’

BY

REV. ARTHUR MOORHOUSE, M.A., B.D.

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I HAVE been asked to speak on this subject, not only because of its own intrinsic interest, but also because it illustrates and exemplifies some of the historical and ethical problems connected with the Old Testament. There is in some quarters an uneasy suspicion that recent scholarship has undermined the historical character of the Old Testament, and that its morality is now discredited and out of date. I shall quote here and there a modern writer who has a good deal to say on the subject ; for he puts into vigorous if hasty and ill-considered words what perhaps many have been thinking. Mr. Blatchford apparently does not believe that any such man as David ever lived, any more than ‘ Bluebeard or the Giant that Jack slew ’ !

Now, I am not aware that any competent scholar has ever suggested a doubt as to the historical character of David. It is, in fact, generally agreed that, of all the documents incorporated into the Old Testament, the one with which we are mostly concerned to-day (2 Sam. ix.–xx.) satisfies the strictest

and most searching tests which the modern study of history has ever applied to any literature. Let me quote a sentence from the article 'David' in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*:—

'Of no hero of antiquity do we possess so lifelike a portrait. Minute details and traits of character are preserved with a fidelity which the most sceptical critics have not ventured to question, and with a vividness which bears all the marks of contemporary narrative.'

Of no other character in the Old Testament is so much recorded ; and none will deny that the biblical historians have told us, impartially and frankly, good and bad alike.

A brief examination of these records will soon convince us that they are not entirely self-consistent, according to our modern standards of consistency. They are written from many points of view, and they contain some obvious discrepancies in historical details. We have been accustomed for so long to use the Old Testament as a book of instruction and devotion, that we unconsciously fall into the habit of thinking that it was written just as we have it. It is not a book but a library, not the work of one author but of many, and these were separated from each other by centuries.

Now, some of those who wrote of David were clearly either contemporaries or they lived very shortly after David's reign. They write of what their own eyes have seen. Others wrote centuries

after the events they record really happened. We have no grounds for supposing that these men were miraculously guided to the discovery of the facts they record. They merely relate the traditions about David which had been handed down orally for many generations. Now, it cannot be denied that the later pictures of David are brighter and more to the credit of their hero than the earlier. As years passed on his evil deeds were forgotten. The people loved to speak of his nobler and finer qualities. The editor of Chronicles says nothing about the ugly stain in David's life. He holds up for our admiration the great king's brave and pious deeds, and ignores the rest. That is to say, in the time of the Chronicler David had become the darling and hero of his people. His character, as some would say, was 'idealized.'

In my judgement that is a very unfortunate and misleading word, because it lends itself to serious misunderstanding. It does not mean, as I take it, that these writers invented or manipulated the stories they tell, and that the man they write about is a David of the imagination. It means this rather—that out of the materials furnished by tradition and the writings of others they chose such parts as would serve their purpose, and ignored the rest. These men were not historians or biographers in our sense of the words; they were not annalists whose interest was to record the facts as such. They were preachers and men of God, who told

the story of David for the sake of the moral truth it contained.

The Jewish name for Samuel and Kings is 'Former Prophets.' The authors of these books as we have them were prophets whose business it was to tell and interpret and apply the record of God's dealings with His people, especially with the picked men of their race. They seized on those details which illustrated and accentuated the providential oversight of God, and whether the story came from an old contemporary record or from a late tradition was of no consequence to them. They were religious men, and they explained events by religious considerations; they fastened on those parts of their country's story which pointed a religious moral, and other parts which were not supposed to do this were permitted to fall into the background.

Let us illustrate this by a modern instance. At the time of the Armada a commemorative medal was struck inscribed with these words: 'God blew upon them, and they were scattered.' That is exactly how an Old Testament writer would have interpreted the facts, though he might have overlooked other human forces through which God was working in ways less striking.

Now, a modern historian, anxious to get at all the facts, would undoubtedly attach greater importance to those parts of the Bible record which are based upon the reports of eye-witnesses; and some devout students of the Old Testament, reading it from the

historian's point of view, speak of these later accounts as 'unhistorical,' again using a word which is liable to grave misunderstanding. We must not take them to mean that these later records are pure inventions or that the writers consciously manipulated the facts to suit their purpose.

The chronicler wrote what he believed to be the truth ; but it is obviously unfair to blame him because he did not apply to his materials the precise and searching tests which modern students of history have devised. He had neither the desire nor the equipment to do any such thing. In our days a history is usually written by one man, from one point of view. He collects and collates his materials, and then writes down what he conceives to be the truth. But that was not the method of the 'Former Prophets.' Their way was to collect information, and incorporate it just as they received it into their work.

The author of 1 Samuel in its present form lived long after David had been gathered to his fathers, and his book is evidently a piecing together of two old narratives—one a bare chronicle of public events, an official document written probably towards the end of David's life ; the other, a popular history of David's personal and family life, written later, though not much later, probably in the time of Solomon. It sometimes happens that each of these writers records the same thing.

The editor (perhaps that is a better name than author) of 1 Samuel combined these two documents

as he found them. He never troubled to make the two accounts tally. Take, for example, the story of David's introduction to Saul. In the older document (1 Sam. xvi.) we read how, because of the king's fits of melancholy, his courtiers sought out a skilful harpist to play to him. He was a full-grown man, clever in speech, a warrior, who quickly rose to be Saul's armour-bearer. Then, in 1 Sam. xvii. 12ff, David is introduced to us as if we had never heard of him before. This time he is a shepherd lad unaccustomed to arms, and utterly unknown to Saul and Abner. He is brought to the notice of the king by a feat of arms against a giant, Goliath of Gath.

No ingenuity can make these two stories tally. They are two accounts of David's introduction to the court, two traditions which came down through different channels. Which of the two is historically correct, or whether there is truth in both and exactly how much in each, it is impossible now to say. The editor of 1 Samuel was not troubled by these discrepancies. He recorded each tradition as he received it, and left it for his readers to choose between them. Historic accuracy, in the modern and scientific sense, the Scriptures do not claim to have, and indeed cannot have. Scientific investigation, such as even we find it difficult to apply to the early records of a nation's life, were impossible at the time when the books of the Old Testament were written.

‘In that case,’ some one will say, ‘what becomes of their inspiration?’

It remains precisely what it was. This is the true word of God, and it serves its real purpose as well as ever it did. It was not given us to increase our historical knowledge, but to illustrate the ways of God to man. These things were written aforetime for our learning—not our historical learning, but that we might know the will and mind of God, and that through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope. Modern research has shown us how these old books were put together; and knowing the different forms and phases through which the documents passed, we can separate the books into their constituent parts. We have learned some things, that is, about the manner and method and forms of inspiration; the fact of inspiration is left untouched. To men who are seeking to know the will of God and do it, these books are as valuable as ever, and incomparably more interesting. Let me illustrate this from another sphere of knowledge. In our days, by the use of the spectroscope, we have discovered that certain metals are found in the sun; indeed, we can almost write the complete history of the sun. But nobody thinks that, because we know more about it than former generations, it has therefore ceased to ripen our harvests and to give us light and warmth!

We begin to understand, then, how God in old time spoke to our fathers by divers portions and in

divers manners. We see that the story of David was written by many writers, each with his own personal bias, and that all the accounts are not equally valuable and reliable from the point of view of the modern historian. After examining all the accounts in their historical conditions, what must we believe about David? If he is not the saint and hero which later writers represented him to be, must we think of him, as a certain popular writer does, as 'a cruel, treacherous, and licentious savage'? Was he, as Renan says, 'a bandit who seized the throne'? or, as another writer puts it, 'A robber chief before whom no man was sure of his life, no woman of her honour'? Perhaps our fathers made a mistake by looking chiefly on the good side of David's character, representing him as a psalm-singing saint, and attributing to him exalted conceptions of God which certainly were never his. On the other hand, we shall not get at the truth by exaggerating the evil in him. We must look at the whole record, and, in all fairness, we must not judge either the good or bad elements in his character from our modern Christian standpoint. We should never think of making comparisons between Stephenson's *Rocket* and a locomotive of the latest type. A modern engineer could doubtless find many faults and defects in 'Puffing-Billy'; but that old engine was far in advance of any contemporary contrivance, and it led the way to something better. David was not a Christian saint. He was a man of his own times; he had the defects

and limitations of his own age ; but he led the way to something better, and he is still worthy of our gratitude and reverence.

David was one of the most complex characters of which history gives us any record. As Edward Irving said, 'The hearts of a hundred men strove and struggled together within the continent of his single heart.' Let us bring into light the worst that is told and the best, and see if it is still possible to think of David with reverence as we were taught to do. Let us take the darker side first, remembering always that David was a man of his times.

He was undoubtedly cruel to his enemies. I think it would be possible to match his worst deeds by cruelties committed within recent months by white men on the Congo or in the Turkish provinces of Europe ; but we must not judge David by our standards. He belonged to a ferocious race, and lived in a semi-barbarous time ; yet there is nothing in his life at all comparable to the wanton cruelty of the Assyrians who burnt and plundered and murdered from sheer lust of conquest. He had great provocation. He thought, as a king of his own day would have thought, that this policy of 'thorough' was the surest way to secure peace in his own borders. He conceived that the public interest demanded severity. He believed himself to be the scourge of God, the instrument in His hands of vengeance on His enemies. Remember how 'an enlightened seer like Samuel' hewed a helpless

captive in pieces before the Lord, and how the public conscience approved. These were hard and cruel days. The worst-recorded instance of David's cruelty is his treatment of the Ammonite captives ; but there are good grounds for believing that there is a mistake in the text. 2 Sam. xii. 31 should be read as in the margin of the Revised Version. The meaning is, not that David tortured his enemies, but that he set them to forced labour at various public works. Another instance is that recorded in 1 Kings ii., in the account of David's death-bed. 'Nothing,' says our author, 'nothing in David's life became him so little as the leaving of it.' The story, or part of it (1 Kings ii. 5-9) is probably one of the latest bits of narrative in the Old Testament. It is a horrible and repulsive story, unlike anything else recorded of David. We do not like to think that a dying man could speak so about a lifelong comrade. I must remind you once more that David was a man of his own times, and again that these are not words of personal spite and vengeance. All David's prestige and power had barely sufficed to check the extravagances of the unprincipled Joab, and any king of his time would have considered it impolitic and dangerous to leave such a man alive during the reign of a young and inexperienced ruler like Solomon.

David's many wives seem to be a great stumbling-block to some. Here again it is unfair and misleading to judge our hero by Western and modern standards. In the East a man's wealth and

power are measured largely by the number of his wives. Among David's contemporaries this would be the index of the increased prosperity and importance of his kingdom. Every marriage would augment his social position and influence at home and abroad. It is of course a practice which Christianity condemns. It was allowed in men of old time, not because God approved, but because at that stage of civilization it could not be wisely suppressed. It was permitted, then, not because it was right, but because of the hardness of men's hearts (Matt. xix. 8). It is urged as an objection against the Old Testament that such things are recorded without disapproval. Of course they are! In other words, morality is a progressive thing, and the Old Testament is the record of the stages of its growth, given us for the moral education of our race,

Is the Old Testament, therefore, no longer necessary? Have we outgrown it, and left it far behind? I will quote our author again: 'The ethical code of the Old Testament is no longer suitable as the rule of life. The moral and intellectual advance of the human race has left it behind.' And again: 'I do not think the Bible in its present form is a fit book to place in the hands of children, and it certainly is not a fit book to send out for the "salvation" of savages and ignorant people.'

True, there *are* ugly things in the Old Testa-

ment. But has it demoralized the races it was meant to save? The history of the Bible Society is sufficient answer to that. It was pointed out in a recent number of *The Spectator* that 'the book as a whole has been put to a test to which no other book has ever been put, and it has stood it.' There are ugly things in the Old Testament—things which make merriment for those who sit in the seat of the scornful, and things which raise a very perplexing problem to devout and earnest men. There is, for instance, the story which makes the blackest spot in David's life—a story all compact of lust and murder, treachery and meanness, and such things as may not even be named among us. We are told the bald truth in plain speech. One sometimes wonders why the story of Bathsheba was ever inserted in the Old Testament. Again, we must not judge David by our modern standards. Probably no king of his time would have been blamed for acts like his. But it is not my place to make excuses for David in this matter; the Bible makes none. It records David's sin, but with the strongest and most uncompromising disapproval. Judged even by the standards of his own time, David was wrong, foully wrong, and he knew it, as we clearly see from his base and cowardly attempts to hide the consequences of his sin.

But why was such a story inserted at all? And where is the 'inspiration' of a foul tale like this? I venture to think that no part of the Old Testament is

more truly inspired. The facts are not inspired ; they were the common property of the writer and his contemporaries ; but manifestly there was divine guidance and oversight in the manner of telling the story. Just think how it might have been told. In a modern society paper the facts would have been quoted as a spicy bit of court gossip, and would have ministered probably to the debasement and defilement of every reader. Any modern historian would have related the facts, if he mentioned them at all, as a common occurrence in the harem of an Oriental despot, and treated them as a matter of course. But read the Bible record, and see how that foul story quickens the conscience, how it awes and humbles us. Any man who knows his own heart will read it with fear and trembling. For David himself he will feel nothing but pity and shame. Here, at anyrate, he will see sin as God sees it. He will find it described in its true character and denounced in words that burn. This Bible story makes us feel how every sinner, high or low, must reckon with God. Here is the true 'inspiration' of such a story—in its constant reference to God and our moral relation to Him. Every sin against man or woman touches *Him*. And you cannot read this story and the sequel to it without feeling how sin affects the sinner too. A sin like this is a calamity, like the loss of a limb ; it marks and maims a man for life. David was never the same again : a shadow fell on all his later years ; the sword never departed

from his house. Though he found refuge in the mercy of God, he was a broken man from that day, and the record of his last bitter years is the divine commentary on this story.

Our author asserts that the Old Testament is not a fit book for children, nor is David 'a model of all the virtues for the emulation of innocent children in a modern Sunday school.' The test of long experience proves that we may safely put this book into the hands of children. In their first pure years such a story would have no meaning for them ; there is nothing in their innocent minds to which it could appeal. But when the time comes that they must know good and evil, I cannot conceive any better and more wholesome way in which such knowledge could come to them than in the plain, straight, pure words of Scripture. Here, at anyrate, they will see sin as it is, and the consequences as they really are.

This story, so far as we have dealt with it occupies a very large place in the popular estimate of David's character. Another fact intimately connected with it is not always equally well remembered. If David sinned greatly, he bitterly and sincerely repented. Such sin was no uncommon thing then for a man in David's position : such genuine contrition, such noble penitence, such public, sincere, unfeigned confession, are absolutely without a parallel. He took his punishment with brave submission ; he felt that he deserved it, and bore it like a man, never doubting the goodness of God.

I have dwelt at some length on this bad side of David's character. Though he was the darling and hero of the Old Testament historians, it is evident they do not spare him. Is it possible, with all his faults before us, to think of such a man with reverence and respect? Is he in any sense a model for us? To the Jews of later days he was held up as a model of all that a king should be. 'David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.' In the dark night of Israel's sorrow, in disastrous days of oppression, of exile and shame, it was the name of David which roused his countrymen to faith and hope again. They looked forward to the day when the desires and longings inspired by David would be fulfilled.

Now, the zealous and fervent attachment of the Jewish people to the memory of David, in spite of his obvious and admitted faults, is a fact which needs to be accounted for. But we will not take our estimate of David's character from later writers, who wrote when his evil deeds were largely forgotten, nor from the noble Psalms which tradition wrongly attributed to the 'sweet psalmist of Israel' (though it would not be fair to overlook the many traditions which continually remind us of his musical skill and his artistic gifts). Although David certainly never wrote all the psalms attributed to him in our English version of the Psalter, personally I think it very pro-

bable that he wrote some of the Psalms. We will form our estimate of David's character, however, on the evidence of his own contemporaries, and on the witness of the men who were nearest to him and knew him best.

With all his faults, I believe that David was a great and noble man, and that his nobility of character was based on a real and living fear of God. His religious ideas were neither elevated nor refined according to our Christian standard; but compared with Saul and Solomon or his fierce nephew Joab, or with any king of his own day or any man among his contemporaries, he was a better and greater man than they. According to his lights, he walked in the fear of God and served Him with rare fidelity and constancy.

I have spoken fully and freely of his faults. May I now be permitted to say something about his virtues? Look at the magnanimity of the man, his loyalty to Saul in the days when he was hunted like a partridge along the Judæan hills! think how he could appreciate the valour of Abner, though often displayed against himself! think of his fidelity to Jonathan, and his kindness to Jonathan's poor lame son! think of his fatherly solicitude for the wayward, misguided Absalom! think how he commanded the respect and obedience of the wild band of desperate men who followed him in his outlaw days, how he won the confidence of Achish, king of Gath, and the passionate devotion of another foreigner, Ittai the

Gittite, and of the three heroes who hazarded their lives to get him a drink from the well of Bethlehem! Nothing is more characteristic of David, right through his life, from earliest youth to extreme old age, than this capacity] to win the boundless affection and loyalty of others. He won the favour of Saul, the friendship of Jonathan, the love of Michal. Nabal's shepherds bore witness to his fairness. His own soldiers called him 'the lamp of Israel.' 'All Israel loved him.' All through his long life, in spite of his faults, he gained and kept the love and admiration of those who were nearest him. He won the undying gratitude of all generations of his people. He was remembered through all succeeding centuries as a lover of justice and a righteous man.

But if we would understand this unanimity of praise, we must think of him as king. We must look at the results of his forty years' reign in Israel. We must remember his foresight and sagacity, his enterprise and courage, his executive ability. When he came to the throne, Israel was crouching at the feet of the Philistines, broken and reduced to narrowest limits. In little more than a generation, Israel under David rose at a bound to the position of paramount power in the Semitic world. Her borders were extended from the Lebanons to the Nile and from the desert to the sea. David won for his people unity at home, security in all their borders, and the respect of their greatest neighbours. 'He shaped at Jerusalem a kingdom which, so long as he lived,

represented the highest conception of national life that was possible under the rude social conditions then existing, and which lived in the hearts of the people as the proudest memory of their past history and the prophetic ideal of their future glory.' And he did all this not to satisfy personal ambitions. He never, with one sad exception, used his power for selfish ends. He consistently put first the welfare of his nation and the honour of God. He appreciated Israel's true mission and call in the world, and inspired his people with a consciousness of their great destiny. In that he was a complete contrast to Saul. He not only made the religious development of his people possible; he gave it a strong impetus in the right direction. His choice of Jerusalem as a civil capital and a religious centre and rallying-point was the expression of his deep conviction that the real guarantee for the welfare of his people was the fear of God.

For this reason, and in this respect—as contrasted with Saul, whom God rejected—David is called a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. xiii. 14). If we read that much-abused phrase in its context, and if we compare it with the only other passage in which it occurs (Jer. iii. 15), and interpret it reasonably, we shall see that it was never meant to be applied generally to the complete life of David. It means that he had the qualities necessary in a leader and ruler of God's people—patriotism, public spirit, and the fear of God: 'a man after My heart,

who shall do all My will.' He served 'his generation by the will of God'; and higher praise cannot be given to any man.

As Cornill says: 'What Israel was under and through David it never again became. So we can easily understand how the eyes of Israel rested in grateful reverence upon this figure, and how a second David became the dream of Israel's future! It is David—not Abraham, father of the chosen race, nor Israel, nor Moses, man of God—it is David who stands for Israel's future. And in the fullness of time He whom Israel longed for visited and redeemed His people—He who was the highest, holiest, kingliest of all our race. And when, as on this day,<sup>1</sup> He rode in kingly fashion in David's royal city, they hailed Him as the Son of David. Let us, too, give Him the homage of loyal hearts; for of His kingdom there shall be no end. 'To Jesus Christ . . . the Ruler of the kings of the earth, to Him that loveth us and loosed us from our sins by His blood, and made us kings and priests unto His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.'

<sup>1</sup> Palm Sunday, 1904.

# 'Christianity and Womanhood'

BY

MISS BURSTALL, B.A.

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'My soul doth magnify the Lord : and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He hath regarded : the lowliness of His hand-maiden. . . . For He that is mighty hath magnified me : and holy is His Name. And His mercy is on them that fear Him : throughout all generations. He hath showed strength with His arm : He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat : and hath exalted the humble and meek.'

THESE prophetic words, uttered by her who was to be the mother of the King Messiah, well sum up, however poetic their form and oriental their imagery, what was to be achieved for womanhood during the coming centuries, what indeed has been already achieved, by the influence of the teaching and the power of Christ. It is only within His kingdom, set up on earth nineteen hundred years ago, that woman, strengthened in her own heart by Christian faith, and protected and elevated in the world by the moral standards of Christianity, can be her best self, can rise to the height of devotion, benevolence, purity, and dignity of which her nature is capable, and can consequently take her right place in the social life of the community. Among barbaric races she is a slave ; in pagan civilizations, whether ancient or modern, she is, if of honourable estate, an ignorant and lonely prisoner ; if otherwise, a drudge,

a chattel, a toy, a plaything, scorned and flung away when no longer of use.

I would, indeed, fearlessly assert the thesis that where Christianity prevails woman is ennobled; where it is unknown or ignored, and in proportion as it is ignored in human life, she is in one way or another degraded, she sinks below her true level alike of personal righteousness and of social achievement. This I would affirm unhesitatingly, and I would call to witness the course of history for the last nineteen hundred years; and not only the course of history, but the facts of Christian life all around us. These facts we may find in connexion with the carrying on of the social and mission work in this very place, in many other centres of Christian work in this city, and in all Britain, as well as in the mission-fields beyond the seas. After all is said and done, after all the theological and critical and philosophical argument, which has its own value (and I would be the last to disparage that value), it is by facts that the issue of the truth of Christianity will be decided, and not by philosophical or critical argument, however learned or complete. The Master Himself has said, 'By their *fruits* ye shall know them.'

We go back to the first days, and we find that the heathen world said then, 'See how these Christians love one another'; and in that love which Christian folk showed to one another, and showed to the world without, even in persecution and sufferings, they made evident the truth of the

doctrine. In particular the noble purity of the Christian life of Christian women in the midst of the welter of wickedness of the ancient world produced an effect. We find, indeed, that some heathen philosophers were profoundly influenced by this very fact—by the moral elevation, due to the Christian faith, shown by early women converts to Christianity. If the same fervour and the same grace were shown to-day among Christian people as in that early time, there would be very few doubters; there would be very few who would be puzzled and troubled, as many of us are puzzled and troubled by philosophical and critical and historical difficulties, if the light of Christian love and Christian goodness shone more clearly from Christians themselves. All this threatening darkness of unbelief would then speedily roll away. We Christian people must feel that it is in part our failings which cause, and even encourage, the difficulties and doubts of our fellows.

But, in spite of all our sins and shortcomings, there are facts, if people choose to look for them, not only in the long record of history, but in the world around us; though it is with the historical record that my business is chiefly this afternoon. I sometimes think that doubters (and I have a great sympathy with those who have doubts and difficulties) might get help if they would examine Christian history and the facts of Christian life to-day much as they might examine an experiment

in a laboratory. Suppose we seek to study scientific truth : we have to give a certain amount of care and attention to studying the proofs of that truth. A great man of science, Isaac Newton, two hundred years or more ago, gave to the world certain doctrines about the motion of the moon round the earth and of the motion of the earth and the planets round the sun. If you want proof of those doctrines, it takes you three years' hard study at Cambridge or elsewhere before you can appreciate the mathematical evidence ; but when you have got it, you *know*. Again, in a chemical laboratory it takes a certain amount of care, and patience, and earnestness, and humility, before one can appreciate the demonstrations of the lecturer, and still more before one can perform them oneself. If science demands this earnestness of purpose, this humility of mind, it is not surely to be wondered at that those experimental proofs which the Christian kingdom offers in history, in the lives of Christian people, and in the facts of Christian mission work, should require some little study and attention. But, fortunately for us, it is not nearly so hard to see the proofs of the working of the Holy Spirit, whether in history or in the world around us, as it is to understand the teachings of science. Some of you may remember that Archdeacon Wilson, speaking in this course of lectures, said, ' It is on experience, on the bedrock of personal experience, explained, confirmed, multiplied a million-fold by the felt, recorded, witnessed experience of

others, that we rest our faith in the Bible as the Word of God to human hearts.' That is as true for the advance of womanhood under Christianity as it is true for the particular subject to which Archdeacon Wilson was referring when he made that statement.

In trying to put before you some short account of what Christianity has done for womanhood, and what it has done therefore for humanity at large, I find it impossible to separate the facts and details of our special subject from those concerning social life in general. I cannot discriminate, I do not wish to discriminate, I do not think it would be right to discriminate between the growth in moral progress and true civilization of the world as a whole and of women taken by themselves. Because, after all, it is a mistake to isolate, except just for the purposes of study, one part of the life of humanity, as if the interests of women could be separated from those of men. The progress in moral worth and true civilization, which has been one of the most characteristic features of Western European life, is also at the same time one of the most convincing proofs of the Christian religion. But, as I repeat, we cannot separate what has been done for women from what has been done for social life generally. Nor is this to be wondered at. It may be said that in a special sense woman is the bond of social life; she is the maker of the home and the centre of the family, the preservative influence in the community as well as the educative.

This is her especial work, just as it is the especial work of man to conquer the material world, to go forth, as Adam went forth from Paradise, to till the barren and stony fields. As that is man's work, so it is woman's especial work to build and nourish the social relationships of life which link the individual units of mankind into a living social organism. And thus, in speaking of what Christianity has done for women, we shall again and again speak of what has been done for social life as a whole.

Let us begin at the beginning. Let us go back to the earliest account of Christian life as given us in the New Testament. Let us look at the part that women played then, considering the documents as you would consider any other historical documents. You are possibly aware that it is in St. Luke's Gospel that we are more particularly shown that from the very beginning women played an important part in the very first beginnings of the Christian kingdom. They seem to have understood what it all meant, to have had the gift of discernment. We read of them as ministering to the Master Himself; we find that in answer to a question about a woman, or arising out of circumstances concerning a woman, some of His most helpful and important utterances were given. We find, as has often been noted, that when all forsook Him and fled, they were the last at the Cross; and they were the first at the empty tomb on the triumphant morning of the Resurrection. And when we come to look at

the teaching of the Master, it is noticeable, as it is in other matters of social life, that our Lord ignores the legal and conventional differences between man and woman, which in Syria at that time were particularly marked. Women held there and then a very low and despised position, much lower, in fact, than they had held in some of the Old Testament periods. Just as Christ ignored the difference between rich and poor and between one class of men and another, and just as Christianity is bound to ignore, and does ignore, the difference between one race of men and another, so in the teaching of Christ there is no special teaching about women or special teaching about men. What Christ does is to speak of *humanity*, and His doctrine of the distinct personality and responsibility of each human being because he or she is a human being is really the basis of the position which women have gained in the Christian kingdom. Only one statement is given in any detail, and that is the Christian law of marriage which is definitely and specifically enunciated by our Lord Himself. But in the incidents of the Gospel story you will doubtless recall example after example of the tender respect with which all women, even the most degraded and outcast, were treated by Him who was the purest and noblest of mankind. And with this elevation of women even in the very beginning we see that the position of childhood also improves. Even the very apostles, affected with the prejudices of

those days, tried to keep little children from the Master; and you remember the Master's well-known answer, that though children were weak and poor, and then not considered as worth His attention, they were to come to Him. Now, this doctrine of our Lord, of the worth of every single human being, was absolutely contrary to the whole ancient social order, which believed in natural inequality. In those old days it was held that one man was born different from another; and we, whether we be in name or in fact Christians or not, we who inherit Christian civilization, hardly realize how much has been gained by this Christian doctrine of the true natural equality, the common origin and destiny of every human being. 'Liberty, equality, fraternity,' were first preached by the Carpenter of Nazareth. The Founder of the Faith was reproached, indeed, in the writings of a certain pagan philosopher as being a working man, born of a working woman.

This doctrine of equality, which has not yet done its work, soon began to affect the position of women even in Syria. Still later, when the Christian faith spread over the Roman Empire, it produced a wider and wider effect, until an early Christian writer could say to some proud Roman noble, 'Thou sayest that thy father is consul, thy mother holy and good; what does it matter to me? Show me thine own life; for it is by that only that I can be able to judge of thy nobility'; and again, 'The world is

a vast republic, a great family of God's children.' You will not find any clause to match that in the writings of the most enlightened pagan philosophers.

In very early times and right down through the course of history to this day we find Christian women doing all kinds of good work in the world. There was a woman called Lydia, a wealthy cloth merchant, who was a great friend of the little church at Philippi, and a friend of St. Paul himself; there was another woman, Phoebe the deaconess, at the port of Corinth, who seems to have worked among the sick poor as district nurses do now; there was a learned matron, Priscilla, possibly of Roman origin, who helped to teach the mysteries of the faith, and helped doubtless in mission work. Work of these kinds was begun by women in the first days of the Christian kingdom, has been going on ever since, and is going on still.

Let us now turn to the legal question. In the ancient world, as is said above, there was no such thing as natural equality; in particular, women were in a very bad position both legally and morally: a woman was not free at all; she had no legal rights, she belonged to her father, or her husband, or her son; she was not a person at all. Along with this legal incapacity went, especially in Rome, moral degradation, which was often taken as a matter of course; so that we find philosophers speaking of the 'levity of mind' and the 'infirmity of purpose of women,' and of them as 'beings of an inferior order.'

It may be said, indeed, that Christianity has done quite as much for woman in her own nature as it has done for her in the world outside. She has her own temptations to 'levity of mind' and 'infirmity of purpose'; but in the Christian faith she finds strength. Along with this legal disability, there was in law no such thing as what we mean by true marriage. There was either something by which the wife was the slave of the husband in the old Roman law, or else there was a laxity which shocks us. In many ways, as the best authorities of the subject declare, Roman civilization was perishing from its own lack of moral power. As soon as Christianity was brought into the Roman Empire, a change comes. These are historical facts which you can look up for yourselves. We find, for instance, that marriage was ennobled; we find inscriptions on the tombs of wives as to their sharing persecution and death with their husbands, and breathing a hope of immortality lived together which lighted even the ghastly arena of persecution with heavenly joy. These Roman women, whether they were nobles, or poor, or even outcasts, were by Christian influences raised above themselves. We may quote a short summary of the teaching of some of the early Christian writers on this subject:—

'They teach the perfect equality of man and woman; that both are alike formed of dust, after the same image of God; that they must cultivate the same virtues, obedience, chastity, charity; that they

have the same struggles against the same temptations ; that they will both rise again to appear before the tribunal of the same Judge, who will judge them without respect of persons. Their natures are therefore equally honourable. “The Saviour,” says Augustine, “gives abundant proof of this in being born of a woman.”

‘What, then, could be more iniquitous than the pagan laws intended to keep women in an inferior position, and depriving them of the most natural rights? Hereafter woman herself must no longer plead weakness when difficult virtues are required of her. This weakness is only in her flesh ; in her soul is a force as strong as in that of man. If God has given her a gentleness which is impressed more easily than the manly will, He has done it the better to dispose her to compassion and sympathy. Besides, in circumstances which require courage, she often shows more than man. Gregory of Nyssa, in his beautiful picture of the virtues of a Christian woman, says, “Where is he who can compare with her in trial, who equals her in piety, constancy, and devotion?”’<sup>1</sup>

We read that these Christian women not only showed virtues in themselves which paganism could never give, but they engaged in all kinds of duties for the Christian community ; that they consoled the prisoners, dressed the wounds of the tortured, prayed with the martyrs, and actually ‘showed themselves more courageous than lions’ in meeting

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<sup>1</sup> SCHMIDT’S *Social Results of Christianity*.

martyrdom themselves. And just as it is to-day, just as we find that the most degraded and outcast sinners, the men or women who seem humanly speaking to be beyond all hope, are uplifted into goodness and usefulness by the power of Christ, so it was in Roman days; we find the most degraded, unhappy, and miserable of women converted to Christianity, abandoning their evil ways, becoming examples of holy living, and even in martyrdom of holy dying.

Children, too, are cared for. One of the most horrible features of the ancient Roman civilization was the custom of exposing infants on the seashore, on the mountains, or in waste places, to die or to be devoured by wild beasts or to be captured as slaves. It seems horrible to think that people could be so dead to one of the deepest feelings of humanity as to treat their own children in that way. The Christian fathers again and again spoke against this practice, and the Church founded charitable societies to rescue these infants. Women managed these institutions, and took care of these little children. In this Christianity was working along the true line of evolution, the rule which declares that it is the next generation that matters, not we; it does not so much matter what becomes of us, it is the children who matter, and the well-being of the future lies with them. Time forbids that we should now go into greater detail on points connected with the Roman law and the changes

that became more and more marked as Christianity grew and spread.

We must turn now to our barbaric forefathers in the German forests and the seacoasts of Scandinavia. They had a pure family life. In some respects women were honoured and were looked upon as the counsellors of their husbands and as sharing the toils and dangers of life with them. In the northern climates the influences which had degraded women morally, in southern lands had not acted, and some women were even regarded as prophetesses and priestesses. But, after all, that barbaric society was founded on war, and woman, who was incapable of being a soldier, could not be there a citizen. Thus in ancient Germany and Scandinavia she had to belong to somebody; she was not free, but was bought and sold like an animal, and had no equal rights in regard to property. It is extremely interesting to trace the inequality of English law until quite recently back to those ancient German customs. You are doubtless aware that until quite recently a married woman had no rights over her own property or her children in England. That goes back to very early days; but we see the Christian Church fighting against these customs, trying to secure the position of women by humaner laws in marriage and by establishing the custom of a dowry. As in the Roman Empire, the Christian faith made these barbaric women anxious to do good to others by associating themselves together for

some kind of good work. In those days this could only be done in convents. The Abbess Hilda of Whitby is the most interesting example to north country folk. Bridget of Ireland and those who worked with her give another example to those qualities, purity, self-sacrifice, and steadfast industry, developed and nourished under the influences of the Christian faith. What is known as chivalry is indeed a product of Christianity; and although there was much class prejudice and exaggeration in the knightly ideal of the Middle Ages, it held much that was noble and grand, and was undoubtedly a step forward in moral progress. But that step could not have been taken apart from the guiding influence of religion. The truths of the Christian faith first enunciated by the Master have all through the course of history an extraordinary power in bringing out the best in human nature; this not only because they are true, but because they are lifegiving. The best that could be made of the barbaric hero and warrior was made in the Christian knight 'without fear and without reproach.'

We come on our own days. It would be interesting to trace what the Reformation did for women; but, after all, we still live in a sense in the Reformation period. During the last hundred years religion has gone back to primitive times, has gone back to the Scriptures, has gone back to study the life of Christ, has got behind all the elaborate structure of ecclesiastical theory, and dogmatic teaching, by

Calvin or Luther or any one else, and has gone back to the sources, to the origins, to the very beginnings of Christianity. We can see this tendency in the life of Wesley, in the eighteenth century, in the Evangelical movement of a little later, and in the Oxford movement which has brought about the rise of the modern High Church party ; in all these, as well as in the critical study of the Scriptures, we note this going back to the beginnings. Along with this return to the primitive simplicity of Holy Scripture, to the teaching of Christ Himself, and not to what somebody else has said about Him, there comes an extraordinary improvement in the position of women. The latter half of the nineteenth century is marked by what is called the 'Women's Movement' ; women receive some measure of legal independence, a good education, and altogether better treatment than they have ever had before. Now, I maintain that these two things go together ; that the 'Women's Movement' as it is called, in England and America, was and is influenced and animated by Christian principle ; and I know as a matter of fact that it has been worked largely by women of fervent Christian faith, especially on the philanthropic and educational sides. It does not matter where you go, you find evidence of this. You see it in the extraordinary development of sisterhoods, in the growth of deaconesses' institutions, in the work of the Salvation Army, in the enormous multiplication of women missionaries, in the organized work of nursing the sick, in the advance

in education for and by women, and in the many institutions for the care and protection of children.

We can contrast all this which we see around us, and which can be seen even more clearly in America than in England, with the life of heathen lands to-day. We may look at the East, the Mohammedan countries, where contempt and oppression are the fate of women and where their degradation injures all the community. Consider India, where 'anything is good enough for a woman,' according to the ancient laws of that country, and where as one ancient Hindu writer has said of women, 'In infancy the father should guard her, in youth her husband, and in old age her children; for at no time is a woman fit to be trusted with liberty. Infidelity, violence, deceit, envy, extravagance, a total want of good qualities, are the innate faults of woman.' That is an Indian opinion; and some of us may be prepared to admit that if you take the natural woman there is a good deal of truth in it. The point is this, that in a Christian kingdom you do not find the natural woman; woman is elevated, purified, and ennobled, not of her own strength, but by the Holy Spirit of God. We may turn to China, and we shall find there some of the horrible customs of the ancient world flourishing just as they did in the Roman times, such as the murder or exposure of female infants. We may consider even Japan, where there is such a wonderful civilization of its own, with such a wealth of intellectual, highly gifted

people, and we shall see some of the same features in the position of women as we observe in ancient heathen Greece.

Leaving for a moment the historical part of the subject, it is perhaps necessary to say a word about a reproach that in our own time has been brought against the Christian faith just because it is a religion for the weak and the poor, the humble and the oppressed, and that it promotes the interests of women and children. That reproach has been brought by a German writer, and is part of a very curious aristocratic movement which may be noted in modern political and social life. It is a movement to maintain that what the world needs is a strong man who is going to make everybody do as he wants, and that the poor and weak do not matter. The statement of the theory is enough to condemn it to many minds, but there is at least one important argument against it. I would remind you of how the idea of self-sacrifice and of devotion, of caring for others and not for oneself, is the line of evolution along which, as far as we can judge, mankind seems to be moving now. This devotion and self-sacrifice for others is pre-human, it is deeper down even than humanity; it is found in the nest of the willow-grouse and the lair of the she-wolf. That maternal devotion which every woman has in her heart for the weak and the poor and the little children is her birthright, and it is older than humanity itself. That line of evolutionary

progress, that line of altruism, of self-devotion, we are not going to abandon for any doctrine of aristocracy.

For the social future of woman and of humanity Christianity is, indeed, the only hope. It only can solve our problems, the problem of the life of the individual that every teacher grapples with day by day, the problems of the state and the community. There are the social problems, the industrial difficulties, due to inventions and transport ; the dangers to the home and to womanhood through the growth of our large towns ; and the unequal distribution of property, which is becoming more serious as education improves and wealth increases. All these problems, which seem to some of us as if they were insoluble, can be solved, and will be solved, by Christian energy and the application of the spirit of Christ. If you study—and I would ask you, however scanty your leisure, to study the facts of the case—you will observe how the ancient world was faced with even worse problems. Look at the problem of slavery. Christ never said a word against slavery, nor did His apostles ; but it has disappeared because it was inconsistent with the principles of Christianity. So our social difficulties will disappear, though slowly, under the influence of Christian energy and the application of the teaching of Christ. The past and the present give us promise of the future. The truth is not yet worn out. It can give to woman that purity and nobility of soul

which man believes she ought to have ; it can give to man that moral strength and spiritual insight and power which woman seeks in her protector and support ; and it alone can ensure that social progress which depends upon the moral progress and self-control of the individual, and the stability and vitality of the family. It will save us in the future ; it will be irresistible amid all our social dangers and difficulties, because it is the true principle of life.

In conclusion, I would appeal to the women in this hall, and to any others whom my poor words may reach, that whatever may happen, we should stand by the old faith, if only in gratitude. It has raised us from slavery and degradation ; it has maintained the woman's charter, the Christian law of marriage ; it has upheld the ideals of chivalry, affection, and gentleness ; it has given us our true position ; it has consecrated whatever gifts we have of self-sacrificing love. How can we show our thankfulness? Not only by our lips, but in our lives. There is the round of daily duty, the many methods of Christian service. But in these days, when the Christian faith is threatened, we can do our part, too, in holding fast by the standard of the Cross. It may be, in the mysterious providence of Almighty God, that a night of unbelief may descend for a time ; but if so, let us at least keep lighted the torch of faith, and guide the race till morning shines for all. If we do not, the degeneracy and melancholy of unbelief will fall on us who are less able to

bear it, and we and our children shall be the first to suffer.

But we may hope for better things. We can look back along the line of good and holy women, some of whom we have known—our mothers, our sisters, our teachers—back to those of whom we can only read in history and biography, and so on farther and farther till at last we reach those who, long ago under the skies of Judaea, learned from the Lord Himself a new hope, a new purity, a new salvation. Ever since, the power of His Spirit has given joy and strength to us, weak women though we be; it has supported us in dangers, and carried us through temptations. Let us hold by the Faith, whatever may befall; and while we bless the name of the Lord for all His hand-maidens departed this life in that faith and fear, let us pray for 'grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of the heavenly kingdom.'

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The writer desires to acknowledge her special obligations in the above paper to Loring Brace's *Gesta Christi*, and to Schmidt's *Social Results of Early Christianity*, from which much of the historic matter has been taken.







