

With the Author's Compliments.

1905

Wm

To Tom,

From Father,

30 August 1951.

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ON
THEOLOGICAL, BIBLICAL,
AND OTHER SUBJECTS



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ON
THEOLOGICAL, BIBLICAL,
AND OTHER SUBJECTS

BY

ROBERT FLINT

D. D., LL. D., F. R. S. E.

Em. Prof. of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh; Correspondent of Institute of France; and Hon. Member of the Royal Academy of Sciences, &c., Palermo, Sicily; also Author of the following Publications: 'Christ's Kingdom on Earth' (1865); 'Philosophy of History in Europe' (1874), translated into French; 'Theism' (1877); 'Anti-Theistic Theories' (1879); 'Vico' (1884), translated into Italian; 'Historical Philosophy in France' (1894); 'Socialism' (1894); 'Sermons and Addresses' (1889); 'Agnosticism' (1902); 'Philosophy as Scientia Scientiarum' (1904); and Contributions to Encyclopædias and Periodicals

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
M C M V

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE subjects treated of in this volume are of a somewhat miscellaneous nature, but not altogether unconnected or of a dissimilar kind. Those dealt with in the five sections of the first chapter were meant chiefly for students of Divinity desirous of qualifying themselves for the ministry of the Christian Church. A "Paper on the Book of Amos," written in 1895 at the request of the *Scottish Women's Bible Study Association*, forms the content of chap. ii. Next in order are two lectures—one on "The Theology of the Epistle of James" and another on "The Theology of St Peter"—both (chaps. iii. and iv.) delivered to the members of the *Church of Scotland's Deaconess Institution and Training Home*. "Christ our King" (chap. v.) was also a subject addressed to the members of the same Institution, and likewise published in 'Life and Work'—a well-known organ of the Church of

Scotland. Chap. vi. is so far related to chap. vii., inasmuch as Socrates has been maintained by some to be on an ethical or religious equality with Jesus Christ. The Ideas of the Divine in Ancient Egypt and in China have been dealt with, owing alike to the similarity and contrariety of those strange and most interesting nations (chaps. viii. and ix.) The Biblical idea of God has been represented as a contrast to the fundamental conceptions of the Divine in two so unique and remarkable nations as Egypt and China (chap. x.)

The two last chapters (xi. and xii.) are of a different character from those which precede them. They consist of two lectures, both delivered in Edinburgh in 1882, and the first of them also published. They were distinctly polemical, and on that account it is with some regret that I feel it a duty to resuscitate them. In 1882 the Church of Scotland was in a very serious crisis of her history, and naturally her clergy found themselves bound in honour, and by a clear sense of duty both to their Church and country, to take an active part against those who assailed their Church and did their utmost so to mislead the people of Scotland as would have injured both its national and religious life. Their labours were not in vain. The assaults on the Established Church failed. She came safely through the breakers on which her enemies hoped to

see her wrecked. They injured themselves in public opinion more than her. The policy of disruption, disendowment, and disestablishment has hitherto miserably and deservedly failed. The true policy has been amply and manifestly shown to be one as much as possible of reunion, co-operation, and peace. But will it be adopted? will it be acted on? I hope it may, but fear more strongly that it will not,—fear that another crisis of the same kind as that which has been gone through will have to be once more dealt with ere long. Certainly the younger ministers or aspirants to the ministry of the Church of Scotland should carefully acquaint themselves without unnecessary delay with the character of the crisis through which their predecessors passed, in order that they may adequately acquit themselves in a crisis of the same kind, and one possibly even more dangerous.

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I.

ADVICE TO STUDENTS OF DIVINITY.

I.

WORK OF THE DIVINITY HALL.

GENTLEMEN,—We have been brought to the beginning of another session. Some of you are about to commence, and others of you are about to resume and continue, the studies of the Divinity Hall, and it is my task again to endeavour to fulfil the duties of this chair. It is assuredly to be desired that we all enter on our work with the conviction that it is most important work; that an ill-spent session here must be a very precious time of opportunity wasted; that a serious responsibility lies on each of us to make the very most we can of the session before us.

My own responsibility I feel, and I know that I cannot too deeply feel it. But your responsibility

is also very manifest. You aspire to an office which is of the utmost importance, and therefore due preparation for it must be of the utmost importance. Since the Christian ministry is a solemn and difficult service, and most momentous issues depend on how it is performed, no one can have a right to enter on it who is indolent or superficial in the studies which qualify for it.

Indifference and negligence are particularly inexcusable in any one who is studying for the ministry. No one who is not in earnest in his preparations—no one whose heart is not in his work—should be here at all. No wise person would wish such a one to be here. If any one here is in his right place—if any one here has his heart right as regards the work to which he looks forward—he will not find his work other than pleasant and profitable. There are no subjects taught in the Divinity Hall which ought not to be attractive and of interest to any student of Divinity of thoughtful and earnest mind; and only men so minded are wanted in the Church. Only such men can be reasonably expected to be successful in extending the Kingdom of God, which is the real work of the Church.

All the subjects you are required to study in the Divinity Hall are of a kind which a clergyman is naturally and properly expected to be more

conversant with than educated men in general. He ought to have the same sort of knowledge of them as a physician ought to have of medical, and a lawyer of legal, studies. They are all of a kind which have a direct and helpful bearing on his work. They are also all of a kind which are at present exciting the interest of a great many persons other than clergymen; which have, in fact, probably never received more attention from the educated public. It is dangerous to the reputation of a clergyman not to be well-informed in regard to them.

The studies in which you will be engaged in the Divinity Hall are of their very nature intimately connected with those in which you have been engaged in the Faculty of Arts. That you ought to bear in mind, and act on. Do not imagine that you may now have done with what you have been doing as students of Arts. Take care, on the contrary, that what you have learned be not forgotten but followed up and extended.

You have studied, for example, with more or less success, Latin and Greek, and you have also at least begun the study of Hebrew. Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, however,—the three sacred languages, as they have been called,—are of immense value to the theological student. There is no language in which so much theology has been written as

in Latin. One who has learned to read the Latin classics with ease has thereby not merely attained the means of acquaintanceship with a wonderful literature, and through it the means also of an adequate appreciation of a most wonderful history and civilisation, but he has in his hands the key to an easy mastery of the writings of all the Latin Fathers, of all the medieval chronicles and scholastics, and of far the greater number of foreign Protestant and Catholic divines who wrote during the period of the Reformation and in the two following centuries.

Greek has been well said to be "the most beautiful, rich, and harmonious language ever spoken or written." It is the most finished medium for the expression of thought and feeling ever devised even by an Indo-Germanic people. For vigour and beauty, naturalness and precision, the language of Homer, of Aeschylus and Sophocles, of Plato, Thucydides, and Demosthenes, is excelled by no other. It is, *par excellence*, the language of culture, with strong claims on those who are in quest of the highest attainable intellectual culture. But it is also the language of the LXX. Old Testament, the language of the New Testament, the language also of the Apostolic Fathers, of such theologians as Origen and Athanasius, and of the creeds and councils of the undivided Church.

Without adequate knowledge of it a clergyman must be incapable of forming a satisfactory judgment of those questions as to the text, the textual criticism, and the higher criticism of the Greek Bible which are now so much discussed.

The study of a strange language is to most persons a rather dry and disagreeable kind of exercise, but even the roots and rudiments of Hebrew have in them more human interest than any other language I know. It is a calumny on the study of them to say that it flourishes best on barren ground. The distinctness of type which differentiates Hebrew from every Romanic or Teutonic language is so marked as to make it richly suggestive and instructive to a thoughtful mind. Its perfect regularity—its, one may say, mathematical yet not mechanical uniformity—its freedom from exceptions which in some languages are so numerous as to be like the proverbial trees which prevent the wood from being visible—are striking and delightful features of Biblical Hebrew. But what above all gives it its value to students for the ministry is that it is the original language of the Old Testament—that sacred Book which is also a national literature, which is a large and essential portion of those Scriptures which have been given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life, and which have had an incom-

parable influence on the spiritual history of humanity. A multitude of questions as to the Old Testament, which are at present keenly disputed, can only be intelligently judged of by those who have a fairly good acquaintance with Hebrew and its cognate tongues.

All your studies in the Divinity Hall should be intimately connected with the study of Scripture.

You have to study other subjects indeed, but without losing sight of their relations to the revelation contained in Scripture. The Bible should have always a central place in the studies of aspirants to the ministry, as well as in the labours of their teachers. The eyes of their minds and hearts should be steadily directed to the truth contained in it for their guidance. It will be your duty, therefore, your wisdom, and, I hope, your joy, to read and meditate habitually on it in all right ways, and with earnestness and expectation.

You should read it regularly with a practical and devotional aim—that is, for your spiritual improvement and growth in grace. It is not now your duty to preach the Word of God, but it is your duty to read it, and you will never learn to preach it aright unless you learn to read it aright, and there is no right reading of it which has not its origin, its foundation, in a high and reverent esteem

of it, in a sincere sense of personal need of it. Probably the Bible was never more studied than it is now; certainly in some ways it has never been more studied than it is now; but I fear that it may once have been more studied than now as a guide and help to holy living. If you neglect that sort of study of it, however, no other sort of study of it, however assiduous, will make you truly good preachers of it. How can a man expect to apply aright the Scriptures to the conversion, edification, and salvation of the souls of others if he has not accustomed himself to try the power of them on his own heart and life?

But you should also study the Bible critically; not only with a humble and pious but also a critical and free spirit. You must let yourselves be initiated into the critical study of the Scriptures—must learn what conclusions Biblical scholars have come to as to the canon of Scripture, the text of Scripture, the formation of Scripture, and the interpretation of Scripture; and on what grounds and by what methods they have come to their conclusions. You are expected to become students of Biblical Criticism in the widest sense of the term; not, of course, in order that you should become critical experts, but that you should have an intelligent acquaintance as to what is certain, probable, and doubtful in the sphere of Biblical Criticism. And

in order to satisfy this reasonable requirement, this legitimate expectation, you must have a considerable amount of intellectual work to go through, and will require to combine courage with caution, candour with prudence, earnestness in the search of truth with avoidance of all extremes. Bibliolatry is certainly not in the present day the most prevalent of erroneous tendencies, but it is still not uncommon, and you should strive to keep free from idolatry of every kind. You will only do harm to the cause of Biblical authority and truth if you assert its entire inerrancy, and hold by the old hypotheses of plenary inspiration which were once so prevalent. At the same time, receive rashly no new hypotheses as to Scripture, for the vast majority of them are born only to die. It is not wise for you at your stage of education to spend much of your time on the consideration of the mere guesses that swarm in the pages of the critical and theological journals. Learn to mortify your love of such novelties, for it is just now far too easily gratified, and you are sure to find the indulgence of it far too wasteful.

Further, you should read and study the Bible as a chief source of knowledge regarding Christian Doctrine. It is not the only source of such knowledge, but it is the richest and clearest source. It throws a bright and guiding light on

the other sources—nature, mind, and history. The position of Systematic (Dogmatic) Theology was once universally recognised as the regal one within the whole territory of theology. It may now seem to be that of a fallen monarch, a discrowned king. It is not so. All theological studies are still as much as they ever were contributory to it. Did they not lead, indeed, to positive truths—such truths as when formulated are just doctrines—they would end in negative results, in barren labours. There may be less activity at the present time in the department of Dogmatic Theology than in some former ages, but there is very great activity,—as much, if not more, than in any age since the Reformation period. Far more earnestness and independence in doctrinal investigation are shown in Britain now than at the commencement of the nineteenth century. At all points in the dogmatic field there are to be found energetic and independent labourers. New questions are raised, new solutions are proposed. Everywhere there are manifestations of an earnest and hopeful spirit and of a fresh and vigorous life. The old faith is retained in essentials although the forms of doctrine have changed and are changing. The new forms are, on the whole, in most cases improvements on the old. What is being let go is mainly the crude and imperfect. The general

tendency of the course of change is towards simplicity, clearness, self-consistency, and perfection. Thus the study of theology is becoming less theoretical and technical and more practical and natural. Knowledge divorced from experience is more adequately recognised to be futile; theology apart from religion to be empty and worthless even as science. Theology is the science of religion, and just for that reason it is the religion, not the theology, which is of prime importance, the main concern, much the more real and vital. The worth of the theology consists entirely in its reflection and expression of the truth contained in the religion and its sources.

I must add that you should throughout your course here read and study the Bible with reference to your future work as Christian ministers and preachers of the Gospel. When reading it with the other aims to which I have referred, you can and ought to have in view how what you read of it is capable of being utilised in the service of those among whom it may be your lot to labour. You read, let us say, a passage of Scripture thoughtfully, carefully, inquiringly, with mind fully awake, and some portion of it specially arrests your attention, and your consideration of it gives rise to various conclusions and reflections of a directly edifying, spiritual, and practical character. Why

should you lose such thoughts which might be of benefit both to yourselves and to others through simply taking no permanent note of them? Why not have a note-book in which you may jot down in the briefest, readiest way, and rapidly arrange them—so briefly and rapidly that you may not have a single fully finished sentence in what you write, and that you may not spend many minutes in the mere process of writing. Enough has been done as regards the writing of your notes to suffice to indicate to yourself what your thoughts have been, and to enable you at any time to recall, revise, correct, extend, and add to them when you please. Were you to accustom yourselves to do that throughout your course in the Hall, would you not have by the time your course in it comes to a close, and you are called on to be constantly occupied in preaching, a mass of material drawn from or suggested by Scripture far more useful for you and easily useable by you than can be found in the volumes of “Skeleton Sermons,” “Helps for Preachers,” and the like, which some preachers, and especially young preachers, are under the degrading necessity of becoming indebted to?

The advice which I give to you I wish had occurred to myself when I was in your position. It would have made the work of my first charge much easier to me. I would not advise you, however,

to spend time in writing sermons themselves so long as you are in the Hall. You should not have time to do that. As a rule, sermons to be effective must be written with a view to the particular kind of audience to which they are to be addressed. The most useful sermons are often those which have been written most rapidly, when the writer of them had appropriate thoughts enough to express; but to be under the necessity of writing them in haste when one has not appropriate thoughts is a sort of Egyptian bondage, like making bricks without straw.

I must not forget that you have also as students in the Divinity Hall to occupy yourselves with the study of history. A knowledge of Biblical and Ecclesiastical History is especially expected of you. And you really cannot have too much acquaintance with History. There is no study richer in spiritual instruction than history. History is a far wider and fuller revelation of God to man than creation or nature is. The creation of the physical world may have been the work of an instant, but only the history of that world can show that there was any meaning in its creation, and the history is besides a revelation of God through the sustentation and evolution of the whole universe during countless æons of time. The creation of man, however effected, cannot

compare in significance with the history of humanity, and derives most of what significance it has from its connection with the history of humanity.

All history may be regarded as sacred history. All history is a revelation of the power, providence, and character of God—of His omniscience and omnipotence, of His wisdom and goodness, righteousness and holiness. All history is pervaded and controlled, overruled and guided by God. The division of history into sacred and secular, ecclesiastical and civil, is apt greatly to mislead young or unthoughtful minds. The history of a nation is as much religious history as the history of the Church or Churches of that nation. God the Father of all men pervades the one as much as the other. Christ is the only true source and centre of the life of the one not less than of the other. It is not clergymen merely, but men of all ranks, trades, and professions, who are dependent on the Holy Spirit for guidance and power to do even an honest day's work.

The Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History in Cambridge once said to me that he regarded the title of his chair as quite unaffected in meaning by the word Ecclesiastical; that he understood it to mean just what it would have meant if it had been simply history. And from the religious point of view he was, I think, quite right. The Old

Testament is throughout historical. But history is certainly not represented there as divisible into sacred and secular, religious and political. The New Testament *ecclesia* never means an ecclesiastical denomination. There were no ecclesiastical denominations in apostolic times.

The *ecclesia* in its distinctively Scriptural sense is not a visible corporation at all, although it manifests itself wherever there is the working of spiritual life—in all spheres of human activity—in what is called State not less than in what is called Church. And the Kingdom of God, which is so prominent in the New Testament, is certainly not one in which Churchmen and their doings are described as having any exclusive or pre-eminent place. Church History may fairly be held to be history presented and studied not from the point of view of modern Churchmen but from the New Testament point of view of the Kingdom of God, and from that point of view it is as wide as history itself, because as wide as the whole providential and redemptive work of God as traceable in the history of mankind. Of course, I do not mean to say that Church History, and even Church History of a necessary and useful kind, may not be written from lower and narrower points of view. All history may be written from various points of view. Few sects or denominations are without histories

of their own written from the sectarian or denominational point of view. It is fortunate, perhaps, that the literary mediocrity of these productions generally confines their influence within a narrow and already prejudiced community. Catholic and Protestant historians cannot be expected to see eye to eye in their study of many transactions, or to form the same estimates of many of those concerned in them, but it is deplorable, inexpressibly deplorable, that so many of them still show so much prejudice, injustice, and lack of Christian charity. It is happily true that on both sides—Catholic and Protestant—there has been of late considerable improvement, but there is ample room for more. Let us hope that it will extend and deepen. Let us hope that the fairness, the candour, of spirit which is still the exception will become the rule, and that the time may not be far off when even the greatest religious differences in opinion among us will not be felt to be incompatible with unity in Christ and the exercise of all Christian graces and duties towards those who differ from us in doctrinal views.

The kind of history, with the exception of Biblical history, in which you are most interested in this class is the history of doctrine. You can have only a very inadequate knowledge of any doctrine if you are ignorant of its history, and

still less can you make yourselves acquainted with a system of doctrine without a study of its origins and development. All doctrines and doctrinal systems which are not deeply rooted in history are sure to pass speedily away. What has sprung up late will vanish soon. To be intellectually and spiritually rich with the treasures of Divine truth, we must not only be ready to accept whatever is new if it be also true, but must also serve ourselves heirs to the treasures of truth of many past ages.

Of course, it is essential that the student of Christian doctrinal theology should be of a reverent and religious spirit. The first condition of all right knowledge is a pre-existing sympathy with the object to be known. He who would know truth must himself stand in the truth. Only the philosophical mind can comprehend a philosophy. Only the æsthetic mind can appreciate aright beauty and art. Only the pious mind can do justice to religion, and without religion there can be no theology worthy of the name. Religious sympathy — religious experience—is essential to successful theological study.

The late Dr Hatch, in an Address delivered to our Edinburgh University Theological Society in 1884, very truly said: "There are some branches of knowledge which might be studied by a man without a

heart. The mathematician sees new combinations and harmonies, of forms and quantities, and needs but the clear lamp of intellect, burning brightly upon his forehead, to venture into whatever paths he will. The anatomist dissects the fibres of what were once living organisms, and needs but the clear eye and the constructive imagination to trace the law of varying types, and build up again a vanished form from the faint resemblances of distant species. But Christian truth is no dead anatomy, whose fibres you can dissect with pitiless knife, and whose bones you can bury when you have done with them. To know it you must love it; to understand it you must be in sympathy with it; you must feel it to be not outside you, but part of yourself; the truths with which you have to deal are living, and living for you—life of your life, and soul of your soul: and day by day, as you try to find them out, you will have to realise in your own experience the depth and force of those words of our Master, ‘If any man will *do His will* he shall know of the doctrine.’”

Those words of Dr Hatch are entirely true. The merely intellectual study of theology will always prove to be an unproductive and unprofitable study of it. Mere intellectualism in that sphere necessarily leads to a dry and degenerate scholasticism.

The main part of your work in this Hall should be to arrive at a system of theology. You have no right to set up as religious teachers or preachers if you have only superficial, disconnected, discordant, fragmentary religious impressions and ideas. You are bound as a matter of conscience and of duty, of common-sense and common honesty, to arrive at what may be called *a system of theology*, before you undertake the spiritual charge of a congregation, and that system must be in your conviction *the true system of theology*. Your *system of theology* must be identical with your *real confession of faith*. It must be what you hold in soul and conscience to be the truth as to God and the truth revealed by God for the guidance and salvation of mankind. Your study of theology ought, therefore, to be earnest and sincere. There should be no make-belief or dishonesty in it. You ought to prefer nothing to truth, and value nothing which is not true. That is the spirit of true science. It is also that of true religion, but not of false religion. False religion always inculcates belief or obedience apart from truth, as equal to or higher than truth. True science inculcates belief only of the truth; true morality obedience only to the truth; true religion only acceptance of and obedience to the truth from love and obedience to God as the truth. You have to study, then, with a supreme desire

to know what is true—Divine truth—saving truth—the truth which centres in Christ—the truth that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.

Your aim should not be to find arguments for any creed merely because already adopted, support for any belief beyond what the truth gives it. You must be willing to work so as to find truth; faithfully to labour so as to be able to speak only truth. Clergymen cannot be expected to know the truth on all religious questions which are under discussion in days like the present; but they ought to strive to know at least enough not to speak what is beyond or contrary to the truth; enough to know when and where to be silent.

An honest Christian faith and a good Christian heart are indispensable qualifications for the Christian ministry. But they are not sufficient qualifications. There are needed besides special aptitudes and faculties. A man may be a most sincere and excellent Christian and yet be the wrong man in the wrong place, both in the Divinity Hall and in the charge of a parish. Probably the faculties required for ministerial efficiency are widely distributed; probably ministerial failure is more frequently due to want of zeal and diligence in the culture of the faculties given than to an absolute want of appropriate faculties themselves;

but there can be little doubt that want of the needful natural endowments is not rare; and that there are many men capable of doing excellent Christian service in the avocations for which their abilities fit them, who are incapable of being useful clergymen. And this is a most serious consideration. For a minister does not require to be insincere or indolent, but only unqualified, in order to be a greater hindrance to the progress of the Gospel in his parish than, perhaps, any other person in it. Who of us has not known men who would in all likelihood have done a great deal of nearly unmixed good in a parish had they been almost anything else in it but its pastors, yet who in that capacity, notwithstanding the best intentions and dispositions, exercised a most depressing and blighting influence?

Let me add that he who aspires to the great work of the ministry ought to strive assiduously to make himself as worthy of it in all ways as he, with God's help, can. He ought to be a man who longs and labours to reach the Divine goal of life; a man not merely anxious to know the truth in all its fulness and purity but also anxious to conform to it, to realise and embody it in his dispositions and actions; one who rejoices to contemplate and aspires to imitate all that was admirable in the saintly and heroic men

whose sacrifices and achievements are recorded in the pages of Scripture and the annals of the Church. Above all, he ought to be one whose eye is fixed with loving adoration on the author and finisher of his faith, the express image of God, the perfect pattern of man; one whose deepest desire, whose governing principle, is the ambition of following humbly and faithfully in His footsteps. The worthy student of theology—the worthy candidate for the stewardship of the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven—can never be content with the mere culture of the head and growth in knowledge, but must crave still more ardently purification of heart and growth in grace.

Apart from personal qualifications, clergymen need not expect to exercise much influence or receive much deference in the present day. Mere ministerial status now carries little weight with it. The divine right of ministers and the divine right of kings were both seriously believed in once, but faith in both tenets alike is now dead in Protestant lands. All faith in mere authority—all faith in any authority which does not rest on truth and reason—has been undermined, and he is an unwise man who would even wish to build upon it. It was thought a bold thing in Cromwell when he declared that if he met the king in battle he would shoot at him as at

another man. Now, the humblest contributor to an evening halfpenny journal does not feel his courage unequal to attack any ecclesiastical dignitary, or any ecclesiastical conclave, in the world. The professional influence of the clergy must rest henceforth on no sacerdotal idea, or corporate authority, or class distinction, but be inseparable from, yea, identical with, personal influence. The success of the minister must be dependent on the worth of the man as aided by the grace of God. He, therefore, who would possess and exert spiritual influence as a teacher and guide of his fellow-men must secure it through his intellectual, moral, and religious attainments; through vigour of mind and largeness of heart; through the clearness and accuracy of his acquaintance with religious truth and the manifold phases of spiritual experience; through having carefully meditated on the most serious problems which are perplexing individuals and agitating society; and through having ability enough to meet any kind of heresy, infidelity, or hostile criticism in a fair and rational manner, and being an example of candour, self-restraint, and self-denial, interested in all good works, and sincerely devoted to the great cause in which he is engaged.

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II.

SUBJECT CONTINUED.

It is quite possible that aspirants to the office of the Christian ministry should expect too much from a course of theological study and training in a Divinity Hall. In reality, they will of themselves fit no man adequately for that work. They cannot even of themselves supply the chief qualifications for it. Religion is of far more importance than theology. The prime qualifications of the Christian ministry are those which constitute personal piety, not those which make a learned or skilful theologian. The history of Methodism in England, in Wales, and especially in America, shows us what need there may be for, and what magnificent successes may be gained by, an uneducated, or at least meagrely educated, ministry. Even in our Scottish home-field there are numerous positions where the ministry of a layman of confirmed Christian experience must be far more efficient for good than that of a young licentiate who has little else than a College education to recommend him. The study of theology severed from the acquisition of Christian experience and the formation and improvement of Christian character cannot fail to be a wretchedly insufficient prepara-

tion for the work of the ministry. The education which will form a true minister of the Word can manifestly be no mere education of the intellect. It can never be accomplished simply by hard thinking, by attention to lectures and preparation for examinations, by studying Greek, Hebrew, and Biblical Criticism, and reading many books on Church History and Divinity.

It requires also the culture of the affections and sympathies, of prayer, devout meditation, close and constant spiritual contact with the Divine Word, pious companionships, the deeds of charity, the grace of God. It requires whatever tends to develop the Divine life in the soul. It is well to seek fully to realise that, because there is great danger of its being very much overlooked. It was too long a characteristic of the Scottish University system to attempt almost nothing more than the instruction and training of the intellect. And the Divinity Hall did not differ from the rest of the University in that respect. Of late years there has been in our Divinity Halls an admirable and most important improvement introduced into them. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has provided for courses of lectures on practical and pastoral theology, and has been singularly successful in its choice of men for the work given them to do. I have no doubt that their work

has been most useful, and hope that all Divinity students will take full advantage of them. They should not fancy that a complete education is to be found in the class-rooms of their professors. To have the needed sympathy with every one to whom they may be called to minister,—to have the needed comprehension and advice for every one, rich or poor, proud or humble, lifted up with joy or crushed down with sorrow, allured with pleasures or harassed with cares, credulous or sceptical, confident or callous or despondent,—the minds of efficient pastors must manifestly not be mere intellects, however vigorous and highly trained, but such as are also rich with the susceptibilities of humanity and the graces of sanctified hearts.

It is further to be observed that even as regards the intellectual education of those who aspire to the ministry non-theological studies are almost, if not altogether, as necessary and important as theological. A man who is learned only in theology will never do much good with his learning, and it is quite natural that it should be so, for such learning is not good in itself. The study of theology can only be entered on wisely through other studies, and can only be prosecuted successfully by their aid. Without a considerable amount of knowledge of language, of criticism, of history, of science, of philosophy, there can be no scientific

study of theology. The conclusions of all the physical, mental, and historical sciences are the data and premises of Natural Theology, and the wider a man's knowledge of these sciences the better it must be for his Natural Theology. Biblical Criticism is only a kind of Criticism, and it must obey the general laws of Criticism. The Bible as a literary phenomenon can be judged of aright only through comparison with many other literary phenomena. A merely Biblical critic is almost certain to be a very bad critic, as is abundantly proved by the example of so many Biblical commentators. The history of the Church is unintelligible apart from the general history of society. No one department of history is fully intelligible by itself.

Systematic Theology presupposes the interpretation of Nature and Scripture, and consequently presupposes also Natural Theology, Biblical Theology, History of Doctrine, and all the conditions, methods, and disciplines which these imply. The old conception of it as a series of theses proved by an appeal simply to texts of Scripture is utterly antiquated. There is no such theological science as Systematic Theology or Dogmatics so viewed. What is true in it will be found in modern Biblical Theology rather than in modern Systematic Theology, which, while leaving Biblical Theology

to exhibit all the ideas and truths of Scripture, accepts them yet does not build on them alone, but on all the findings of science and philosophy as well, or, in other words, on all the ways and means by which God has made Himself known.

You may thus see that the theologian to be even intellectually complete should have mastered as much as he could of science, and to have diligently surveyed worlds of thought, creation, history, and special revelation. From every side, from every object, from every speculation, there may come to him either help or hindrance. Every truth conveys its ray of light to our knowledge of God. Every falsehood lets fall a shadow on it. The cross on Calvary is the centre of history, and the truer our knowledge, the deeper our experience, of the nature, the capacities, the struggles, the trials, the sins, and the wants of humanity, the better shall we realise the significance of that cross. The Bible is not only itself a literature, but it is one which receives illumination from, and still more gives illumination to, every other literature in the world. Theology is in the system of the sciences what the heart is in the organism of the body, and to think that it can be understood if abstracted and isolated from other science is as absurd as to suppose that the heart and its functions can be understood if considered

only as a separate dead thing without relation to the rest of the body.

While, however, as I have now indicated, the Christian minister may be educated and aided by all kinds of learning and science, he is specially bound by the very nature of his office to have an enlarged and working knowledge of theology. He ought to seek to comprehend religion in all its phases, and to have the most thorough acquaintance possible with all the sources of religious knowledge, and to that end apply himself with his utmost energy to the study of Holy Scripture. He should study it as a whole that he may understand as a whole the revelation which it presents, and that he may perceive aright the perspective in which it places different truths. He should study it book by book, portion by portion, that he may discover the drift and purpose of each separate contribution made to its aggregate unity. He should study it inductively that he may gather together into so many different centres all its utterances on particular matters of doctrine or duty. He should study it critically, historically, and scientifically, for that just means that he should study it closely, accurately, and comprehensively. It cannot be studied too searchingly, from too many sides, or in too many ways. We cannot have too much Biblical criticism, too much Biblical learning. Neither

the individual minister nor the Church can know more than enough of the Bible or about the Bible.

In like manner the minister of religion should seek to understand the Science of Religion—Theology—in all its length and breadth, in all its branches, and alike in what is oldest and newest in it. It is very old and yet vigorous with fresh life. The great truths of Christian doctrine were formulated in the early ages of the Church's history, but the whole science of Comparative Theology is the creation of recent years, and has during those years made as much progress as almost any physical science. I do not know any century in which there has been more theological activity and progress in almost all directions than in the nineteenth century of the Christian era. Those who fancy that theological light is vanishing from the world are blind men who have eyes but do not see.

No thoughtful man will imagine that theological learning can supply the place of practical piety, or will refuse to acknowledge that it loses its chief worth when divorced from piety. But equally no thoughtful man will fancy that piety and theological learning are necessarily or naturally antagonists, or will deny that the latter in its proper sphere and performing its proper work is an indispensable and excellent thing. The fanatics who despise theological science may safely be left to expose

the absurdities of their theory by the extravagances of their practice.

The true relation of practical piety and theological study is very obvious. On the one hand, the theological science which is not rooted in the religious life will never produce abiding and beneficial results of a positive kind. Mere intellectualism, criticism, rationalism, may remove rubbish, but cannot in the sphere of spiritual life build up nor ever truly comprehend, for without personal interests and sympathy there can be no earnestness or depth of intelligence. On the other hand, the spiritual life which shrinks from spiritual life, nay, which does not turn to it and seek it with all the force of its nature, is a diseased life. The faith which fears inquiry into its objects and grounds is a faith which has the canker of a semi-conscious distrust at its root. The piety which dissociates itself from the love of truth will also proceed to dispense with the practice of righteousness and become a thing hateful to God and contemptible before honest men.

The first and most important requirement in those who look forward to enter on the ministry of the Divine Word in the Christian Church is that they be men who realise in thought and life the relation of time to eternity; who perceive and feel that the ultimate source of human welfare

is no human work, invention, or acquisition, but the grace and righteousness of God dwelling and operating in the human soul and the mind and spirit of Christ reproduced and exemplified in individuals and societies. The clergy are often reminded in the present day that they ought to advance with the times and preach to the times. And there is a sense in which that advice may be so far reasonable and not wholly to be rejected. The clergy ought to be alive to the wants and circumstances of the times in which they live, and not foolishly persist in striving to conserve or galvanise into life what is clearly dead. They ought to be before rather than behind the times, and as ready to encourage what is good as to condemn what is evil in them. The Christian minister should not become a political partisan or follow in the wake of daily newspapers. There is far too much preaching to the times already, and in many places most unholy alliances between the pulpit and the press. The work of the Christian ministry has reference primarily and mainly to what is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Hence no one has a right to aspire to the office, or will be in his proper place or do much good in it, who is not possessed by the conviction that to live the Gospel and to preach the Gospel are the most practical and urgent of

present day duties; and that what our age needs most is to know God better than it does, and to value more the salvation which He has provided in Jesus Christ.

“’Tis not a cause of small import
The pastor’s care demands,
But what might fill an angel’s heart,
And filled a Saviour’s hands.”

A true and adequate knowledge of religion is of inestimable value, but there is unquestionably something still better. Knowledge, says the most thoughtful of English poets,

“is the second, not the first.
A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain ; and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With wisdom, like the younger child :
For she is earthly of the mind,
But wisdom heavenly of the soul.”

III.

ON THE SUBJECT OF PUBLIC WORSHIP.

THE success or failure of the ministers of the Christian Church is very largely dependent on how they conduct the worship of the Church. Success there is of immense importance and failure

an incalculable loss. Therefore, I must even at this early stage of our work call your attention to the subject of *public worship*.

Public worship comprises the four acts of praise, prayer, reading the Scriptures, and preaching; two of which may be described generally as devotional, as means of expressing the feelings of the soul towards God, and two as instructional, as means of imparting the truth of God to the soul.

These acts, it must be remembered, naturally form a whole. No diet or service of worship can be regarded as otherwise than incomplete, inharmonious, faulty, when they are not all combined and rightly correlated. Proposals have often been made to dissociate and separate them; to have on Sabbaths one service for devotion and another for instruction. Such proposals, it seems to me, are extremely ill-considered; their adoption would be most pernicious. The manifest tendency of it would be to divide church-goers into two classes,—those who went to praise and pray, and those who went to hear sermons. And it is most undesirable that any such division as that should be occasioned or encouraged. It is a condition of right worship that the devotional and instructional should confirm and support one another; that God's truth should evoke and guide the feelings of the soul; and that the feelings of the soul

should have their grounds of assurance and a warrant for their aims in the Word of God. It is not in the direction of the separation of the acts of worship that there is room for improving public worship, but in the adaptation and co-ordination of these acts so that they shall supplement and aid one another, and harmonise into a whole, the effect of which shall owe much to the concurrence and co-operation of the parts.

In this direction every minister will find a large field for progress and improvement. The psalms and hymns, the prayers, the portions of Scripture read, the discourse delivered, should not only be appropriate and impressive in themselves, but should be so related to one another that head and heart may alike be satisfied, and the entire being find in the worship at once enlightenment, rest and joy, strength and consecration. It is very rare that an entire service of worship is thus satisfactory and accordant. There is commonly weakness and discord somewhere, marring the general effectiveness. But, of course, the aim of the minister should be towards the perfection of the whole; and he who aims steadily and works carefully towards this end will often attain, even with inferior abilities, a much more desirable result than he who throws his whole strength into one of the acts,

the preaching say, to the comparative neglect of the others.

Young ministers, I may be permitted to say, specially need to be reminded of that fact. So long, indeed, as they are licentiates in quest of a settlement, and particularly when candidates on leets, they are not very likely to overlook it. But when a young man is placed in a parish where the general ministerial work is heavy, and when he has, say, two sermons to prepare for each Sabbath, there is a sore temptation on him comparatively to neglect preparation for any part of public worship except the preaching. If he yield to the temptation he falls into a serious fault, which will lead to the formation of most deplorable and improper habits in the conduct of public worship, and to spiritual insensibility and deadness. Every one who is placed in these circumstances, and consequently exposed to this temptation, will do well, I think, instead of beginning his preparation for Sunday with his sermons, and leaving for preparation for the other parts of worship only what of time remains when they are finished,—which is likely enough to be none at all,—to do just the reverse, to begin with these others, and to leave to the last what he cannot help giving a fairly sufficient measure of time and strength to, if he is to accomplish it at all.

But a minister has not only to be on his guard

against failure in this matter on his own part, but he ought also to stir up his people to the discharge of their duty. No minister should be long placed over a congregation without faithfully setting forth to them the privileges and the obligations of God's people in relation to public worship, and to its various functions. Reminding them from time to time of these is a duty specially incumbent on him as being specially responsible for the oversight of all that is said, sung, or done in the House of God in which he ministers.

The devotional exercises of worship are praise and prayer. A few words first as to the former.

There can be little doubt that this is the part of public worship to which ministers, as a rule, attend least. Perhaps not a few of them even feel and act as if the precentor or leader of the choir were chiefly responsible for it; as if the service of praise were specially, if not exclusively, his department. Let ministers beware of falling into this error. The minister is primarily and supremely responsible for the whole service of worship. It is necessary for the right ordering of worship that he should have the control of the whole. He has no right to assign to another any part of the authority or power requisite to the proper discharge of his own duty. I have known of churches where the precentor and choir

expected, as a matter of course, that the choice of several of the psalms to be sung should lie with them; but I confess that I cannot conceive that a minister who has an adequate idea of the importance of careful arrangement and harmony in the service of worship will allow anything of the kind. It may be of great moment, for example, both as regards the effect of the sermon and the spirit in which the psalm is sung, that the sermon and the psalm which follows it should be rightly related; but how can they be so if he who preaches the sermon does not also choose the psalm?

Praise—which consecrates to the service of religion the two noblest arts, music and poetry, and in which the soul may find unspeakable help and joy—should ever have an ample place in our public worship, owing to its power of producing right feeling both towards God and man,—of softening hardness and dispelling coldness of heart,—of melting down the ruggedness of unkind passions,—of kindling high and generous aspirations, and of giving sweet expression to delightful and devout emotions.

The minister must seek to have all due interest himself in this part of worship, and to excite such interest throughout his congregation. His aim must be to have his congregation as a whole join with heart and soul in celebrating the mercies of God. It is a poor ambition to seek to have

good music in your church if the music be not that of your church but merely of a choir or of a small section of the people. Music in which a congregation cannot generally join is out of place in the worship of a congregation. So-called improvements in the service of praise which tend to convert a congregation into mere listeners to music are no real improvements but the reverse, however excellent they may be in themselves, or if they were introduced where they had a contrary effect. The best service of praise is that in which a congregation does its best to praise God, not that which will gratify most a musical amateur. But that a congregation may be got to do its best in this matter, the minister of the congregation will require to show a hearty interest in classes for the practice of psalmody, in the musical training of the young, and in the efforts of those who are willing and able to assist in improving this part of worship.

Even as regards the mere choice, however, of what has to be sung the responsibility of a minister is considerable; and it is not lessened by the fact that his duty has been made much more easy since the introduction of Hymnals or Hymn Books. There is now no excuse for an inappropriate selection of pieces to be sung. The first psalm or hymn should, as a general rule, be a direct invocation to God, a direct expression of

our reverence and love to Him, and of our trust in His grace and mercy. Words like—

“O thou my soul, bless God the Lord ;
And all that in me is
Be stirred up His holy name
To magnify and bless”—

spoken and sung with heartfelt expression, are wonderfully fitted to induce a worshipping frame of mind. The last psalm or hymn should follow up the sermon. The psalms or hymns which come between ought to be selected with a view to making of the service a consistent, harmonious, and effective whole.

Many of the psalms far surpass in the prime elements of strength, directness, and simplicity, almost any of the hymns, and they should receive a due place, a large place, in the service of song. On the other hand, nothing should be selected from the psalms which falls distinctly below the demands of Christian piety. In the Church of England the Psalter is sung boldly through from beginning to end. I do not admire that boldness. There are psalms in the singing of which I would not join on any consideration. Then, there are hymns which, on account of the very intensity of Christian feeling expressed in them, can only be sung honestly by any general body of believers in rare seasons.

The minister is bound to warn his people of the danger of singing before God thoughtlessly, and he is to beware lest he lead them into temptation by putting into their mouths words which they cannot truthfully use.

The reading of a portion of Scripture is much more like Apostolic preaching than the delivery of a modern sermon. It has the same end as the sermon, while it possesses [an authority to which the sermon can lay no claim. It is primary; the sermon is secondary. It is what is permanent in the religious instruction given by the Church, while the sermon being designed to illustrate, enforce, and apply it, varies with the wants and circumstances of those to whom it is addressed. It is not in the sermon but in the Word of God itself that people should seek first to find the fundamental principles and outstanding facts of the Gospel. The preached word must always support itself on the written word, and can never without usurpation displace it. It is utterly wrong that any man's word should be listened to with greater interest than the Word of God.

To guard against this error, or to correct it when formed, every minister of the Word ought to choose with care and judgment passages of Scripture which will be felt to be appropriate, and he ought to endeavour so to read them as to bring out clearly

correctly, and impressively their meaning. Of course, thus to read them he must previously study them. It is impossible that any man can read properly a chapter which he has hurriedly selected on the Sabbath morning, or perhaps looked up in the vestry just before going to the pulpit. Some men may be able to preach well *ex tempore*, but no man will ever read well *ex tempore*; for good reading means good interpretation, and good interpretation demands thought.

To read the Scriptures aright requires not merely correct articulation, or even elocutionary effectiveness, it requires a thorough understanding of what is read, and such reading as will best convey the sense and feeling of what is read. It requires you, for example, to know on which words to lay emphasis, so as to carry home the thought and sentiment contained in each sentence. And this requires consideration even for the simplest sentences. If in reading, for instance, the first verse of the Gospel of John you lay the emphasis, as almost every one does, on the *was* in each clause, you will of course be heard as far and as distinctly, and the sound of your voice will be as euphonious, as if you laid it where it ought to be, namely, on *the Word* in the first clause, on *with God* in the second, and on *God* in the third; but you will not give prominence and point to what St John meant.

To read the Bible aright demands even, I must further say, that it be studied not only in the English version but also in the Hebrew and Greek. One ignorant of these languages may be a good reader of it in the sense of a good elocutionist, but not in the higher sense of a good interpreter. I would advise you all to adopt it as a rule for yourselves, from the commencement of ministerial work onwards, to read in Hebrew and Greek at least all that you read in church on Sunday; and to do so very closely and carefully.

I think the practice which some ministers have of indulging in running comments and incidental remarks on the passages which they read is not one for general adoption. A few men may have a special tact in that direction quite warranting their adoption of it; but I believe that in the case of all but a few the effect is not good. It is extremely likely greatly to spoil the reading. God's Word is for the most part so clear that if properly read it will speak with most effect where left to speak for itself.

A minister may well strive earnestly to discharge aright this simple, but at the same time most important, duty of the public reading of God's Word. For if this duty be preceded by careful preparation and prayer, and seriously and appropriately performed, who can doubt that it

may be as effective in the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints as the preaching of any sermon?

The exercises of worship which may be called devotional as distinguished from instructional are praise and prayer. I have made some remarks on the former, and now pass to the latter.

What I would wish you especially to recognise is that public prayer is the most difficult exercise of worship; and at least the exercise of worship which we are most apt not to realise to be so difficult as it actually is. It needs, of course, the preparation of the habitually prayerful and Godward life; but it needs also constant special effort. All true prayer is intense prayer, demanding that every faculty of mind and heart should be in full activity.

Probably prayer in public worship should seldom be wholly extemporaneous; few men having the power to express in simple, direct, appropriate words the wants not of himself only but of a multitude of his fellows, without careful meditation and preparation. Any amount of meditation and preparation needful to enable one to acquire this power, needful to enable one from Sabbath to Sabbath to lead a congregation to the throne of grace and to give true utterance to the desires which they must feel if consciously in God's

presence, ought to be joyfully undertaken; for prayer is the very soul of worship, and on its character depends chiefly the worth or worthlessness, the success or failure, of the entire service.

Do not aim primarily at *fluency* in prayer. That may be obtained by an almost mechanical mastery of certain stock phrases, and it is often the sign of inward irreverence and prayerlessness. Aim at absolute *sincerity* in prayer, although doing so should make your words faltering and slow; aim at so identifying yourself with those whose devotions you lead that all of them will feel your prayer to be their prayer; aim at so directly and closely communing with God that every wish except for His approval and gracious response will be excluded from your mind. So long as you keep this aim steadily before you, you may dispense with a multitude of cautions against such faults as prolixity, artificial rhetoric, undue familiarity, vain repetitions, etc., for the sense of the Divine presence will of itself purify your prayers from these stains and defects.

Dr Taylor of New York has admirably said in his "Yale Lectures": "If any one should be overwhelmed with a sense of his own unfitness to lead the devotions of others, let him take comfort in the thought that they who have such feelings are most commonly those who excel in this exercise.

The poet Cowper shrunk almost from the sound of his own voice, and yet when he led in that little prayer-meeting which was held in the great house of Olney, it is the testimony of those who heard him that no one ever prayed like him. He who knows that he has a gift in this direction, has in reality no excellence in it, for the consciousness of it mars its glory. He who is eager to lay hold of God, and seeks to rise to ever closer communion with Him, mourning all the while that he is so far from his ideal, is likely to be nearer to it than he wots of. He sees not the shining of his own face, but the people feel that he is 'talking' with God. Take comfort, then, for fluency is not always fervour ; and always in prayer there is more real power in the hesitancy of a burdened heart than in the easy utterance of stock phrases. If the heart be in the prayer, other things will right themselves by degrees. But nothing will compensate for the absence of that."

Each man should be carefully on his guard against faults in the manner and matter of prayer, primarily, of course, because they are very serious faults, but also because in regard to them he is likely to be left almost entirely to his own good sense and feeling, his own judgment, his own criticism. They are faults of a kind which no one cares to point out to a man ; which reverent and

pious persons, the best judges, shrink from speaking about at all.

Prayer is in itself so serious and solemn a thing that to take up a critical attitude in relation to it, and dwell on faults which disfigure and mar it, is very likely to do more harm than good,—to favour irreverence rather than to promote devotion. Therefore each man should be in regard to it so much the more suspicious and jealous of himself. This is a matter in which it is emphatically and especially true that no kind of criticism is comparable in value to self-criticism. And the need of realising this is immensely increased by the fact that all faults in prayer spring directly from the same root, the state of heart of the man who prays, insufficient realisation of the true nature and aims of prayer. They must be seen, felt, and corrected by the same heart which makes them.

A man fully conscious of being in God's presence, of having communion with Him, and of being privileged to ask not only for himself but for all his fellow-worshippers the blessings of which they stand infinitely in need, will not multiply useless words; will not indulge in vague rhapsodies, in flights of imagination, in anything which tends to self-display; will not compose a meditation or an oration; will not be otherwise

than simple, natural, and direct in language, and humble, reverent, and earnest in manner and spirit.

I have spoken of praise, prayer, and the reading of Scripture as parts of public worship. I have now to make some remarks as to preaching.

All attempts to depreciate the value of preaching may safely be regarded as foolish. Preaching may, indeed, easily be of a kind which is of little or no value. No preacher is entitled to regard *his preaching* as necessarily valuable, as above criticism, or should be unwilling to acknowledge and profit by any reasonable criticism. The preaching of individuals may be very faulty and ineffective, and every individual who has to preach should be so conscious of his own insufficiency as anxiously to strive to make his preaching as good and beneficial as he can. But whenever preaching answers in any fair measure to what it ought to be, to what it has been ordained and designed to be, it must be a mighty power for good, and will amply vindicate itself and all who preach aright.

The prophets who prepared the way for the Gospel were preachers. Christ was the greatest and the best of preachers. Christianity gained its first and most decisive triumphs through preaching. In all ages since which have been

ages of earnest Christian life, that life has been evoked and invigorated by faithful and living preaching.

The character of preaching must be determined by its aim. Its worth must be measured by its fitness to accomplish its true purpose. And the aim or purpose of every sermon should be either to convince and convert unbelievers or to contribute to the spiritual improvement of believers. The Christian preacher must seek to persuade those who are indifferent or hostile to Christ to turn to Him in faith and love; and he must not be content that those who are in any measure Christian should remain ignorant of any essential Christian truth or devoid of any Christian grace, but must labour to help them to attain "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"—unto a complete maturity both in knowledge of the faith and in practical conformity to the will of God.

The design of preaching is only to be accomplished through setting forth Christ Himself as the great object of the soul's love and worship. All true preaching must be essentially preaching Christ. It is presenting Christ to the contemplation of the soul as being to it what He really is. This is the great immediate design of preaching, through which it can alone accomplish other

ends; through which alone, especially, it can accomplish its ultimate end. Christ in His Person, Work, and Kingdom; Christ as revealing God the Father through the teaching of the prophets, through His own incarnation and atonement and their consequences, through His Apostles and through the guidance and government of His Church and through His gift of the Holy Spirit and all spiritual gifts; Christ in all His offices, and in all His excellences: this is the grand theme, many-sided yet one and indivisible, of Christian preaching. It is only in so far as things can be looked at in relation to Christ, and through the medium of the light which shines from Him, that the Christian preacher has any call or right to deal with them.

Let him not fancy that his work as a preacher will thus be confined within a narrow sphere. "Christ"—that is a great and comprehensive word. An Apostle tells us to "do *all things* in the name of Christ." The Christian preacher has to show his hearers how they may do so, and how they may walk with Christ, and live with Him in all the relationships of life. "Preaching Christ" is not, as some seem to fancy, simply repeating over and over again certain general statements about Christ; it is not that so-called "preaching Christ crucified," which is, in reality, crucifying Christ

by preaching, since it sets forth only a mean and mutilated simulacrum of Christ. It is a vast work: it is not only to declare all that Christ did and suffered, but it is to apply what He did and suffered to human life in its entire length and breadth, in all its issues, in all its relations. It is to seek to make the whole of life sacred, to make the whole of life Christian, by bringing Christ, so to speak, into it, so that the spirit of Christ will shine forth in all that men do; in their religious exercises indeed, but not less also in their daily business and amusements; in all that they do as individuals, as members of families and of general society, of the State and the Church. Nothing less than all this is implied in preaching Christ, and earth can show no work more capacious or as glorious.

If such be the design of preaching, we may see at once what we ought not to preach. We have no right to preach what is merely peculiar to ourselves,—our own notions, feelings, likes or dislikes, so far as they are only ours. We are bound to strive to enter into the mind of Christ, and to make that known; to keep in the shade ourselves, and to let the light fall as purely and fully as possible on Christ and His message. “We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord,” says St Paul; and his words may well be the motto of every preacher.

There should also be no preaching of mere philosophy, science, secular history and literature, politics, social theories, or morality, divorced from Christianity. There are many who fancy that the pulpit would gain greatly in power if ministers would only discourse more about science and philosophy, nature and history, political and social reform, and the various so-called questions of the day. Ineffably silly such people are. Surely for six days of the week we have quite enough of all that ; and surely there is something more important even than all that. The power of the pulpit will most certainly not be increased by ministers forsaking their own glorious work, the preaching of Christ, for that of lecturers on lower themes, or of politicians, or of journalists, of all of whom there is no scarcity in this country at the present time. The power of the pulpit lies in Christ ; and will be strong or feeble according as He is faithfully and zealously or faithlessly and coldly preached.

The preacher may, I fully admit, have good reason to refer occasionally to all the things which I have mentioned, and often to some of them. A wise preacher, however, will never follow applications so far that the principle of them is in danger of being lost sight of. He will keep the central and unifying object of the Gospel always clearly in his own view and before the view of his hearers. He will feel

that it is only in so far as things can be looked at in relation to Christ and by help of the light which His life and death shed upon them that he has anything to do with them; and that with Christ Himself he has far most to do.

Young preachers are specially apt to bring forward in their sermons subjects which they had better leave untouched—subjects not of sufficient religious importance to find a place there—subjects perhaps of a controverted and uncertain character—subjects of which they have not acquired a competent knowledge—subjects which cannot be treated before those who have not through special studies acquired a special acquaintance with them without doing positive injury. Much might be said in this connection about the folly of many young preachers and some old ones. I merely say that preachers in regard to preaching, as well as other men in regard to other things, require always to bear in mind the great and profound declaration: “But one thing is needful.” Realise what it is to preach Christ, faithfully, truly, comprehensively, in all His excellences, offices, and relationships, and you will not fail to see what are “the many things” which you are *not* to preach.

A true estimate of the proper end of preaching and of its fitness as a means to attain that end is a primary and indispensable qualification of successful

preaching. That end is to bring men to God in Christ: into a right relationship of mind, heart, and life to Him; to increase the blessedness and intimacy of this Divine fellowship; to transform and beautify them, and build them up until, by a mysterious and Divine assimilation, they are in all respects conformed to the character and example of Christ. This is the design which all preaching should have in view; and the true test of successful preaching is its adaptedness to accomplish this design.

The *self-satisfaction* of the preacher is no true test. That may in many cases be very easily gained. If he have a certain measure of self-conceitedness, and a defective conception of the purpose of preaching, he may be abundantly satisfied when he has reason to feel self-condemned and humiliated.

The *satisfaction of the hearers* is no true test either. They are often pleased when they should not be so; and displeased when they have no good reason to be so. Congregations not unfrequently choose the worst preachers on their leets, quite convinced that they are the best. Glittering superficiality is often more esteemed than solid worth. Even almost absolute unintelligibility is at times attractive and admired.

Once, happening to be in Glasgow one wet Sunday forenoon, I went into the nearest church. There

was a crowd of carriages at the door, there was a crowded congregation within, and the sermon was given by the minister himself. It was listened to seemingly with rapt attention and interest. But I not only confess that I understood virtually nothing at all of that sermon, but I am convinced that, whatever they might suppose, the preacher and all his hearers were in the same position, since there was, in fact, nearly nothing intelligible in it. There was there success in verbal articulation and modulation of voice, wonderful success in the use or abuse of the dictionary, and remarkable success in attracting a mass of wealthy people who, doubtless, supposed themselves to be intelligent; but, notwithstanding all such success, it was assuredly far worse than worthless. It was mischievous.

This leads me to my second remark, which is that the consciousness of insufficiency must lie at the foundation of everything like an approximately right conducting of the ordinances of our holy religion.

The consciousness of insufficiency in ourselves should, of course, so far accompany all very serious work, and very specially the work of the ministry at every stage; but the reason why I mention it here and now is that the work of the ministry is one which a man can only learn to perform aright by a constant watchfulness and continuous exertion

which must have their root in self-distrust and the sense of unworthiness. An intending minister may receive from a teacher of ripe experience and reflection advice and instruction as to the work before him which will prove most useful. Pastoral theology is a very appropriate subject of attention to a Divinity student. But still how to perform the work of the ministry must always be chiefly learned by the actual doing of the work ; and if you begin by thinking you can do it well—if you do not start with your minds emptied of all self-conceited notions as to your power of doing it—if you are not from the outset far stricter critics of your own sermons, etc., than your hearers are likely to be, the probability is that you will never do otherwise than ill.

It augurs badly for a young minister's future if he is satisfied with his own pulpit services. He ought to assume it as axiomatic that every young man has in this sphere much to amend and much to acquire before he reaches such a degree of excellence as is attainable by him. He may be sure that if his ministerial life prove really one of growing and expanding power, three or four years even will not elapse before he regards the efforts of the first year of his ministry with deep dissatisfaction. Excellence in any practical work is only to be attained by a process of continually improving practice, and only those improve who sincerely feel their need of improvement.

I must add, however, that efficiency of the kind to which I refer requires for its attainment more than any definite efforts, however incessantly and strenuously repeated. It needs a growing, deepening, mellowing of the whole spiritual life. Sermons rich in edification, and prayers truly expressive of varied and deep spiritual wants, are fruits which even trees of the Lord's planting will only bear when fully developed and matured under the influences of grace. Particular acts of praise, prayer, and preaching must be characterised by the qualities of the general religious experience which underlies them. There is a great, and, I am inclined to think, growing danger that young men begin looking to how this or that study or mental exercise will tell on their fitness for the pulpit, when they should be unselfishly engrossed on the study or exercise itself. The mistake is a most serious one.

It is not so that great or even good preachers are formed. They form themselves before they form their style of preaching. Substance with them precedes appearance, instead of appearance being a substitute for substance. They learn to know truth before they think of presenting it. They give themselves up in the formative period of their lives with chivalrous devotion to ideal ends. They learn and study with a genuine enthusiasm for truth, knowledge, and science without hurriedly and

anxiously asking what advantage they will be to them in the future. They acquire a solid basis for the manifestation of their love of souls through a loving, comprehensive, absorbing study of the love which saves souls, for to love it is to love all its ends, and to become acquainted with it as we ought is to get into living sympathy with the mind of God. And they are right, and those who haste towards the pulpit by the shortest and directest road they can see are quite wrong. Seemingly short ways are often found to be in fact and practice the longest. "Raw haste is half-sister to delay." There is no surer sign of the radical incompetence of a man for the ministry than his haste to enter it when intrinsically unformed, unfitted, unfurnished for its requirements, and merely outwardly, artificially, superficially got up so as to dazzle and delude at first sight and first hearing. The only true road to such a ministry as will meet the requirements of our age and country is the road of patient meditation, of toilsome study, of persistent and strenuous self-formation and self-culture of intellect, heart, and character.

IV.

APOLOGETICS AND DOGMATICS, HOW
RELATED.

GENTLEMEN,—Desiring to treat of a subject which should be interesting and useful to all students of theology, nothing suggests itself to me as more likely to be so than a consideration of what is implied in the study of Christian doctrine. This is the subject, therefore, to which I shall ask your attention for a short time. Let me begin, then, by saying that we must esteem doctrine itself more than the defence of doctrine,—that we must subordinate the vindication of the faith to the presentation of its objects and the exposition of its contents,—that we cannot reasonably put what is called Apologetics on the same level with what is called Dogmatics.

It may be well to emphasise this fact a little, for we are undoubtedly in danger of forgetting it. We live at a time when apologetical tasks are forced upon us. From all sides Christian truth is attacked; on all sides there are systems presented which claim to be substitutes for Christianity. It is, in consequence, simply impossible for a theologian in the present day not to be a man

of war. The sword and shield are unfortunately instruments which he requires very often to handle. A large part of his activity must be devoted to defending what he regards as the true system and to assailing hostile systems. It is useless to complain of this, because it is inevitable; it is foolish to ignore it; it is cowardly to shrink from meeting the responsibilities which it involves. But there is a grave danger connected with this state of things — a danger which the theologian cannot perceive too clearly nor guard against too carefully. It is the danger of coming to regard the relation of the truth to unbelief as more important than its relation to faith, or even than its internal self-consistency and essential character; the danger of ceasing to study and value sufficiently the truth itself, owing to being engrossed with the consideration of what unbelievers are thinking and saying about it; in a word, it is the danger of placing Apologetics on an equality with, or even above, Dogmatics. That this is a real danger I need not spend time in attempting to prove; and that serious evils must result if it be not adequately guarded against, a very few brief remarks will be sufficient to prove.

Observe, then, first, that the error consists in ignoring to a large extent the difference which exists between the detection of error and the

discovery of truth. No wise apologist of the faith stands merely on the defensive. Error must be attacked wherever truth has to be defended. The best way of defending truth is often to begin by attacking error. A defence is never complete until every assailant is overthrown. Since the work of Apologetics is thus of necessity largely negative and destructive, when that work is over-estimated while that of Dogmatics—the systematic exhibition of positive Christian truth—is comparatively neglected and undervalued, encouragement is given to the delusion that the detection of error is as important an attainment as the discovery of truth. I know few delusions either more prevalent or more pernicious. It is one of the worst signs of our time that there should be so many persons more than content to have as to the most important concerns a merely negative knowledge. They profess themselves to be Agnostics, and pride themselves on their want of convictions. They know, or fancy that they know, that common opinions are erroneous, and in virtue of this real or imaginary knowledge they suppose themselves entitled to look down upon the mass of their fellow-men with contempt. They take a pleasure in detecting falsehood, and are puffed up with conceit by their supposed success in doing this, while they are extremely deficient in the love of positive truth, and fail to realise

that only such truth can sustain mental life and enable human beings to do their proper work in the world. Man cannot live by negations or by his knowledge of falsehood. It is only positive truth which can nourish, strengthen, and guide the soul, and the power of detecting error derives its importance solely from its connection with the power of discovering such truth. The detection of error can rationally be regarded only as a painful necessity; the discovery of truth is alone a glorious privilege. Error we must know because we are fallen and mortal, easily hurt and apt to go astray; truth is essentially precious to us, because we are spiritual beings, and truth is the sustenance of spirits, the *pabulum animi*.

Further, when Apologetics is preferred to Dogmatics a means is preferred to an end, and this never can be either reasonable or beneficial. Apologetics even in its highest or positive function is simply an instrument. Its chief purpose is gained when it has proved that Christianity deserves to be accepted. But it will profit us little to make this out, if we merely rest in the conclusion we have reached, instead of proceeding actually to accept Christianity by striving to understand it with the intellect and to realise it in the life. The defence of anything derives its importance from the importance of what is defended. To contend earnestly for what

one yet otherwise treats with neglect or contempt is extremely inconsistent. When theologians devote so much time to defending Christianity that they have none left for the fresh and profound study of it, their vigorous assaults on the unbelief of others become severe censures on the lethargy of their own faith. They even lay themselves open to the suspicion of in reality setting but a slight value on what they make so much noise about.

It is also obvious that the exclusive or extreme culture of Apologetics will not be really and permanently profitable to it. All judicious Apologists have come to be convinced that the most effective vindications of Christian doctrine are those which are made, as it were, from within—from a full comprehension of the doctrine—from a profound internal appreciation of it. In numerous instances the best defence of Christian truth is the correct exposition of it. Very often no other defence is needed. Where a doctrine is not thoroughly understood no successful defence of it is possible. The only apologies of any value for doctrines like those of original sin, predestination, and the atonement, must spring necessarily from truthful and searching investigations into the natures of the doctrines themselves.

Then, again, the fault to which I refer must manifestly be prejudicial to Christian Dogmatics.

When apologetic interests exert an excessive force theologians are apt to content themselves with the truth which they have inherited, and to make no effort to add to it. They are apt even to be content with what they can easily defend, and to let go much that is valuable, merely because it is troublesome to retain it. They neglect, at least, to prosecute the labours which are requisite to bring to light the more hidden treasures of the Divine Word. This, it is hardly necessary to say, is most hurtful to the Church. In order that a Church may be truly prosperous its dogmatic theology must be truly progressive. It is by an ever-growing appropriation and application of the truth which God has revealed that a Church advances towards the realisation of its ideal and mission; and the appropriation and application of truth presuppose its apprehension. A Church which rests satisfied with the acquisitions which former generations have drawn from Scripture—which does not seek to add to the old treasure stored up in its creeds, catechisms, and dogmatic systems new treasures—is a Church which has fallen into error and into danger. It may be orthodox—it may have espoused as yet no grievous positive falsehood, but its whole attitude towards the truth is a wrong one; it is at heart disloyal to the truth and dead to the love of it; and once a Church is dead and disloyal to the

truth it will soon be dead and disloyal to all that is good.

When a Church loses that love of the truth as it is in Christ which constrains it to seek in Him for ever new treasures of wisdom and knowledge—when it comes to look with suspicion on new discoveries and to discountenance the spirit of independent and original investigation—when theological research and theological instruction are the best things it strives to encourage—that Church is not far from the terrible condition in which errors are justified and lies embraced; and if that condition be reached the moral corruption within will speedily make itself manifest without. If a Church surrender the love of the truth as it is in Jesus, it will not long even seemingly practise Christian justice and charity. If it hold fast to it, its theology will not remain stationary, but continually become a more truthful and adequate expression of God's revelation. The light and the life of a Church are dependent on each other. Its life depends on its appropriation of light. That light comes primarily, of course, from God as He has revealed Himself; but Dogmatic Theology is the reflection in science of the Church's illumination by the Revelation and Spirit of God, and where the illumination has increased the reflection cannot remain unchanged. It has been well said that "a Church which ceases to theologise ceases in the same

moment to grow, while conversely, from the constant action and reaction that connect knowledge and practice in all moral organisms, a Church whose life grows dull will also cease to theologise aright."

Nothing can have been farther from my intention in the remarks just made than to discourage or disparage in any way the study of Apologetics. That study is most important, and never was more obviously important than at present. The study of Dogmatics is, however, even more important; and it has seemed to me desirable to indicate this just because, owing to the operation of temporary causes, there is considerable danger of its being overlooked.

I may now proceed briefly to point out what is implied in the study of doctrine—of any and every doctrine. First, then, there is required a comprehensive and careful study of what Scripture has taught bearing on the doctrine discussed. The whole of genuine Christian theology lay in germ in the Christian Scriptures, and no doctrine—no dogmatic affirmation—is to be received which cannot be traced back to the Scriptures. But a comprehensive study of what the Scriptures teach bearing on any doctrine is almost always a difficult and laborious task. It is not one which can be accomplished either by a hasty collection or a rough classification of texts, but one which demands the

exercise of all the powers and resources of criticism. Unless a theologian have an adequate knowledge of Biblical Criticism and practically apply it, he will certainly take false readings for true, and erroneous translations for correct—that is, he will take for facts what are not facts. For obviously, unless a passage be authoritative and correctly interpreted it can be no real proof of Christian doctrine. In natural science great stress is justly laid on what Bacon calls “the rejection or purging of instances,” and what this process is to physical science an honest criticism and discriminating exegesis are to a theology founded on Scripture.

In what way is it that the doctrines of the incarnation and the atonement, for example, are chiefly assailed in the present day? Thus. They are first denied to have been taught by Christ Himself. The Synoptic Gospels, it is contended, can alone be appealed to for information as to what He really taught; the Gospel ascribed to St John is rejected as unreliable; then, it is pointed out that there are few utterances in the Synoptics which can be held to imply the doctrines in question, and an effort is made to explain away those which there are; and, finally, a view is given of the growth of the ideas of the early Church, and of the formation of the New Testament, which deprives the Apostolic writings of any title to be regarded as authoritative.

An attack of this kind is based on and carried on by criticism, and can, of course, only be repelled by criticism.

Then, that we may know what has really been revealed on any point, we must study the whole process of revelation so far as it throws light on that point. We must trace each truth through all the books of Scripture regarded as the record of a revelation which was our organic and historical whole. And in doing this we must not consider merely the passages which explicitly refer to the truth considered; we must also take into account what bears on it merely implicitly or indirectly. To attempt to evolve a doctrine, say, of the Church merely from passages which directly and expressly speak of the Church is most unwise. What sort of doctrine of the Church can you hope to frame if you exclude from consideration the teaching of Scripture regarding, for example, justification by faith and the work of the Holy Spirit? Have you adequately refuted the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Church when you have proved the inaccuracy of the Roman Catholic interpretation of certain texts in which the word "church" occurs, but neglected to show that underlying the whole doctrine, and naturally producing the perversities of interpretation complained of, there are serious misconceptions as to the essential

character of Christ's Kingdom and Gospel? Or, to put a more special question, can the distinction to which Protestants generally and justly attach so much importance and which Roman Catholics so strenuously refuse to recognise—the distinction between the visible and the invisible Church—be conclusively derived merely from particular explicit texts? Or, is it not rather a legitimate, yea, necessary, consequence of the Protestant view of the nature of the plan of salvation, and its denial a logical consequence of want of true insight into that plan?

There can be no true understanding—no true elaboration—of any doctrine without a knowledge of revelation in its essential nature, its distinctive spirit, and its entire development. The chief weakness of doctrinal systems hitherto has been that they have frequently rested their conclusions on texts chosen without principle from all parts of the canon, uncritically severed from their context, arbitrarily associated, and loosely interpreted, instead of on the truths elicited in accordance with the laws of a sound method from the whole teaching of Scripture. The fault is less excusable now than it was in former days because a better method is known—the method which has given rise to, and which is exemplified in, Biblical Theology, understood in the usual modern sense of the term.

By this Biblical Theology is meant not a theology founded on the Bible, which would only be another name for Systematic Theology or Christian Dogmatics, but a purely historical discipline, a study which does not assume that the Bible is either a source or a standard of truth,—which does not set forth the ideas which it exhibits as true in themselves, but only as truly in the Bible,—which seeks no other truth than truth of exposition,—which aims at doing no more than giving a true account of what are the religious ideas in the Bible, of how they are related as set forth in the Bible, and of what their history has been so far as that is to be ascertained from the Bible.

In fact, Biblical Theology is the ultimate direct result and the most comprehensive and perfect product of Biblical exegesis. It is, at the same time, the scientific basis of Christian Dogmatics which is bound to accept and utilise every general result at which exegesis arrives. Unfortunately this Biblical Theology, which is the connecting link between Christian Dogmatics and Biblical Criticism, is a missing link in our Scottish Theological Halls. It is one of the most recently constituted departments of theological science, and no provision has been made for teaching it. Were the University or the Church or individual munificence to give the professors in the Hall assistants, who might

be employed in examining under professorial superintendence, the defect referred to might be supplied at no great expense; but until that happens, if it ever happens, students of theology must endeavour to make themselves acquainted with Biblical Theology as best they can by private reading, and professors of Systematic Theology must endeavour habitually to act on the conviction that at the basis of every Dogmatic investigation there is a Biblico-Theological investigation.

I would remark next that a thorough theological knowledge of any doctrine cannot be attained except through a knowledge of its history. It may seem as if it must be otherwise,—as if the best way to arrive at true doctrine would be to go to Scripture only, and strive by prayer, meditation, and study to evolve our theology from it, regardless of what men in former ages had done. But a very little reflection should be sufficient to show us how unwise this notion is. It is just as absurd as would be the opinion that a student of physical science should have nothing to do with text-books or the discoveries of Galileo and Newton, Faraday, Helmholtz, and Thomson, but should go direct to Nature in his own unaided strength and with the independence and impartiality of a perfectly empty mind. To proceed thus in any scientific study displays merely a silly presumption which is sure speedily to punish

itself. Every science consists of a body of truths which have been slowly collected and gradually combined by the labours of generation after generation. On these truths the student of the science must energetically employ his thoughts, so that they may be to him not dead traditions but real personal possessions: he is not, however, to suppose that his own thoughts can be substitutes for these truths, or that he could have discovered these truths himself. No single man, no single generation, but only the collective mind of Christendom, labouring through more than eighteen centuries, and always to some extent enlightened and guided by the Holy Spirit, could have evolved from Scripture the system of Christian Doctrine of which we are now in possession; and if any one imagine that he may safely ignore or reject all that has thus been accomplished, and construct a system entirely his own which will be better, or at least as good, he must be egregiously blinded by his own self-conceit.

I for my part have no faith in the originality which is so great that it can dispense with knowledge, and make a man extremely enlightened while it allows him to remain extremely ignorant. I for my part can never feel that I have attained to any real comprehension of a doctrine until I know how it has grown up, out of what

elements it has been formed, from what motives and reasons, what errors have been committed in connection with it, how these errors have been detected and refuted, etc. It is only, I am convinced, when the individual mind thus follows, as it were, in the track of the collective mind, and learns alike from the successes and failures of the past, that it can obtain a comprehensive view of any doctrine or contribute to its further development. I attach, therefore, the very greatest importance in the study of doctrine to the study of its history. The past is no mere desolate graveyard. It is the seed-field of countless future harvests, and only those who cultivate it diligently will reap abundantly.

The study of the history of doctrine is the connecting link between Church History and Christian Dogmatics, but I am afraid that it is also a missing link in our Theological Halls. Indeed, in these venerable institutions there are, perhaps, more links missing than existing. The late Principal Cunningham, of the Free Church College, Edinburgh, was so impressed with a sense of the value of the history of doctrine, that he made the teaching of it his main occupation as a professor of Church History, and the result was a work on Historical Theology which displays great erudition and logical ability. But, of course, the primary and chief object

of a Church historian should be to give the history of the Church, not the history of doctrine,—a narrative of events, not a disquisition on the growth of opinions; and this primary and chief object is so enormously large that he may well be pardoned if he finds that he can attend to no secondary or subordinate object, however intrinsically interesting and important. No one has a right to expect that he will be taught the history of dogmas in a class of Church History; but a knowledge of the history of dogma is indispensable to a scientific knowledge—such a knowledge as the trained theologian should possess—of dogma itself.

My third observation would be, that in the study of doctrine particular attention ought to be given to the statements of doctrine contained in the creeds and confessions of the Churches. In Germany many theologians go to an extreme in this respect. They entirely subordinate theology to Churches and creeds. They represent it as a branch of historical science—as the systematic analysis and exposition of the faith of a Christian community existing at a definite time and place—as the scientific self-consciousness of the Church to which the theologian belongs. According to this view, a creed which embodies the faith and expresses the consciousness of a Church is the very object of which theology treats, a Lutheran creed being an adequate basis for a Lutheran theology

and a Calvinistic creed for a Calvinistic theology. I regard this view as very erroneous. The Church is dependent on the truth as it is in Christ, not the truth on the Church. The whole visible Church may err, and has erred for generations, otherwise there would have been no need for the Reformation. With what right or confidence, then, can any particular Church put forward its faith, its self-consciousness, as the basis of theological science? The only true basis of Christian theology is the original revelation of God in Christ; not the impression which it has produced on the minds of a society of fallible men, nor any production of a society of fallible men. Still, there is a truth underlying the error in the view to which I refer: it would never otherwise have been adopted, as it has been, by men like Schleiermacher, Twisten, Hagenbach, Rothe, Martensen, Schweizer, etc. And the truth which has been exaggerated into error is just that the beliefs which are found to satisfy, unite, and guide vast communities of men for ages may fairly claim to be entitled to more respectful consideration than the private opinions of individuals. They must be more in accordance, even if erroneous, with human nature; there is a greater presumption in favour of their being true, or at least not wholly false; they have a far greater historical significance; they have a far more powerful practical influence. Probably

no uninspired productions did such vast service, both of a negative and positive kind, to theology and to the Church as the œcumenical creeds, setting forth, as they did, a conception of the Godhead and a conception of the Person of Christ which, when intelligently entertained, make impossible a host of errors and at the same time form the only adequate basis alike of Christian worship and of Christian philosophy. The creeds even of the Roman Church are eminently worthy of the most careful consideration of every theological student. Notwithstanding their deplorable departures from Catholic Christian truth, there is a certain self-consistency and grandeur in their exhibitions of error, both imposing and instructive; while the fact that they are the authoritative statements of doctrine of a society of enormous power, as well as of ancient renown and lofty pretensions—a society with which a living Protestantism must always be at war—should make their study of vital practical interest. Still more requisite is it, of course, that what has been taught in the chief Protestant Confessions of Faith should be thoroughly mastered. Dr Schaff, by his noble work on Creeds and Confessions, has rendered the task as easy as it can well be made, and rendered all theological students deeply indebted to him. It seems to me so desirable that you should understand the doctrine set forth in the Confession of your own

Church, that in treating of any doctrine I shall take occasion either to expound or to examine on the chapter of the Confession which relates to it. For example, in connection with Ecclesiology we shall take up the chapters on Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience, Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day, the Civil Magistrate, the Church, the Communion of Saints, the Sacraments, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Church Censures, Synods and Councils.

After saying this it is necessary to add that creeds, although they formulate and summarise Christian doctrine, are not scientific expositions of doctrine, and can never supply their place; and that the latest and best of them, being mere human compositions, must be faulty and imperfect. No man in his senses will maintain that the Westminster Confession, for example, contains the whole truth of God or is exempt from error. It is enough for the Church's needs if it be as a whole, and so far as it goes, a true exhibition of the principles of Divine Revelation. It professes to be no more; it disclaims for itself and for all things human every pretension to infallibility. Says one who took an active part in the framing of it: "It is pleaded by some that to establish by the law of the land a Confession of Faith is to hold out and shut the door against new light; that as the State and Church have discovered

the evil of divers things which were sometime approved and strengthened by the law of the land, so there may afterward be a discovery made by the light of experience and a further search of the Scripture to make manifest the falsehood of those doctrines which are now received as true: for *αἱ δεύτεραι φροντίδες σοφώτεραι*. . . First of all, I do not deny, but most willingly yield, yea, assert as a most necessary truth, that as our knowledge at its best in this world is imperfect—for we know but in part—so it ought to be our desire and endeavour to grow in the knowledge of the mind of Christ, to seek after more and more light. Secondly, I acknowledge that we may happily come to know the evil of that whereof we knew no evil before, or the good of that in which we knew no good before. Thirdly, I acknowledge that there is oftentimes a great mistake, misunderstanding, error, and unsoundness in the judgment of Christian persons or Churches, so that godly men and true Churches may come to know that to be evil which they sometime thought good, and that to be false which sometime they thought true, or contrariwise; which experience hath taught, and may teach again. Fourthly, I confess it is no shame for an Augustine to write a book of Retractations. It is the duty not only of particular Christians, but of reforming, yea, reformed—yea, the best reformed—Churches, whensoever any error in their doctrine,

or any evil in their government or form of worship, shall be demonstrated to them from the Word of God, to take in and not shut out further light, to embrace the will of Christ held forth to them, and to amend what is amiss, being discovered unto them. Fifthly, I also believe that towards the evening of the world there shall be more light; and 'knowledge shall be increased,' and many hid things in Scripture better understood, and the Spirit of grace and illumination more abundantly poured forth."

Thus wrote George Gillespie. Time has been continually confirming the truth of his words. There has been very great progress made in theology since his day. Entire theological sciences have been created within the last hundred years. In fact, the human mind never worked, perhaps, more energetically or successfully in the fields of theological science than it has been working during the nineteenth century. The theologian, therefore, who would be abreast of his age cannot stop short in his studies at Calvin or at the Confession of Faith, but must make himself acquainted with the most recent writers and the latest researches. He must become familiar with the views of Schleiermacher, of Rothe, of Müller, of Hofmann, of Dorner, and many similar labourers in the sphere of Christian Dogmatics. He must not fancy that even the latest voyages of

discovery have reached the outmost limits of the universe of revealed truth. There are worlds there still to conquer by the human mind divinely guided and enlightened. "There remaineth yet much land to be possessed."

If time had allowed me I should have endeavoured to confirm and illustrate these two positions,—first, that in the study of theological doctrine none of the sources of Divine Knowledge—*i.e.*, the physical creation, the human mind, human history, and Scripture—should be ignored or excluded, underestimated or overestimated, but all ought to be duly considered, and the information supplied by each should be taken in connection with that supplied by the other; and second, that a doctrine can only be reached by a complex process of induction, deduction, and verification. Although both positions, however, are important, I must be content merely to enunciate them.

It may next be observed that no Christian doctrine can be rightly understood except it be looked at in relation to other Christian doctrines, and viewed as occupying a particular place in the Christian system of doctrine. The Christian system is an organic whole, and every truth in it has its appropriate position and function. The system of Christian Dogmatics must reflect in the form of science what the system of Revelation presented in

the form of historical manifestation. Now, undoubtedly, what was central in Revelation—what made it a complete, organic, spiritual whole—was Christ Himself,—Christ who united Divinity and Humanity in His Person—Christ who reconciled Heaven to earth and earth to Heaven by His Life and Death. He who was the centre, yea, the Alpha and Omega of revelation, must be so also of theology. Hence no doctrine of theology can be rightly understood unless when it is apprehended as the expression of a part of the truth which is in Christ, and viewed in relation to His entire manifestation and mission. Any doctrine severed from connection with Him is as a branch detached from the tree whence it derives the life which gives it vigour, fruitfulness, and beauty. Of course, that which unifies everything must be itself a unity. Scripture shows us, accordingly, in Christ's manifestation and work a central principle, namely, the mediatorial principle which reached ultimate realisation in an atoning death. The incarnation, life, miracles, and instruction of Christ all led onwards to the cross; on the cross the work for which He came to earth was finished; from the cross all Christian blessings flow. Only by presenting the perfect offering of atonement for the sins of the whole world did Christ accomplish His mediatorial work of restoring the broken communion between God and Man. It is

to Christ as Mediator, then, that all parts of Christian theology equally refer. Here is the centre of the Christian system, and all the doctrines of the system can only be rightly understood when viewed as antecedents, constituents, or consequences of its centre. "It will not do," remarks Vinet, "to say, This truth, the atonement, is in the Gospel. It will not even do to say, This truth is the most important in the Gospel. What you must say is, This truth is the Gospel itself, and all the rest of the Gospel is only the history, the form, the transcript, or the application of it. This truth is present in every part of the Gospel, just as the blood is present in every part of the human body. To him who comprehends this capital truth, everything recalls, everything reproduces it. Even where another person would never suspect its presence, he sees and feels it. On whatever side he looks, into whatever details he enters, to whatever application he directs his views, he meets and recognises the cross." This being the case, the light of the cross must be "the light of all our seeing" in theology.

I shall now only add that he who would thoroughly understand a Christian doctrine must live by it. A doctrine is only a truth, and Christian doctrine is truth of a kind which is pre-eminently meant to be embodied in the life. He who does Christ's will can alone reasonably

hope to understand His doctrine. He who seeks truth alone or virtue alone will find neither, for they do not exist alone, but in wedded and harmonious union with each other. The worthy student of theology—the worthy candidate for the stewardship of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God—can never be content with the mere culture of the head and growth in knowledge, but must crave still more ardently purification of heart and growth in grace. He must be a man who longs and labours to reach the Divine goal of life. He must be a man who is not merely anxious to know the truth in all its fulness and purity, but also one who is anxious to conform to it, to realise it in his dispositions and actions. He must be one who rejoices to contemplate and is ready to imitate all that is admirable in the saintly and heroic men whose sufferings and achievements are recorded in the pages of history and the annals of the Church; above all, he must be one whose eye is ever fixed with loving adoration on the Captain of his salvation, the Author and Finisher of his faith, the Express Image of God, the Perfect Pattern of Men; and whose deepest desire, whose governing principle, is the ambition of following humbly and faithfully in His footsteps. “It is but a thin, airy knowledge,” says John Smith, the famous Cambridge Platonist, “that is got by mere speculation which is

ushered in by syllogisms and demonstrations; but that which springs forth from true goodness is as Origen speaks, it brings such a Divine light into the soul, as is more clear and convincing than any demonstration. The reason why, notwithstanding all our acute reasons and subtle disputes, truth prevails no more in the world, is, we so often disjoin truth and true goodness, which in themselves can never be disunited; they grow both from the same root, and live in one another. We may, like those in Plato's deep pit, with their faces bended downwards, converse with sounds and shadows; but not with the life and substance of truth, while our souls remain defiled with any vice or lusts."

I conclude. I thank you for having so kindly listened to me; I wish you God-speed and great success in your studies here; and God's guidance through life in practising, proclaiming, and applying the truths of which your studies put you in possession.

V.

TENDENCIES OF THE AGE WITH REFERENCE TO
THE CHURCH AND CLERGY.

GENTLEMEN,—In addressing you this evening my aim is entirely practical. I am not going to discuss any doctrine of Theology, or treat of any controversy known in Church History, or try to answer any question of Old or New Testament Criticism. I take for granted that at this period of the session you are not specially anxious to be drawn into the study of any other doctrines, controversies, or questions than those with which your professors are insisting that you must be acquainted. Hence I shall not ask from you any intellectual exertion whatever, or add in the least to the weight of any intellectual burdens you may have to carry. I wish merely, speaking as a student of theology to younger students of it, to give some advice which may, of course, be all wrong, but which I certainly deem to be true and opportune.

The age in which we live is powerfully affected by certain prevalent tendencies and comprehensive movements of thought which have originated, for the most part, in a remote past, but which have

acquired in the present time a peculiar character, a special significance, and a hitherto unknown force. They tell upon our lives; they control and modify our thoughts. With all of them theology is connected; by all of them it is influenced; and it is important that the student of theology should take up a right attitude towards them.

What that attitude should be precisely and wholly I do not seek to determine, for it would obviously require a discussion of the movements in question such as cannot be undertaken in a single address. But it may be of use to point out that as there is a soul of goodness in them all, it ought to be so far a sympathetic and receptive attitude, and not one of mere aversion and antagonism. My wish, then, is merely to indicate what as students of theology you have to learn from each of the intellectual movements or tendencies referred to in order to profit by them all; and that your theology may be not a narrow theology, which must be a false theology, but a broad theology, which can alone be a true theology.

All who are resolved to enter into the ministry of the Christian Church should be men of wide sympathies and many interests. They should certainly be neither recluses nor chargeable with

narrow-mindedness. Nothing in God's universe which presents itself to them should be wholly indifferent to them. In all nature they should seek to see disclosures of revelation and in all history the operations of providence. And they should be quick to discern the signs of the times, and able to appreciate aright the prevalent tendencies and the movements of thought which are in operation among us. It is not difficult to see in a general way what the right attitude towards them should be. It must obviously be one primarily dictated by a strictly conscientious regard to what it holds to be the truth in Christ, — vitally important religious truth. The Church exists to be a pillar and ground of spiritual truth, and should bear a clear and distinct testimony on its behalf, as also a clear and distinct testimony against what is hostile and dangerous to it. The Church cannot do its duty in relation to such phases of modern thought as agnosticism, pessimism, pantheism, empiricism, rationalism, anarchic or revolutionary socialism, and the like, if it lack the courage and candour required to combat what is false and evil in them.

Now, of these tendencies and movements one of the most conspicuous and noteworthy is the sceptical or Agnostic. It is by no means new, for it attained a wonderful degree of development

in ancient Greece, and has always been manifesting itself in some measure in modern Europe, but it was never more prevalent or plausible, more full of vitality or more varied in its forms, than at present. It is, in essence, an excessive distrust as to the power of the human mind to attain truth—an undue extension of the sphere of doubt and unbelief. As excessive and undue, of course it is to be opposed and avoided—ought to have the error and the evils of it exposed. If that only be done, so far good: but theologians rarely stop there; they generally proceed to take up a wholly unsympathetic and hostile attitude towards it, and so fail to apprehend the truth and the good which underlie it. But it is just this truth and good to which I wish you to give due consideration.

It is the special temptation of religion, and of the teachers and preachers of religion, to exaggerate the merit of belief and faith, and to depreciate and denounce unbelief and doubt. Religion springs from belief; its strength is the strength of faith; it spreads and flourishes through the enthusiasm begotten of belief or faith. Belief precedes doubt. Uncultured man believes easily; the lower religions show his extraordinary credulity. The greatest and highest religions equally appeal at their origin to the faculty of faith, and with a success shown by the

conversion of multitudes at once. As on trust in Christ all Christianity depends, so on trust in Mohammed all Mohammedanism depends, and on trust in Buddha all Buddhism. Faith has raised all these religions, and is their life, and the life of all that has been evolved from them. There is thus abundant testimony to the power of faith, and explanation enough of the eulogies which have been heaped upon faith by religious men.

But there is another side of things. If faith be strong and have done great works, doubt is not feeble and has wrought many achievements by no means contemptible. If faith have raised religions, doubt has often thrown them down, and has in all of them found much to eliminate and destroy. If theologians often speak as if all duty were summed up in religious faith, scientists and philosophers often speak as if the very root and spring of all progress and culture were scientific and philosophical doubt. The great revolutions of speculative thought, at least, have all originated in extensions of the operations of doubt. A believing enthusiastic type of character is the one most generally admired and is supposed to be one of special excellence and strength; the doubting, questioning type of character is generally viewed with decided disfavour, and supposed to be necessarily culpable and weak.

But that is a very one-sided and superficial estimate. Socrates and Plato, Carneades and Ænesidemus, Des Cartes and Locke, Hume and Kant, and many others, in whose characters the quality of doubt was largely present, were undoubtedly very superior men, who could brave the world's antagonism, and who singly did as much for the world's advancement as many thousands of burning enthusiasts combined have done. Much may be said on behalf of doubt and doubters. I am not going, however, to constitute myself their apologist or advocate, any more than of belief and believers.

In my view there is no merit either in mere belief or in mere doubt; there is merit only in believing and doubting according to truth. Excess of belief, however, is as bad as excess of doubt; and there is excess wherever either belief or doubt outstrips reason and fails to coincide with truth. To doubt so long as there is reason for doubt is as much a duty as to believe where there is reason for belief. To believe where there is insufficient reason for belief is as much a vice as to doubt in opposition to sufficient evidence. Enthusiasm in the propagation of truth is admirable, but so is the enthusiasm in search of truth which will accept no substitute for truth, no unreasoned or unreasonable belief. The former enthusiasm

without the latter is half vice as well as half virtue, and it is only by chance that it is not enthusiasm in the propagation of falsehood, which may be an object of admiration but must be also an object of alarm.

We should cherish a sense of responsibility alike in reference to doubt and belief; but not fear to doubt any more than to believe, and shrink from no inquiry which even our deepest and boldest doubts suggest. The more fundamental and far-reaching our doubts are, the more necessary and incumbent is it that we should not rest until we find satisfaction in regard to them. Loyalty to our own consciences and reasons obviously and imperatively requires this. And I believe Christianity no less obviously and imperatively requires it. It comes to us with the claim to be the Truth guaranteed by adequate evidence, and only he who is in the Truth can be in Christ, and whoever is in the Truth is to the extent in which he is so in Christ. The faith which Christianity requires is thus one which does not evade doubt, but which deals with doubt and conquers it, and so proves, purifies, and strengthens itself. To evade doubt is neither the way to, nor the sign of, a vigorous faith. Doubt cannot be escaped by evasion, and by refusal to inquire whether it is just or not. He who seeks thus to escape doubt is already in the grasp of

doubt. He who is afraid to try his faith, to follow his doubt as far as reason will allow him to go, already distrusts his faith more than he who is prepared to test it; already doubts more than he who is willing to investigate it to the utmost, and certainly has less faith in the Truth—in Christianity as the Truth. He who has no doubt of the firmness of the foundation on which his faith rests will not fear to have it examined.

“He that would doubt
If he could,
Alone cannot doubt
If he would.”

From Agnosticism we should learn, however, not only to appreciate aright the function of doubt, but also be reminded by it of the littleness and limitations of our knowledge, and of our inability to know God in the absoluteness and infinity of His Being and perfections. Much of our theology is painfully anthropomorphic, representing God as altogether human in passions and feelings, and ignoring His necessary transcendence of all human thought. It is nowhere so true as in theology that “when a man has got to the end he is just beginning; and when he ceases, he is still full of questions.” All dogmatism and all rationalism in theology, and almost all popular religious opinion, overlook this, and are, in consequence, deplorably

lacking in humility and reverence. Agnosticism, therefore, even in exaggerating our ignorance of the Divine, has a lesson to us, a spiritual purpose to serve in the world.

Pessimism is akin to Agnosticism. It doubts and despairs of good, as the latter of truth. It exaggerates regarding evil, as Agnosticism exaggerates regarding error. And it, too, is far from wholly without instruction or use. On the contrary, the theologian, and above all the Christian theologian, may see in it not a little for which to be thankful. The greatest impediment to the formation and diffusion of right religious views is a frivolous hopefulness, a superficially optimistic conception of life, founded on unsusceptibility and blindness to the awful prevalence of vanity, sorrow, and sin in existence. The great majority of men look only at the bright sides of things, and especially at the outsides of things, which are so often their brightest sides. There is nothing so antagonistic to true religion and true theology as this. The religion of the Old Testament—the religion of the psalmists, prophets, and sages of Ancient Israel—was not one characterised by a light joyousness, but one out of which a note of hope reaches us only from amidst sounds of weeping, and anguish, and penitence. The Gospel of Christ begins where

pessimism ends. It implies that pessimism would be true but for itself. It represents the merely natural life—the earthly, sensuous, selfish life—life when separate from God, and alien to God—as a fallen, futile, and woful state of being; as a state of sin and misery, of darkness and death. Christ, according to the Scriptures, came to save the human race, not from the danger of being lost, but because already lost—not from the risk of eternal death, but from the eternal death, in which it by nature lies, and from which it can only be raised through participation in the rightcousness, love, and grace revealed in Him. Christianity thus founds on the profoundest sense of the vanity and evil of the merely earthly, sensuous, and selfish existence. It can, yea, must accept, almost all that pessimism says of such existence; while it is entirely inconsistent with every form, either of theistic or of pantheistic optimism, which assumes such existence to be other than corrupt and vile. To understand and appreciate Christianity at all, something of the seriousness and sadness of pessimism seems to me indispensable.

And the teaching of pessimism may be of service also in leading us to correct our views of the extent and depths to which Christianity has influenced the human heart and human

society. Christianity has done great things, and its power is unexhausted and inexhaustible. It needs no flattery. It can only do harm to ascribe to it victories yet unwon. Yet undoubtedly there prevails a visionary way of regarding, an exaggerated way of describing, its achievements which we would be well rid of, and which in the conflict with pessimism we shall be compelled to abandon. In many respects Christendom is not so much better than heathendom. London and New York are not much less vicious than the great cities of the East. The Gospel has not expelled from the area, where it has reigned for centuries, drunkenness, prostitution, war, the robbery and oppression of man by man. Christianity is not making more rapid progress than some of the ethnic religions. Its gains from among educated Brahmins, Buddhists, and Mohammedans are few and slight; its losses from among the scientists and thinkers of Europe are many and serious. It is a far more urgent problem at present how to keep the leaders of thought in Germany, France, and Britain, Christian, than how to make those of Turkey, India, or China, Christian, for we are certainly much more rapidly losing the former than gaining the latter. These and the like facts are dark and painful, and we are apt to shut our eyes to them, tempted to deny them, to gloss

them over with pious phrases, and to go on contentedly indulging in pleasant dreams. That is the worst thing we can do. Let us seek to know the worst, and betake ourselves to no refuges of lies. The wisdom, the courage, and the policy which ignore truth when painful are alike false. If Christendom, and Christian Churches, and Christian Missions are in many ways far from satisfactory, the sooner and the more fully we know this the better. The more thoroughly we know it, the more clearly, I believe, we shall see that it is because there is so little in them of the Spirit of Christ, not because there is anything wanting in His Spirit. His Spirit is not confined to them. In so far as His Spirit is exemplified in any religion, but no farther, good is done. Other life and hope the world has nowhere found than the life and hope brought to light in Him. Faith in Him, far from requiring us to shrink from acknowledgment of the harshest facts, can only lead us of right through the honest recognition of such facts to a worthier view of His nature and of the character of His kingdom.

The most extensive and powerful of contemporary movements of thought is probably the one variously designated empiricism, positivism, phenomenalism. Its central principle is that the data of experience, understood as sensible experience or at least the

experience of immediate consciousness, are the constituent elements of all true science, which consequently may be reduced for the purpose of verification to these data. In accordance with this principle, religion has been viewed by many as only a succession of beliefs and observances connected by the laws of historical evolution, and all theology reduced to comparative Theology, or rather represented as simply a transcript of the history of religion. On the same ground, it has been demanded that religious truth should in all cases verify itself by experience understood as indicated—the experience given by immediate external perception or direct internal introspection. It is obvious that from this standpoint, so far as by theology is implied a knowledge of God, there can be no theology; and that while there may be a science of religion and a knowledge of religions, such science and knowledge must be purely historical and psychological, but that there cannot be, properly speaking, any religious truth or falsity, or any distinction of true and false religions. From the standpoint of mere empiricism all religious beliefs and systems must be merely temporary phases of history, and can only be studied aright when studied entirely and exclusively as such.

Necessarily the theologian must combat the

empiricist theory of knowledge. Unless it be superficial and inadequate he must plainly be in the main an impostor. Hence he is bound to point out its defects and errors, and to substitute for it a theory which, while it applies better to mathematical, physical, and mental science, affords room for theology even as real knowledge of God. He must show that science is not experience, but the explanation of experience, and must always, in order to explain experience, to some extent transcend experience; that experience is not limited to things of sense, but may be a communion of spirits; and that in all experience with what is phenomenal, contingent, and conditioned there is united, and must be united in order that experience may come into being and manifestation, what is essential, absolute, and conditioning. But he will combat it all the better if he recognise that there is truth in it, and important truth, which he as a theologian may and ought to accept and act on.

While science and experience are not to be identified—that is, confounded—it is not to be forgotten that science is of experience; ought to start from experience; and must be in accordance with experience. We can only reach the general through the particular—the farther off through the nearer at hand; and the particulars nearest

us are those which we most directly see and feel—those present to outward and inward perception. The theologian, if he would not go utterly astray at the very outset, if he would not follow a wholly wrong method, must begin his study of religion by the study of its history—by the examination of its historical forms, effects, and documents. What he has to explain and theorise on is the whole of religious history, and his first duty is to ascertain as precisely and completely as he can what that history was—what the contents of the various religions as they successively appeared in history actually were. The chief distinction between the scientific and the unscientific study of religion is that the former recognises the necessity of starting from experience and the latter does not.

The scientific study of religion must begin, as empiricists insist, with its history; and it must be added, as they also insist, that a very elaborate apparatus, very delicate and complex processes, and strenuous exertions may be needed to ascertain exactly what that history was. Indeed, there are long tracts and vast spaces of it on which light, or at least clear and steady light, will, almost necessarily, never be thrown. Important portions of it even which had long been deemed quite certainly known have been made by advancing research to appear not as under a brighter light but

as if shrouded in cloud or resolved into fog. Until recently few felt that there were any difficulties as to the ascertainment of what had been the history of the religion of Israel. It was imagined that in order to become acquainted with it, substantially all that was needed was just to read the Bible carefully through very much as we have it, from the first verse of Genesis to the last verse of Malachi. The questions raised as to the origin, composition, and relationship of the constituent portions of the literary documents from which our knowledge of history must be drawn were comparatively few, and of a far less radical, wide-reaching, and perplexing character than those with which Graf and Reuss, Kuenen, Wellhausen, and so many others, have made us familiar. These writers may or may not have made out their own main positions, but they have undoubtedly discredited to all except the ignorant and those who are in a deep dogmatic slumber the old and easy method of studying Bible history formerly universal. The inquiries which they have originated imperatively demand from those who would either continue them or show wherein they are erroneous in method or conclusions rare special linguistic attainments and refined and laborious critical researches. At the same time, they are not inquiries which he cannot be too strongly urged to qualify himself

for conducting, or at least for estimating aright. They should be of primary interest to him, for they are investigations into the very foundations of what concern him most. They must be presupposed or dealt with in almost all spheres of theological science. They underlie all Biblical Theology and condition its results, and so mediately underlie and condition the results even of Christian Dogmatics. Besides, although they are not at present the subjects of ecclesiastical controversy and treatment, there can be little doubt that they will become so, and that the most serious trials await the Churches from this quarter. Ignorance is a dangerous kind of protection to trust in. Whether in the controversies which are sure to arise our Churches will conduct themselves well or ill must mainly depend on the amount and diffusion of appropriate scholarship among their clergy.

The empiricist or positivist theory, while plainly inconsistent with the claims of theology to be a knowledge of God and of spiritual truth, as plainly does not affect at all its claims as a knowledge of religion and religious phenomena. Grant it, and there will still remain room and need for cultivating all the exegetical, historical, and psychological disciplines of theology. The positivist or empiricist who represents all Apologetic Theology as useless, and all Speculative and Systematic Theology as

illusory, yet cannot deny that Comparative Theology, Biblical Theology, the History of the Christian Church and of Christian Doctrine, and all linguistic and critical studies, necessary for the interpretation of religious documents and for the appreciation of their value as sources or authorities, and all psychological and philosophical studies helpful to the elucidation of religious phenomena, are perfectly legitimate departments of investigation, for, directly or indirectly, they are occupied only with empirical fact, positive phenomena, the historically given. All that he can reasonably or consistently demand, is that they shall not be studied with any apologetic bias or with any assumption that religious belief is true. Now, I believe it to be the part of wisdom not to quarrel with this demand. I do not in the least blame the positivist, empiricist, criticist, for making it. I am only sorry that so many who make it pay no attention to it themselves, but proceed to work in spheres properly of pure criticism and history, with a polemic bias, which is quite as out of place as an apologetic one, and with an assumption of the falsity of religious belief just as irrelevant as that of its truth.

It seems to me that in such a department as, say, Biblical Theology, we cannot too frankly and fully admit that as students or teachers of it we have nothing to do with the question of the truth or falsity

of the Bible ; that the sole question with which we have to do is that as to what is truly in the Bible—one wholly of fact or history. And so as to all the other departments which even the positivist must allow to be positive disciplines. In regard to all of them we can be, and ought to be, as positivist or empirical as a critic or historian or scientist in any other department can be reasonably asked to be. I am convinced that this, far from being hurtful to any real apologetic interests of religion, would be most favourable to them.

If we were to keep our Apologetics entirely away where it is really out of place, and over the whole field which the empiricist must concede to be one of experience and history, to be more strictly and truly experiential and historical in our studies than himself, the empiricist hypothesis of the falsity and illusoriness of religion is not, it seems to me, the one which would profit in consequence. The more truly and thoroughly critical and historical is the study of the course of philosophical thought, of special research, of artistic endeavour, and of moral life, the less likely is it to lead any one to the belief that these things have been merely vain efforts after illusions called truth, and beauty, and goodness—the more certain is it to issue in the conviction that substantially they have been gradual evolutions of a truth, beauty, and

goodness, far more real than aught given us by the clearest of perceptions or the most vivid of feelings.

There is no reason to suppose it otherwise in religion. A superficial and partial study of its phenomena and phases—a study of them under irrelevant assumptions and with foregone conclusions—may very probably end in scepticism and negation; but an unprejudiced, profound, truly scientific study of them is most unlikely indeed to issue in the view that a phenomenon so vast and comprehensive as religion is only a form of psychical disease; that all religious belief through all generations has been delusive; that theology is wholly a sort of pathology to which no physiology corresponds. If the history of the world be, as has been said, the judgment of the world, it is incredible that that judgment should be the condemnation of a fact so permanent and universal as religion. To believe so is equivalent to accepting the dogma not of empiricism but of pessimism. A world with such a history must be a world which should never have been.

I have to add that while empiricism shows itself in narrow and erroneous views as to wherein consists verification in religion, it is right in urging that verification is indispensable. Of course verification should be always of an appropriate kind. Colours are not to be discriminated by the same

organs and processes as sounds. Astronomy and Chemistry apply different standards and tests. The findings of mental science are to be verified, but not in the same manner as those of physical science. Hence in religion, too, verification must have a relation to the nature of religious truth and of religious experience. It is simply foolish to expect that spiritual truths should be verified by sensible experimental proofs; the presence of God like the presence of fire; the efficacy of prayer like the efficacy of medicine. Those who demand that spiritual truths should be verified by sense, demand that these truths should be at one and the same time religious and non-religious—spiritual and physical.

Yet verification, rightly understood, is most important in religion and theology. If religious truths be accepted by us merely on the authority of the Church or of the Bible, or on merely external grounds, such as miracles accomplished or prophecies uttered by those who originally affirmed them, they are not really accepted by us as either truths or religions. To be known by us as properly religious truths we must have a living insight into their own nature, and a veritable although spiritual experience of their character and influence. They can be tested by their power to sustain piety, to promote virtue, to purify the heart, to ennoble the nature, and are not known as what they are unless so tested.

Revelation even at its highest, and taken in its strictest sense, must be so far capable of being thus verified, otherwise it would be a revelation which did not really reveal, and certainly a revelation which could not accomplish those spiritual ends for the sake of which alone we can reasonably conceive a revelation to have been given. But has not the Spirit been given to lead us into the experimental knowledge of all truth, yea, even of the deepest things of God revealed in His Word?

The movement of thought which forms the direct contrast to the Empirical is the Speculative, and to it I would now direct your attention for a moment. It is the philosophical movement properly so called. The speculative mind is the mind which seeks to see particulars in the light of the universal, the contingent and apparent in the light of the necessary and essential, and which consequently cannot content itself with analysis and induction alone, but must also have recourse to synthetic, deductive, dialectic methods of procedure.

In our age the speculative movement is not specially strong. In most minds there is suspicion of or aversion to all that bears the name or nature of speculation in theology or in any other department of thought. In this country over-speculation (I mean, of course, in intellectual, not in money, matters) is, perhaps, the only kind of evil by

which we have never been visited. There is not the slightest need, therefore, to discourage the rise or impede the spread of speculative thought among us. On the other hand, there is great need if speculative thought have a true place and function in the advancement of theological or other knowledge, to recognise the fact and proclaim it. Now, I for one have no doubt whatever not only of the legitimacy but of the necessity of speculation in theology, in philosophy, and indeed in all science. There is no science which does not advance by the aid of hypotheses, and there is no scientific hypothesis which is not essentially, so long as it is merely an hypothesis, of the nature of speculation. An original genius in science is necessarily a man of speculative intelligence within the sphere of that science.

There has been, of course, much illegitimate speculation, much futile and delusive speculation, in theology, as in philosophy. Men have undertaken to explain from some single supposed primary datum, very often of a really poor and questionable character, by dialectic processes, also very dubious and unreliable, the nature of God and His universe and His revelation with an altogether extravagant confidence in the power of mere thinking and an altogether foolish disregard of facts. But speculation does not necessarily

imply the ignoring of facts, and does not necessarily assume that mere reason can spin out of its own essence or out of any abstraction or single datum the whole system of truth. Speculation in certain forms pretends to an independence of reality and a creative power for which there is no warrant in reason or confirmation in fact. But the futility of such speculation is no disproof of the utility of a speculation which will fully recognise reality and directly endeavour to elucidate it. Speculation of the latter kind seems to be a necessary condition of true systematisation and a necessary supplement to induction and to all the special methods of particular sciences. In a true philosophy, for instance, science and speculation must necessarily be combined. So far from claiming independence of the sciences, a true philosophy will base itself upon them, and seek to rise above them by means of them. It is only thus that it can hope to reach the ultimate universal and real principle of knowledge and being, without which there can be no rest for reason or unity in the universe. But having ascended by an analytic and inductive course to the unity of an all-comprehensive ultimate principle, philosophy must endeavour to descend from it in a synthetic and deductive manner, so as to exhibit the whole organism of existence, or to determine how the many laws of

science and the many facts of experience are connected with the absolute in being and causation, and through it with one another. It is conceivable that the descent should be accomplished in various ways, and Plato and Plotinus, Des Cartes and Spinoza, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Krause, Gioberti, and others have attempted it each in a way of his own; but two things are obvious, namely, that philosophy cannot consistently decline the task, and that any method it may adopt in trying to perform it must be one essentially speculative. An inductive and analytic method is clearly inapplicable, for the highest and last results of induction and analysis are just what are to be elucidated through being viewed in relation to the one supreme truth or fact. And among the data with which philosophy must thus synthetically or speculatively deal are those of religion. It requires to show how what theology teaches as to God's nature and operations comports with what itself affirms as to the absolute source and ground of existence, and this necessarily commits it to have recourse to a theologico-speculative use of reason. And to a very large use of it, if, for example, theism be true; since, in this case, the absolute principle of philosophy can be no other than God Himself, and its highest task no other than to show Him to be the essence of all existence,

the light of all knowledge. In this case philosophy must inevitably become in the highest stage of its development a speculative theology.

Nor can positive theology dispense with speculation. It cannot indeed begin with it or confine itself to it—cannot start with some immediately certain religious fact, and then by mere force of logic evolve therefrom a whole theological system. Its data are all real facts of religion, and these it must deal with, in the first place, mainly by observation and induction. But observation and induction will not always alone lead to a satisfactory result. Observation is confined to experience, which gives only the particular. Induction, in so far as it effects a transition from the particular to the general, already involves the activity of speculative reason; it makes discoveries only when guided by theory; it can never of itself reach ultimate truth; and it is manifestly not its function to raise coherent comprehensive systems on their proper constructive principles. Then, the theologian who renounces speculation must deal most inefficiently with the ideas and doctrines of his science. Consider the greatest idea of all—the idea of God. Mere observation and induction do not yield the idea. Exclusively applied, they cannot take us beyond the contingent and conditional, cannot take us beyond atheism and secularism. Waive, however,

this objection, and grant that the idea of God may be given, say, through revelation. What sort of idea must it be in the mind of the theologian who refuses to speculate? Merely that of a complex of the attributes predicated of God in the Bible. Surely that is unworthy to be accounted an idea of God at all. The theologian who is in earnest with the idea of God, who would find order and light in the idea, who would think of Him as He is, Absolute Being, Harmonious Life, Infinite Personality, Perfect Spirit, Ultimate and only Complete Explanation of the Universe, must assuredly speculate, and speculate freely and largely, although he ought also to do so humbly and reverently. Even if he would maintain that we cannot have a knowledge of God as He is—that we must renounce the hope of a speculative knowledge of Him, and be content with a merely regulative knowledge—he will find that he needs, as Kant, Hamilton, Mansel, and Spencer have practically so fully acknowledged, speculation, and much speculation, to support his thesis.

The mind is not necessarily relieved from the duty of exercising speculative thought on the nature of God by receiving a special revelation regarding God. Christianity is a proof that such revelation may only increase obligation in this respect. It brought with it a wondrous idea of

God, one of marvellous practical efficacy, but one also which forced Christian reason into paths of speculation, which could only be formulated after lengthened and severe speculative labour, and which no intellectually or spiritually quickened soul can accept otherwise than with speculative exertion. And this may show that speculation is as legitimate and applicable within the sphere of Christianity as within that of general theology. The comprehension of Christianity requires that we penetrate to its distinctive and central principle, and view all its contents in the light of that principle. It is only so that we can hope to accomplish either a true systematisation or a true elucidation of its contents. The procedure by which this is effected cannot be one of formal logic, of pure deduction, or strict demonstration; it must be one which implies a constant reference to facts and inductive results; but still it must be one which is essentially synthetic and speculative.

If time had permitted, I should gladly have dwelt longer on the desirability of theologians daring to speculate with greater freedom, and frankly and boldly aiming at the construction of religious philosophies and Christian philosophies, instead of being, as they have so long generally been, afraid to think beyond the written letter and the formulated dogma.

The right attitude, then, of the Church towards the leading phases of modern thought is one which cannot be described by any single term, for it has various characteristics. It should clearly be an attribute of independence. The Church should never act as the mere servant or follower of any intellectual movement, as the passive recipient and unintelligent repeater of its message. She ought to realise, and show that she realises, that she is a divinely instituted power entrusted with a message to mankind, grander and more important than any temporary phase of thought can bring, and bound to judge of the teaching contained in all phases of thought by its relation to her own doctrine. Her attitude must, therefore, further, be no weak or undecided attitude. She must in many cases, and indeed on all vital points of faith, have a clear Yes or a clear No to utter; and in all such cases she ought to give forth no uncertain sound. At the same time, her attitude ought to be a discriminating one. She should distinguish in all prevalent systems and tendencies between what does not concern her and what does. What does not concern her she should let alone. In what does concern her she should separate what is false from what is true. The former she should fairly and courageously oppose. The latter she should candidly and gratefully assent to, and wisely and diligently profit by.

All that has been said applies in a general way to the Attitude which the Church should assume towards Modern Criticism of the Holy Scriptures.

By Modern Criticism is meant, I suppose, what is often called the Higher Criticism or Historical Criticism, in contradistinction to the so-called Lower Criticism or Textual Criticism. The Lower Criticism in the present day awakens no anxieties in the Church—raises and agitates no burning questions. And it is agreed on all hands that it can be rightly carried on only in one way, namely, by the application of certain principles and rules of evidence appropriate to the subject, in the spirit of strict objective impartiality,—one which seeks simply to ascertain the state of facts, not either to establish or refute any hypothesis or doctrine.

It is very different as regards the so-called Higher or Historical Criticism. It deals with the historical bases of our religion—a religion which rests largely on history, and which centres in an historical person. It analyses and criticises the sources of our knowledge of this religion, and pronounces on the character, authenticity, age, and credibility of every constituent portion of the Bible. It treats of all that bears on the explanation of the origin and formation of the Bible. It thus obviously and directly affects faith and doctrine, and searches and tries their very foundations.

Criticism of this kind cannot fail to be widely and intensely interesting. There may be much good in the interest which it awakens. But there should be no unnecessary impulse given to its diffusion or intensification. There are some serious evils accompanying it, and these are all very much increased by the fact that the vast majority of those who get excited over the results said to be reached by the historical criticism of the Scriptures are wholly incompetent to judge for themselves whether these results have been really attained or not, and can only accept them on the authority of those whom they are told are the highest authorities. And told by whom? Perhaps by a credulous partisan disciple of those authorities. Or, more probably, by writers who are no more entitled than themselves to say who is or is not an authority: journalists, say, who really know almost nothing about the Higher Biblical Criticism except what they pick up to enable them to compose the articles which are supposed to mould, and perhaps do mould too much, public opinion.

But the clergy themselves may, in this connection, be even greater sinners than the journalists. It is not long since they were too apt, when dealing with any psalm ascribed to David in the Psalter, to waste their own time and that of their

hearers by fanciful descriptions of the circumstances in which they alleged that the Hebrew monarch had written it. This fashion has happily now become out of date; but I am told, and rather fear it may be true, that there are some who have adopted the still more objectionable one of arguing, when engaged on such a psalm, that David did not write it, and speculating when and in what circumstances it may have been written. That sort of thing, I confess, seems to me extremely foolish; and I doubt much if those who have so little sense as to fall into such a fault can have had faculty enough to acquire much knowledge either of the Hebrew Language or of Historical Criticism. It is not the work of the Christian minister to discuss in the pulpit, and before people who cannot possibly judge of them with adequate knowledge, the hypotheses debated in the schools of Biblical Criticism. His real duty as an expositor of Scripture is to set forth to his people as clearly and fully as he can the Divine truths contained in it, and to apply these as wisely and effectively as he can to their spiritual edification and guidance.

The clergy may do a great deal to keep those to whom they minister, and the Church in general, in a right attitude to the historical criticism of Scripture. But the way to do so is certainly not

that of throwing about them from their pulpits handfuls of critical chaff; but that of so feeding their flocks with the pure and true wheat of the word that they will so fully appreciate the spiritual value, the divinely nourishing power of it, that no kind of historical criticism of the Scriptures will be able to destroy their faith in their Divine inspiration, seriously to mislead them or foolishly to alarm them.

The higher criticism of Scripture may be rightly enough classed among modern phases of thought. For the critical analysis of the sources of history, the free and searching investigation of the documents from which our knowledge of the history of any people or age is drawn, has never been so generally or zealously prosecuted as during the last half-century. The movement which has drawn a Kuenen or Wellhausen to the study of the sources of the history of Ancient Israel is the same movement which has drawn a Giesebrecht or Wattenbach to the study of the sources of the history of Medieval Germany. But those who have been drawn to the criticism of the sources of the history of Ancient Israel have, compared with the critical investigators of the sources of German medieval history, very few documents to compare; very scanty means of correcting and controlling their assumptions, processes, and con-

clusions; have been free to make, and strongly tempted to make, a far larger and bolder use of hypotheses; and have actually been much more influenced by subjective considerations, by individual preconceptions, tastes, and tendencies. Hence the findings of the historical critics of the Bible can as yet by no means be received, as a rule, with nearly the same confidence as those of the modern critics of medieval chronicles. Hence there is as yet no steady consensus of opinion among the historical critics of the Bible.

Modern Criticism of the Bible, since it awakened from its dogmatic slumber, has been largely conjectural. It will doubtless become strictly scientific; but in order to become so it must be far more largely self-critical than it has yet been. The criticism of the higher criticism by competent critics is a chief want of the age, and for Modern Biblical Criticism itself a necessary means of transition to a positively scientific condition.

The needed critics of a too hypothetical criticism of the Biblical writings will come; and, perhaps, the Church should in no small measure leave it to them to deal with their too adventurous brethren. She should be very cautious not to attempt unduly limiting critical freedom. Historical criticism of the Bible may seem for a time to be her enemy, but in the end it will be found to be her friend

and servant. In many respects it has already greatly benefited her.

The Historical Criticism of the Scriptures ought to be of the impartial, independent, thorough kind, which is alone appropriate in all other historico-critical inquiry. There may be some who deem it irreverent to subject the Books of the Bible to analysis and criticism at all; who are content to pronounce them inspired and infallible, and all free research into their character and credibility unwarranted and profane. But such an attitude towards them is unreasonable, for what it affirms it ought not to assume, but to prove. And it is far from really tending to honour them. It rather gives evidence of a latent scepticism, an unworthy fear that the sacred writings will not stand being strictly tested. Under pretext of exalting them, it discredits them by treating them as in danger should they be closely investigated.

It is not close historical investigation, not the most searching historical criticism, which is most dangerous to the authority and credit of the Holy Scriptures. It is the investigation which is not close, the criticism which is not searching, the investigation and criticism which are not purely and properly historical, but which are based on and biassed by extra-historical and uncritical pre-suppositions. And there is a great deal of that

sort of investigation among those who profess themselves to be quite unbiassed critics and historians. The findings of many Biblical critics, for example, are based on and biassed by the extra-historical and uncritical presupposition that belief in miracle is inconsistent with the reality of any truly historical sequence; that to adopt in any case, no matter how complete may be the evidence in that case, virtually implies that there is no order in human affairs; and that any such event as "the appearance of a heavenly being for an episodic stay upon our earth breaks the connection of events in space and time, upon which all our experience rests, and therefore it undoes the conception of history from the bottom." Now that is surely neither genuine criticism nor pure historical research, but, on the contrary, a dogmatic and metaphysical assumption such as no historian is entitled to bring with him to the criticism of historical documents. To do so is virtually to rule impartial and reasonable historical criticism irrelevant. It allows the so-called critic to decide only in one way, no matter what the historical evidence may be. Scientific criticism not only does not require, but does not allow of, the subjection of historical criticism to any such preconception. There is no proof that a miracle must be a violation of the principle of causality or break the

connection of events in space and time. Those who think it would must logically either conceive of a miracle as an event without a cause—*i.e.*, in an absurd manner—or that there can be no order in history if there be any freedom, any self-determining causes, which is a very rash and groundless hypothesis.

When one looks at the history of the world before Christ and contemplates the preparation, negative and positive, made for His coming, and when one studies history after Christ and sees how dependent it has been for all that is best in it on the Gospel which He revealed, one may most reasonably conclude that history, far from having been made unintelligible by His advent, would have been vastly more obscure, mysterious, and perplexing than it is had it not taken place. For all that we know, every mind which comes into the world may come direct from God with a given measure of power which cannot be explained by the absolute necessitation which is characteristic only of, and conceivable only in, material objects merely mechanically connected. History would not be undone, as we are told, from the bottom, were that true; nay, rather, it would be undone were there no free causes, no acts but those absolutely necessitated.

Every historical personage is essentially an original

force, an unexplained quantity. The historian can trace the influences which act on his character, which so far determine the direction of his activities, and which explain in a measure his success or failure; but he does not account for, and cannot account for, his personality, his mind, his will itself. Cæsar and Napoleon, Dante and Shakespeare, Socrates and Kant, Newton and Laplace, can be historically studied in many respects and relations, but they cannot be necessarily accounted for. They are free causes, and for us, with our present knowledge, as inexplicable as would be an immediate Divine creation, an absolute miracle. Yet no historian imagines that these men by any thought or action of theirs broke the connection of events in space and time upon which all experience rests, and so upturned the conception of history from its very foundation. On the contrary, historians recognise that the world of history is just the world of such causes, and that it is precisely because it is so that history has its distinctive value, and that it is so specially and profoundly interesting to trace the connections in space and time which are given in historical experience. All metaphysical assumptions, however, of the kind referred to rest on a most questionable assumption, namely, that of the truth of absolute

determinism, exclusive and inflexible necessitarianism,—an assumption which seems inconsistent with belief in any properly spiritual philosophy whatever.

There is another movement or tendency as to which a word may be said—the Mystic movement or tendency. It proceeds on the assumption that religious truth is to be attained not by processes of reasoning and reflection, but by immediate vision and feeling. It is a very large phenomenon—common in the lower form of Shamanism among barbarous nations, fully developed in the East, widely prevalent at sundry times in Mohammedan and Christian lands, never entirely absent from any age—and naturally so. That it should have prevailed among uncultured men was to be expected from their unacquaintance with all logical methods of attaining truth. It is so closely connected with pantheism—flows from it so directly in certain forms—that we cannot wonder it should be common wherever pantheism is dominant. It is so natural a recoil from Scepticism, and so natural a reaction from Dogmatism and Formalism, that it is easy to understand why it should have been so current in medieval and modern times.

The scope of this address does not require me to point out its defects or dangers, or to do more

than to remind you that whatever be its faults and shortcomings it has often been of great service, and carries with it a large fund of truth which the theologian of no period can afford to despise or neglect. It should teach him to recognise the influence of feeling on thought, to acknowledge the claims of the heart, to realise the need of intimate communion with the Eternal Spirit. It has testified in the most earnest and persuasive manner to the worth of personal life, of inner as opposed to a merely outer experience, in the search after spiritual wisdom. It has shown by the excellence of many of its products that piety carries a light within itself; that the purer the nature the finer its perceptions of surrounding truths. It has been a constant reminder and a clear practical proof of the fundamental spiritual law that the pure in heart shall see God. No worthy theologian will deny profound obligations to the great masters of mystic theology. No hours can be spent by the theologian better than with some of the Mystics.

Mysticism numbered among its adherents many of the most thoughtful and pious men of the Middle Ages—the practical and heavenly-minded St Bernard, his friend Hugh of St Victor, the Scot Richard of St Victor, St Bonaventura, John De Gerson, and Thomas à Kempis, whose *De*

Imitatione Christi should be in the possession of every clergyman at least, whether Catholic priest or Protestant minister. There was a vein of mysticism in the nature and doctrine of Luther. Carlstadt and Schwenkfeld passed over entirely from common Protestantism to mysticism. In Germany the mystical succession has never been broken. It may be traced down from Paracelsus, Weigel, and Boehme to Schleiermacher, Schelling, and Baader. Mysticism has been a very strong factor both in German philosophy and German theology. In England it flourished chiefly during the Puritan period: Peter Sterry, Sir Henry Vane, Fox and the first generation of Quakers, Everard, Rendal, Erbery, Pordage, Law, and others, may be referred to as English mystics. It is a very vague and variable phenomenon, and has manifested itself in history in the most various forms. Hence it is to be found associated with every developed religion.

There is a Catholic and a Protestant mysticism, but, so far as mysticism is concerned, Catholicism must be admitted to have been more tolerant than Protestantism. That may probably have been owing to its feeling more able to be tolerant, in virtue of its stronger organisation. Looking merely to the subjectivist and individualist character of mysticism in general, we would naturally expect it to be more welcome in the

Protestant than in the Catholic Church ; but that has certainly not been the case as regards at least pronounced forms of mysticism. It may also be noted, however, that Catholic mystics, even the most enthusiastic, have been most willing to make their mystical doctrines subservient to the interests of their Church. I am inclined to think that there has been too much mysticism in the Catholic and too little in the Protestant Church.

It may easily be shown that mysticism has most serious defects. It proceeds on an assumption which it does not justify. It takes for granted but does not prove that Divine truths and experiences are to be known by mere feeling or immediate intuition. There is no mere feeling—feeling without knowing. Nor has any satisfactory evidence been produced for an immediate intuition of the Divine. Even of God's existence our knowledge is immediate, being derived from the forms and modes of His manifestation. The millions who live in idolatry have clearly no intuition of the Being whom we call God, and still less can we suppose them to have intuitions of the beings whom they deem to be gods. The philosophers among ourselves who profess to have an intuition of God do not seem to have, in reality, any other knowledge of God than that which may be acquired through education or by

reflection, and from Nature, History, and Scripture. Further, what seem intuitions are often really inferences, and not unfrequently erroneous inferences. The conceits of fancy are often mistaken for the dictates of pure reason, strong feeling for high wisdom, and the dark for the deep. The mystic is in danger of ascribing to direct intuition what arises from the law of association or organic impulse—to distinct vision what is mere floating sentiment—to pure reason what is the product of habit—and to God Himself what originates with the fallible human heart.

Who will venture to pronounce the mysteries which Dionysius the so-called Areopagite, or Erigena, or Eckart, which Boehme, or Schelling, or Baader have proclaimed to mankind, on the authority of immediate intuition or direct feeling, to be self-evident, necessary, and universal? Again, whatever part intuition may have in religion, it is not to be supposed that it can have any great part *in theology*. For theology is necessarily, on the whole, reflective and logical. It is only as the intellect begins to speculate and reason on the Supreme Being and His relations to man and nature that a theology arises. Theology is professedly knowledge of a scientific kind, and so far as it answers to its character as such, it must be mainly the result of scientific processes. Finally, pronounced

mystics—those whom all would agree to call mystics—are men who promulgate views as to the Divine Nature and the Heavenly World which the intellect and consciousness of ordinary religious men, and even of sincere and cultured Christians, cannot verify. They profess to make disclosures which far transcend in novelty and mysteriousness anything to be found in Scripture. They are too high for reason, and too profound to be judged by the general canons of the human understanding. Therefore they are in need of a special kind of really valid authentication. Intense individual conviction is not enough. It may satisfy the subject of it himself, but it cannot be expected to satisfy others, or provide them with any reasonable guarantee of truth. And in fact no satisfactory authentication is given. It is neither internal evidence valid for man simply and exclusively as man, nor external evidence founded on objective realities.

There is another contemporary movement which has at sundry times and in divers manners acted on both Church and State in the past, and is almost certain to influence them similarly in the future. I refer to Socialism. It is weaker, perhaps, at present than it was, say, a dozen or twenty years ago, but it is almost nowhere either dead or dying, and may, at almost any

time or place, reappear in as great or greater force than ever. That socialism may yet powerfully affect both Church and State no thoughtful churchman or statesman can possibly doubt. It should be a subject of profound interest to them and of careful study by them. As I have elsewhere, however, treated with, I hope, a considerable measure of thoroughness, the relationship of socialism to social organisation, democracy, morality, and religion, I shall say nothing further of it here. (See my work on "Socialism," pp. 236-498.)

II.

PAPER ON THE BOOK OF AMOS.¹

I. INTRODUCTORY.—A methodical study of the Old Testament and of Old Testament prophecy may not inappropriately begin with the book of Amos. It is the earliest prophetic writing, and, indeed, the oldest book of any kind in the Bible, of which the authorship and date are so certain as to be practically undisputed. Hence it is of exceptional value even considered simply as a source of historical information. It affords clear contemporary evidence regarding the condition and beliefs of the Hebrews early in the eighth century B.C. It also supplies data from which reliable conclusions may be drawn concerning their history and religion in still more ancient times.

Prior to the eighth century the Hebrew prophets seem to have been content with the oral delivery

¹ Prepared for Scottish Women's Bible Study Association, August 1895.

of the truths which they were commissioned to declare. But then came a new stage in the history of prophecy. A group of spiritually gifted and divinely enlightened men appeared, who, besides proclaiming the words of the Lord to their contemporaries with the living voice, took care to record His words in a form which would convey them to later generations. This change was so momentous that the full significance of it cannot have been foreseen even by those who effected it. It was the initiation of the procedure which has given to humanity both the Old Testament and the New. The initiators of it can have had only a dim and limited perception of its end and consequences; yet they must have had a sufficient reason for taking it, and what that reason was seems obvious. It sprang from the very nature of the communications which they were to deliver. It was no small part of the burden laid upon Amos and Hosea, Isaiah and Micah, that they knew so clearly that they would speak for the most part in vain to those who heard them, and that their warnings and injunctions would not avert captivity and destruction from either Israel or Judah. The only hope which they were permitted to cherish, additional to the grand but vague Messianic hope denied to none of them, was that their prophecies would work for good through the long years of approaching exile, and co-operate

with the bitter experiences of life under a heathen yoke and in a foreign land, to form a new generation of Israelites which would put its glory and its trust in Jehovah alone. And that this hope might be fulfilled obviously a faithful and enduring record of their prophecies was needed. Only as writings, as books, could they effectively contribute to keep the Jews together as a separate people during the captivity, and fit them to resume their place among the nations of the earth.

II. THE AGE OF AMOS.—Amos, according to the superscription of his book, prophesied “in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.” This is equivalent to saying that the period of his prophetic activity fell within the period during which the two monarchs were contemporary rulers. The whole period, one of some fifteen years, probably belonged to the first half of the eighth century. To the contemporaries of Amos and their immediate descendants, the words “two years before the earthquake” must have precisely determined the time when the prophet had spoken “the words which he saw concerning Israel.” They do not, however, perform the same service for us, seeing that the year of the occurrence of the earthquake mentioned in the superscription (and also referred to in Zech. xiv. 5,

and in Josephus "Antiq.," ix. 10, 4) is nowhere specified.

Both Jeroboam II. and Uzziah were able and prosperous rulers. Jeroboam greatly extended and enriched the kingdom of Israel. His administration must have had deplorable faults, but of a kind which arose not from want of energy or of intellect, but from a systematic subordination of the claims of religion and morality to the interests of a selfish policy. Uzziah, although not his superior perhaps in military talent, was both a better and a wiser man, and endowed in a rare degree with all the qualities of a good governor. Unfortunately, "the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel," in which the acts and achievements of Jeroboam were narrated, and "the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah," in which those of Uzziah were recorded, have long been lost. The only historical notice of Jeroboam in the Bible (2 Kings xiv. 23-29) is very meagre. The account of Uzziah in 2 Kings xv. 7 is also slight; that in 2 Chron. xxvi., although likewise brief, is a skilful and instructive piece of characterisation. What Josephus (in "Antiq.," ix. 10) has not drawn from these Biblical sources, themselves secondary and scanty, is plainly unworthy of credit. Hence, for a knowledge of the condition of Israel and of Judah under Jeroboam and Uzziah, we are chiefly dependent on the

writing prophets who were their contemporaries; and for a knowledge of the condition of Israel during the closing years of the reign of Jeroboam, chiefly on Amos and Hosea. The Israel of those years was the direct and main object of concern alike to Amos and Hosea, and their testimony regarding its state is in all respects accordant. Neither of them says much of the kingdom of Judah. From this of itself, perhaps, we may infer that although Judah may have been in their time politically weaker than Israel, its moral, religious, and social condition, while far from satisfactory, was considerably less corrupt. To them both Israel seemed ripe for destruction. Political aims had led to a deliberate corruption of religion, and that had given rise to a sensuality and immorality which assumed the grossest forms and rendered the whole life of the nation hateful to God. On the character of the age of Amos, however, we need not dwell longer, seeing that his own pages cast on it a light of intense clearness.

III. HISTORY AND CHARACTER OF AMOS.—All that is to be known regarding him must be learned from his own book. His name does not occur elsewhere in the Bible. It is not to be confounded with *Amoz*, the father of Isaiah. Many early Greek and Latin ecclesiastical writers fell into this error

owing to the two names, although distinct in Hebrew, having been written in the same way in the Septuagint. The name of the father of Isaiah means *strong*; the name of our prophet means *burdened*. There is nothing to warrant the supposition that the name of the prophet was meant to indicate anything specific in his character, life, or message.

He has told us nothing about his descent or parentage. That he was a Jew, as distinguished from an Israelite (or Ephraimite), seems a fair inference from the way in which he alludes to the sanctuary of Zion, and from the very different feeling which he entertained towards the houses of David and of Jeroboam respectively. We are not told that he was a native of Tekoa, but he may have been so. It was there that he was residing when the call of the Lord came to him to go and prophesy in Israel; and the region round Tekoa was one well fitted to nurse and form such a nature as his, and to help to make him the fearless and earnest man, the fervid orator, and poet-prophet who denounced the sins of his age and proclaimed the rights of his God in words which will never die. The village of Tekoa stood high on an elevated hill so as to be visible from Bethlehem, six miles off. It had famed pasturing-grounds around it; there were rich vineyards and fair sycamore

groves near it northwards; while beyond it rose the wild and bare mountains, which stretch away westwards to the Dead Sea. As a herdman of Tekoa the prophet was necessarily brought into all-sided contact with nature; caused to know her both in her sternest and gentlest aspects; made familiar alike with the terrors of the storm, the desolateness of the wilderness, the roar of the lion when it springs on its prey, the hiss of the deadly serpent, the sublime beauty of the starry night, and the varied charms of the changing seasons, and of hill and meadow, garden and grove. That he profited thereby we know. He looked "through nature up to nature's God" with a directness and clearness few men have shown. The impressions made on his senses went to enrich the chambers of his imagination and to feed his intellect and heart. No prophet presents illustrations drawn directly from nature with more frequency, vividness, and force.

When the call of the Lord came to him he had received no special training for the public office. He was "no prophet or prophet's son." He had another occupation which is described in the Hebrew original by three designations. The first is a term in the superscription (i. 1), found elsewhere in the Bible only in 1 Kings iii. 14, "Mesha, king of Moab, was a *sheep-master*"; the

second (vii. 14) is a word which means strictly *ox-herd*, but may mean a keeper of any kind of cattle; and the third (also in vii. 14) is a phrase which is more correctly rendered, as in the R.V., "a dresser of sycamore trees," than, as in the A.V., "a gatherer of sycamore fruit." From these expressions, and especially from the way in which the latter two are introduced, it seems improbable that Amos was merely a hired servant. Amaziah's order to him, "Seer, go flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there; but prophesy not again any more at Bethel," assumed that Amos required to make his bread by prophesying; and the prophet's reply would have been very weak and inept if he had meant, as the common interpretation implies, that in Judah he had been an hireling so poor that he required to live chiefly on the sycamore figs which he gathered. The reply that he was no prophet by trade or training, but had been directly summoned by God from occupations which, however anxious and laborious, were such that he could be under no temptation to gain his bread by undertaking the duties of a prophet, was one entirely relevant and adequate, and seems clearly to have been the one which was given.

Amos was not disobedient to the heavenly voice. He left his home, his occupation, and all else,

to obey it. And in the kingdom of Israel he prophesied with a stern faithfulness which created excitement among the people, and fear and resentment among those in authority. At Bethel he came into direct and violent conflict with Amaziah, the high priest of the sanctuary of that place. The prophet had represented the Lord as saying that he would "make desolate the high places of Isaac, lay waste the sanctuaries of Israel, and rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword" (vii. 9). That he should in consequence be accused of sedition was not surprising. Amaziah denounced him to Jeroboam as a preacher of treason, whose words the land could not bear, and who had predicted that the king would die by the sword; while he told Amos himself to go and eat bread and prophesy in Judah, but "not to prophesy any more in Bethel; for it is the king's sanctuary and a royal house." Amaziah appears, in his accusation of Amos to Jeroboam, to have misinterpreted, if not deliberately misrepresented, his words. But this is not what Amos charges him with, and pronounces a terrible doom both on himself and his family for: what calls for his indignation is the interference with his mission, the arrest laid on the proclamation of the word of the Lord, the indignity thereby done to the Almighty King of Israel. The sin of Amaziah was just the sin

which was working the ruin of all Israel, and which the priesthood in Israel was fostering: it was the putting policy before religion, human law before Divine law, the seeming interests of the house of Jeroboam before the unquestionable claims of Jehovah. Amaziah must have felt that the words of Amos were substantially those of the Lord; he had no objection that they should be uttered in Judah; what he felt to be intolerable was that they should be spoken in Israel, and especially in Bethel, "the king's sanctuary and a royal house." When Amos and Amaziah confronted each other at Bethel it was not merely two men, but two systems, that came into conflict. Whether the doom pronounced by Amos on the high priest and his family took effect or not, we are not told. It seems certain that Jeroboam died in peace.

The prophetic mission of Amos was of an exceptional and special character, and was probably brief. It is not unlikely that he had to yield to the interdict of Amaziah; but, if so, doubtless, when this happened, the purpose of his mission was accomplished, and he could go back with a good conscience to the care of his cattle and sycamores. The earthquake mentioned by him (i. 1) may have been, as many have supposed, the immediate occasion of his writing a report or summary of the

prophecies which he had previously delivered. It was certainly an event calculated to dispose the minds both of Israelites and of Jews to give serious heed to them. Nothing is known of the later life of Amos.

His character is clearly mirrored in his book. Whatever may have been his precise social position, he was certainly not an ignorant or uncultured man, but one of a wide range of thought and interest, of profound moral insight, and intense moral earnestness: a man who had communed much with God in his own heart, traced His hand in the appearances and occurrences of nature, and sought to discern His purposes in the movements of all the nations which came within his range of vision. And that was singularly comprehensive. It embraced the whole known world of his time. He wrote in a style direct, vivid, and strong, in which feeling, imagination, and reason are thoroughly and harmoniously blended. The language which he employs contains some peculiarities of spelling which may, perhaps, indicate provincialisms of pronunciation; it contains no traces of rudeness or rusticity. The love of righteousness is the most prominent ethical feature of his character. Conjoined with it are a noble wrath against sin and sinners, and pity for the wronged and oppressed.

IV. PLAN AND SUMMARY OF THE BOOK OF AMOS.—A careful perusal of the work of Amos will suffice to show that it is not a mere reproduction or collection of the discourses which he had delivered. It is truly a book—a logically coherent, and even artistically arranged whole. In this respect it is not excelled by any of the other prophetic writings.

It is a book “concerning Israel.” Israel is its chief and central theme, and is always kept distinctly in view. The most obvious and natural division of the book is into two parts: the first composed of simple or direct prophecies (i.-vi.), and the second of visions or parables, and the prophecies based on them (vii.-ix.)

(A) The first part begins with what may also be regarded as a general introduction (i.-ii. 6). This contains the sentences pronounced by the prophet against the Syrians, Philistines, Phœnicians, Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, and Jews. Syria (Damascus), Philistia (Gaza), and Phœnicia (Tyre) are dealt with first, as being more distantly related to Israel; Edom, Ammon, and Moab follow, as being allied in origin and nearer to Israel; and Judah last, as being in every respect the most closely connected with Israel. The judgments pronounced on all these peoples are introduced by the same formula—one which indicates that they had all been guilty of

a series of sins rising to a climax, of a perversely persistent and growingly aggravated course of sinning, such as made it impossible for Jehovah not to visit them with severe chastisement. The crimes charged against the heathen nations are ruthlessness in war, inhumanity to the weak and vanquished, rancorous and revengeful hate, disregard of old alliances and friendship, and the like; those charged against the Jews are violation of the statutes of the Lord, and walking in idolatrous ways. The punishments with which both heathens and Jews are threatened are those evils which war and captivity bring to conquered princes and peoples.

Chapter ii. 6-16 is transitional. It belongs in its form to the introduction, and in its subject and substance to "the words which Amos saw concerning Israel." What it charges on Israel are oppression of the poor, covetousness, perversion of justice, drunkenness, profanity, idolatry, tempting the Nazarites from obedience to their vows, and forbidding the prophets to prophesy—crimes all aggravated by ingratitude to Jehovah for the signal favours which He had shown to the Hebrew race.

The next four chapters (iii.-vi.) may be divided into a number of natural sections.

(1) iii. 1-8. Here we are taught that the Lord had manifested Himself to the children of Israel far more intimately and graciously than to any other

family of the earth; and that from this they inferred that He would deal with them less strictly than with other nations, whereas it, in reality, required Him to deal with them more strictly, to "visit on them all their iniquities." They fancied that, however they might act, they could not cease to be God's specially favoured people. They are told that they could not be God's people unless they conformed in heart and conduct to His will. Amos views this truth as implied in the more general truth that cause and effect everywhere correspond, and makes apparent the validity of the wider truth by a series of questions based on illustrative examples. He is thus able to assure his hearers in an apt and striking way that he can speak to them no otherwise than he does; that what God wills to be revealed must as inevitably be uttered in prophecy as that the sound of a trumpet in a beleaguered city or the roar of a lion close at hand will produce fear.

(2) iii. 9-iv. 5. In this passage the rulers of Ashdod (or, perhaps, as the LXX. read, of Assyria) and of Egypt are summoned to come and witness the misrule and unrighteousness in Samaria, and to behold how terribly its nobles and their dames—"cows of Bashan," as covetous, cruel, and dissolute as their lords—will be punished. Then follows the prophet's scornful invitation to those whose trust was in their religious observances to go on frequenting Bethel

and Gilgal, and to multiply their rites, their sacrifices, and their offerings to the utmost, so that they might make up, as they were doing and seemed determined to do, the full measure of their sins.

(3) iv. 6-13. Here the Lord is represented as reminding the Israelites of the various afflictive dispensations with which He had visited them in order to bring them to repentance and reformation. These dispensations, far from being evidences of His want of love to them, had been consequences of His love. But they had not attained their end ; they had not produced the effects which they ought to have done. Therefore Israel must now prepare to meet her God—the Lord over all, the Almighty Author of all created beings.

(4) v., vi. These two chapters are regarded by some as the “lamentation” mentioned in v. 1 ; but the term so translated was more probably meant to apply to v. 2. The plaintive cry, the *elegy*, in the latter verse, is, however, the keynote of this portion of the book. Through the whole two chapters there runs the wail of a soul deeply stricken by the fall of the virgin daughter of Israel, and heavily burdened by the necessity laid on it to announce the disasters and plagues, the disgraces, miseries, and ruin, with which forgetfulness of God, idolatry, injustice, effeminacy, and luxury were to be punished. Yet there are not wholly wanting in them notes of

comfort. A streak of light shines through the gloom. God still asks the sinner to turn to Himself, to goodness, and to life; He still intimates that, although the nation will be overthrown, there may be hope for "the remnant of Joseph." It is in these two chapters that we find the clearest expression of the substance of the prophet's message, and his strongest protests against the false trust placed in ritual observances, and the delusion that immoral acts can be atoned for by numerous sacrifices and assiduous worship. True service of God and real righteousness of life—these are what he insists on as the essential and only effectual conditions of salvation, and as inseparable. He says nothing which warrants us to suppose that he doubted the propriety or the legitimacy of sacrifice; but he sternly rebukes those who, disobeying God and acting wickedly, look for "the day of the Lord" in the vain confidence that their prayers, and feasts, and solemn assemblies, their burnt offerings, meat offerings, and peace offerings, would then avail them with Jehovah. He tells them that Jehovah despises their service; that the day which they desire, or professedly desire, to see will be a terrible day for them unless they observe judgment and practise righteousness; that in comparison therewith little depends on prescribed sacrifices or numerous gifts, as was proved by God's presence with and favour

towards their fathers during the forty years' pilgrimage in the wilderness, where they could not have had the animal sacrifices and manifold offerings to bring to Him which were afterwards presented in Canaan even in the worst times. (See v. 14, 15, 20-25.) The most difficult passage to interpret in the whole book is v. 25, 26. The clearest intimations of the danger impending from the side of Assyria are contained in v. 27 and vi. 14.

(*B*) The second division of the work of Amos is less poetical than the first, yet it is throughout vivid and vigorous, and in some places sublime. It consists chiefly of a series of symbolical visions, with the interpretations of them or discourses founded on them. These visions are a sort of parables well fitted to arrest the attention, stimulate the imaginations, and aid the memories of the prophet's hearers, and especially of those of them who belonged to the unlearned or peasant class. Far from merely following each other, they are closely connected, and form a natural and progressive series. They are all significant of impending destruction, and each later one is more threatening than the one which precedes it. There are thus in this part of the book as many separate sections as there are visions. These sections are of very unequal length, and are as follows: (1) Vision of locusts, vii. 1-3; (2) Vision of fire, vii. 4-6; (3) Vision of a plumb-line,

vii. 7-9, the occasion of the conflict between Amaziah and Amos described in vii. 10-17 ; (4) Vision of a basket of ripe fruit, with the sternly denunciating discourse to which it serves as a text, viii. ; and (5) Vision of the Lord standing over the altar, and assigning the rebellious nation to a doom from which there is no escape, ix. 1-10. The last and most impressively descriptive of these sections closes with the truly wonderful prediction that Israel shall be scattered and shaken among all the nations like corn in a vast sieve until all the chaff shall be driven off and perish, while not one good grain is lost.

From this the transition to ix. 11-15, the general conclusion of the book, is natural and obvious. Amos was convinced that Israel could not be saved by alliances with her enemies, or any other device of mere worldly policy, but that as soon as the Hebrew people ceased from impiety and immorality, truly honoured God and faithfully practised righteousness, the unpatriotic and unholy separation of Israel and Judah would be brought to an end, the fallen tabernacle of David built up and repaired, a glorious and happy Davidic kingdom established, "the remnant of Edom and all the nations" blessed through incorporation with it, and the purpose of God in the election of the covenant people fulfilled. This, his Messianic hope, was rooted in his whole

conception of the character and providence of God, and his message would have been most inconsequential and incomplete without it. There are critics who regard the closing verses of the book as not the composition of Amos, but of some unknown post-exilian prophet or editor. They have not had insight enough to see that Amos and his book, and indeed all the prophets and prophetic writings of the age of Uzziah, are inexplicable apart from the Messianic hope. Without it there could have been neither the men nor the books.

Amos saw clearly that the kingdom for which he longed could only be established through the spiritual regeneration, the religious and moral purification, of those who composed it, but all beyond that he saw vaguely or not at all. What was hid from him has been revealed to us through later Scriptures and more than two thousand years of history.

V. ENDURING VALUE OF THE BOOK OF AMOS.—

Under this head it must suffice to quote these words of an eminent scholar and teacher too early lost to the cause of Biblical study in Scotland, Professor Weir of Glasgow: "The great thoughts to which the book gives such fervid utterance are not less precious to the Church now than when Amos wrote. That Jehovah, our covenant God, is also God of

nature and nations, shaking the mountains and ruling amid the crash of empires; that all the evils which have ever afflicted or do now afflict the Church flow from one source—separation from Jehovah—and that these evils can be removed only by re-union with Him and faith in Him; that the sacrifices, however costly, of the unrighteous and ungodly are an abomination to Jehovah; that sin is never so hateful to Jehovah as when found in His own people, iii. 2; that national safety and greatness depend not on external alliances, but on righteousness and union within; that cruelty and covetousness destroy a people more surely than the assault of the most powerful enemies, viii. 4, etc.; that Jehovah will not consent to accept a divided homage, v. 4, 5; that no policy is so destructive as the temporising policy which regards only the present emergency, to the neglect of great principles and permanent interests; that Jehovah's covenant with David and Israel—in New Testament language, with Christ and His Church—shall stand for evermore, ix. 8; and that neither the opposition of His enemies, nor the unfaithfulness of His people, though they may retard, shall ultimately prevent the fulfilment of all its conditions and promises: these are truths which can never grow old, which belong to no one age or dispensation of religion, but are the common property of all ages, and the only

true foundation of the progress and happiness of mankind.”¹

BOOKS THAT MAY BE CONSULTED.—H. Ewald, “Prophets of the Old Testament,” Vol. I.; W. Robertson Smith, “The Prophets of Israel,” Lect. III.; J. Robertson, “Baird Lectures,” pp. 50-160, and note on p. 230; Archibald Duff, “Old Testament Theology,” pp. 36-89; Pusey, “Minor Prophets”; Henderson, “Minor Prophets”; Farrar, “Minor Prophets (Men of the Bible Series).”

The Revised as well as the Authorised Version of the Book of Amos should be carefully studied.

¹ Art. *Amos*, in Fairbairn’s “Imperial Bible Dictionary.”

There are learned and elaborate articles on *Amos* in Cheyne’s “Encyclopædia Biblica” and Hastings’ “Dictionary of the Bible.” Of course, ordinary readers cannot judicially decide on the critical questions discussed in them.

III.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.¹

THOSE who would study in a reasonable and comprehensive way what is taught in the New Testament must obviously turn their attention first to the teaching of Jesus Christ, the Master Himself, He who spake as never man spake. He wrote nothing; but His words, as well as His acts, have been recorded for our enlightenment and salvation in the four canonical Gospels. His teaching is to be regarded as the primary source of Christian revelation, and no later teaching should be confounded with it. But obviously the writings of those who immediately after Him gave expression to Christian ideas also call for special attention. Such attention they should receive were it only on historical grounds. But they deserve it also on far higher grounds, the words

¹ This and the following exposition of New Testament Theology were delivered to the Members of the Church of Scotland's Deaconess Institution and Training Home.

which they contain being, like Christ's own words, wonderfully full of spiritual power and life.

We should seek, therefore, to understand not only the doctrine of Jesus, but also the doctrine of each of the writers of the New Testament; not only the theology of the Master, but also the theology of those of His disciples who have left to us the means of knowing what their doctrine or theology was. By the doctrine or theology of a New Testament writer is meant merely what he taught as religious truth, and that viewed, so far as possible, as a whole or a system, in which the particular truths expressed are organically connected. Every New Testament writer, whether strictly an apostle or not, is regarded by the student of Biblical Theology as an apostolic writer.

In order to ascertain the doctrine of any apostolic author, his writings must, of course, be studied in the first instance separately, and from the standpoint of their author. But they should be studied also in relation to the writings of the other New Testament authors, so that the unity as well as the diversity of apostolic teaching may be ascertained. It must not be assumed that there is little unity among them. In reality there is, amidst much diversity, a most instructive unity both as regards spirit and doctrine. Yet each of the apostolic writers had his own way of apprehending and setting forth the revelation made through Christ. That

revelation did not impose itself on them as a rigid system, or as a fixed form of words, allowing of no individuality or variety. On the contrary, it came as the very life of freedom, as the law of liberty, emancipating those who received it from all intellectual and spiritual bondage.

Those who have treated of New Testament theology differ as to the order in which they should deal with the teaching of the apostolic writers. Some have felt bound, for example, to begin with James, others with Peter, and others with Paul. That is not in the least surprising. It is, on the contrary, inevitable that there should be such a divergence of views, seeing that the apostolic writers were contemporaries, and all derived their ideas for the most part directly from Christ. Hence, although there is no other kind of arrangement of their doctrinal systems possible than arrangement in a linear series, every such arrangement must be to some extent arbitrary. To seek what is the best arrangement, on the whole, is very proper. To imagine that we shall find an absolutely best arrangement is probably unwarranted.

I have elected to speak to you of the theology of James and of Peter—the Jacobine and Petrine types of doctrine—rather than of the theology of Paul and John—the Pauline and Johannine types of doctrine,—far more because it is much easier

to treat of the former than of the latter in a single lecture, than owing to having any firm conviction as to their priority. I am quite aware that about as much can be advanced for regarding Paul, at least, as the earliest New Testament apostolic author, as either James or Peter. I do not say more than "about as much"; I do not say that the claim of priority so frequently made for St Paul is stronger. Those who, in treating of apostolic doctrine, begin with St Paul, do so on the supposition that some of his Epistles were the earliest published of the New Testament writings. That, it appears to me, however, is merely a supposition, while it is certain that Paul's doctrine was to a large extent an original individual development, and not the earliest form of apostolic teaching. It is, therefore, on the whole better, I think, to begin with either St James or St Peter than with St Paul.

I.

I begin with St James. Most of the Biblical theologians who do so are influenced chiefly by the consideration that the type of doctrine in his Epistle is the simplest to be met with in the New Testament, and at the same time the most closely connected with the Old Testament. That reason, however, does not seem to me to be of

much weight, so far as it founds on simplicity of type. There was no inherent necessity that the simplest type should have appeared first, or is there that it should be studied first. The doctrine of Jesus Himself was, we have abundant reason to believe, so rich and full that the doctrine of Peter, or Paul, or John might have stood nearer to it than the doctrine contained in the Epistle of James. The closeness of the connection of the teaching of St James with the Old Testament is a much weightier consideration. It is an obvious and strong reason for deeming that teaching the best reflection we possess in the New Testament of the Gospel as at first received by the Jewish converts to Christianity,—the simplest and highest expression of the Judæo-Christianity which was the earliest form in which Christian theology appeared.

There has been much discussion as to the authorship of the Epistle. Far the most probable view is that it was written by James “the brother of the Lord,” the first bishop of Jerusalem; a man designated “the Just,” and honoured for his righteousness even by his anti-Christian countrymen; one who, although not an apostle in the strictest sense of the term, was recognised as the equal of any apostle, and one of the chief pillars of the primitive Church, and who sealed his testimony unto Jesus by a martyr’s death. The only period of history known to us in which the

Epistle could have been written was, it seems to me, that previous to the destruction of Jerusalem; and its adaptation to the circumstances and wants of the Jewish Christians of that time, so far as they are known to us, is so perfect, that others than those to whom it was addressed—Gentile Christians, the believers whom Paul and John and their fellow-labourers had influenced—may well have failed to appreciate it aright. Such was doubtless the main reason why its authenticity and canonical authority were for a considerable time recognised only in the Syrian Church. Sound positive reasons for denial of them there are none.

The critics who argue that the Epistle presupposes a rich literature not only of Old Testament apocrypha but of Christian writings, and could not have appeared sooner than between 120 and 150 A.D., show more inventive ingenuity than real historical knowledge. The claims of any other James than the greatest of those so named in the New Testament to be its author are not worth discussion, whereas the whole tone and character of the Epistle are in accordance with all that is known of "the brother of the Lord." And he, above all men, was entitled and might be expected from his standing and office to write it, and to address it to the Jewish Christians scattered throughout the world. There is a striking similarity between the language of his Epistle and

that of the speech ascribed to him in Acts xv. It is the language of a man of strong individuality, of intense moral earnestness, and whose life, thought, and speech had been powerfully influenced by the law and the prophecy of the Old Testament dispensation. It is a language very unlike that of St Paul or St John, but which has a great deal in common with that of St Peter, although there is nothing in it to warrant us ascribing to him any dependence on St Peter either in thought or speech. There are numerous coincidences both of thought and expression between his Epistle and the Gospel of St Matthew, and especially the report of the *Sermon on the Mount* in that Gospel, but none of the coincidences of expression are really quotations. The most striking of them only suggest to us that what St Matthew recorded, James also had in substance heard either directly from Jesus or from hearers of Jesus.

The Epistle is the circular letter of a man who knew that the mere announcement of who he was would secure for his words the attention of men of his race; and who felt that he had much to say to them which required candour and boldness. It is addressed to "the twelve tribes scattered abroad," the Jews of the dispersion. Its general tenor shows that its author had chiefly in view Christian Jews, but that he aimed likewise at the instruction and improvement of other Jews.

When it was written there was not yet a complete separation between Christian and non-Christian Jews. The two classes were still more or less united in the fellowship of the synagogue; and although the Christian Jews were drawn chiefly from among the poor, and oppressed and despised by the wealthier of their race because of their faith, they had a servile respect for those of their kindred who "wore a gold ring and fine clothing."

St James hated such subserviency, but he was not a man to press for the separation of the two classes. He was of a distinctly conservative nature, and he loved his race, although he hated their faults. Hence, in writing his Epistle, he aimed at profiting both Christian and non-Christian Jews. That very probably explains, at least in part, his reserve and silence as to the person and work of Christ. The practical, ethical aim of his Epistle may also so far account for it. But a desire to be useful to others than Christians is very likely to have been likewise a motive. To get a Jew to try to live like Father Abraham and the Prophets, he must have felt would be a great gain even if he stopped short of owning Christ as his Lord.

He left none of his readers ignorant, however, of his own faith in Christ. It was not as "the brother of the Lord," or "the bishop of Jerusalem," that he described himself; it was not in relation-

ship to Christ after the flesh or in official dignity that he gloried ; but in service, in subjection. "James, a servant," a slave, one whose will and capacity are wholly at the disposal of another—"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." The man who could so describe himself was no half-converted Jew, who had not realised the essential principles of Christianity, and in consequence sadly confused Law and Gospel, works and faith, as some have imagined James to have been.

There is no New Testament writer so exclusively *practical* as St James. Possibly this may be owing to our having only one Epistle of his. Had he written others, he might, perhaps, have dealt to some extent with Christian doctrine, as St Paul did so largely, or with Christian experience, which was the favourite subject of St John. His one Epistle, however, is wholly occupied with Christian practice, and is of itself sufficient to show that he was a man of a distinctively and intensely practical nature. Not beliefs or feelings, but deeds, right conduct, was obviously in his eyes the main thing. Writing or speaking so far as it did not lead and help to that, he had clearly no high opinion of. To say, as has been often said, that St Paul shows a marked predilection to dwell on Christian doctrine, St John on Christian experience, St Peter on Christian

endurance, and St James on Christian practice, is a correct and useful generalisation; as it also is to say that St Paul insists mainly on faith, St John on love, St Peter on hope, and St James on works. All four, however, were one in Christ, and all lived and all preached the same Gospel. Their one-sidedness was needed to bring out the many-sidedness and completeness of Christ and of the Gospel.

It is an error to say, as some have done, that St James' work is rather a homily than an epistle. It is much rather an epistle than a homily. It is not a homily, because that is the treatment of a single theme, an address with just one subject and aim. The work of St James is certainly not of that character. It is one in which he has written of many most important subjects, doubtless started with the resolution to do so, and consequently did not dwell longer than he could help on any one of them.

A still more erroneous view, however, is that the Epistle is largely made up of unconnected parts, and some of its sections composed of sayings not originally thought out by James, but already in existence, and only put together by him. That view betrays an imperfect acquaintance with the tenor of his thought. If unable at times to trace the connection between one passage and another, I would strongly advise you rather to distrust

the adequacy of your own study than the consecutiveness or consistency of the apostolic writer's thinking. I have twice lectured through the Epistle of James from beginning to end, and I have found nowhere disconnectedness in it.

Time will allow me to touch only on some of the subjects which he brings before us.

What, then, is his *teaching as to God*? How does he think, and lead us to think, *of Him*? In a most worthy and attractive way. He has got quite beyond the usual Old Testament conception of God. While speaking of Him as "the Lord" and "the Lord of Sabaoth," he speaks of Him also as "God and Father," "Lord and Father," "God who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not," "God who cannot be tempted with evil, and Himself tempteth no man," "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," God who "of His own will begat us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures," "God who hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them who love Him." Who is there who can have forgotten his definition of religion? Who of us has found a better? "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their

affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”

It is just Christ's own conception of God truthfully and heartily accepted; one free from all Jewish limitations and defects. For James as for Jesus, God is the only and perfectly good—absolute purity, entire goodness. The aspects of the Divine character on which he chiefly insists are its moral attributes. It is to the dealings of God with men as Lawgiver and Judge that he gives special prominence. He views even His unchangeableness as not merely a distinctive characteristic, but as an ethical excellence, a virtue. While often reminding his readers of the holiness and justice of God, he in no wise overlooks His long-suffering and mercy.

He refers, however, *very sparingly to Christ*,—never mentions Him as his own brother or relative. To have done otherwise must have seemed to him as a false glorifying of himself, and unjust to Jesus, who was so incomparably above himself. He speaks of Jesus only twice, namely, in the first verse of the first chapter and in the first verse of the second chapter, and in both cases by the same term, “the Lord”—the equivalent in the New Testament of “Jehovah” in the Old Testament. In the former verse he so connects the name of Jesus with God as to show that he believed in His equality and

identity with God, although he did not attempt to determine their nature or extent; in the latter verse he describes Him as "the Lord of glory." In both cases the name "Jesus" is conjoined with the title "Christ," showing that, for James, Jesus was undoubtedly the Messiah promised to the patriarchs and foretold by the prophets.

St James makes *no mention of the Holy Spirit*. This may seem very strange in an apostolic man, and all the more so as his Epistle treats throughout of the practical Christian life. But we must bear in mind that the doctrine of the Trinity was not expressly taught in Scripture, although Scripture supplied the material from which that doctrine was evolved in the consciousness of the Christian Church. It was only gradually that it came to be recognised in an express and definite manner that there were three persons in the Godhead, the same in substance yet distinguished by personal properties. The doctrine of Christ in relation to the Godhead had to be thought out before the doctrine of the Spirit in the same relation could be brought to light. Besides, St James may well have doubted the propriety or wisdom of bringing before Jewish minds aught that might seem to them to conflict with the truth of the unity of God.

He did not ignore, however, the work of grace in the soul which Christians directly refer to the

operation of the Spirit, nor did he fail clearly to trace it to its Divine source. He regarded all truly religious men as regenerate men—"men begotten of the will of God with the word of truth." The life of the children of God is the life of God Himself in their souls, a life implanted or "engrafted" through His word, the revelation of Himself and His requirements to their spirits—a word which is to be received with meekness, and when so received will "save the soul." "The word of truth" is the chief of the good gifts which come from God to man, although all their good gifts come from Him. It is what regenerates the nature, purifies the life, and saves the soul; but to attain its end it must be not merely an external word, simply written or heard, but an internal word, a spiritual word, so received into the heart as to renew, enlighten, and transform the whole being and conduct of the recipient.

St James, then, clearly recognised the necessity of the new birth. He was no more than St Paul a legalist. He presupposed in the Christian a moral transformation, a birth from darkness to light, from death to life.

St James has said *nothing as to the atonement*, but it is not therefore to be inferred that he was ignorant of it or did not believe in it. His silence

is sufficiently accounted for by the obvious purpose of his Epistle—the direct enforcement on those to whom it was addressed of patience, of an active faith, of attention to neglected duties, and of abstaining from faults inconsistent with their professions. And further, this has to be noted, that, although constantly referring to “the law,” he never speaks as if it were obligatory on those whom he addresses to obey the ritual injunctions of the Old Testament economy. May we not conclude from this that he must have thought that those injunctions had been somehow so fulfilled as to have been abolished? He could only have supposed that they were so through the efficacy of Christ’s sacrifice.

The view of the Gospel most distinctive of St James and most prominent in his Epistle is that it is “*the perfect law of liberty*”—*a law, the soul of which is love; a law which is not that of works, but of what St Paul himself calls “the law of faith,” “the law of Christ,” the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.*” Such is, so far as we can judge from his one Epistle, the central and most general conception of Christianity attained by St James. He calls it a “law” because it is a disclosure of the will of God and the rule of man’s life and duty; but “the law of liberty,” not a law like that revealed to Israel on Mount Sinai, or that which is presented to us in the

mere "Thou shalt" or "Thou shalt not" of natural conscience, or still less as a law of traditional rites and ceremonies, for these are imperfect, rudimentary, subject to revision and correction, and keep us in bondage and fear.

It is a law which enjoins all duty, and contains in itself many precepts which is one and indivisible—so one and indivisible that a man may in a way keep all its particular precepts and yet so offend in one point as to become guilty of all. One offence, James teaches, may bring us in for the condemnation not merely of the precept directly transgressed, but for that of the whole law. The reason given for that is the essential unity pervading all the commandments and binding them into a whole; and the ground of that unity is that all the commandments imply one another, and can only be truly obeyed where there is love to God. The law is attacked in its essence and dishonoured in its every part by the transgression of a single commandment, because its essence is none else than love of the Lawgiver. That wanting, there is *no obedience*. There is entire disobedience,—not partial obedience and partial disobedience. Single commandments cannot be fulfilled where the principle of obedience to all of them is violated. Then the golden thread which bound them together is severed, and not one but all of them fall to the ground and are trampled under foot.

Hence it is that St James says, "If we offend in one point"—meaning thereby, not indeed one single failure occurring through infirmity, but an abiding predominant conduct in violation of one precept to which in our pride we will not submit—a persistent repugnance of heart and life to any one ordinance; if we thus offend in one point, "we are guilty of all."

The law thus essentially one, because the expression of the character and will of Him who is purely and entirely good, and which can only be responded to and observed aright where there is love to God and love to man, St James naturally designates "the law of liberty," inasmuch as it is a law which works not from without but from within, not from constraint but through affection. The obedience which it demands is that which love of itself tends to produce and is disposed to give—the obedience which spontaneously springs from a truly loving heart; an obedience far superior to any which the strictest Pharisaism, the most rigid legalism, can exhibit.

And this "law," which is for St James the Gospel itself, the substance of Christianity, the realisation of the ideal of religion, is, he further tells us, not only "the law of liberty" but "the *perfect* law of liberty." By so calling it he doubtless meant, for one thing, that it is *perfect in the liberty which it gives*. That liberty is the reverse of all lawlessness. It is a liberty in which we are most free when

most subject ; a liberty which is perfect only when freedom and obedience are made one through the pure and holy love which is a law unto itself.

But "the law of liberty" is "perfect" also both as a standard of conduct to men, one of which the requirements are always and for every individual precisely what they ought to be, and as a disclosure of the character and will of its Author surpassing every earlier revelation.

The Epistle plainly shows that in the mind of St James the conception of the "perfect law of liberty" was intimately connected with, and indeed inseparable from, "the word," "the word of Truth," "the engrafted word." All that he says of the one implies what he says of the other. The "word of Truth" is to be found in the written word when humbly listened to, patiently studied, and not only heard or read but reduced to practice. It is not, however, to be just identified with the written word. That was most probably for St James, and the early Judæo-Christians, merely the Old Testament. But for St James there was "a word within the Word," the word interpreted, fulfilled, and revealed by Christ. Should we deny James and his Epistle to be Christian because the Old Testament was all his Bible, we might for the same reason deny Christ Himself to be a Christian when He preached His Sermon on the Mount.

Let us pass to the doctrine of St James regarding *Man*. It rests on the conviction that man is a being created in God's own image. That image St James assumes to be not utterly effaced in man, and therefore condemns as a something both profane and self-contradictory that the same tongue should both bless God and curse man, thus directly praising Him in Himself while indirectly blaspheming Him in man His image. Seeing thus even in sinful man "the Divine image"—an affinity to God which all men should recognise and respect both in themselves and in others—it was natural that he should have a high sense of the dignity of man as man, and a correspondingly deep contempt and dislike for "respect of persons." And no Old or New Testament writer—perhaps no ancient or even modern author—has given stronger expression to those feelings than he has done in the first ten verses of his second chapter.

The respect of persons which he there so sternly condemns is neither proper self-respect nor due respect for others, but has its root precisely in the want of that reverence for man as man, for the soul itself, for what is Divine in the soul, which the Gospel requires and inspires. It is a vice which may manifest itself in many forms, unlike and even seemingly opposite, according as the

objects of it and those who are guilty of it are rich or poor, high or low, fortunate or the reverse; but whether forms of pride or disdain, of contempt or servility, of insolence or meanness, they are all unrighteous, yea impious, and all spring from wants of due reverence for human nature as such—from overlooking what the true dignity of man consists in—and fixing the regard instead on comparatively insignificant outward distinctions.

It was not only, however, as inconsistent with the truth that man is made in God's own image that St James was indignant at the sight of all false respect of persons, but also as incompatible with "the faith of Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory"—He who, although the Highest, was He who humbled Himself to the uttermost, laid down all outward glory in love to the lowliest, and has taken away all the shame of mere poverty and misfortune; He who has made the poor "heirs of the kingdom of heaven."

His teaching *as to human sin is full of interest and instruction.* This portion of his theology has for its presupposition and foundation the truth that God is perfectly good, and therefore not the cause of sin. When men fall into sin, they are prone to excuse themselves by assigning as the cause of what they have done the peculiar position in

which they happen to have been placed at the time; they are prone, in other words, to cast their guilt off themselves, and to charge it on acts or gifts of God and on the arrangements of His providence. That mode of calumniating God's character St James emphatically exposes and condemns. He denies absolutely that any man is entitled to say that God has tempted him to do evil. God cannot be Himself induced to do wrong, and no more can He induce any of His creatures to do wrong. Sin is absolutely not of God. Wherever it comes from, it does not come from Him.

Whence comes it? St James explains that it does not come from without at all, but is truly and strictly our own, and not another's. Nothing external to us can be *the cause* of sin, although anything external to us may be the occasion of it. It is out of the heart itself, out of the evil latent in each man's own heart, out of the concupiscence, lust, or desire of the heart, that proceed evil thoughts, murders, adultery, theft, false witness, and all that defiles man and the world he is in.

The lust or desire, which includes all the original propensities and appetites of human nature, may not be wrong, is not in itself wrong; but is, on the contrary, an essential part of our nature,—essential as the means of enjoyment, and essential

as giving the necessary stimulus to activity. But it is what makes sin possible. If we had no lust or desire for food or drink, there would be neither gluttony nor drunkenness; if we had no lust or desire for possessions, there would be no avarice. In so far as we are without desire, we are beyond the reach of temptation.

While the Apostle does not call this lust itself sin, he tells us of the danger of being drawn away of it and enticed. An appetite or desire not wrong in itself may take us farther than we should go, or where we ought not to go. It may induce us to venture beyond the limits where conscience within us and God's law without us declare that we should stop. Thus being drawn away, we are enticed, are caught—"caught with a bait," as the original word means. Satan is angling for men—for he too is a fisher of men—in the turbid waters of this world, where it is so difficult to see clearly, with all sorts of pleasant baits,—dainties for the palate of this one, wine and strong drink for the appetite of that other, gold for a third, power for a fourth; and all classes and conditions of persons, like poor silly creatures as they are, rush greedily on what takes their fancy and desire, and are caught, deluded into sin and held fast by it, and so brought into the power of the Evil One—liar, deceiver, and murderer from the beginning.

St James does not only not call natural lust or desire sin, he does not even call its drawing away sin. He calls it temptation. It is when lust hath conceived, when the will gives its consent, when it is yielded up to be the slave of desire, and the desire has brought forth an act, an evil act, that there is sin. That consent of the heart which no eye but God's own can see is sin, and from it there naturally arise sins of word and deed in the most manifold and most aggravated forms. When sin is finished it bringeth forth death; death in all its forms: temporal, spiritual, and eternal,—not merely, or even mainly, the death of the body, but also, and especially, the death of the soul.

St James' account of the origin of sin seems to have been suggested to him by the narrative of the fall in the second chapter of Genesis. It is the best of commentaries on that narrative. It states in clear words the whole substance of what is there pictured to us in an allegorico-historical form. Whoever accepts it cannot err much as to the doctrine of the fall of the first parents of the human race; for all that was true in that doctrine of its origin in them has been equally so of its origin in all their descendants. And that is equally so as to its effects. All have sinned, and are consequently subject to death.

But God, so teaches St James, is able to save and ready to save, from death. He does so by the communication of a new life through "the implanted word of truth," and faith in "the Lord Jesus, the Messiah of glory"; by an inner transformation, a spiritual renewal from the centre of the soul outwards through the whole conduct and conversation. And this new life He gives, this regeneration He effects, of "His own free will," of His own pure goodness, by an election and gift of grace, by a choice "of the poor of the world, that they may be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them who love Him." Though all sin, and in all sin there is death, none will die who turn to God for life, and humbly receive His forgiving and sanctifying grace. Sin has its root in the evil desires of the heart consenting to the enticement of the world. In its essence it is love and obedience to the world, and aversion and disobedience to God. To be free from it we must put our trust and dependence in God Himself. And that we may safely do. For, as the purely and wholly good, He renders help wherever one will let himself be helped, and only denies it to those who are too proud to seek it. "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you" (iv. 8). "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (iv. 6).

There is proof enough in the Epistle of James that its author must be ranked among the very wisest and most practical of the world's teachers of morality. There is a wonderful measure of good sense and spiritual insight in what he says, for example, about the use of trials and the patient endurance of them; about the real character of that respect of persons which is displayed by the combination of courtesy to the rich with discourtesy to the poor; about abuses of the tongue, over-readiness to undertake to teach others when one is self-ignorant; rashness in the utterance of words which may seem of slight consequence, and yet do immeasurable harm; about the inconsistency of praising God while reviling man, who is made in His image; about true wisdom and false—the heavenly wisdom which is pure, gentle, peaceable, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy, and the wisdom which is earthly, sensual, devilish, the cause of envy, strife, boasting, lying, confusion, and every evil work; and about the sinfulness and dire results of quarrelsomeness and worldliness. I must not dwell, however, on any of those subjects, although on all of them St James has left behind him a legacy of precious words of warning and reproof, instruction and correction, the need of which the Church on earth is never likely to outgrow.

II.

There is still one part of St James' teaching, however, which must not be passed over, as there has been a vast amount of discussion and controversy regarding it. I refer to what he says of faith and works in chap. ii. 14-26. It has been maintained by many that in that passage he has not only taught a doctrine as to justification by faith differing in reality from St Paul's (in Romans and Galatians), but that he meant directly to contradict and condemn what St Paul taught, and to deny the relevancy of his illustrative examples, Abraham and Rahab.

Luther held that opinion, and rejected the Epistle of St James in consequence. He summed up his view of it thus: "James has aimed to refute those who relied on faith without works, and is too weak for his task in mind, understanding, and words, mutilates the Scriptures, and thus contradicts Paul and all Scripture, seeking to accomplish, by enforcing the law, what the Apostles successfully effect by love. Therefore, I will not place his Epistle in my Bible among the proper leading books; but will leave it to every one to receive or reject it as he likes, for there are many good sentences in it." That is strong but inconsiderate and inaccurate language. No evidence has been adduced to show that St James aimed at refuting

any previous writer or apostle. What he did clearly aim at was to establish a most important practical point which he had in hand. No one can study his Epistle carefully and without prejudice, and not acknowledge the grasp of his mind, and the soundness of his judgment, and the appropriateness of his words. In his use of Scripture he neither mutilates it nor perverts it. He does not contradict Paul, nor seeks to accomplish by law what can be effected only by love; but he urges the importance of a truth clearly and necessarily accepted by St Paul, and insists that the law we are under is the law of liberty, which is fulfilled by love.

It is not from excess of zeal for the doctrine of justification by faith that Baur, Renan, and not a few other New Testament critics of the present century, have taken the same view as Luther of St James' relation to St Paul; but from excess of confidence in an almost entirely imaginary hypothesis that there was a radical antagonism between the Christianity of St Paul and of the other apostles, headed by St Peter—an antagonism between Paulinism and Petrinism only reconciled after a century of severe struggle in the orthodox catholic Christianity by means of the forgery of the writings attributed to St John.

All that is, in the main, a bad dream, and now,

happily, in general recognised to have been such. There is no good reason for assuming even that James had any reference at all to Paul in what he says of justification. The whole passage in which he speaks of justification comes in so naturally that it might well have been written without thought of Paul, or before Paul wrote any of his Epistles. James, in rebuking those to whom he wrote for their respect of persons, showed that their conduct was contrary to the royal law of Scripture—the law of love. He then went on to indicate that the faith of Christ was in its very essence, as a law which receives its life and unity from love, inconsistent with a wilful disobedience even to one point of it. Love absent, the whole body of the law is dead, and no one commandment is fulfilled.

James is merely carrying out this series of thought when he goes on to add that there is no use in a man's professing faith if he have got no works to show. Thus to be told to keep the law in its undivided unity, in its every part and precept, to speak and act as men aware that they are to be judged by the perfect law of liberty, is surely quite naturally followed by the exhortation, Do not think it enough merely to believe the truth; that will profit you nothing unless you obey it—unless you act on what you believe. No two exhortations not identical can well be more closely similar, more

kindred in nature. It lay so entirely in James' own way when enforcing the necessity of a good and holy life to argue that mere belief could not avail, that it seems quite gratuitous to attribute to him the design of contradicting Paul.

It does not seem to me at all necessary to enter into any comparison of the statements of St James with those of St Paul with a view to reconciling them. If the words of St James be correctly interpreted, I hold that it must be seen that no reconciliation is needed,—must be seen that St Paul would have grievously erred if he had ever contradicted what is so manifestly true, but that he never did.

James thus begins what he has to say on justification by faith and works: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, 'is dead, being alone'" ("dead in itself or by itself" (ii. 14-17).

Now, St James is not to be understood as speaking there of justification merely before men, nor of the mere profession of faith, nor of faith in any exclusive special form, but of justification in general, and of all mere faith or belief.

The interpretation which makes his words refer not to the justification of the person before God, but that of the character and religious profession before men, has nothing of any weight to recommend it—nothing drawn from the words themselves, nor from any preceding portion of the Epistle. What the Apostle was required by his argument to say was, and what he has said is, that faith without works was of no use—of no use in itself; of no use at all. To represent him as saying that it was of no use merely before men, and as consequently implying that it was of some use before God, is to represent him as saying what would be very foolish. Faith without works, like everything false and hollow, is likely to pass with men better than with God. He is sure to desire a working faith still more than they do.

Some interpreters have fastened on the expression, “though a man *say* he hath faith,” and sought to make *it* the key of the passage,—to make every statement turn upon it. What St James declares profitless is, they tell us, a mere profession of faith; not mere faith, but mere assertion of faith. But that is clearly erroneous exegesis. What the passage tells us of is the utterance by some one in the form of an objection to what St James had been urging, viz., the necessity of living as men who would be judged by the law of liberty—that he had faith, that he was a believer, and therefore would

escape the condemnation of the judgment. The Apostle refers to the utterance of that assertion, and takes it up and refutes it by refuting the assertion, the substance of the assertion itself. He does not turn upon the man and say, "Your saying that will not save you." The man had not said that his *saying of it* would save him; and what James shows the man is that *what he had said* was no good objection; that, granting he had faith, if he had not works as well, his faith would do him no good—would not save him, as he foolishly imagined.

It is an error also, and one into which many interpreters have fallen, to restrict in some way or other the term "faith" as employed by St James. He uses it quite generally as inclusive of any or all acts of religious belief or assent. He does not confine it to any particular act, or class of acts, of credence. He knew nothing apparently about faith in the sense which Luther gave it, the personal appropriation of the words, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," or of various other theological and catechetical definitions of faith. He employs common and popular, not professional and technical language. He asks broadly, What is the good of belief in any truth if you do not act upon it? What is the good of belief without a correspondent practice? Will belief of any kind, in any case, in any circumstances, of itself save you? And he answers plainly, No!

Belief is of no use if you do not act on it; mere belief will certainly not profit you, not save you; belief which is alone, which is without works, is dead. Has St Paul said anything contrary to that? Most certainly not,—not one word of the kind.

St James next makes use in his argumentation against justification by mere belief, a dead and inoperative belief, of the principle that faith cannot show itself except through works, while works can prove faith. Whoever pretends to have faith cannot show that he has, if he have not also works. He may claim to have it in his heart, but one cannot see into his heart; yet he is surely bound to show that he has what he claims to have. To show, however, that he really has faith is impossible without works. Works, on the other hand, can satisfactorily prove faith. Effects reveal the cause; no cause can reveal itself without effects.

St James proceeds to confirm by examples the truth which he has thus far affirmed. The first is a very startling and impressive proof indeed of the worthlessness of a dead faith, of a belief which does not work by love. "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (shudder, *φρίσσοῦσι*). "There is one God." That is a great and glorious truth. The belief in it, when living and operative, has doubtless had an elevating, and purifying, and saving efficacy

on thousands who have not heard of Christ's name, and a far greater influence for good on all who are true Christians. All who believe in it "do well," so far as they go. It is a doctrine which ought to be held. It is one of the great fundamental truths of religion. But mere belief in it is not enough. The devils believe it, but their belief only fills them with aversion and terror.

St James' second example is that of Abraham—"Abraham, our father." St Paul has in Romans and Galatians very naturally selected the same example as a conclusive proof that Abraham was not justified by the works of the law, but by faith counted to him for righteousness. There is not a word in the Epistle of St James which, reasonably interpreted, suggests any doubt as to the truth of that thesis of St Paul. Abraham is the typical example of faith in God. The best of his spiritual children, perhaps, have never reached the same perfection of self-surrender as that which he attained when, as St James so aptly says, "*he had offered up Isaac his son upon the altar.*" That was a truly wondrous work of faith. But it was none the less a work because it was of faith. And St James was just as much entitled to say that Abraham was justified by his work, his deed, as Paul was to say that he was justified by his faith.

Abraham, indeed, was not justified by his work apart from his faith, but as certainly he was not justified by his faith apart from his work. Would merely believing that it was right for him to do all that he did, without actually doing it, have justified him? Would his faith without his obedience have availed him? Clearly he might not only have believed that it was his duty to offer up Isaac in sacrifice as commanded, but might have travelled as he did to Mount Moriah, might have built the altar and arranged the wood, and bound his son upon the altar; but if even then his purpose had changed, if even then he had said, "I will do no more," he would not have been justified. It was only when his work was completed, when he had done all, and God said that it was enough, when he *had offered* up his son upon the altar, that he was fully justified.

St James' last example is that of Rahab: "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?" Had he wished to refute St Paul, and to prove that justification is by works apart from faith, he would assuredly never have made choice of that example. What sort of works had Rahab to justify her, except just the one which he expressly mentions as that which justified her? A more unimaginable case than

hers no advocate of salvation by works apart from faith could well take in hand. Apart from faith in God, and the work which that faith produced, we are told nothing of her good deeds, and know that she must have been guilty of many evil ones. But she had faith, and an intelligent and remarkable faith, which has won praise alike from Jews and Christians, and caused her name to be placed by the side of that of Abraham on the roll of the heroes of faith recorded in the Bible. Her faith was founded on what she had heard of God's doings on behalf of Israel, and consisted in the conviction that the God of Israel was also "God in heaven above and in the earth beneath."

That was her faith, and it was a living and operative faith, and it showed itself not indeed in any such marvellous act of self-surrender to the Divine will as that of Abraham, yet in a real and practical way by receiving the spies and helping them to escape. That was work done from faith, in faith, and through faith, yet it was work, and work not indeed comparable to that of Abraham, or unmingled with evil, but not undeserving the place Scripture has given it. Rahab, in protecting the men of Israel, must have had to repress her natural feelings, since she knew that they were the foes of her country. She

concealed them and sent them away by night at the peril of her own life. When the city was encompassed, and the walls fell, and the tumult of battle raged, she showed her steady confidence in their fidelity and in God by using the simple means on which she was told the safety of herself and her family depended.

Hence St James asked, and might well ask, "Was she not justified by works?" It is manifest that Rahab's work was essential to her justification; that, if she had not concealed the spies and helped them to escape, she would not have been justified. She might have believed in all that she did believe most firmly, yet had she either neglected to act on it or acted against it, she would not have been justified by her belief, but only the more condemned on account of it.

Our author fitly closes his argument with the words, "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." It is as necessary that faith should have works in order to be a living faith, as that the body should have a soul in order to be a living body. He only is a living man in a natural sense in whose body a soul is present to confer on it vitality and activity. He only is a living man in a spiritual sense, a living Christian, whose faith embodies itself in good works. Unless faith be of the kind which

produces good character and good conduct, purity and sanctity of spirit and behaviour, it is no more true religion than a dead body is a living man. The faith which does not lead to a good life is "the mere corpse of religion."

I have thus briefly explained to you what is St James' teaching as to faith, works, and justification. There is no real conflict between it and St Paul's on the same subjects, although there are some differences of phraseology capable of easy explanation. Both hold that God accepts men on condition of true faith. Both hold that neither dead faith nor dead works can save. James in his Epistle does not insist more earnestly on the necessity of a good life than does St Paul in Romans v.-viii. The active faith of James is "the faith that worketh by love" of which Paul speaks. Paul speaks of justification by faith, and St James of justification by works; but neither Paul nor James, nor any other New Testament writers, mean that, in strictness of speech, men are justified either by mere faith or mere works. They all teach that the real ground, the true source, of salvation is neither human faith nor human works, but the mercy of God revealed in Jesus Christ, and making Christ unto men "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

IV.

THE THEOLOGY OF ST PETER.

THE Petrine type of theology, to which I have to direct your attention to-day, is akin to the Jacobine which I had under consideration in last lecture. It, too, is of what is called the Judæo-Christian type. It is, however, a more developed and richer theology than that of St James, and the sources of our knowledge of it are fuller.

We do not count the Gospels among those sources. They tell us, indeed, very fully and graphically, most interestingly and instructively, what sort of man Peter was when Christ was on earth in the flesh. They have not told us so much, indeed, about any of the other apostles as about him. There are few historical personages of which it is so easy for us to form a most vivid and natural mental picture as of Simon Bar-Jonas, called Peter.

It is only, however, with his theology that we

are now concerned. And, as regards that, there are only three sources of information. One of these is the "Acts of the Apostles." The book of Acts is our chief original source of information as to the history of the Apostolic Age. Apart from it, something, indeed, may be learned about the state of parties and opinions in that age from post-apostolic traditions and practices, but comparatively little. The Book of Acts may fairly be held to be a good historical authority. We can reasonably come to no other conclusion than that it was written by the author of the third Synoptic Gospel, and before the destruction of Jerusalem,—consequently, by a most competent and credible witness. Its accuracy even in minute matters has in recent times been verified in many ways — *e.g.*, the proconsular as distinct from the proprætorian status of Cyprus under Sergius Paulus, whose very name has been discovered by Cesnola on an inscription (xiii. 7); the proconsular state of Achaia under Gallio (xviii. 12); the Roman colonial dignity of Philippi (xvi. 12); the title of "Politarchs" instead of "Poliarchs" to the Thessalonian magistracy (xvii. 6, 8), which is explained by an inscription on an archway in Thessalonica; the minutely accurate account of Ephesus (xix.), as verified and illustrated by the discoveries of J. T. Wood, made between 1863 and

1874; and the geographical and nautical details in the account of Paul's voyage (xxvii., xxviii.), as exhibited in Smith's "Voyage and Shipwreck of St Paul." In all these cases the critics were confident that whoever wrote the Book of Acts was mistaken or inventing; and in all these cases he has been found to be quite accurate.

There has been no good evidence produced to warrant us to suppose that he was less accurate on great than on comparatively small matters. Yet a celebrated New Testament critic (Baur of Tübingen) got a large school of followers to accept his hypothesis that the Book of Acts had been expressly written to falsify history, by making St Peter and St Paul seem to have been consistent with each other, although they had really been irreconcilably opposed. How was it that so very able a man as Baur undoubtedly was could imagine that Peter was thus deliberately represented in the Acts of the Apostles as speaking in a way in which he never spoke, in order that it might not be known that he had taught a doctrine radically contrary to that of Paul. It was just because he had too ingeniously constructed, mainly out of his own inner consciousness, a largely imaginary St Peter, who could only have spoken quite differently from the St Peter of the Acts, and written quite differently

from the St Peter of the First Epistle which bears his name. As Dr Baur would hold his St Peter to be the true and only St Peter, he was forced to maintain that both the Acts and the First Epistle had been, of set purpose, Paulinised, *i.e.*, falsified.

The writer of the Acts of the Apostles does not attempt to give a general view of the history of Christianity in the Apostolic Age. He deals merely with the early portion of the history in which St Peter was the prominent figure, and then with the missionary activity of St Paul. The reason for thus limiting his subject may well have been that those two sections of the history were especially well known to him. As regards St Paul, he had been for a time his companion. As regards St Peter and the Church at Jerusalem, it is almost certain that he used a Hebraic source. He began the "Gospel" which bears his name, you remember, by claiming to "have had perfect understanding of all things from the very first," or, as the Revised Version renders the same words, to have "traced the course of all things accurately from the first." "Perfect understanding," "accuracy," was, I imagine, what St Luke was particularly anxious to attain, and what there is no reason to doubt he did in a very successful measure attain.

The discourses of St Peter in the Acts of the Apostles are the earliest records we possess of apostolic teaching. They may be used either as a secondary source for the representation of his general doctrine, or as the sole source of our knowledge of his apologetic and missionary preaching. There are many marks of resemblance between the speeches of St Peter in the Acts of the Apostles and the First Epistle. Among such common features, for instance, there are (1) the reference to the rejected corner-stone (Acts iv. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 7); (2) the designation of the cross as "the tree" (Acts v. 30, x. 39; 1 Pet. ii. 24); (3) the description of the apostles as "witnesses" (Acts ii. 32, iii. 15, x. 41; 1 Pet. v. 1); (4) the prominence given to *the witness* of the Holy Spirit (Acts v. 32 and 1 Pet. i. 12); (5) the representation of Christ's death as the fulfilment of prophecy; (6) the still more frequent representation of the resurrection as the chief ground of faith and hope; (7) the special mention of God as "the Judge of quick and dead" (Acts x. 42 and 1 Pet. iv. 5); and (8) the employment of certain favourite terms.

There is no contradiction or inconsistency between the doctrine in the speeches of St Peter reported in the Acts and the teaching in his First Epistle, although they necessarily differed in so far as they

had different objects in view. The reports of the speeches, it must be remembered, although wonderfully vivid for brief reports, are, with one exception, brief, and mostly very brief.

In those reports the main tenor of St Peter's preaching is represented as having been that Jesus the Messiah, in whom Old Testament prophecy had been fulfilled, had risen from the dead, been exalted to the right hand of God, and so had attained a sovereignty and brought in a salvation far surpassing what Israel had looked for. It was pre-eminently a preaching, a giving witness to, the resurrection, and is so described by St Luke on several occasions. The resurrection occupies a much larger and much more prominent place in the discourses than in First and Second Peter. In those Epistles, as in all the apostolic epistles, the resurrection indeed is often referred to, but it is not in any case made their main subject, as it obviously was of many of the apostolic discourses. The reason is obvious. It lies in the difference of aim between the discourses and the epistles—a difference dependent on the different classes of persons to whom they were respectively addressed. The discourses were missionary addresses, and the great design of them was to convince unbelieving or doubting men that Christ was really what He claimed to be. The epistles were letters to churches

already established and to individuals friendly to the Christian cause, and the design of them was to get men to act fully and consistently in conformity with the truth as it is in Christ. In the discourses reported in the Acts, St Peter and the other apostles were especially concerned to give motives for belief, and in their epistles to give motives for obedience. Hence in the former the resurrection was much more prominent.

St Peter in his discourses started from the fact of Christ's historical appearance. He pointed to the spiritual gifts with which He had been endowed; to the powers and miracles by which His mission had been attested; to the moral features of His character, and especially to His sinlessness, which He repeatedly and emphatically affirmed; and finally to His resurrection and exaltation. Thence he rose higher, and recognised Him as "the man whom God had chosen to be both Lord and Christ." St Peter was during the lifetime of Christ the first to recognise and acknowledge the Messiahship of his Master; and he was also the first after the Lord's ascension to proclaim His Messiahship to the world. The advent of the Spirit at Pentecost revealed itself to him as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy regarding the coming of a kingdom of grace on earth; and of that kingdom he declared Jesus to be the cornerstone and the enthroned Prince. The confession

which had earned for him the name of Peter—the confession of the truth that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God,” the truth which is the whole Church’s one foundation—he was privileged at Pentecost to proclaim aloud to “devout men from every nation under heaven,” and so to open to all the door of the kingdom of heaven.

In all the discourses of St Peter recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, he naturally, and indeed necessarily, as I have indicated, gave special prominence to the resurrection of Christ; but even in these discourses it is certain that he did not preach merely the resurrection, or base entirely on it his views of the Gospel of the new dispensation. The sufferings and the death of Christ are always recorded to have been distinctly presented along with it. He must have constantly set forth that Christ had suffered and died according to the foreordination of God, and as foretold in prophecy; had been exalted to God’s right hand and procured gifts for men; and that, in consequence, the forgiveness of sins could be confidently promised in His name. All these thoughts are contained in every discourse of which there is any report. And if he dwelt, as he undoubtedly did, most at length and most emphatically on the resurrection, it was clearly for the simple reason that, were the resurrection proved, everything else must be granted. Wher-

ever he proclaimed his message, he preached remission of sins, both among Jews and Gentiles, on the ground, not of ritual services or of personal merits, but on the ground that it was procured through the work of a crucified and risen Saviour.

The reports of St Peter's discourses in the Acts of the Apostles do not, it is true, draw attention to the connection between Christ's sufferings and the forgiveness of sins, or, to speak more definitely, to an expiation of human sin or satisfaction of Divine justice by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Hence one can understand why some should argue that St Peter, when he uttered the discourses, cannot have believed that the forgiveness of sins was obtained through the afflictions endured by the Messiah, or, in other words, through the expiatory character of Christ's death. That is the view maintained, for instance, in a thoughtful book by Dr Young, entitled "The Life and Light of Men." I doubt, however, if we are entitled to accept it. It is quite certain that St Peter did believe in the expiatory power of Christ's death when he wrote the first of the Epistles which bear his name. That being the case, and the reports of his discourses being brief reports of speeches of a particular kind, it seems to me that we are not warranted to infer that what St Peter is not recorded to have stated he must have disbelieved. The absence of record may well be

owing to the brevity of the reports and the desire of St Peter to dwell on those considerations which seemed to him most likely to secure the great immediate end which he had in view at the time.

Now, that end was to prevail upon the Jews to repent of having rejected and crucified the Lord Jesus, and to persuade them that He was the promised Messiah, through whom alone they could receive the pardon of sin and eternal life and glory. Insistence on the expiatory power of Christ's death was not especially conducive to that end. Hence, very probably, it is that we do not find it. What we do find St Peter to have persistently declared in the discourses recorded in the Acts was that Jesus of Nazareth was "a man approved of God by miracles and signs which God did by Him"; that He was the Christ of whom Moses and the prophets had spoken; that in crucifying Him the Jews had committed a great crime; that God had raised Him from the dead; that He was now reigning in heaven, and was appointed by God to be the Prince and Saviour and Judge of men; that it was the immediate duty of men to repent of the sin of rejecting Him, to be baptised in His name, to acknowledge His authority, and to rely on Him for salvation; that if they repented and believed in Him they would receive remission of sins and the gift of the Holy

Ghost; and that "through His name," and only through His name, was remission of sins possible to men. At this early stage of his apostolic ministry he may not have connected the forgiveness of sins with Christ's dying, but he did connect it in a very special manner with the name of Christ, with the manifestation of the person and character of Christ. He left no doubt even then that men were to rest on Christ alone for salvation—were to seek and expect forgiveness only through Him.

The Second Epistle attributed to St Peter is, perhaps, of all New Testament books, that of which the authenticity is most contested. The majority even of conservative critics pronounce with more or less confidence that the writer of it cannot have been the author of the First Epistle. And it must be admitted that its authenticity may naturally enough be questioned and disputed both on external and internal grounds. It is not certainly known to have been quoted by any writers of the first or second century, nor is it found in the oldest lists, collections, or translations of apostolic writings. Doubts of its authenticity were early expressed. Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, and others of the Fathers knew only of *one Epistle* of Peter. And so far the external evidence for its claim to be St Peter's cannot be denied to be weak. On the

other hand, there is no positive external evidence against its claim. Although, apart from that claim, the external evidence that St Peter was the author of the Epistle is indeed small, there is no external evidence which points to anyone else as its author. The claim to be St Peter's is positive and unambiguous. The Epistle distinctly professes to have been written by St Peter, and that not merely in its opening words, which might be supposed to have been prefixed to it by one who was not its author, but also in the body of it, where the writer declares himself to have "been with Jesus in the holy mount,"¹ and also where he speaks of his "beloved brother Paul."² Now certainly such a claim is not to be lightly set aside, especially as the author was obviously a man of great religious fervour and earnestness—one not likely to pretend to be another man than himself.

The internal evidence for Second Peter having the same author as First Peter is also weak. There are certainly considerable differences of thought between the two Epistles. But it does not appear that they amount to contradictions, or altogether preclude the belief that Peter wrote both Epistles. The type of doctrine is in both the same—Judæo-Christian. I see no traces of what is called Alexandrianism in the Second Epistle any more

¹ 2 Pet. i. 16-18.

² 2 Pet. iii. 14-16.

than in the First. It is true that "hope" does not hold in the Second so prominent a place as in the First, "knowledge" (*ἐπίγνωσις*) having greater stress laid on it. But the difference has been exaggerated. The "knowledge" insisted on in the Second Epistle is not the "wisdom" of Alexandrian philosophy or theology, but a true practical knowledge of God and of all things pertaining to life and godliness—a knowledge closely akin to the "hope" which is so prominent in the First Epistle. The main aim of Second Peter was to exhort those to whom it was addressed—the same persons as those to whom we are told First Peter had been sent—to "live in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the day of God," in the expectation of "a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," and "using all diligence to be found of Him in peace, without spot or blemish." But that is substantially the demand for hope which is made in First Peter.

As to style, there are many strikingly peculiar expressions in Second Peter which are not in First Peter; but, on the other hand, there are a number of peculiar expressions common to the two Epistles, but almost unknown in the rest of the New Testament. As to general tone and spirit, there is a similar likeness and unlikeness. There is

undoubtedly in these respects a greater difference between the two Epistles ascribed to St Peter than between any two writings ascribed to St Paul or St John. It does not follow, however, that they could not be written by the same person. First Peter is manifestly a much more elaborately planned and deliberately composed Epistle than Second Peter. It is also, in the main, consolatory, while the other is largely denunciatory. The one was written in a composed and sympathetic mood, the other in a disturbed and to a large extent angry one. The writer and those whom he addressed may have been the same, but the occasions and circumstances were not the same, and the author was certainly far from entirely in the same state of mind. In the case of a man with the temperament of Peter, that may account for greater differences in style and tone than mere literary critics deem credible.

I do not venture, then, to affirm that Second Peter was written by St Peter, although it is certainly Petrine in its type of doctrine; but I do think that the critics, conservative or radical, who are at present so hastily and confidently pronouncing St Peter not to have written Second Peter, would do well to be more deliberate and cautious.

There is a remarkable similarity, I may add, between Second Peter and the Epistle of Jude, both in the general structure of the argument and in particular

expressions. It is such that it cannot have been accidental. But no valid argument can fairly be drawn from it against the authenticity of Second Peter.

First Peter is the main source of our knowledge of the theology of St Peter. Although its authenticity has not been uncontested, we are nevertheless quite safe, I think, in receiving it as truly St Peter's. Of course, it is no mere doctrinal disquisition. Its aim was not the exposition of truth for its own sake, or for the mere satisfaction of the intellect. It is a pastoral letter—a wonderfully sympathetic, wise, and beautiful one—written to comfort and cheer those to whom it was addressed, and to encourage them to keep pure and entire the precious faith which they had received. If any of you wish to enter fully into the meaning and spirit of it, with a view mainly to the increase of your own religious insight and strength, let me recommend to you Archbishop Leighton's "Commentary" upon it. That book is as unique of its kind as Milton's "Paradise Lost" among poems of its class. The loss of it would be a greater misfortune than the loss of all the learned critical commentaries on it which have appeared during the last century. In Britain we have no work on practical religion so spiritually pure, deep, and delicately truthful.

The Old Testament is largely drawn upon in St Peter, as in all that the apostle is represented in the New Testament either to have spoken or written. The Old Testament, it is everywhere manifest, had been a chief source of inspiration to him, and largely contributed to the formation of his religious convictions. His theology is, like that of St James, drawn to a great extent from the Old Testament. Yet there is a very noticeable difference between St James and St Peter in relation to the Old Testament. St James, as I indicated in my previous lecture, thought of the Gospel chiefly as "the perfect law of liberty"—a law which, through being fulfilled and perfected by Christ, had been changed from a law of external constraint and internal unrest and fear into a law unified and spiritualised by the principle of love, so that the heart freely and joyously chooses and acts on it. St Peter thought of the Gospel more as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy than of Old Testament law. He viewed it chiefly as the realisation of the hope of Israel—the fulfilment of the latent prophecies in the Old Testament ritual and of the prophetic visions. Hence one reason why Peter dwelt so much more on Christ and His work than did James.

St Peter's way of looking at the relationship of the new to the old dispensation was also somewhat

different from that of St Paul. He looked chiefly at how the new dispensation fulfilled the old, whereas St Paul was especially impressed with how it differed from the old, and hence dwelt mainly on their unlikeness. Both views are, of course, so far true, and each view is in itself one-sided. God's thought, in its fulness, has to be expressed through the one-sided thoughts of many men of various natures. It was so even as regards the inspired teachers of apostolic times; it is not less so now.

There was little of a distinctive character in St Peter's teaching as to God. Yet it may be well to indicate what that teaching was.

He describes God as "the faithful Creator," and as "the Judge of the quick and the dead." But he speaks of Him especially as He whom Christians are privileged to call "Father"—"the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (i. 3); "the Father" (i. 2, 17). He thus shows that he felt the great significance of Christ's revelation of the Divine Fatherhood; his consciousness of the fact that through Christ God had at length been made known as absolute goodness and holy love—perfect righteousness and uttermost grace and mercy,—and these are just the attributes to which we find him referring. Mercy is strongly emphasised. It is the source of hope and salvation (i. 3). God is

“the God of all grace” (v. 10). All the blessings of the Gospel are the gifts of the “varied grace” of God (iv. 10); the expression of His “virtues”—“the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light” (ii. 9).

The various passages in which St Peter is represented in the New Testament as speaking of the Holy Ghost do not contain any developed, or indeed definite, doctrine as to the personality of the Holy Spirit, or the relationship of the Spirit to the Father and the Son. But they give expression to an unhesitating faith in the agency of the Spirit in the saints and prophets of old, in those who had been commissioned to proclaim the message of the Gospel, and in the lives of individual Christians. His sense of the need of the Holy Ghost and trust in His aid rested on the evidence of history, the authority of the Old Testament, and personal experience—three pillars all firm, and each strengthening the others.

Neither in his First Epistle nor elsewhere did St Peter expressly affirm the Divinity of Christ, although what he spoke and wrote is full of Christ. But the way in which he mentions Christ (1 Pet. i. 2, 3) in connection with the Father and the Spirit at the very commencement of the First Epistle; the way in which he describes the Spirit of Christ as working in the prophets; as also the way in which he transfers to Christ Old Testament utterances regarding

God,—have been held, and may not unreasonably be held, to imply his belief in our Lord's Divinity.

Christ had a far larger place in the teaching of Peter than of James. That followed naturally from the different ways in which the two apostles looked at the Gospel. St James regarded it as a spiritualised law, St Peter as fulfilled prophecy. Even St Peter's standpoint, however, led him to present chiefly not the Divine but the historical side of the manifestation and work of Christ, for it was in the history alone that prophecy was fulfilled. But whereas in the Epistle of James there are few references to Christ, in the First Epistle of Peter, as also in the discourses in the Acts and in Second Peter, they abound. His sinlessness and sufferings, His meekness, endurance, and mercy, are lovingly emphasised. From the time of Pentecost onwards, Peter had spoken of his crucified Master as "the Prophet," "the Holy One of God," "the Holy Child Jesus," "the Holy and the Just," "the Prince of Life." He is the only apostle found applying to Him the term "lamb" (*ἀμνός*) drawn from Isaiah. In his First Epistle he gives prominence to the Sonship of Christ. God is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. i. 3). Redemption is described as effected "through His precious blood." The prophets testified beforehand of His sufferings, and the glory that was to follow (1 Pet. i. 10, 11). Although only

“manifested at the end of the times, for the sake of those who through Him are believers in God,” He was the Lamb “without blemish and without spot, foreknown (foreordained) to bear their sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Pet. i. 18, 19, ii. 24, iii. 18). Now “He is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him” (iii. 22). He is the Shepherd and Bishop of souls (1 Pet. ii. 25); the Judge of the world (1 Pet. iv. 5); our Lord, to whom words employed in the Old Testament of Jehovah may without presumption or impiety be applied.

St Peter's doctrine of man was of the most general kind. He seems to me to have been the least introspective of New Testament writers. He was a man prompt to feel and judge, to speak and act, but not specially reflective, or given to self-questioning. He had no psychology of his own, like St Paul. He gives us no analysis of states of consciousness, such as St James does in a few words when explaining the origin of sin and the origin of strife. There is no meditative mysticism in what he writes, as in the writings of St John. There is nothing, therefore, which calls for special remark as to his views of human nature.

There is little even that is peculiar in his teaching regarding sin. He does not deal with sin separately or specially. He speaks of it only

in connection with the salvation by which it is put away and cleansed. In his affirmation of the indispensableness of that salvation, he presupposes the universality of sin. He regards even the Christian as continually exposed to the necessity of sinning, and as not to be saved without energetic struggling, both because of the manifold sinful desires (*ἐπιθυμίαι*) in his own heart, and because of the influence of the Adversary who "walketh about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour."

Among the many kinds of sin which he enumerates he mentions not merely the heathen forms, but no less condemns the pride which fancies that it has no need of the Gospel of free grace. The "world" (*κόσμος*) is his comprehensive expression for the community of those who live in sin. Its opposite is "the brotherhood," "the brotherhood of us," of Christians.

The view which he took of the history of the human race was just that to be expected from a plain, earnest Christian man, trained as he had been and situated as he was. It had for him only two periods or states—that of nature or that of grace. In the state of nature man was left to himself; in the state of grace he has been raised by the mercy and intervention of God into a better condition. The former is described as

a time "of ignorance" and of "darkness"; one in which men's desires were contrary to the will of God and their own good, and in which they became the slaves of their own lusts. The latter state is one into which men are called through God sending to them messengers enlightened and endowed with the gift of the Holy Spirit to make known to them His blessed will. Those who comply with the Divine "call" made to them are the "elect"—in that they accept and obey the truth, and through watchfulness and perseverance, in dependence on the goodness and grace of God, enter into eternal life. Israel had been thus elect, but through her rejection of Christ the election had passed over to those who had received Him, and who looked for His reappearance.

St Peter in his early missionary discourses had laid great stress on the resurrection as an evidence of the truth of the Gospel. In both the Epistles which are ascribed to him great stress is laid on it as an essential part of the Gospel, as of the substance of it. For St Peter the resurrection was not only the basis of faith, but of life. It was the latter, because he saw in it the warrant for "hope." He has been called "the apostle of hope." This is not because the other apostles failed to recognise the importance of hope, but

because of the especial prominence which Peter gave to it. The characteristic appears alike in the discourses in the Acts and in the First Epistle. Both are marked by the intensity with which their author regarded the future. Both show us that he lived in a lively expectation of Christ's reappearance. Whereas Paul represents salvation as dependent on faith and John on love, Peter represents it as dependent on hope. Of course, all those views are true, as the graces of faith, love, and hope are inseparable from each other. It is impossible to have any one of them without having also the others. Any one of them is dead if alone. They are all three at once necessary roots of the new life, and essential manifestations of it. They are all grounded in and pervaded by the new life. It is in the resurrection of Christ that St Peter sees the foundation and guarantee both of faith and of hope. "God raised Him from the dead," he says, "and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope might be in God."

The object of hope, according to St Peter, is the consummation of the Messianic kingdom, the heavenly inheritance—"an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading," to be bestowed at the second advent, the *parousia*. To that goal the eyes of the followers of Christ must be directed. In so far as they are His true followers, they

belong to the heavenly world where He is. Here below they are strangers and pilgrims, "passing the time of their sojourn in fear," "abstaining from fleshly lusts which war against the soul," and having their "behaviour seemly among the Gentiles, so that, instead of being able to speak against them as evil-doers, they may, by their good works which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."

The hope itself Peter describes as "a living hope," one which influences the whole moral life, inasmuch as the goal set before the soul, the glory promised as a reward, becomes the strongest motive for the fulfilment of all the conditions of its attainment. We are purified by such a hope. The whole moral life is altered, elevated, and sanctified by it.

Of the time of Christ's second coming it was not to be expected that St Peter would have any precise knowledge to give. Christ Himself had said to His disciples, "Of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only." In First Peter the day of the Lord is represented as "near at hand." In Second Peter it is represented as perhaps indefinitely remote. That is no reason whatever for inferring that St Peter was not the author of both Epistles. He may well, as time passed on, and the Lord did not appear, and impenitent and impious men scoffingly asked for the signs of His coming, have

had to acknowledge to himself that the return of the Lord, so ardently desired, might remain longer unaccomplished than he had at first expected. St Peter was all the more likely to have written what we find in Second Peter about the *parousia* and the end of the world because of what he had written about it in First Peter. We are not to fancy that the inspiration of the apostles rendered them infallible in details, or prevented them from enlarging and correcting their views.

Whoever wrote Second Peter drew largely from the Old Testament, although he quoted from it literally only once (see Prov. xxvi. 11 and 2 Pet. ii. 22). His references to the righteousness of God, to election, to the sure word of prophecy, to the times of Noah and Abraham, to the conduct of Sarah and Lot, etc., are unmistakable allusions to the teaching of the Old Testament. He had either never held, or, what seems more likely, had ceased to hold, that the end of the world and the advent of Christ must inevitably be near at hand. For all that he knew, he acknowledged that it might be indefinitely distant. He had thought that it would have already come. He and his fellow-Christians generally had been mocked on that account by wicked men. But the delay and the mockery of the ungodly had in no way weakened his faith in the advent of his Lord. On the contrary, his

faith had become stronger and far more comprehensive in its scope. The *parousia*, he thought, was to be coincident with a great world catastrophe, a final judgment of mankind, of which all earlier Divine judgments of a like kind had been only types. The world by its wickedness and corruption was preparing for it. In the time of Noah it had been punished and purified by water. When corruption is again at its height, the heavens that now are and the present earth will be punished and purified by fire. "The day of the Lord will come like a thief—it will be a day on which the heavens will pass away with a rushing noise, the elements be destroyed in the fierce heat, and the earth and all the works of man be utterly burnt up." By that he did not mean that either the heavens or earth would be annihilated. The flood did not annihilate but purify them. Why should it be otherwise with fire? The author of Second Peter was, in accordance with God's promise, "expecting new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness will dwell," and he exhorted all Christians to do the same, and to act in consistency therewith, "earnestly seeking to be found in the presence of the Lord, free from blemish or reproach," and to be continually on their guard so as not to be led astray by the false teaching of immoral men. Experience and the lapse of years had taught him

not to imagine or profess that he knew when Christ would come again, although he felt certain that He would come, and that whenever He came the coming would be sudden. There is no ambiguity in his words: "There is one thing, dear friends, which you must not forget: with the Lord one day resembles a thousand years, and a thousand years resemble one day. The Lord is not slow in fulfilling His promise, in the sense in which some men speak of slowness; but He bears patiently with you, His desire being that no one should perish, but that all should come to repentance. The day of the Lord will come like a thief" (2 Pet. iii. 8-10, Weymouth's tr.)

The central doctrine of First Peter is not merely affirmed in a variety of ways. It is also practically applied to the special relationships of life. St Peter has shown how it ought to be exemplified in *brotherly love*, in *obedience to civil rulers*, in *the submission of domestics to masters*, and in *the family*. To that we owe some of the most striking and precious words in the First Epistle. All the exhortations referred to presuppose and depend on the advice given in chap. i. 13-16: "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ: As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignor-

ance: But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." Fix all your hopes on Christ, and be prepared for His reappearance; avoid all selfish and debasing cravings such as ruled over you when you knew Him not; seek to be holy in all your habits of life as He was holy, knowing as you do that Jehovah, the God of your ancestors, had always claimed from His people that they should be holy as He Himself was holy. That was the source from which the author of First Peter drew the other exhortations by which he applied his doctrine to the special relationships of life. One of them was, as I have said, to brotherly love—mutual affection and helpfulness. He reminded those to whom it was addressed of having been redeemed not with a ransom of perishable wealth, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, the alone efficacious paschal lamb, without blemish and without spot, foreordained to that end before the foundation of the world, but manifested at last to those who had believed in God that raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory, that their faith and hope might be in God. Hence the author of the Epistle exhorts all who had received such good news to live a life of sincere and hearty love to one another, and to free themselves from all deceitful-

ness, ill-will, and evil-speaking. The view given in 1 Pet. iii. 21 by the close relationship between the administration of baptism and the "putting away of the filth of the flesh" is clearly presented, wherever there is the inquiry (or response) of a good conscience towards God, through the resurrection of Jesus. The idea may seem to be a little far-fetched. It is so expressed, however, as to give no sanction to any materialistic or sacerdotal notion of baptismal regeneration.

A second idea only to be found in First Peter is that the ancient prophets desired to study and know the time and blessings of the Gospel—that the spirit of Christ, the Messiah-spirit, working in them before Messiah came, thus prompted them, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them. That is an idea which it is not difficult to accept. It is an idea which one can see must have very naturally occurred to St Peter, seeing that his own mind was so much occupied with thoughts of his Lord's reappearance.

The third idea peculiar to the First Epistle is that Christ "preached to the spirits" in prison, or "to the dead." As to what is meant thereby there is, and has always been, great differences of opinion. Long accounts of the history of the interpretation of the passage in which the idea is expressed have

been written, and the history itself seems to be very far from ended. The three leading interpretations are these: (1) That no descent of Christ into any place of the dead—whether Hades or Hell—is meant, but only that He preached in and through Noah to the men of Noah's time, "the spirits in prison," "the dead," alive when preached to, but "now dead"; (2) That Christ, in the interval between His death and resurrection, went in the spirit and preached the Gospel to those departed from this life who had not been saved; and (3) That He preached to the fallen angels, "the spirits in prison," spoken of in 2 Pet. ii. 4 as having been cast down to Tartarus, a deep dark place, according to Greek mythology as far beneath Hades as heaven is high above the earth. It is useless, I think, to pass any distinctly positive opinion as to which of the views referred to should be considered the correct one. I greatly doubt whether it would be advisable to expend much time or thought on the subject. The enigmatical words of St Peter, however, are the only authority for the insertion in the so-called Apostles' Creed of the clause "He" (Jesus Christ) "descended into Hell"—an insertion made in the Latin Churches about two centuries after the whole of the rest of the Creed was in use. It is an error, I think, in using the Creed, not to omit that clause.

I must conclude. I hope I may in some small degree at least have increased your interest in the words of St James and of St Peter, and perhaps of the theology of the New Testament as a whole. If so, I shall be more than sufficiently rewarded. I hope also that all your varied and useful work here will prosper, and that you will have much satisfaction in it, and feel God's blessing to be on it.

V.

CHRIST OUR KING.

I.

CHRIST came to be our Prophet, Priest, and King. He revealed Himself to the world in these three offices, functions, or relationships. As the ideal or perfect Prophet, Priest, and King, He showed Himself to be the ideal or perfect Saviour of the world. Without being all these He would not have been the full Mediator, the complete Redeemer, which the world needed. By them all His work is defined; in them all it is comprehended.

In Christ the whole history of prophecy culminated. He revealed the mind and heart of God as none other, being the very Word of God,—at once the living Law and the living Gospel, He in whom the Law appeared at once as an Example, and the Gospel as the Truth. In Christ the history of all priesthood reached its goal, since He was the

Great High Priest of humanity—priest and sacrifice in one—the only true Priest, the only adequate sacrifice for the remission of sins. And equally in Christ as King we have the full significance and outcome of the history of kingship.

The idea of kingship is one which has pervaded history and which has had an enormous influence on it.

Society must always and everywhere have had a head. Society in the form of the family has the father as head; in the form of the tribe the chief; in the form of a people or nation the king. It is only where society can scarcely be said to exist—where there are the merest rudiments of organisation (as among the Fuegians, etc.)—that there is no definite head. Where nations are formed kings appear almost everywhere, if not everywhere, although they may give place in time to aristocratic or democratic governments; and often in such governments the essence of monarchy is present, a single strongest controlling will, the Carlylean hero, or some substitute for him.

In rude savage tribes kings exercise an almost unlimited power. Their will is law. In a vast number of such societies they are regarded *as gods*, or the descendants of gods, or as temporarily or permanently possessed by the Deity, and as endowed with Divine powers and rights. Obedience

to them is thus deemed a sort of worship, and the withholding of it in any circumstances as profanity. In these rudimentary forms of society what has been called the doctrine of "the divine right of kings to govern wrong" is held with much less qualification even than it was in the mediæval world. The reign of kings was thus almost everywhere, even in the rudest times, closely associated with a blind crude faith in a Divine kingdom.

Such a faith even in that form is no more inexplicable, perhaps, than any other form of naturalistic or polytheistic faith. The worship grounded on fear or reverence or admiration of human qualities and forces, seems in no wise less natural than that grounded on fear or reverence or admiration of purely physical forces. To refer to Divinity the strength, courage, skill, or good fortune manifest in the great warrior or skilful ruler of men was as rational as to refer to it the force and effects of the winds or waters.

Certain it is, however explained, that in the belief of many savage and semi-civilised peoples their kings are deemed to be of a Divine origin and endowed with Divine powers. Mr Frazer, the learned author of the "Golden Bough," gives a long list of African kings who are consulted as oracles, and believed to be able to inflict or heal sickness,

withhold rain, and cause famine. In the New World the Incas were revered like gods; and the Mexican kings "at their accession took an oath that they would make the sun to shine, the clouds to give rain, and the earth to bring forth fruit in abundance."¹

In the Oriental World the idea of a kingdom of God on earth was one not confined to Israel. Nay, all the nations of the ancient and eastern world more or less felt and acknowledged themselves to be under Divine government, and sought Divine protection. They regarded their institutions as of Divine origin and appointment; their kings as descendants, manifestations, or vicegerents of their gods. And those kings seem thoroughly to have believed that they were so; and hence that they were entitled to act as gods on earth, and to have authority over all the nations of the world. The monarchs of Assyria and Babylon, in their long-buried and recently-recovered inscriptions, habitually speak of themselves as appointed and raised to their thrones by the gods, sometimes as sons of gods; they describe the deities as arming them, helping them, and fighting for them; and themselves as enforcing the will of the gods, and imposing their laws, institutions, and ordinances on the people they conquer. The kings of Egypt

¹ "Golden Bough," vol. i. pp. 38, 42, 44, 49.

and Persia used in like manner, as the direct representatives of the Most High God, to cover the rocks with commands set forth as binding on all the world. Social arrangements were held under their rule not to be historical and alterable, but Divine and unchangeable. Thus was it in Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, India, China, etc. They have all passed under a theocratic *régime*.

Theocracy almost everywhere preceded monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy. And in a way it deserved to do so; for it rested on a deeper and truer idea than those on which they are founded.

The will which ought to rule on earth is *not* the will of one man, or of any class of men, or of any number of men, but the will of God. Vaguely even the most ancient nations of the earth felt this, and showed thereby that a kingdom of God was their desire. If nations now forget this, so much the worse for themselves. If they believe that they can rule and save themselves, they will find that they can only misrule and ruin themselves.

The true course for humanity to follow is not one which carries it away from theocracy in its general and essential essence of the rule or government of God. It is one which carries it only

from a partial towards a perfect theocracy; from an external semblance of theocracy to its spiritual reality; from a kingdom in which God is misrepresented by men who make use of His name to one in which God really rules through the power of His Spirit working in the hearts and lives of men obedience to His own righteous laws.

Of all the ancient ethnic religions, the Mazdean (old Persian religion) was the one in which the idea of a Divine kingdom was the most prominent, and also much the most reasonable, righteous, and elevating; and it is interesting to note that priests of that religion, the Magi, are recorded by St Matthew to have been guided by a star, the significance of which they divined, to Bethlehem, in order that they might hail the infant Messiah as a king and offer Him gifts. Mazdeism was much more closely akin in spirit to the religion of Israel than were any of the other contemporary religions; and Judaism was undoubtedly quickened and strengthened by its contact with Mazdeism during the Babylonian captivity. The bringing of the Magi into connection with the Saviour of the world and placing them in relation to Him in so uniquely favourable a light must have been because there was recognised to have been in both the Hebrew and Persian religions a relationship to,

and preparation for, the coming of the kingdom of God.

The Empire of Rome, the rule of the Cæsars, was from its origin an object of religious worship. The emperor was deified. Poets like Virgil and Horace glorified the divine functions and attributes of Augustus. The sacredness of the Empire was the cardinal tenet of the later Roman faith. Of course, the idea of the Roman Empire had no influence on the formation of the biblical idea of the kingdom of God. It had, however, an influence, and unquestionably a very great influence, on its development, as in the eyes of the early Christians the Roman Empire seemed to be the great embodiment of the kingdom of the world, as opposed to the kingdom of Heaven. To Augustine even it appeared, on the whole, or in essence and spirit, as the *civitas diaboli*, necessarily hostile to the Church of God.

II.

The people of Israel believed their God to be their king. So did other ancient peoples. But the idea of God which prevailed in Israel was very different from the ideas of God current in other nations. Leaving aside all conjecturing and

theorising as to how it came to be what we find it to be in the Old Testament, there we see it to be that of an Almighty and All-holy God, the one true God, the Creator of heaven and earth. The Old Testament conception of God is a distinctly monotheistic conception, in nowise a polytheistic or pantheistic one, and therefore also a thoroughly spiritual and moral conception. In that respect there is a profound difference between it and all heathen conceptions of God, and between the Hebrew and all pagan theocracies.

The foundation of the theocracy in Israel was the belief in a covenant between God and man through which Israel became the people of God. The terms of the covenant were expressed in the law,—the charter of Israel as a theocracy. The non-fulfilment on Israel's part of the covenant, and the consequences which followed therefrom, were what gave occasion to the development of the idea of Messiah and His kingdom. The kingdom of the Messiah was to realise in a complete and spiritual manner what had been merely foreshadowed and suggested by the historical theocracy.

The establishment of the monarchy in Israel may be regarded as a proof of the unfitness of the people for a truly theocratic government. They did not sincerely accept God as their king, and so

they placed themselves at the disposal of arbitrary and tyrannical human kings, like those of the nations around them. However, the Hebrew monarchy was a notable stage in the development of faith in a kingdom of God. It gave a great impulse to Messianic thought. The life and experience of David and his son Solomon became what we may call the typical frame of the Messianic idea. The king who was to come—David's greater son—was conceived of more or less as like one or other of these two most admired monarchs of a united Israel; and of the two, David was viewed as the more realising the theocratic ideal of a king ruling in the name of Jehovah.

From the eighth to the fifth century, B.C., there was a continuous advance in prophecy as to the kingdom of God. All the so-called writing prophets foretold the coming of a kingdom of God. The thought of its advent cannot be reasonably supposed to have originated even with the earliest of these prophets. Their prophecies presuppose the existence of a belief in its approach,—a belief which is only explicable as having grown out of the past, and as having had its roots in the history of the national consciousness. It was, however, chiefly through the prophets referred to that the faith in the coming of the kingdom became what it was, and what we know it to have been. The

faith of the prophets in its coming is itself one of the most remarkable phenomena of history.

“It is a wonderful fact,” has said a great American divine, “that while the wisest men, as Plato and Aristotle, among the most cultivated nations of ancient times, in their conceptions of the true condition of men never rose above the idea of a single state or community, the Jewish people, so unlettered and remote, looked forward under prophetic guidance to a divine kingdom, centering in a glorious Head, into which all kingdoms were to flow, and in which all strifes and conflicts were to be adjusted. Their prophets gazed upon this hallowed vision with inspired exultation—with faces not turned backward to a golden age already past, nor forward only to a ruinous catastrophe, but backward to read the promise made from the beginning, and forward to see its fulfilment in Him who was to bring in a time of freedom and joy, of reconciliation between man and God and man and man, and who was to gather unto Himself all the nations of the earth.”

The fact so described by Dr Henry B. Smith is, indeed, most wonderful. Yet it is not wholly inexplicable. The key to the explanation of it is to be found in the idea of God common to all the prophets,—the idea which they sought to keep incorrupt, to purify and spiritualise, when it was

being distorted, dishonoured, and materialised. It was because in the unity of God in heaven they saw the unity of the peoples on earth,—in the righteousness and love of God the reasons of His chastisements, and the grounds not of despair but of hope. It was because they were filled with that supreme and comprehensive thought of God, in the light of which alone can either the past, present, or future be truly seen.

They had accordingly faith in a better covenant than that which had been given; in a true kingdom of God on earth in which the highest hopes of pious souls would be realised; in a perfect king, who would accomplish His work and attain His kingdom through humiliation and suffering: and, therefore, the very non-fulfilment on Israel's part of the requirements of the covenant, and the consequences which followed therefrom, gave occasion to the development of the idea of Messiah and of His kingdom as one destined to realise in a complete and spiritual manner what had been merely foreshadowed and suggested by the historical theocracy.

The prophets of Israel had a passion for righteousness, and they saw clearly and felt deeply the prevalence of unrighteousness. They were conscious in an extraordinary degree of the extent to which sin had laid hold upon all ranks of the people, and fully aware of the mischiefs which

were flowing, and could not but flow, from it. To sin they attributed all the divisions, weaknesses, and calamities of the kingdom. But they had also a correspondingly strong sense of the righteousness of God, and of His interest in Israel, whom He had separated from among the other peoples of the earth with a view to attaining thereby great and holy ends; and hence they looked above and beyond Judea in the present to a kingdom in the future of which the members would be obedient to the will of God and carry out the purposes which He had in the election of Israel. They felt that the kingdom of God could only be shared in by those who were truly the people of God; and, consequently, moved by the Spirit of God, they boldly proclaimed as an approaching reality what elsewhere a few poets only had uttered as a vague aspiration or mere ideal.

III.

In God's appointed time, and when due preparation had been made, Christ our King came. His forerunner, John the Baptist, came preaching, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He Himself began His ministry with the same message, "Repent:

for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He thus started with the thought of a divine kingdom on earth to which the whole history of mankind, and the whole process of revelation, had contributed, so as to connect Himself with the past as He who was to realise what it had promised. He came preaching the "Gospel of the kingdom." "The kingdom" was the burden and tenor of His teaching. The idea of it was comprehensive of His entire doctrine and life. All that He said may be regarded as related to its conditions, laws, government, service, antecedents, or consequences; and all that He did as having a reference to its foundation and upbuilding. Of the "Church" He said but little. Indeed, he expressly spoke of it, so far as we can learn from the Gospels, by the term "Church" (ἐκκλησία) only twice,—once (Matt. xvi. 18), where he obviously refers to the Church in its totality, and again (Matt. xviii. 17), when He has in view a congregation in the sense of a synagogue or local community of believers.

It is most instructive that Christ should have dwelt so incessantly and so emphatically on the kingdom of God, and that He should have touched so seldom and so lightly on the Church. That He should have done so is no evidence that the Church is an unimportant institution, or that correct views regarding it are unimportant, but it

is evidence that the Church and the doctrines which directly refer to the Church are secondary and not primary, subordinate and not fundamental. The doctrine as to the Church should be determined by the doctrine as to the kingdom, not the doctrine as to the kingdom by the doctrine as to the Church.

There is a theology which puts the doctrine of the Church in the foreground—which finds in it a rule and test by which to measure and judge all other doctrines. Catholic theologians naturally do so, as, in their view, the Gospel can only be known through the Church, and not the Church through the Gospel, and because they are unwilling directly to apply to their Church the standard of doctrine and practice contained in Scripture. But such a theology is very unscriptural and unevangelical. It is in profound contradiction to the spirit and character of the teaching of our Lord. That teaching was strikingly devoid of churchliness. It reserved for the Church merely a ministerial or instrumental position. The Church, as Christ's institution, exists for the sake of the kingdom of God, and accomplishes its end only in the measure in which it extends and builds up the kingdom of God on earth.

Christ clearly set forth how the kingdom to

come was related to Himself. He avowed its dependence on Him. He hesitated not in the greatest crisis of His life to claim to be its king, inasmuch as He was the manifestation and source of the truth of which the kingdom was to be the expression and development. When He stood a prisoner before Pilate His Jewish accusers charged Him with having declared that He was a king, and in consequence accused Him of treason against the sovereignty of Rome; but by a single word of explanation He made it manifest that His enemies had perverted His language; that He made no claim to a sovereignty like that of the Roman emperor; that He had no desire to be a temporal prince. "My kingdom," He said, "is not of this world." While He thus gave Pilate an assurance that He was no claimant of the Jewish sceptre or antagonist to Cæsar, His words were not words of mere denial; on the contrary, they involved the assertion that He was of right and in very deed a king. "*My kingdom* is not of this world." That meant that He had a kingdom. "*My Kingdom*"—the kingdom *which I possess*,—the kingdom *which belongs to me*—is not a kingdom of this world, as that of Cæsar is.

Hence Pilate's next question was, "Art thou a king, then?"—put, perhaps, in mere wonder—perhaps in sarcasm—perhaps to suggest that it

would be well to speak more cautiously, and altogether to avoid the use of dangerous words like *king* and *kingdom*. The question was not unanswered. It led our Lord to state more fully and clearly what His claim was. "I am a king," He said; "for this very purpose was I born, and for this very cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth." The answer was perfectly clear and explicit. It stated precisely how He was a king. His title to rule was founded on this, that *He bore witness to the truth*. There can be no title so good as that; there is even no other title valid for the spirit. Force can rule the body; truth only can rule the spirit. It is not merely, however, to *truth* that Christ is a witness, but to *the truth*—the truth which is of infinitely more importance than other truth,—the truth which it is eternal life to know and eternal death not to know. This truth He bore witness to, not merely by preaching it, not merely by proving it, but by *being it*, by embodying it. "*I am the truth*," He could say. That which in the Divine nature was unknown—which men's thoughts and affections could not of themselves reach and grasp, yet which was the source whence alone spiritual life could be drawn—was brought near to them—was made to stand out clearly before their very eyes—was made an object for their minds to

contemplate, for their hearts to love—through the Word becoming flesh. The power, the wisdom, the justice, the love, the mercy of God, all these Christ bore witness to—all these He showed forth—by being in Himself the brightness of the glory of God and the express image of His person. For this very purpose was He born. For this very cause came He into the world.

Christ's kingdom is based on and developed from the truth which Christ *is and to which Christ bears witness*. It is *the truth* vivified by the spirit of holiness and productive of righteousness and goodness in all the spheres of existence. It is the mind, heart, and will of Christ realised in individuals and societies. Christ is necessarily the King of this kingdom, for it proceeds from Him and continues only in and by Him, and through the Truth which He is, and to which He has borne and is ever bearing witness through the Divine Word and Holy Spirit. From its nature we may easily infer the character of His sovereignty, and from the character of His sovereignty we may easily infer the nature of His kingdom. The connection between king and kingdom is here of the closest conceivable kind. No earthly kingdom depends on its king as intimately as the kingdom of God does on Christ. It is a kingdom only by being the manifestation of His will, the prolonga-

tion of His life, the creation of His Spirit making use of the truth which is in Him. No one apart from Him can be in the kingdom, nor can any one be in the kingdom without being united to Him through faith, love, and obedience.

Christ took wonderful care in describing the nature of the kingdom. He left the doing of it to none of His disciples or their successors, and there is no reason to believe that any of them, not even a St Paul or St John, could have adequately done so. He chose to explain the nature of the kingdom Himself; and did so with wonderful skill, insight into nature and spirit, and comprehensiveness of view as to the past, present, and future of the history of mankind. The doctrine taught by Christ as to the kingdom was so complete that it received little further development from the apostles, and although in their teaching the latter always implied the truth as to the kingdom, they insisted on it less than on the truth as to the Church. The kingdom is the most prominent, the Church is the least prominent, idea in Christ's teaching. In the Epistles of the apostles the Church is much more spoken of than the kingdom; but that was plainly only because the truth as to the kingdom had been already fully taught, whereas the truth as to the Church had been left to them to teach and apply. There was no re-

jection, on their part, of the view which their Lord had given of His kingdom and kingship, nor even any deviation from it. It was throughout implied by them in its entirety, and at times explicitly affirmed by them. The result, it seems to me, of an unprejudiced comparison of Christ's teaching with that of the apostles, was that none of the apostles, not even St Paul, originated any essential Christian idea whatever, any doctrine, not clearly implied in Christ's own teaching as to the kingdom.

No part of our Lord's teaching regarding the nature of His kingdom is more explicit than the prayer which He taught His disciples as a model of prayer. In that prayer the petition, "Thy kingdom come," is preceded by the petition, "Hallowed be Thy name," so that we may know that in the measure God's name is hallowed His kingdom comes; and it is followed by the petition, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," so that we may know that the coming of God's kingdom on earth is just the doing of His will on earth in the spirit in which it is done in heaven. The kingdom for the coming of which we are thus taught to pray is manifestly the kingdom of Divine power and grace over men's will, its acts and results; of Divine order and righteousness in man's life and in all its relations. In the measure

that human caprice is replaced by Divine law, human perversity by Divine holiness, this kingdom is advanced. When God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven, then it will have fully come. This is the kingdom which is the grand theme of Christ's teaching and of the whole Bible; yea, the kingdom after which, throughout all history, a certain groaning may be heard, a certain groping traced; and for the advent of which nature itself seems to travail in pain and sigh to be renewed.

IV.

Christ our King has Himself clearly taught us that His kingdom is an essentially present life in the heart of the religious man. It is primarily internal,—what the spirit has in itself when it possesses certain graces,—what the world cannot give nor take away. This truth is fully set forth by our Lord, the King Himself, in His Sermon on the Mount, where He lays down the conditions of entrance into His kingdom and of membership. These conditions are all dispositions of character or modes of conduct. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven”; *is now*, as a present possession, since poverty of spirit

is itself a part of the wealth of the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven." The kingdom of heaven *is* righteousness; those who cleave sincerely to righteousness cannot be out of the kingdom of heaven. "Not every one who sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." The kingdom of heaven is entered into and continued in by the doing of the will of the Father. The petition in the Lord's prayer, "Thy kingdom come," is elucidated by that which follows it, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." When He was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (cometh not so that the outward eye can detect its coming); "neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God *is within you.*" The kingdom of God reveals itself, that is to say, as spiritual experience. Its coming is not to be looked for in this or that historical event, in any political revolution, or ecclesiastical reform, or social movement. It is primarily the regenerated life of the spirit, and only the enlightened spiritual eye can trace its rise and progress.

Christ's kingdom, being a spiritual kingdom, is one which cannot be consistently defended or propagated by carnal weapons. Christ forbade His disciples to fight for Him with the sword. Providence, however, has so ordered it that the sword has often been an instrument of Divine justice and necessity, by which Christ's kingdom has been advanced, and many a good Christian has been a soldier, and as an executioner of Divine justice prepared the way for the spread of the Gospel of peace. The missionary zeal and the missionary success of Islam are undeniable. It has made hundreds of millions of converts, and swept idolatry clean off a large portion of the earth. Very often, it must be admitted, the sword has been its chief instrument of conversion. That instrument Christians now deem themselves unwarranted to employ, and rightly. But they did not always think so. Christianity was largely spread in Europe by force of arms. In the early half of the Middle Ages pious kings and emperors felt it to be their bounden duty to compel their heathen subjects to renounce idolatry. Christianity undoubtedly profited by what Charles the Great and other European kings did in that fashion. I have no doubt that it will also profit by much which Mohammedan rulers have done in the same way. We may well thank God, however, that

the only sword which is now needed either to propagate, or even to prepare the way for, the Gospel of Peace, is the sword of the Spirit—a weapon which woman may as appropriately and effectively employ as men, and which is not out of harmony with the service of the Prince of Peace.

The kingdom of God, the kingdom over which Christ rules, is incomparably more comprehensive than any earthly kingdom has ever been or can be. It is not confined to any place or bound to any form. It is dependent only on the Spirit. It is independent of the ordinances and commandments of men. Yet it rejects no iota of the law of a perfect righteousness, but accepts it all as inherently and eternally binding on the soul. It is to be traced in the earliest operations of God's spirit in the history of humanity. It extends to all the spheres and phases of life. It transcends all limits of race and language, of time and space. It advances uninterruptedly onwards and will have no end, for the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. It embraces and combines earth and heaven. The kingdom of God in heaven can only be entered through the kingdom of God on earth. The conditions of admission into the one—the conditions of existence in the one—are the conditions of admission into and of existence in the other. The kingdom of glory is the complete

realisation, the full fruition, of the kingdom of grace; and to regard them as separate—to make of the one two—is a serious error. Christianity has come to bring heaven to earth, to raise earth to heaven, and to unite heaven and earth under the one true spiritual government, through obedience to which alone can the soul rightly and harmoniously accomplish the ends of its being.

The King of this kingdom has invited us all into His kingdom. He has summoned us to be His servants and soldiers in it. Higher honour we cannot have, and we shall do well to listen to His voice, to obey His summons, and to train ourselves for the duties which He requireth of us.

The kingdom of God is just another expression for the supreme good and chief end of mankind. It gained, all is gained; it lost, all is lost. In the kingdom of God all that is good for human nature is included and presented in purity and perfection. The individual soul finds in it exercise for all its faculties and satisfaction for all its desires. Providence has for goal its establishment,—its victory over the kingdom of evil. That the kingdom of God the claims of which Christ set forth is thus the highest good is apparent from its very nature, for it is the manifestation of the attributes and operations of God in individuals and societies. It is the personal and collective

communion of man with God through Jesus Christ both in enjoyment and in action. And man's chief end is continually to enjoy God through his affections and to glorify Him by his actions. There is no true good which does not find its appropriate place in the supreme good, which, as I have said, is in its most comprehensive signification but another name for the kingdom of God, which was the great theme of our Saviour's teaching.

I must close, and shall do so in the well-known words of Miss Havergal, a sweet singer in Israel, a noble soldier of the Prince of the kings of the earth :—

Who is on the Lord's side ?
 Who will serve the King ?
 Who will be His helpers
 Other lives to bring ?
 Who will leave the world's side ?
 Who will face the foe ?
 Who is on the Lord's side ?
 Who for Him will go ?
 By Thy call of mercy,
 By Thy grace Divine,
 We are on the Lord's side ;
 Saviour, we are Thine.

VI.

CHRIST'S TEACHING AS TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

THE teaching of Jesus as to the Kingdom of God (set forth in the Synoptic Gospels) may be studied under the following heads: (*A*) His doctrine as to its Nature; (*B*) His doctrine as to its Righteousness; (*C*) His representation of His own relation to the doctrine of the Kingdom; (*D*) His doctrine as to its Members; and (*E*) His doctrine as to its Consummation.

The central and most comprehensive idea in Christ's teaching, as set forth in the Synoptic Gospels, was that of the Kingdom of God. The idea, as we can see even from a perusal of the Parables of the Kingdom, was one wonderfully wide, organic, and complete. It implicitly contained the whole doctrine of the Gospel. All that is to be found in the Fourth Gospel, and all that the Apostles taught, can be easily fitted into it.

In order, however, to realise in any adequate

measure the full wealth of our Lord's teaching as to His Kingdom, it is, of course, necessary to study it as a whole. That, of course, I cannot here do in detail. But I must indicate in as generally comprehensive a way as I can what it was. To do so, however, our indications must be little more than mere finger-post pointings.

The one already given shows the general scheme.

(A) In the teaching of Jesus as to the Nature of the Kingdom the points to be considered are—

(1) The significance of the designations "Kingdom," "Kingdom of the Father," "Kingdom of God," and "Kingdom of Heaven";

(2) The general or essential idea of the Kingdom of God in itself, and in antithesis to the Kingdoms of the world and of evil; and

(3) The characteristics ascribed to the Kingdom of God.

(1) As to the first point, it may be noted that the designations of "Kingdom of God" and "Kingdom of Heaven" cannot differ much in meaning.

The term "Kingdom" (*βασιλεία*) is itself very significant, very instructive. It signifies that Christianity is not simply a scheme for the salvation of individuals. It is that; but unless it were much more than that, it could not be a kingdom. It has to do with individuals, and to

do with them individually, but it has also to convert and organise them into a spiritual society obedient to the will of God, and pervaded by the Spirit of Christ, and to deal with them collectively. Christianity is certainly not *individualistic*. But neither is it *socialistic* or *collectivist*. So to regard it is the error of the theologians who, following Schleiermacher, identify the Kingdom of God with the *Christliche Gemeinschaft* — the religious and Christian community. The Ritschlians have gone farthest in this direction. It must not be forgotten, however, that the Kingdom of God has its being primarily in its King, and takes root and manifests itself first in the individual soul. It may be in one grain of leaven in a society which is otherwise all unleavened meal. In several of the Parables of the Kingdom it is, as you will have observed, likened to an individual.

In a multitude of passages βασιλεία must be understood as meaning kingdom in the sense of *reign*, *i.e.*, the exercise of kingly rule; not in that of *realm*, *i.e.*, people and territory under kingly rule.

The kingdom which was the theme of Christ's preaching is designated in the Synoptic Gospels by two expressions—"Kingdom of heaven" (βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν) and "Kingdom of God" (βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ). The former title is used only in the Gospel according to Matthew, where it occurs thirty-two

or thirty-three times; while the latter title is used only four or five times. In Mark and Luke βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is exclusively employed.

There has been considerable discussion as to whether or not the two designations are synonymous. It is manifest, on examination of the passages in which they are found, that if there be any difference of meaning between them it can only be slight.

There is a difference of opinion also as to which title was employed by Christ. The more common opinion is that it was β. τ. θ. This supposition, however, rests chiefly on the hypothesis that Mark gives us the earliest and most exact version of Christ's words. It is an unsafe—and as yet unproved—hypothesis.

Others decide in favour of β. τ. ο. The Jews were in Christ's time accustomed to the phrase *malcuth hashamaim*. It was to Jews that Christ spoke. Mark and Luke wrote for Greeks to whom the phrase β. τ. ο. would have been unintelligible or misleading.

I think the second view the more probable. It is easy to understand why Mark and Luke should have changed β. τ. ο. into β. τ. θ., but not why Matthew should have done the reverse.

(2) As to the second point—the essential idea of the Kingdom of God—it may be noted that

the Kingdom was virtually although not formally defined by the position of the petition regarding it in the Lord's prayer, and also by contrast.

Christ gave no explicit, no formal definition of the Kingdom of God. To have done so would probably only have narrowed men's views of it, and had a misleading influence. Nor was it necessary, inasmuch as the Old Testament idea and the prevalent expectation of a Messianic Kingdom could both be assumed. Yet, although not formally, the Kingdom may be said to be virtually defined in the Lord's prayer simply by the position given to the petition which regards it.

Its character is further defined by contrast. It is opposed to the kingdoms of earth. They have grown out of selfish passions, have been built up by force, and are supported by carnal weapons. It has originated in the love of God, is dependent for its spread on the love of truth and the spirit of grace, and its progress consists in the assimilation of earth to heaven.

It is further opposed to the kingdom of evil or of Satan. Its triumph means the destruction of sin and the establishment of righteousness. Its coming must be the loving subjection of all created intelligences to the Holy Will of God.

(3) As to the third point, such characteristics of the kingdom may be noted as that it is present yet

future, ideal yet actual, invisible yet visible, within the individual yet a social fellowship, progressive, all-pervasive, all-comprehensive, all-satisfying, etc.

It was in no way necessary that Christ should *define* the kingdom. It was very necessary that He should point out its attributes or characteristics. It was only thus that He could make known its true spiritual nature. And He did so, with all care and patience, feature by feature, through a continuous, carefully graduated course of teaching.

On this point, however, I need not dwell, as all I have said regarding Christ's doctrine of the kingdom has, directly or indirectly, referred to it.

(B) In the teaching of Christ as to the Righteousness of the Kingdom the chief points are—

- (1) The nature of that righteousness ;
- (2) The conditions of entering into the life of righteousness ; and
- (3) The requirements of the life of righteousness binding on Christ's disciples.

(1) As to the first of these points, the righteousness is a perfect righteousness towards God and man, springing from pure love towards God and man, and showing itself in the entire surrender of the whole self to the will of God.

Christ laid the greatest stress on the righteousness of the kingdom. "Seek ye first the kingdom of

God and His righteousness" (or perhaps rather, following Westcott and Hort's text, "the kingdom and His righteousness" (τὴν βασιλείαν καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ). So said He in His Sermon on the Mountain, declaring thus the kingdom and righteousness inseparable, and alike important.

The righteousness of the kingdom was exhibited by him both negatively and positively. He taught both *what it was not* and *what it was*. He opposed it to the righteousness of the Pharisees and Scribes, showing how insufficient, how defective, that righteousness was; how grievous and burdensome, and yet practically powerless and worthless it was. He opposed it also to all moral laxity and lawlessness. It was to be not less but greater than the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Positively it was to be the free, full, loving service of the Father in heaven, and of all brethren on earth; a striving after the perfect fulfilling of the good and gracious will of God—after even conformity to the likeness and character of God. "Every other aim must give place to this striving. Even the noblest and dearest possessions must be sacrificed if they stand in its way. All fulfilment of the Divine will in detail is valueless. The striving of the will, the longing of the heart after a complete righteousness, is what is essential, and well-pleasing to God."—(Weiss.)

(2) As to the second point relating to the righteousness of the Kingdom, the conditions of participation in it are *repentance and faith*,—a repentance which implies faith, and a faith which includes repentance.

The great change through which Christ represents men as entering into the kingdom and righteousness of God is one of heart and nature (*μετάνοια*), such as carries with it an outward returning (*ἐπιστροφή*) to the way of life. It is a change not from *without inwards* but from *within outwards*. There is a beautiful description of it in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. This *change of mind* (determining change of conduct), this turning of the self from the following of the will of self to the fulfilment of the will of God, is *the repentance* on which Jesus laid so much stress.

Before Him the prophets had laid it down as the condition of obtaining the Divine favour; and His forerunner had proclaimed it as the preparation required by the approach of the Kingdom of God. The repentance preached by Christ, however, while the same so far as that of the prophets and John the Baptist, was also not the same, because He had a far profounder conception of sin and a far broader conception of righteousness than they. The idea of *repentance* is essentially conditioned by the ideas of sin

and righteousness. It differs in meaning in so far as they differ in meaning.

Christ laid great emphasis also on *faith* (πίστις), which is intimately connected with *conversion*. *Faith*, as He employed the term, meant not merely assent of judgment, consent of the understanding, but a confiding acceptance of the heart in what manifests itself to it as the truth, righteousness, and grace of God—trust in the Gospel, trust in Christ Himself.

The noun πίστις occurs eight times in Matthew, five times in Mark, eleven times in Luke, and never in the Gospel according to John. Its fundamental signification in the Synoptics is *trust*. Acknowledgment and conviction seem to be only secondary senses. It belongs more to the heart than to the head; is primarily *moral*, secondarily *intellectual*.

In St John's Gospel the verb πιστεύειν occurs frequently, but with primary reference to acknowledgment (intellectual assent) and secondary reference to trust (moral confidence).

In the Synoptics πίστις and πιστεύειν always imply relationship to Christ. It is important to notice this. It explains why the Apostolical development of the doctrine of faith was determined by the object of Faith being thus the revelation of God in Christ—not merely a general truth or an isolated object or act. The virtue of faith does not belong

to itself as a state of consciousness, as a psychological fact, but to its content—Christ.

The word *πιστίς* is not found used by Christ, however, quite in the same sense as it is by St Paul. Christ is not represented in the Synoptics as opposing *πιστίς* to *ἔργα* and *νόμος* as St Paul does in his Epistles.

(3) As to the third point, the life of righteousness is represented as manifesting itself in a continuous self-denying following of Christ, and in loving, watchful, and prayerful obedience to the will of the Father.

Faith is at first a coming to Christ, and it manifests itself by a continued following of Him. This implies a self-denial which must seek to be complete, and must show itself in voluntary, daily renewed, and constant practice. It must include both piety towards God and love towards men, and bring forth the fruits thereof. The life of a member of the Kingdom of God should be daily dying to all that is contrary to the righteousness of the Kingdom. It is only, according to Christ's teaching, through such self-denial, such death to self, that man can enter into true life. Hence the need of prayer, watchfulness, fidelity, etc., and Christ's many exhortations to them.

(C) In the teaching of Christ as to His own relation to the doctrine of the Kingdom and to the Kingdom itself, there has to be considered—

- (1) The connection of His doctrine with the Theocracy and Old Testament ;
- (2) The connection with the current Messianic expectations ;
- (3) The connection with the preaching of John the Baptist ; and
- (4) Wherein lay its originality.

Our remarks on these points must be very brief.

(1) Jesus constantly represented His own work and teaching as the legitimate, divinely appointed consequence of the whole Old Testament economy and as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. His clear and constant claim was that Moses and the prophets had all testified of Him. It should be obvious, I think, that they did. The great change which has taken place in men's minds as to the nature of Messianic prophecy, however much it may modify our conceptions as to the character of such prophecy in itself, certainly makes it no weaker or less certain witness to Christ's Messiahship than it was before. The new view of prophecy merely makes the testimony of prophecy to Christ somewhat more intelligible and a great deal more spiritual than the old did.

There has been much discussion as to the relation of Christ's doctrine of the Kingdom to the Mosaic law. The discussion arose chiefly out of Baur's representation of the subject. He held, and

vigorously maintained, that Christ had never contemplated the passing away of the Mosaic system. It is now almost universally recognised that all that he was warranted to affirm was that Christ did not desire that it should pass away prematurely. Far from representing the Israelitish worship as unchangeable, He taught what implied the reverse: that the time was coming when men would have a more complete and inward communion with God, and a more perfect sacrifice for sin which could not but abolish other sacrifice; that the old forms were to be broken through by the new spirit, etc.

For His own time Christ recognised the obligatoriness of the Law, and of the whole Law. He did not make a distinction as to mere obligatoriness between the moral and the ceremonial law. He regarded the temple as His Father's House. He observed the Passover. In His Sermon on the Mount He supposes that His followers will bring the usual gifts to the altar, and do what was commanded for purifications. He did not blame the most scrupulous payment of tithes, but only demanded that the weightier precepts be not neglected. He paid tribute. His free observance of the Sabbath where not conformed to common practice He justified through Old Testament analogies, as in accordance with the Divine intention. He did not, as Reuss and others have argued, distinguish the moral from

the ritual law, and observe the last in mere accommodation to current opinion. He did, however, in the spirit of the prophets put love and mercy and justice higher than sacrifice, and than attention to the outward services of religion.

(2) As to the second point, the connection of Christ's doctrine of the Kingdom with the current Messianic expectations of His time, there is no very precise information to be had. What there is to be got is chiefly from the so-called Book of Enoch, the Fourth Book of Ezra, and intimations in the New Testament. In the apocalyptic Book of Enoch the coming of Messiah and the results which it would produce among "the elect" and the gainsayers, the blessedness which it would bring to the saints, and the misery and confusion in which it would involve the sinful rulers of the world, are described with much splendour of imagery. There is no positive reason for thinking that it was known to Christ.

The Fourth Book of Ezra (Second Book of Esdras) is also apocalyptic, and so far Messianic, but does not yield us any precise information as to the Messianic expectations prevalent in Christ's time. Its date has not been determined. It may have been any time between B.C. and A.D. 100.

There is no doubt possible that at the time of Christ's advent belief in the coming of the Messiah was widely diffused. Seemingly, however, it was of

a very crude and incoherent character. The Messiah expected was chiefly thought of as a great temporal conqueror. No one is known before Christ to have understood with clear vision the real meaning of Old Testament prophecy, except so far His precursor John. He saw that the Messiah's chief work would be to "take away the sin of the world."

(3) As to the third point, the relation of Christ's doctrine of the Kingdom to the preaching of John, that can be easily studied; and the study of it is important for the understanding of Christ's relation to the Law. That is very well shown in the late Dr Hort's "Judaic Christianity," pp. 22-28.

(4) As to the fourth point, wherein lay the originality of Christ's teaching as to the Kingdom, that it was in all respects highly original is certain. Although the Jews of Christ's time were familiar with the idea of the Kingdom, and although Christ found it in the Old Testament, He transformed it, expanded it, deepened it, in the most wonderful way. There is nothing in the way of doctrine which can compare in comprehensiveness and profundity with his doctrine of the Kingdom.

He accomplished this chiefly by connecting it with a new disclosure of God as the loving and redeeming Father of mankind; also by so connecting it as He did with His own Person and Work; by His conception likewise of its righteousness as a life

of perfect love to God, and by the infinite worth which He ascribed to the individual soul. He so followed out all lines of thought regarding it as to leave His disciples a completely comprehensive and consistent view of it.

(D) As regards Christ's own relation to His kingdom the points to be considered are—

- (1) What Christ taught regarding Himself as Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man, etc.;
- (2) What He taught regarding His connection with the Heavenly Father; and
- (3) What He taught as to the significance of His Words, Miracles, and Death.

(1) As to the first of these points, it is to be noted that Christ is represented in the Synoptic Gospels, not as expressly declaring Himself to be Messiah, but as in many ways clearly implying it and as accepting the title; that the designation "Son of God" is seldomer met with in the Synoptics than in the Fourth Gospel; and that there are some remarkable peculiarities in the use of the expression "Son of Man."

The accounts given us of the baptism of Christ in the Gospels lead us to believe that His consciousness of being the promised Messiah, "the Holy One of God," anointed and consecrated by the Spirit of God, must have been, if not previously, at least then clearly awakened in Him. Yet the Synoptic Gospels

make it plainly apparent that, far from publicly proclaiming Himself to be the Messiah, He, during the early part of His ministry, expressly prohibited others from doing so. The devils were forbidden to speak because they "knew Him." After Peter had confessed that Jesus was the Christ, although Peter was commended for his confession, "the disciples were charged that they should tell no man of Him."

The reason why Christ was thus opposed to the open proclamation of His Messiahship was, doubtless, that the prevalent conception of Messiah among the Jews was a very false one—that of a political and conquering king. The coming of the Messianic kingdom, it was supposed by them, would be preceded by a great political revolution. Jesus would give no sanction to such an idea. He could not allow himself to be made the hero of any political revolution of the kind.

At the same time, He showed clearly, and in various ways, that He did not reject the title of Messiah in itself. His answer to the question of John the Baptist, and not a few expressions in His earlier discourses, indicate that He was possessed by the consciousness of Messiahship from the outset of His ministry. It appears, further, in such respects as these:—

The way in which He regarded His miraculous

powers of healing, expelling demons, etc. He viewed them and exercised them as entrusted to Him for the establishment and spread of the kingdom, and only to be employed for that purpose.

Likewise, the personal claims which He made for Himself in that connection. A true and holy man, who set an infinite value on humility, meekness, and poverty of spirit, He yet felt himself exalted above all the organs of the Old Testament theocracy, above kings and prophets, above all creatures in heaven and earth. He spoke of Himself as greater than the temple, as the Lord of David, as the wisdom of God. He predicted for His words an everlasting duration; promised to His people an enjoyment of His presence far above all limits of time and space; and represented Himself as the Judge of the world.

Further, He did not reject the Messianic title of "Son of David" circulated among the people, nor the anticipation of exaltation to royalty connected with it, although He gave another and higher idea of the kingship. The blessing pronounced on Peter because of his confession showed, on the part of Jesus, entire conviction of its truth. He allowed His Messiahship to be openly proclaimed as His death drew near, and when the proclamation could no longer do harm.

The designation "Son of God" applied to Jesus

in the New Testament refers us back to the applications made of it in the Old Testament. These are of a twofold kind. It had a collective and an individual sense. It denoted first Israel itself as the object of God's peculiar favour, the nation whom He had specially called into being and whom He had most lovingly cared for—His elect people. In this sense we find it used in *Exod.* iv. 22; in *Deut.* xiv. 1, 2; in *Hos.* xi. 1; in *Isa.* lxiii. 16; *Jer.* xxxi. 9, 20; and *Mal.* i. 6. It denoted, secondly, the theoretic King, the Messiah as King. In this sense it is to be found in *2 Sam.* vii. 14 and *Ps.* ii. 7, 8.

There are various references of it in the latter sense to Christ in the Synoptics. According to both *Matt.* viii. 29 and *Luke* viii. 28, Satan used it in the temptation. Both these evangelists (*Matt.* iv. 3 and *Luke* iv. 3, 9) represent the evil spirits when cast out as addressing Jesus by it. The disciples, according to *Matt.* xiv. 33, employed the same title after the storm. Probably in the mouth of the centurion (*Matt.* xxvi. 54 and *Matt.* xv. 39) it had a pagan, not a Jewish meaning, and therefore is not a case in point.

It appears, however, from the Synoptics that Christ avoided using this title,—did not speak of Himself as "the Son of God" in the Old Testament or Jewish sense. The reason why seems obvious.

In that sense it was little, if anything, more than an official title for the Messianic king. The use of it, consequently, meant a claim which Christ had no desire to make prominent, or to make at all, before those who had a wholly false conception of what the Messianic kingship was. Christ's view of His sonship was an entirely different one. It was that of a unique relationship to the Father—a unique knowledge of, communion with, and likeness to, the Father. Hence, while avoiding the use of the official Messianic phrase "Son of God," He revealed God as "the Father," and Himself as not only "a son" but "*the* son." He cast into the background the official title and claim, and gave prominence to the foundation-truth, the personal relationship, through which alone they could be correctly and profitably understood. He felt Himself to be the Messianic king because He was "the Son of God," not "the Son of God" because He was the officially designated Messianic king.

The way in which Christ is represented in the Synoptics as teaching men to conceive of His sonship in relation to the Father, and also to mankind, led naturally to the point of view from which Christ is throughout viewed in the Fourth Gospel, and which is at least nearly the same as that which St Paul and the other writers of the

New Testament had reached probably quite independently of the Fourth Gospel. From this point of view—the one indicated, according to the general tenor of the Synoptists' representations, by Christ Himself—the whole manifestation of Christ is surveyed and exhibited in the Fourth Gospel. In the Fourth Gospel the designation "Son of God" often appears, although it is difficult to say how often Christ Himself is to be understood as having used it. In John's Gospel "Son of God" means essentially what "the Son" meant in the Synoptics when used by Christ in its most specific and distinctive way. It expresses explicitly what was implicit in Christ's own use of the term "son." It is not at all equivalent to the Old Testament or Jewish sense of "the Son of God." It directly conveys the disclosure that the Messiah, the Christ, was that, and all else that He was, because He was God manifested in the flesh, the Son of God in whom the Divine Nature itself came into full union with humanity. The central truth in the Gospel of John is just that view of the person of Christ, the view at the same time which alone appears to be able "to explain the phenomena of the belief attested by the earliest Christian literature, the letters of St Paul and the Apocalypse, and by the existence of the Christian Church. The Gospel of St John adds that express

teaching on the relation of Christ to God—of the Son to the Father—which underlies the claims to exclusive and final authority made by Him in the Synoptists.”

The title which Jesus most frequently applied to Himself was “the Son of Man,” *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*,—one derived from the vision of Daniel (vii. 13, 14): “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

There are some remarkable peculiarities in the use of the expression “Son of Man” in the New Testament. It is only put into the mouth of Jesus when speaking of Himself, and He is seldom represented as applying to Himself any other appellation. In Matthew He is represented as styling Himself “Son of Man” thirty-two times, in Mark fourteen times, in Luke twenty-six, and in John ten times,—making in all eighty-two times. In almost every one of these instances the definite article is associated with the appellation.

Further, the phrase is connected with the greatest

assumptions of power on our Lord's part. It is as "the Son of Man" that He heals the sick and forgives sin. It is as "the Son of Man" that He is "Lord of the Sabbath." It is as "the Son of Man" that He is to rise from the dead. It is as "the Son of Man" that He is to come in the glory of the Father; is to judge the world; and is to bestow everlasting life upon those who believe in Him.

While Christ Himself employed the term so frequently, it occurs on the lips of others only in three instances in the New Testament. In Acts vii. 56, the martyred Stephen is represented as saying, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." In the Apocalypse (i. 13) John says, "I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the candlesticks one ὅμοιον νῆφ ἀνθρώπου, *like to a son (or to the Son) of Man.*" And in ch. xiv. 14 of the same book he says, "I saw, and behold a white cloud, and on the cloud one sitting ὅμοιον νῆφ ἀνθρώπου, *like to a son (or to the Son) of Man.*" In all these three instances, it will be noticed, the appellation is virtually a quotation, and supposes a heavenly vision.

Various explanations of the title have been given. Colani and others have represented it as denoting the being a mere man. That is an

obviously superficial and inadequate hypothesis. If Christ had wished to convey that meaning by it, how came He so often to use it in just the connections which suggested, and even affirmed, that He was alone among men, and held a position and had to perform functions such as no other man held or could perform? Akin to the view just mentioned, and no more plausible or consistent with the texts, was Dr Martineau's conception that Jesus "in adopting that name took the level, not of the Messianic grandeur, with its political triumphs and earthly glories, nor of the heir of David destined to crown and render millennial the splendour of his reign, but of simple Humanity in its essence, and without its trappings, endowed and called to be the child of God, but through the discipline of many a need and sorrow and temptation." To support that notion Dr Martineau had to conjecture that Jesus really seldom used the name, and never in the sense which it bears in any of the sayings attributed to Him, but that the evangelists, although the title was not really a Messianic one, thought so, and, "unconscious of any perversion, threw it back upon the name as it passed from the lips of Jesus." Then further added Dr Martineau, still speaking of Christ, "Being unaware that it was a characteristic expression of his, by which he loved to designate himself,

they too readily fitted to him whatever any prophetic writing said that the Messianic Son of Man would be and do; and hence were tempted to patch his discourses with shreds of Jewish apocalyptic writings, and even to attribute to him, as what he must have meant and might have said, whole masses of eschatology, borrowed from Israel, in which the signs of the "Son of Man," on His coming to conquer, to judge and to reign, are unveiled in their succession, and identified in their commencement with the events passing before the writer's and the reader's eye." Now what does that view practically amount to? Just this; Dr Martineau found, in his opinion, that in the vast majority of instances in which Christ is represented by the Synoptists as speaking of Himself as "the Son of Man," He cannot be interpreted as speaking of Himself as a simple human being and as formally discarding any claims to Messiahship. Further, that Dr Martineau did not like that, as he believed Jesus to have been merely a man, and not the Messiah; and that, in consequence, he averred Jesus never to have uttered the sayings of the kind attributed to Him, ascribed to the evangelists an absolutely incredible ignorance, and a kind of procedure of the most dubious morality. That a man of such great ability, and natural clearness and honesty of mind, as Dr Martineau

should have yielded so far to a mere preconception, is only one of many facts which show that advanced critics of our own day may be unconsciously often no freer of bias even in the study and interpretation of the New Testament than were mediæval Catholic or seventeenth century Protestant dogmatists.

The view that the title signified the heavenly *Urmensch* may be set aside as a mere fancy. The view that it was meant to teach that man's uniqueness must be sought for in its connection and alliance with a higher Divine Nature—a view held by various scholars—placed more in it than is warranted. The view of Neander that Jesus called Himself the "Son of Man" because He had appeared as a man; because He belonged to mankind; because He had done such great things even for *human* nature (Matt. ix. 8); because He was to glorify that nature; because He was Himself the realised ideal of humanity—is on the whole true, so far as it goes. Neander himself expressly recognises that the title bears evidently a reciprocal relation to that of the "Son of God," and implies not mere humanity but more than humanity,—that "it would have been the height of arrogance in any man to assume such a relation to humanity, to style Himself absolutely Man; but that He, to whom it

was natural thus to style Himself, indicated thereby His elevation above all other sons of men—the Son of God in the Son of Man.” Neander’s opinion, however, is not an adequate expression of the truth conveyed in the texts considered collectively.

Jesus in these texts gives such an account of the unique position and work, of the peculiar call, duties, and powers of the Son of Man, as clearly although indirectly to indicate that He believed Himself to be the Messiah; and yet, at the same time, one which pointed to a Messianic ideal contrary to popular notions, and tended to foster just conceptions in receptive minds. He announced a Messiah not exempt from the common lot and trials of men, but one appointed to suffer, richly endowed with human sympathy, ordained and ready to give His life a ransom for many, and made perfect in all true human experience, yet the Messiah foretold of old, and actually expected although under a false and unspiritual form: the Messianic man in whom as a son would be seen the truth and grace and glory of the Eternal Father, through whom eternal life would be given to believers, and who would at the last day as Man be the judge of all men, so that human love would be made the touchstone of character and the arbiter of destiny.

(2) As to the second point, Christ’s whole doc-

trine of the kingdom of God rested on His revelation of the Fatherhood of God and of His own relation to God as Father.

Christ's teaching as to the Kingdom of God centred in a new revelation of God. It supposed a special coming and full self-manifestation of God on earth, a higher manifestation of God than had been given, yea, the highest that could be given to human beings. "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." That our Lord was conscious of as the knowledge specially His,—the knowledge which made Him the light of the world and the life of men, and the King in the Kingdom of Heaven.

His disclosure of God was identical with that of the Old Testament, in so far as He assigned to God the same attributes and in no respect contradicted it, but received it in its entirety so far as it went. At the same time, it differed from it in the prominence which it gave to God's Fatherhood and the Fatherly relationship of God to individuals. It thus showed the nature of the Messianic Kingdom in its true light. It made apparent that it was no mere collective external theocracy, but a spiritual kingdom so realising itself in the soul that each individual could participate in it through a communion of mind,

heart, and will with the Father, springing from faith in the Son.

Christ's revelation of the kingdom was thus, as it were, a full revelation of its nature because Christ Himself was the perfect revelation of God. No merely verbal revelation could have sufficed. The revelation through Christ was not merely or mainly verbal. It was Himself, His mission, His life, His nature. It lay in the fact that He was the Son in whom the Father, in His spiritual, personal, paternal character, was clearly revealed. It was that He alone could truly say, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." And *that* no one could truly say who was not fully man, and yet not merely man, but God in man.

Through Christ the revelation of the kingdom was in essentials completed, and in the process the whole conception of it was transformed. The Old Testament ideal of the kingdom had far more attractions for the Jews than the view of it given by Christ. The former could be understood as meaning revenge, victory, conquest, wealth, and power for Israel. The latter could not possibly be so interpreted. It plainly meant submission and obedience to the Father's will. It proclaimed directly and unmistakably the Kingdom of Sonship—a Kingdom of which Christ Himself was the embodiment and expression, the centre and

life. The grandeur of the Kingdom had the key to the understanding of it given by the lowliness and obedience of Christ. Hence it was that just as sorrowing and suffering man, yet true and loving Son of God, He placed Himself above "kings," and "prophets," and "angels," and "spoke of Himself as greater than the temple," as "the wisdom of God," as "the Lord of David," and promised to His people an enjoyment of His presence in the Kingdom of His glory far transcending all limits of time and space.

(3) As to the third point, Christ's teaching contains what is fundamental in the doctrine of the Kingdom. He regarded His miracles primarily as among the works which manifested the nature of the Kingdom and of His own place in it, and only secondarily as proofs or evidences.

Christ represented His own words as spirit and life. And it should ever be remembered that what He Himself taught is above all what is fundamental in the Christian doctrine of the kingdom of God. Christianity must stand or fall according as His claim to be *the truth* was warranted or not. Christianity can only evolve into true doctrine the truth revealed in Christ; and His teaching may be employed as the standard for testing all other revelation, at least to the extent that nothing inconsistent with it is to be accepted.

At the same time, it is not impossible to attach a too one-sided value to the mere teaching of Christ. This is actually done by those who oppose it to the teaching of the Apostles with a view to depreciate the latter. The teaching of Christ could not have been the living and precious thing it was, had it possessed a finite completeness which did not permit of, and even required, a progressive development. And such development it was to be expected it must largely receive from Christ's immediate disciples who had heard His words, seen His life and works, could bear witness of His resurrection and ascension, and had experience of the spiritual gifts which He had obtained for men. Those who deem the greater definiteness of Paul's teaching than Christ's in many doctrinal respects evidence that Pauline teaching was a perversion of Christian teaching, are unreasonable; and certainly they do no honour to Christ's teaching by thus virtually representing it as incapable of originating healthy outgrowths.

It is another form of the same error to represent Christ as merely or mainly a teacher. It was not merely or mainly in what He said that the revelation of God through Him was made. The personality, and the active and passive manifestation thereof, through suffering and action, life and death, ought not to be subordinated to His teaching.

In Himself as a supernatural revelation of God, and of the kingdom of God, there was more contained than even He and all His Apostles expressed in words.

As to the miracles of Christ, they can only be regarded aright when viewed as inseparable from His self-revelation. They were the natural results of what He was, or, as St John says, the manifestation of His glory. Hence they were a constituent portion of His means of teaching what the Kingdom of God was, and how it was designed to satisfy the higher and essential spiritual wants of men. Hence so many of them were what have been called acted parables. Hence they all implied that the communication of the Divine Life was the highest miracle; and that diseases of body and mind are closely connected with sin, and require for their removal deliverance from the power of sin.

They were in no case wrought merely as evidences, although they were evidences, and although miracles were so universally regarded by the Jews as signs of the Messiah that had Christ not wrought them probably few would have believed in His Messiahship. The Jews in Christ's time were not, like the mediæval Christians, credulous as to miracles. They did not attribute the power of working them even to the most revered of their teachers. But they believed that

miracles were among the distinctive signs of the Messiah. Christ responded to that not unreasonable expectation. He attached, however, no extravagant importance to miracles. He did not think that they would of themselves produce any true spiritual faith or lay the foundation of the Kingdom which He had come to establish. Only through His life-work as a whole and on His atoning death did He expect to draw men truly and firmly unto Him, and to bring them out of the kingdom of darkness and death into the kingdom of light and life. He therefore never presented His miracles as the weighty and decisive proofs of His Messianic work. Such faith as was founded mainly on them He described not as the highest but as the lowest kind of faith.

As to the significance attached by Christ Himself to His death, that could only be appropriately dwelt on in connection with the doctrine of the Atonement, and with, indeed, the whole subject of Christian Soteriology. That, however, is too vast a theme to be now dealt with even in outline. I must therefore here leave my readers to their own reflections and studies. My volume on "Christ's Kingdom on Earth" may be helpful to them in that connection.

VII.

THE WISEST OF THE ANCIENT GREEKS— SOCRATES.¹

GENTLEMEN,—On Tuesday I learned from the newspapers that your very eminent Gifford Lecturer, my friend the Master of Balliol, had been treating on the previous day of the teaching of Socrates. That information gave me rather a shock, as by that time I had made up my mind to speak to you of the teaching of Socrates.

On first thoughts it seemed to me that I had better change the subject of my Address; but on second thoughts it seemed to me better that I should adhere to it. The Master of Balliol, as I understand, dealt with the essential philosophical teaching of Socrates. My purpose is to speak of his practical teaching—his moral wisdom—in such a way as, I hope, may be not unprofitable to theological students.

¹ Addressed to the members of the Theological Society in Glasgow University.

Perhaps some of you may think that in addressing you regarding the wisdom of Socrates, the moral teaching of a man who was born about 470 years before the Christian era, I have selected a very antiquated and inappropriate sort of theme on which to speak to the members of a Theological Society in A.D. 1901. I am not going, however, to make any apology for my choice of a subject. I am only sorry that time will not allow of my doing much justice to it.

Socrates is one of the greatest and noblest, one of the most original and most influential, personalities which universal history presents to us. The spirit and method of his thinking and the character of his teaching have not improbably affected the development of history even more than the battles and campaigns of Alexander the Great or Julius Cæsar. His fame is secure, and will be fresh and bright when the fame of the greatest of our contemporaries is likely to have passed into oblivion. Yet he had no desire of posthumous fame, any more than of contemporary praise. He left no writings of his own. We only know what and how he taught from two of his friends and hearers—Xenophon and Plato. That, however, is quite sufficient to account for the extraordinary influence exerted by him. “The wisdom of Socrates” is not like “the wisdom of Solomon.” Little is known about the latter, and that little suggests to

us that it must have been rather of a superficial and showy than of a solid character. "The wisdom of Socrates" is to a large extent quite certainly known, and it is, in the main, what all the best and wisest men of to-day acknowledge to be true.

Socrates lived in times the most stirring and eventful, when Greece was at the height of her glory, when she had statesmen and poets, thinkers and doers, who have not yet been excelled, and when, although not quite half the size of Scotland, she raised herself to the rank of "school-mistress of the world" for ever. Of her chief city, Athens, although inhabited by not more than 90,000 free-men, Gibbon has well said that it "condensed into the period of a single life the genius of ages and millions." Socrates spent all his life in that city. Only on a few very rare occasions was he more than a few miles beyond its walls. He was the best known man in it—the best loved by some, the best hated by others. In appearance he was not at all like a Greek,—not only no beauty, but reputed the *ugliest*, as well as the wisest, man in Athens. His forehead was deeply lined, his eyes protruded, his nose was broken-backed, his nostrils wide and upturned, his lips thick, his shoulders rounded, his body stout and ungainly. In summer and winter he went barefooted, and his dress was poor and rough. He was exceedingly strong, and capable alike of extraordinary endurance

and extraordinary exertion. Wine seemed to have no effect upon him, yet he was extremely abstemious. His ordinary fare was bread, water, and a few olives. Yet he was the reverse of austere. He was full of genial wit, humour, and mirth; ready to talk with anybody about anything; and probably the greatest master of the whole art of conversation the world has ever had—not dogmatic like Samuel Johnson, nor hazy like Coleridge, nor given to substitute monologue for dialogue like Burke or Macaulay. He was decidedly a “character,” but not in the least a charlatan. He was thoroughly in earnest and thoroughly disinterested. He had always a number of young disciples following him, not a few of whom were rich; but although he gave himself devotedly to their instruction, he would take money from none of them, on the ground, as he himself said, that he had nothing to teach them, and if he had he would not exchange knowledge for gold. So much, in the most general way, for the man and his surroundings.

He was by no means the first in Greece to seek for wisdom. There had been many philosophers, many “lovers of wisdom,” there before him. Those so-called had looked with wonder on the world, and asked themselves how it came to be, and to be as they saw it, and had speculated and guessed on that great subject as best they could, trying to

find among the infinite number of things of sense and experience present to the mind the one thing or being which is the source or ground of them all, the first principle or ultimate explanation of them all. Socrates therefore found a great number of theories in existence, each pretending to explain the whole of nature, the entire universe of things, from some single principle—from water, from air, from the indeterminate, from number, from atoms, from reason. He studied those theories for a while, and came to the conclusion that they were unsatisfactory and useless. They were contradictory to one another. They were all mainly the constructions of imagination, and would not abide the scrutiny of reason. Socrates resolved to have done with them—to discard the process by which they had been built up, and to direct his inquiries to a different object. He resolved to seek principles, instead of starting with the assumption that he had them, or that they lay on the surface—to analyse and reason, not to conjecture and imagine; and to study man, not nature.

He thus became the author of a revolution in thought. He took for his task, as has been said, the bringing of philosophy from heaven down to earth, the turning of the course of thought from vague physical speculations embracing the whole universe to precise inquiries into what was of

practical concernment. Hence he has not erroneously been often called “the first moral philosopher in Greece.” “He discussed moral questions,” says Aristotle, “not at all physical questions.” “He never ceased,” says Xenophon, “discussing human affairs.” One may reasonably suppose that he carried his revolt from the past rather too far—that he somewhat unduly despised all physical speculations—made man too exclusively the object of his enquiries. Perhaps a revolt or reaction always goes too far. But certainly right lay, if not entirely, yet essentially with him; and although the past had prepared for the view he took, and made possible the step he took, it was yet necessary to break with the past—to abandon the old paths and strike into a new one; to change not only the answers of philosophy, but even its questions.

Socrates had, however, a harder task than one just mentioned, and more formidable antagonists to contend with than the adherents of the older philosophies. He sought to revolutionise public opinion, and so had for antagonist the Athenian people. For he was the assertor, the advocate, the missionary of free inquiry against all traditionalism in religion, in morality, and in politics. He stood up for the right of reason against authority, of private judgment against dominant orthodoxy. Luther and the reformers were in that respect

only distant, and not very consistent, descendants of his. He found everybody talking of this and that as just or unjust, pious or impious, wise or foolish, familiarly or dogmatically, with a firm persuasion of knowledge, but without the reality of knowledge. He found the minds of men filled with dogmas, and their lives regulated by a number of customs which they regarded as sacred, and yet for which, when cross-questioned, they could give no proof. And he asserted his right not to have his reason overborne or set aside by any opinions or customs, however widely received, but, on the contrary, to bring all opinions and customs before the bar of his reason for approval or rejection. Bow who might before King Custom, he would not bow to him nor worship him; he would not take fact for right, nor common consent for a sufficient reason. "You, Polus," he says in the "Gorgias," "bring against me the authority of the multitude, as well as that of the most eminent citizens, all of whom agree in upholding your view. But I, one man standing here alone, do *not* agree with you. And I engage to compel you to agree with me."

Nor was that all. For he would not only insist on judging for himself, but he would insist that everybody else should do the same. He would go about laying hold of whoever could be got to listen to him, asking, "Is this that you are purpos-

ing or endeavouring to do right? How do you know that it is right?" He would insist that he had received a divine mission to trouble people thus, and trouble them he would. He had been sent, he said, expressly to test and expose the false conceit of wisdom in his fellow-citizens. That was the task which the voice of the god within him imposed on him, and disobey it he dared not. He had proved himself no coward on the battle-fields of Delium and Potidæa, and, let the consequences be what they might, he would go through with the work given him to do. "Should you even now offer to acquit me," he says on his trial, "on condition of my renouncing this duty, I should tell you, with all respect and affection, that I will obey the god rather than you, and I will persist, although I should die many deaths, in cross-questioning you, exposing your want of wisdom and virtue, and reproaching you until your defect be remedied."

All that could only be expected to have one end—the dark and sad one which it actually had.

The death of Socrates has often been said to have been brought about by the contrivances of the Sophists. That is quite a mistake. The Sophists had their quarrel with him, but they never had the power to procure his death. It was the Athenian people who were guilty of that—Athenian

authority and Athenian orthodoxy; those in whose eyes Socrates was himself a Sophist, and the most troublesome and mischievous of Sophists, undermining old institutions, unsettling sacred beliefs, and perverting the minds of the young.

In reality, however, Socrates was the true antagonist of the Sophists. By the multitude he was identified with them. By the multitude he seemed to be engaged in the same work of unsettling all that had been established, confusing men's notions of good and evil, and involving everything in doubt. And he had one essential feature in common with the Sophists. He and they alike saw that the traditional maxims and orthodox belief of the multitude were not based on truth and reason. He quite agreed with them there. And yet, although the Athenian people did not see it, as some modern writers have not seen it, he and they were the natural enemies of one another. The Sophists have no doubt been misconceived and misrepresented by certain historians, and thanks are due to those who have enabled us to understand their position in history somewhat more accurately and fairly than was at one time done. On the other hand, those who have defended the Sophists, and represented them as merely the precursors of Socrates and Plato, have far overshot the mark,—have lost sight of the

immense distance between the parties and of the vast significance of the struggle between them. The distance between them was essentially just the distance between sophistry and true wisdom. The perspicacity of Socrates was in nowise at fault in seeing that the Sophists were men whom he was bound, in the service of truth and morality, to oppose to the uttermost.

The great majority of the Athenians, like the majority of men in all communities, thought their opinions true and their practices right, from a blind belief in tradition and custom. They were averse to all change, and averse even to inquiry lest it should lead to change. They accepted the dogmas which had come down from antiquity, and saw no good in subjecting them to examination—nay, considered that it showed profanity and want of patriotism to do so. Were not the beliefs questioned to be found in Homer and in Hesiod? Had not the country grown great and glorious under them? Had not all the fathers believed in them, and heroes lived and died by them? How self-conceited for any man to set himself up as wiser than the past! How presumptuous in him to pronounce false what all men had hitherto held to be true! How profane in him to pronounce impious what all men had hitherto held to be holy, and enjoined by the gods themselves! That was the way the

public naturally looked at things. With them religion and morality were matters of unconscious instinct, and not of conscious insight. Their beliefs and practices were based on external and unsound foundations; they were not grounded on truth and reason.

The Sophists saw this, and they refused to acquiesce in it. They saw that with most men truth was merely what they felt to be truth, and right merely what they felt to be right; and they asked, "Is there any other truth, any other right?" and, as a party, they answered, "No! there is no other truth, no other right; truth and right are mere matters of feeling and convention; they are just what man thinks them to be and makes them to be." Now the question was a proper one, and the Sophists deserve not blame but praise for putting it, and so effectively as they did; but their answer was false in itself and hurtful in its tendency, and Socrates rightly felt that he could not oppose it too earnestly. If each man is the measure of the universe; if our individual judgments and feelings are the standard of the true and the false, of the right and wrong; if whatever each man regards as right is right, and whatever each man regards as true is true, the foundations both of truth and morality are upturned—religion, virtue, and society are made impossible. Hence,

while Socrates defended the question put by the Sophists, while he vindicated against the Athenian public the right of free inquiry on all subjects without exception, and exercised it with the utmost boldness and thoroughness, he opposed with all his energy the conclusion of the Sophists. He felt that it would ruin either the individual or the state that accepted it. He felt that there was—that there must be—a goodness and a truth which were not individual and conventional both for himself and for all men who would search for it, and that the search for it was the prime duty of human life; the finding of it its distinctive dignity and glory.

He made such search his life-work, and through many years it was from morning to night his endeavour to stir up all who would listen to him to be in that respect followers of himself. He certainly did not live and labour in vain, any more than he died in vain. He knew himself that he had been of some service to Athens, and could proudly tell his judges that, instead of sentencing him to death, they ought to order him to be maintained at the public expense. But little could he have foreseen or even imagined how boundless was to be the harvest springing from the seed which he scattered: how the truth which he taught, and for which he was willing to die, would never die, but would spread beyond Athens, beyond

Greece, over lands whose names he knew not; how it was to outlive empires the foundations of which had not then been laid, to pass through the strangest vicissitudes of thought as gold through the fire, to be an eternal possession of the human race, a beauty and a joy for ever.

More important than any particular or special truth which Socrates taught was his general and habitual attitude of mind towards truth. His greatness lay not so much in what he discovered or inculcated as in what he was. It lay in himself. His influence among his contemporaries was mainly a *personal* influence, and such it is even to this hour. For all time his chief claim to remembrance and gratitude must be that he left an example—perhaps unique in its instructiveness—of the combination of a wise scepticism with an enlightened and earnest faith in the pursuit of moral truth. His so-called “method” was an admirable expression of his mental attitude towards truth, and therefore also largely a personal thing, which could not be imitated, and was inseparable from the individuality which it revealed. It was a practical process of which Socrates himself had in all probability no general theory, and which, so far as it could be taught, could only be taught by example, not by precepts.

It had two sides or aspects—a negative and a positive. The former was critical and destructive;

the latter was eductive or inductive and constructive. As regarded himself, the former was the process by which he protected himself against hasty assent to current opinions and against dogmatism on matters which were not thoroughly known to him, and by which he maintained the attitude of a humble seeker of truth so long as he was not sure that he had found it. As regarded others, it was the process by which, without violation of the rules of good breeding and with full scope for the exercise of his rich and varied humour, he rebuked presumption, unmasked sophistry, analysed crude opinions and exposed their contradictions, involved dogmatists in conclusions at variance with their own assumptions and yet necessarily involved in their own concessions, and, in a word, by which he confounded, humiliated, and dispelled the conceit of false science, the confidence of imaginary knowledge. It was as thus negative used against the advocates of any of the previous philosophies, against the Sophists, against self-conceited people of every kind, against whoever professed to know anything which he did not. Wherever Socrates met with such a person—and he made it his business to find him, which was not difficult—he readily entered into conversation with him, professing ignorance and earnestly desiring to be taught. He found no difficulty in obtaining an offhand superficial answer. There-

upon he probably confessed to being a little stupid as well as ignorant. The answer was doubtless all right, but he did not quite understand it—did it mean such a thing? Yes. But does not that imply this other thing? And so on till very soon the professing teacher found himself hopelessly entangled in his own admissions, which his imperturbable, self-possessed, and, although honest, extremely subtle opponent, kept him inexorably to until he had landed him in monstrous and absurd conclusions, and caused him to feel that he had made somewhat of a fool of himself. Of course, if there was not a considerable amount of good in him, so far from being grateful to Socrates for the trouble he had taken with him, he was extremely offended. The method in this its negative reference thus led, and was meant to lead, to that wise scepticism, that cautious proving of all things in order to hold fast only what is good, that emptying of the mind of sham science in order to reach tested truth, which St Paul has recommended in religion and Des Cartes in philosophy, and which cannot be conveyed from without, or done in a day or a year, but is rather the work of all high human life, to be persisted in from day to day and from year to year, and which, when united, as it was in Socrates, with zeal in the service of God and man, constitutes human greatness and worth.

A great part of the work of Socrates was of that negative kind, the teaching men wisely to doubt—not to believe where they had not evidence for belief; to admit that they were ignorant when they really were so. He undoubtedly rated high this side of his work—this part of his mission. The oracle at Delphi pronounced him the wisest of men. At first he could not understand this, and yet he was unwilling to disbelieve the oracle, so he went about from one person reputed wise to another, in order to be able to say, "Here is a wiser man than I am," or at least to find out what the oracle meant. He went to many, but he found that, while they in reality knew almost nothing that was worth knowing, they thought they knew a great deal, and were angry with one who tried to convince them of their ignorance. So that at last he came to recognise that there was a truth in what had been said about him; to use nearly his own words, "He left them saying to himself, I am wiser than these men; for neither they nor I, it would seem, know anything valuable; but they, not knowing, fancy that they do know: I, as I really do not know, so I do not think that I know. I seem, therefore, to be in one small matter wiser than they." He was quite right. To know that we do not know what we really do not know is a most valuable attainment. To accustom ourselves not to believe where we have

not sufficient evidence for belief is a most desirable habit of mind. But there is something more desirable, more valuable; and Socrates would not have been the great man he was if he had not clearly seen that the detection of error, important although it be in its place, is necessarily inferior to the discovery of positive truth. Unfortunately there are many persons among us less perspicacious. Their knowledge, or what they fancy to be their knowledge, about the most serious of concerns is mainly or wholly of a negative kind. They know, or fancy that they know, that common opinions are erroneous; and in virtue of this real or imaginary knowledge they suppose themselves to be very superior persons indeed, and entitled to look down upon the mass of their fellow-men with contempt. They take a pleasure in detecting falsehood, and are puffed up with conceit by their supposed success in doing this; while they are extremely deficient in the love of positive truth, and fail to realise that *it only can really sustain mental life*, and enable men to do their proper work in the world. Millions of mere negations will no more enrich the mind than millions of mere nothings will fill a purse. It is only positive truth which can nourish, strengthen, and guide the soul; and the power of detecting error derives its importance solely from its connection with the power of discovering such truth. The detection of error can

rationally be regarded only as a painful necessity; the discovery of truth is alone a glorious privilege. Error we must know, because we are fallen and mortal, easily hurt and apt to go astray; truth is essentially precious to us, because we are spiritual beings, and truth is the sustenance of spirits, the *pabulum animi*. Socrates felt this, not perhaps as strongly as men educated under Christian influences should feel it, but as strongly as any Greek could be expected to do; and it was only because he felt it and acted on the conviction of it that he originated a philosophical movement of a grandeur which has never been surpassed. The smart reviewers and clever young men of these latter days, who profess themselves to be Agnostics, and pride themselves on their want of convictions, are immensely mistaken when they imagine themselves to be the intellectual heirs of Socrates, as one of the things of which that great man had no doubt whatever was that all persons of their stamp were floating wind-bags, misleading and mischievous to the commonwealth, and meriting merely perforation.

He was himself an earnest seeker of the real truth, on which alone the mind can rest, and on which alone it can act. The attainment of that he deemed worth any toil however strenuous, any journey however long or difficult. The Socratic method was therefore not merely destructive and

negative. Only its intermediate aim was to produce doubt; its final aim was to reach certainty. When the irony had done its work, or when a man was met with who did not pretend to a knowledge which he had not, the process was reversed and became what Socrates described as the maieutic art or mental midwifery. Then it was a means of drawing mental and moral power out of those subjected to it, of helping to a birth their intellectual throes, of guiding their minds to find in the depths of their own being unexpected truths. And just as when proceeding negatively Socrates, by shrewd questioning, brought objectionable assertions and assumptions to the test of specific cases with which they were found to be inconsistent; so, when proceeding positively, he tried in the same way of question and answer to rise from individual cases, concrete instances, through a patient comparison of particular with particular, and a gradual elimination of the contingent and accidental, to what was essential and universal, and which as such could be expressed in affirmations capable of defying criticism. In this positive aspect his method was, as to form, a dialogue, but, as to matter, an induction (ending in a definition); at least, if not strictly an induction, it shared largely in its nature and spirit, and came much nearer to it than anything there had been in philosophy before. And when we consider it

not merely in its naked essence as an approximation to induction, but as a practical and living process, the mode in which the whole mind and soul of Socrates worked in earnest search after truth through intercourse with his fellow-men, it is perhaps impossible to admire or praise it too highly. So considered, it remains a wonder in the world's history—unique, unparalleled; unseen before; unseen in anything like the same perfection since. “No other son of woman,” says Grote, “has had strength enough to bend that bow.”

Passing from the method to the substance of the teaching of Socrates, we find, as I have already said, that he confined his inquiries, in the main, to subjects directly bearing on the practical life of men—to morality and politics.

No two ethical tenets of his have, perhaps, been more discussed by moral philosophers than his identification of happiness and virtue, and his reduction of all virtues to wisdom or true intellectual discernment.

He identified happiness and virtue. He used the one word “well-doing” (*εὐπραξία*) to denote both. He contemplated the moral life in relation to its ultimate end or chief good, and that he thought could only be wellbeing or true happiness. He did not identify virtues, however, with every kind of happiness, or with happiness in general, but with

the happiness which consists in, and flows from, a man's obedience to the law of his true being, and which implies the subjection and control of all the appetites and desires by reason, seeing that man is essentially a rational being—such a subordination of the lower to the higher nature as constitutes virtue. It was only in that sense that he maintained the coincidence of virtue and happiness. The doctrine was quite in accordance with the general aim of his philosophy, which was to show that not in anything external, nor in the pleasures of sense, but in the culture of the soul itself in the various virtues, and in inward peace of soul, man ought to seek his ideal and satisfaction.

Further, Socrates tried to find what was the essential element in virtue, the common principle to which all its forms could be reduced, and seemed to himself to find it in wisdom, in a true insight into the real nature of things of most importance. He saw men all around him going wrong from ignorance in moral matters, from spending no thought on them. He felt himself disposed and resolved to do whatever was right, provided he only knew it. His life was spent in endeavours to dispel moral ignorance in others, and to acquire moral knowledge for himself. He thought no artisan would prefer doing good work to bad if he only knew what good work was, and how to do it. Thus he was led to resolve virtue into

knowledge or wisdom, and vice into ignorance or folly. If a man, he thought, only knew and kept constantly and clearly in view what his true nature was, he would aim only at that which conduced to the wellbeing of his nature; and aiming only at that, he would be unwavering in the practice of virtue, for that alone will secure its true wellbeing. Evil is often preferred to good, but always as good and not as evil. It is loved and pursued, but under the illusion that it is good—*i.e.*, ignorantly and unwittingly. No man is in the full sense of the term voluntarily vicious. No man wills to do what he truly knows to be adverse to his highest interests.

Whether Socrates was right or wrong in maintaining these two tenets may fairly be regarded as debatable. What is indisputable, however, is that, even if he were mistaken in respect to them, he was not thereby prevented from most admirably recommending virtue and the virtues. That he did so I have now briefly to show.

Long before the time of Socrates—in the old Homeric days even—the Greeks had come to have fairly clear conceptions of, and distinctive names for, the virtues. In the age of Socrates it had become common among them to consider the virtues as four in number—wisdom, temperance, fortitude, and justice,—what have been generally

called the cardinal virtues. Socrates did not reject the classification, but, as I have just indicated, he thought that the three last might be resolvable into the first. At least he tried to trace them back to it as their common root, just as the doctors of the ancient and mediæval Church were accustomed to refer all the cardinal virtues to love as their primary and essential principle.

As regards wisdom, therefore, you will perceive that if Socrates erred, it was, supposing that to be possible, by putting too high a value on it. You must not imagine, however, that by wisdom he meant a function of pure reflection or intellection. He was far, indeed, from being a mere intellectualist or rationalist, and as far from being a pure individualist or idealist; and he was especially far from being so in the sphere of morals. There Aristotle was on the whole truer to his teaching than Plato. He attached their full value as reasons for a virtuous life to such motives as spring spontaneously from a generous nature and good dispositions, from the dictates of conscience and the voice of God, as heard in the secrecy of the soul, from the naturalness of the ties which bind individuals together, from regard to the welfare of the community, from respect to lawful authority, etc. He was a thoroughly practical moralist, as practical as Aristotle himself, and I hope I need hardly tell

any of you that the "Nicomachean Ethics" of Aristotle is the most practical treatise on ethics that Christendom even yet possesses. The conception of wisdom entertained by Socrates was not of a kind which tended to make his moral teaching of use only to philosophers. Certainly his moral teaching, viewed as a whole, was of a kind adapted to the needs even of those whose moral discernment falls far short of speculative sun-bright clearness.

So much as regards his conception of wisdom, but what follows should make it more definite.

Temperance, of course, he held to be dependent on and inseparable from wisdom.

Temperance was generally understood by the ancients as the control of all the appetites and affections, and not merely as moderation in eating and drinking. Socrates so understood it, and is repeatedly represented by Xenophon as persuading to the practice of it. Intemperance, he says, deprives a man of wisdom, destroys the soul, destroys the body, wastes property, renders incapable of performing public services. Intemperance seems to lead to happiness, but it is only temperance which does so in reality. The law of man's true nature is freedom from the thralldom of his lower propensities; and as the happiness of every creature can only be promoted by obedience to the law of its true nature, man's real happiness

can only be promoted when, exercising temperance, he retains the mastery of all his appetites.

In conversation with a Sophist who reproached him as only teaching men by his self-denying way of life to be miserable—a conversation reported by Xenophon—we find him making a singularly comprehensive and powerful plea for temperance; but as it is too long to quote, I must merely state that while he urges all those common-sense utilitarian or prudential considerations which so obviously and strongly testify on behalf of this virtue, he forgets not that higher motive of the dignity and divine origin of our nature which will only be ineffectual on the sorely degraded. “If I am observed,” he says, “to be not over-delicate in my diet, if I sleep little, nor once taste of those infamous delights which others indulge in, assign no other cause than my being possessed of pleasures in themselves far more desirable, which delight not alone for the moment in which they are enjoyed, but gladden with the hope of yielding perpetual satisfaction. . . . It would seem to be your opinion that happiness consisted in luxury and profusion; whereas, in truth, I consider it as a perfection in the gods that they want nothing; and consequently he cometh the nearest to the divine nature who standeth in want of the fewest things; and seeing there is nothing which can transcend the divine

nature, who ever approacheth the nearest thereto approaches the nearest to the sovereign excellence." Socrates acted as he taught. Both Xenophon and Plato regarded him as the most temperate of men. "If the whole tenor of his discourse," says the former, "showed his regard for temperance, the whole tenor of his life served more abundantly to confirm it."

Not less admirably did Socrates recommend the virtue of courage or fortitude. One of the finest passages in the "Memorabilia" is the apologue of "The Choice of Hercules," borrowed by Socrates from Prodicus, and so modified and improved by him as to be among the most beautiful eulogies this quality has ever had. He praises it as affording pleasures of conscience, as enabling men to serve well their fellows and their country, as procuring the esteem and affection of men and gods, and as the source of well-merited glory. It is indispensable to the discharge of all other duty. The coward can never be depended on to do any duty in a serious emergency. That was his oft-repeated teaching, and the sincerity of it was tested to the utmost. He was seldom beyond the walls of Athens—only five times to any distance, it is said; three of these times, however, was on military service, and on each occasion his fortitude was conspicuous. In his first battle he gained the

prize of bravery, but insisted that it should be awarded to encourage a younger man, Alcibiades, whose life he had saved. In Thrace he treated as so indifferent to himself the terrible hardships which overcame all others, that the soldiers thought he did it to mock their want of courage. "And," we read in Plato, "to see Socrates, when our army was defeated and scattered in flight at Delium, was a spectacle worthy to behold; for he walked and darted his regards around with a majestic composure, looking tranquilly both on his friends and enemies, so that it was evident to every one, even from afar, that whoever should venture to attack him would encounter a desperate resistance. He thus departed in safety; for those who are scattered in flight are pursued and killed, whilst men hesitate to touch those who exhibit such a countenance as that of Socrates even in defeat." He showed still greater moral courage. When the Thirty Tyrants had made a law prohibiting the teaching of philosophy in Athens, Socrates not only paid no attention to it, seeing he never pretended to teach philosophy, but, after the Thirty had put to death many of the wealthiest and best citizens, and given up the reins to all manner of violence and vice, he said publicly, to their great indignation and his own serious danger, "that it would astonish him much, if he who lost part of the herd every day, while the rest

grew poorer and weaker under his management, should deny his being a bad herdsman; but it would astonish him still more, if he who had the charge of the city, and saw the number of his citizens decrease hourly, while the rest became more dissolute and depraved under his administration, should be shameless enough not to acknowledge himself an evil ruler." And when the Thirty ordered him to go with some others and bring Leon of Salamis to Athens, Socrates steadily refused, and would not be implicated in such an act through fear of death. So in the case of the Admirals, when the Five Hundred of the Athenian Senate wavered and yielded to the demands of a furious mob, Socrates, who was president for the day, remained unmoved, defiant of threats, steadfast to his oath. He stood there sworn to administer justice. He would not administer injustice. He would not even put an illegal question involving the lives of men to the vote, although his own life were to be taken on the spot. Add to these instances the crowning example of his life and death, and it must be acknowledged that scarcely any one in history has by word and deed more nobly taught courage than Socrates.

The latter three of these instances might equally have been adduced as illustrations of his reverence for justice. It was in order that he might keep his soul pure from injustice that he braved the vengeance

of the tyrants and the fury of the mob, and death as a criminal. He preferred, he himself tells us, to define justice by actions to defining it by words, for many who spoke of justice committed injustice." "I am," he said, "continually demonstrating to the world my sentiments concerning justice. When have you known me bearing false witness, or slandering any man? Where was it that I sowed dissension between friends? stirred up sedition in the republic? or practised any other kind of injustice whatsoever?" When pressed to give a verbal definition of justice, he said it was a due observance of the law; and he very properly insisted that this was the bond which held the state together, the condition of all social peace and prosperity. He was careful, however, to distinguish his doctrine from that of the Sophists on the same subject by maintaining that there were unwritten laws everywhere in the force which had come directly from God, and which carried in their very natures the rewards of obedience and the punishments of disobedience. We must refer to Socrates therefore the first clear enunciation of the distinction between natural and civil justice, on which so much depends in the Sciences both of Morality and of Law.

Justice is a virtue of relation—negatively an avoiding of doing injury, and positively a rendering of good to others. Our account of the teaching of

Socrates regarding it would be incomplete, therefore, if we did not indicate how he inculcated those duties of abstinence from wrong and beneficence, which arise out of the chief relationships of life, and which the ancients were accustomed to include under justice.

There was one virtue which held perhaps a higher place in the ancient than in the modern world—I mean friendship. If you find the delights and duties of friendship worthily described by modern authors — as, say, by Montaigne, St Lambert, Addison, Brown—be sure they are drawing from, if not translating, some Greek or Latin writer. Cicero and Seneca have said about all that is to be said on the subject. But, though they have spoken more fully than Socrates is recorded to have done, they have not spoken better, and we may even perhaps say not so well, because with less originality. If you read and compare the last four chapters of the second book of the “*Memorabilia*” with the “*De Amicitia*” of Cicero, you will find that the Roman orator has only developed the thought of the Athenian sage.

The duties of a son to a mother have scarcely ever been more wisely and affectionately taught than they were by Socrates to his eldest son Lamprocles, when that youth was enraged at a scolding he had received from Xanthippe, the wife of Socrates, a

good woman of a sharp and shrewish temper, as some good women are.

The duties of brothers to one another are not less admirably described in his conversation with a person who was at variance with his brother. The concluding words of Socrates were these, and they are well worthy of being recorded in what one might call the "Bible of Humanity": "Nothing can be more deplorable than your present situation; it being no other than if these hands, ordained of God for mutual assistance, should so far forget their office as mutually to impede each other; or these feet, designed by Providence for a reciprocal help, should entangle each other to the hindrance of both. But surely it shows our ignorance and folly, and works our harm, when we thus turn those things into evil which were not created but for our good. And, truly, I regard a brother as one of the best blessings that God hath bestowed on us; two brothers being more profitable to each other than two eyes or two feet, or any other of those members which have been given to us in pairs, for partners and helps, as it were, to each other by a bountiful Providence. For, whether we consider the hands or feet, they assist not each other unless placed at no great distance; and even our eyes, whose power evidently appears of the widest extent,

are yet unable to take in, at one and the same view, the front and the reverse of any one object whatsoever, though placed ever so near them; but no situation can hinder brothers, who live in affection, from rendering one another the most essential services."

It is often said that the duties of husband and wife — the conjugal virtues — were never rightly apprehended or appreciated by antiquity. And that is so far true. But, in justice to the ancient Greek world, Plato should not be referred to in proof. When that is done, it is forgotten that Plato was a *communistic* theorist; and that it is no more fair to refer to him in such a case for the general opinion and sentiment of his age than it would be to represent the system of Fourier as exhibiting the ideal of married life in the nineteenth century. It is not to Plato that you must go for the wisest teaching of antiquity on the subject to which I refer, but to his master, who was far superior to him in practical sense. Now, in the unfortunately little read but very valuable treatise of Xenophon entitled "Economics," the views of Socrates on the subject to which I refer are stated at length. Well, the doctrine there taught will not only pass without criticism, but will command admiration even at this day. It has not been outgrown in all the intervening centuries.

Nay, put it to this test: Compare what renowned fathers of the early Christian Church, great mediæval divines, and the most famous of the Reformers—men like Origen, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin, for example—have written on the same theme, and then try to determine whether their doctrine or that of Socrates, as set forth in the little treatise mentioned, is what the Christian conscience of the present day will most approve of. I believe that the finding would have to be that the Christian writers whom I have named, with all the advantages of revelation, had fallen both in wisdom of conception and purity of feeling below the level of the pious heathen.

Socrates, although he did not, like Aristotle, expressly justify slavery, has not expressly condemned it. There is nothing surprising in that. Those who had seen slavery substituted for the massacre of prisoners of war could not be expected to regard it as other than a moral advance. We who have seen how slowly the thought of its abolition came even to a Christian nation in only a portion of which it had taken root, cannot but acknowledge it scarcely possible that it should have dawned on any Athenian, however enlightened. But history must not only on this ground acquit Socrates of blame. She must also record to his honour that he urged masters to

strive to gain the affection of their slaves, to encourage them by rewards, to guide them by the sentiment of honour, and, when they conduct themselves well, to treat them as free men, and to esteem them as honourable men. To cite again just a few of his words: "The man who ought to be admired and valued is he who, when he comes among his servants, creates in them a pleasant countenance, and makes them rejoice, every one running or striving in their business to serve him, and using all ways to get his praise and love. Such a man is worthy of the rank of a king. A master who has good sense enough to bring his family to such affection towards him, and to good order, does not possess this by learning only, but he must receive his good nature and wisdom from the gods. He must be born with a generous nature, which must proceed from the gods, for I have never yet found the true gift of government but it was attended with generosity."

Socrates was certainly one of the greatest teachers of political duty which the world has known. The political message which the sage of Chelsea sought so earnestly to impress on the minds of his countrymen, and especially on the minds of politicians and would-be politicians, was only a part of the political doctrine which the sage of Athens was constantly inculcating on the

minds of his fellow-citizens. His political ethics, however, would require a lecture to itself.

The wide subject of the religious convictions of Socrates is one on which a vast amount has been written, and one also on which, owing to its magnitude, I must not dwell. I may only say that he was the first to give explicit enunciation to the argument for the existence of Deity drawn from final causes, which Anaxagoras had only suggested, and that his statement is as clear as that of Paley, the *Bridgewater Treatises*, or *Burnet Prizes*; that he applied his argument to prove a particular providence; that he thought God had on several occasions directly made known to him his will; that while so far accepting, and honestly accepting, the religion of his age and country, he rose above it to a faith in One "whose eye," as he said, "pierceth throughout all nature, and whose ear is open to every sound extended to all places, extending through all time; and whose bounty and care can know no other bound than those fixed by his own creation"; that on this faith he built up a moral life of rare excellence, and that he died in the hope of a happy immortality.

Nothing became Socrates so well as his death. It is foolish to compare it, as some have done, with the death of Christ. But outside of Christendom there is no record perhaps of a nobler death, and

even within it very few. It was a magnificent testimony to his reverence for truth and virtue. And we have fortunately a full account of it—one as full as of the death of our Lord.

In 399 B.C., when in the seventieth year of his age, he was accused because of the alleged evil tendency of his teaching, before a court composed of 577 judges, and condemned by a majority of only five or six votes. He prepared no defence,—the voice within him, he said, would not allow him to do so; but he made a marvellous defence,—one, however, in which there was no grain of sycophancy—not a single note of appeal to the mere pity or sympathy of his judges. He told them plainly that he would rather die a thousand deaths than cease teaching if they acquitted him. “Ye men of Athens,” he said, “I honour and love you, but I shall obey God rather than you.” When in prison his friends devised a plan by which he might have escaped, but he refused to break the law of Athens in order to secure his own personal safety, and smilingly asked his friends if they knew of any place beyond Attica where death would not find him. Through the hours of the last day of his life he discoursed in a wonderful manner on death and immortality. When the cup of hemlock was presented to him by the weeping jailer, he thanked him for his generous sorrow, but

drank the fatal draught as cheerfully as if it had been a safe and soothing beverage, after he had said, "I pray the gods to prosper my journey from this to the other world." He did not profess to be certain of immortality, but he was able to rejoice in it as "a glorious hope." I, for one, cannot believe that that hope was disappointed.

VIII.

THE IDEA OF GOD IN THE RELIGION OF ANCIENT EGYPT.

THE old Egyptian religion is still of special interest in various respects. It formed part of a very ancient and peculiar civilisation. Even Chinese civilisation is in all probability much younger than the Egyptian. The Hindu civilisation is certainly so. The Vedas do not take us so far as the Egyptian monuments. And those monuments in almost all cases refer to contemporary facts. In that respect they supply far more trustworthy historical data than are to be found in the Chinese national histories or in the Livian version of early Roman history. It has not been found that any Egyptian wrote on stone as a narrative of real events a connected series of fictions such as Geoffrey of Monmouth, Hector Boece, George Buchanan, and others committed to paper. The credibility of Egyptian history is exceptionally high. Unfortunately its chronology is exceptionally difficult to fix. There are no

absolute dates—no dates from the reign of the first or of any succeeding king—no era. Notwithstanding that, however, the history of ancient Egypt can be traced for more than three thousand years by the aid of authentic records contemporary with the facts to which they relate.

The Egyptian civilisation was obviously a thoroughly original product,—one which had grown up wholly in the Nile valley, under the fostering care of a priesthood. The elements of it, however, were not drawn primarily and exclusively from Egypt. On the contrary, they can be traced back to races which had entered into Egypt in pre-historic times. The Negro, the Libyan, the Mesopotamian, and a Punic population gradually came to be absorbed into Egyptian, and to contribute to make Egypt what it came to be as one of the most peculiar and powerful nations of the ancient world. It was unlike any other; as distinct and peculiar as that of China has been, to which, however, it presents a striking contrast. The Egyptian genius, unlike the Chinese, was the reverse of commonplace and unimaginative. It was not content with a limited, practical, superficially clear view of life. It was a serious, sombre, brooding genius which pondered on the life beyond death, which felt drawn towards the obscure, enigmatic, mysterious. It was like its own sphinx. Egyptian civilisation,

unlike the Chinese, was throughout interwoven with religion. It was essentially a priestly civilisation.

It possessed some great qualities. Although it fell far short of that of Greece in certain respects, it immensely surpassed it in durability, in the power of maintaining and perpetuating itself. Athens conferred immense services on humanity; but she was miserably devoid of power to keep herself alive. That constitution of hers, which from the time of Pericles till now has been so often eulogised, must be admitted to have done wonders, but it burned itself out almost in the course of a century. That was a serious defect. For a nation the power to live, to live long, to live long in health and strength, is of prime importance. And Egypt had this power in a measure which has never been surpassed. And along with it she had in a very considerable degree that of adaptability and self-development. Her civilisation was not exclusive of movement, variation, and progress, although it did not admit of them, of course, to anything like the same extent as that of modern nations.

The power and wealth of Egypt were immense, its organisation firm, and its administration carefully regulated. Agriculture and other species of industry flourished. Education must have been widely diffused. The language was not of a kind

to allow of a high literary eminence; but the Egyptians were amazingly given to reading and writing. The walls of their houses covered over with inscriptions were so many books always open; and their contents must have been much more instructive than those of many of the books in our Free Libraries. In moral knowledge the Egyptians were advanced; and their moral conduct seems to have been on the whole exemplary. They were credited by contemporary peoples with exceptional proficiency in mathematical and physical science. Their wisdom or philosophy was held in honour by the Greeks, but this seems to have been largely for the same reason which makes German philosophy specially revered by young Oxonians, to wit, because on account of its obscurity it passes their comprehension. In mechanical skill in the construction of buildings, and in power of representation in their portrait statues, the Egyptians have not been surpassed. They had consummate taste in ornaments, vases, etc. Their architectural achievements are still the wonder and admiration of the world. So eminent a judge as Ferguson pronounced St Peter's at Rome to be "as insignificant in style as in extent" when compared with the palace temple at Karnac.

The religion of Egypt, then, is of interest as being the root principle and the pervading spirit

of such a civilisation. But it has, further, intrinsic claims on attention. For, while a religion with great defects, monstrous peculiarities, it was not a superficial, narrow, torpid religion, but one which could go on, and did go on, developing for thousands of years without losing its identity. It was a religion in which perhaps no attribute of God was wholly unrecognised; in which there were great truths, although often too obscurely conveyed; in which such truths as Divine judgment and future retribution were strongly emphasised; and in which moral law was invested with Divine sacredness and majesty. I see no reason to doubt that its religion above all things else was what inspired the Egyptian mind and Egyptian character, and ruled Egyptian life. Some, indeed (*e.g.*, Schultz and Tiele), maintain the contrary. They hold that what is called the Egyptian religion never lived at all in the consciousness of the Egyptian people. The common people, they think, held with passionate tenacity to a worship of local gods and sacred beasts which had come down from prehistoric times. There seems to me to be as little reason in holding this opinion as there would be in maintaining that the peasantry of Brittany or the Tyrol have been uninfluenced by Roman Catholicism because they cherish local superstitions and revere objects which are sacred only in their own eyes. It was certainly not the

worship of onions or a veneration for cats which made Egypt a nation, or produced anything great in Egypt, or even anything known to be ancient. The great mass of the local gods and sacred beasts of Egypt were, in all probability, like the great mass of local superstitions and sacred relics in Christendom, of late origin relatively to the fundamental ideas of the Egyptian and Christian religions. It was the national religion of Egypt which was old, and the local superstitions which the Romans ridiculed that were new. There can be no reasonable doubt that the Egyptian religion had a very real, although, of course, very imperfect life, in the consciousness even of the Egyptian common people.

Comparatively little, so far as I am aware, has been as yet certainly ascertained as to the influence of the Egyptian religion on the religions and civilisations of any people besides the Egyptian. Egypt was in more or less close connection with several nations. There was an active intercourse between the kingdoms on the Nile and on the Euphrates which must have very considerably influenced both, and affected in no small degree the thought and life of Western Asia. Greek philosophy was no doubt to some extent stimulated in its early stages by contact with Egyptian wisdom, but to what extent it is impossible to say. It

certainly did not owe to it nearly so much as Glabisch, Roth, and others have endeavoured to make out.

As to the connection between the religion of Egypt and of Israel the most conflicting opinions have been held. Some have argued that the Hebrew religion was in the main borrowed from the Egyptian; that it owed its monotheism to the acquaintance of Moses with the teaching of Egyptian priests; and that circumcision, the ark of the covenant, the cherubim, the holy and most holy places, Urim and Thummim, the sending forth of the scapegoat, etc., were all of Egyptian origin. Others entirely reject this view, and maintain that the relation between the two religions was essentially one of contrast, the Hebrew being designedly antagonistic to the Egyptian. It has even been maintained that the Israelites were never in Egypt at all, and that Egypt contributed nothing to their religious thought so far as that can be ascertained from the Bible. I believe it contributed but little to it; but to know whether it contributed little or nothing, and if it contributed anything what that was, it must be studied. To the Biblical student this must be an obvious reason for studying it.

At present all that we have to consider in it is the idea of God or of the Divine. In doing so we cannot go back to the origin of the idea

or of the Egyptian religion. The origin of the Egyptian religion is not disclosed by Egyptian history. It is merely a matter of conjecture. There are no records or inscriptions to take us to it. The origin of the Egyptian people is unknown to history. The Egyptians themselves did not know it; they believed themselves *autochthones*. Their oldest traditions had a reference to the valley of the Nile (Khemi). Egyptians were not given to travel outside of Egypt either by sea or land.

Like the Babylonians and Assyrians the Egyptians are spoken of as a Hamitic people, owing to their speech being very different from Semitic and still more unlike Japhetic or Aryan. And they may have had an Asiatic home, and a long prehistoric history before they settled in Africa. In the earliest known stage of Egyptian history the Egyptian deities were of a character akin to those that were worshipped in India during the Vedic period. They were regarded as at once physical and ethical powers. There was prevalent in their worshippers a consciousness of their unity in an all-comprehensive power and godhead with which particular gods were at different times identified. The Egyptians themselves believed that the reign of men was preceded by the reign of gods, which must have implied that they knew of a prehistoric age, a mythic age, an age of which nothing definite

was known except the gods. The gods, of course, were viewed as older than any historical men.

The human history begins abruptly with King Mena. What is said of him and of a number of his successors is probably historical, but it is scanty. It is all the more likely to be historical because scanty. Contemporary inscriptions are not found until late. When Egyptian history begins the government, language, and religion were formed.

What, then, was the character of the Egyptian religion as it first appears in the light of history? It was complex, and, as one may say, complete as regards its rudiments; complete as the organic germ, the vegetable bud, is complete. It had certain great gods, but not so many as in later times; ancestor-worship, but not so developed as in later times; and animal worship, but very little as compared with later times. Its higher and lower elements from the earliest times that we have any account of it co-existed, and they continued to co-exist throughout its whole known history.

Animal worship was amazingly prevalent in Ancient Egypt. Every small town or district had a sacred animal of its own, with a temple consecrated to its worship, and priests or priestesses to conduct what was deemed an appropriate divine service. The animals held in veneration were very numerous,—dogs and cats, sheep and oxen, storks

and birds of prey, crocodiles, and especially the three sacred bulls, *Mnevis*, *Onuphis*, and *Apis*, which were worshipped throughout the whole land with profoundest reverence.

As to Egyptian animal- and ancestor-worship, two eminent authorities, Fritz Schulze and the late Professor Tiele, have maintained that both were older than the worship of the great gods. Schulze affirmed that the oldest form of the Egyptian faith was "a very elementary, strongly totemistic, popular religion"; and Tiele has laid down that "the sacred animals were no doubt originally worshipped as fetishes." But evidence for thinking so has not been produced. There is no proof that animals were worshipped in Egypt as either totems or fetishes during the historical period. They came to be worshipped as incarnations, as symbols. The principles of incarnation and symbolism being very vague, the divine animals naturally become in course of time very numerous. As far as is known, they were not deified at first. The bull and hawk are almost the only animals which can be said with certainty to have been held sacred from very early times, and both were naturally so regarded because obviously symbolical of power. The principle of symbolism had an immense influence in the development of the Egyptian religion.

As to ancestor-worship, there is no case of mere

propitiation of ancestors ; the only propitiation of them of which there are traces is through prayer to some of the great gods. The deceased is described as faithful to the gods. It has nowhere and in nowise been shown that the propitiation of ancestors preceded belief in other deities. The divinity of the king was believed in, however, to an extraordinary degree. But the inscriptions show us quite clearly why. In the king divinity itself was beheld as reigning and legislating. The king was regarded as an "emanation" of Ra, the "living image" of the sun-god, a "visible god on earth,"—in short, an incarnation of the invisible divine powers. It was on that ground that the king as king was worshipped. As an individual he was himself bound to worship, and so to humble himself before, the Godhead which reigned in and through him. As an individual he even prayed and sacrificed before his own image, the idea or symbol of the kingdom.

In the oldest Egyptian inscriptions to be found in the oldest Egyptian tombs, the names of comparatively few gods occur. Osiris, Horus, Thot (Tehuti), Seb, Nut, Anubis, Apheru, Ra, Isis, Neith, Apis, are about all. They are enough, however, to show that the religion in its earliest historical condition was not monotheistic, at least in any obvious or strict sense.

There can be no doubt as to the general character

of these gods, the greater gods of the Egyptian religion. They were certainly not gods who had been old kings, or deceased ancestors, as we should expect them to have been were Mr H. Spencer's hypothesis as to the origin of religious beliefs correct. They were gods of nature, and especially, although not exclusively, of the heavens. It was in the physical world, and especially in the sky, that Egyptian man saw a revelation of the power and being of the Divine.

This is obvious from the very names of the gods. These names were, of course, older than the oldest inscriptions in which they occur. Osiris=Us-ar, Us-ra, signifying "power," or, according to another interpretation, "seat," of Ra, is the uprising Sun-God, in whom is incorporated the divine all-originate power which dispels the darkness of the primeval waters and vivifies the world, but who finds an antagonist and temporary conqueror in his own brother Set, the god of the powers which work towards death. His son Horus is a revival of himself who vanquishes the destroyer. His name denotes the "sun in the height," the sun of the day; and Osiris came to be sometimes contrasted with him as the sun of the night, the sun of the under world. Isis, the name of the wife of Osiris, meant the exalted, the venerable, and the goddess herself represented the dawn of day. Neith also meant

dawn, or perhaps heaven. Thot (Tehuti) meant the measurer, and so the Moon, conceived of, however, as masculine=Hermes Trismegistos. Seb =the earth (conceived of as male and parent), and Nut=heaven (conceived of as female and parent), were the father and mother of Osiris. Anubis (Ampu)=probably twilight or dusk, was said to have "swallowed his father Osiris," and is described on early tombs as "lord of the grave," "guide of the dead." Apheru="the opener," *i.e.*, he who opens paths for the dead, was another form of Anubis.

It thus appears that in the earliest known stage of Egyptian history the beliefs entertained in the Nile valley as to the Divine Powers which rule the world were fundamentally like in character to those which swayed the minds of the husbandmen, warriors, and priests in the valley of the Punjab to whom we owed the beginning of the Vedas. The Divine Powers, according to the ancient Egyptian idea, were also the natural powers; they worked physically and visibly in the aspects and agents of nature, and also in the life and fates of men. The Egyptian mythology is obviously a personified representation of what goes on in the sky and on the earth. Hence it has been regarded as only a sort of poetical materialism. As early as the reign of Tiberius, the Stoic Chæremon, who

had been in Egypt, explained it in a purely materialistic sense. On the other hand, the Neo-Platonists took just the opposite view, and explained everything in it spiritually and in accordance with their own idealism.

This sort of divergence of opinion has always prevailed, and arises from looking at different sides of the subject, and ignoring that it has two sides, and that a chief characteristic of the religion is that it regarded natural powers as spiritual and spiritual powers as natural. The old Egyptian in his thoughts of the Divine did not separate the natural and the spiritual as modern men do. Hence gods whose histories at first glance seem to be simply representations of the operations of the powers of nature were really also gods who were regarded as the ideals and upholders of the moral life. While they operated in ways perceptible to sense in the phases and activities of nature, they also operated imperceptibly in transmundane spheres, and with intelligence and moral purpose. For example, Osiris may seem to some to have been simply an elemental deity, while he was regarded by others as far more than that, and indeed as no less than the friend of right, the enemy and vanquisher of wrong, the author and dispenser of blessings among the living, the judge and sovereign of the dead. From the earliest times

the Egyptian deities were thus regarded as both elemental and ethical, and their symbols were read in both ways.

The sense of unity more or less explicitly contained in the religious creed of the Egyptians does not warrant us to pronounce their doctrine monotheistic, or to account for it by an antecedent monotheism either natural or revealed. As regards the character of the conception of the Divine entertained by the Egyptians in the earliest period of their history, it has to be discovered not only from what is said of the gods in the early inscriptions and from the meaning of their names, but also from the signification and use of the general term for "god." It is quite conceivable that a people should have no general term for the Divine (for God); should have, on the contrary, merely names for the deities (the gods). That would obviously be the rule were there no feeling of unity underlying polytheism—were the gods regarded as merely individuals, entirely separate and independent individuals. In that case they would probably have even merely individual and non-significant names. But the rule is the opposite. All the names of the Greek gods, for example, are like those of the Egyptian gods, general terms individualised, although there is also a general term for "god." The Romans, the Slavs, the Teutons, the Chinese

and other peoples, have also had a general term for any and every assumed "god." It was not otherwise with the Egyptians.

The general term for *deity* among the Egyptians was *nutar*. The distinguished Egyptologist, De Rougé, has attached to the word the sense of *renovation*. According to that interpretation, a *god* could only mean "one who renews himself." Another very distinguished Egyptologist, however, Le Page Renouf, has argued to the contrary, and seems to have shown that *nutar* really means "power," and consequently is equivalent to the Semitic general name for God, viz., *El Illah*, *Allah* (the root of which as a conception is *strength*, *might*, *force*). In that case *nutar nutra*, an extremely common Egyptian expression, corresponds to the Hebrew *El Shaddai*.

This term *nutar* never became a proper name—never ceased to be a common noun. It was applied indifferently to Horus, Ra, Osiris, Set, etc. All were *gods*; all were *powers*. But did the individual gods—the separate personified powers—exhaust God, include all Power? We have no reason to believe that the Egyptians supposed that they did. No affirmations have been found to that effect. Nay, we know that *nutar* was early spoken of without a reference to any particular god, without any kind of limitation, or any ascription to it of merely

mythological characteristics. The most ancient discovered manuscript—the oldest known book—in the world is the *Papyrus Prisse*, now preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. It has been twice translated into English, once by Mr H. Osgood in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* (October 1888), and also by M. Philippe Virey in vol. iii. of “Records of the Past,” New Series, edited by A. H. Sayce. It is known as the Precepts of Ptah-Hotep, a man of distinction and influence, although not perhaps, strictly speaking, a prince or king, as is commonly stated. It contains many sentences like the following: “If any one beareth himself proudly, he will be humbled by God who maketh his strength.” “If thou art a wise man, bring up thy son in the love of God.” “God loveth the obedient and hateth the disobedient.” “Inspire not men with fear, lest God fight against thee in the same manner.” “Let no one inspire men with fear; this is the will of God.” “If thou humblest thyself in obeying a superior, thy conduct is entirely good before God.” “The man master of his soul is superior to those whom God has loaded with His gifts.”

The preceding paragraph shows us that at a very early date, in a plain popular writing, God is spoken of in a way which, if it stood alone, every one would call *monotheistic*, and which, standing even alongside

of references to "gods" and "powers," shows that none of these, nor all of these, were supposed to be exhaustive of Godhead, of Power, but forms of it. Just as we do not regard the existence of many powers as inconsistent with the oneness of power, so the ancient Egyptians did not regard the existence of many gods as inconsistent with one godhead, their primary idea of which was power. Wherever, indeed, the powers of nature are worshipped as gods, the feeling that the separate powers are not all power, the particular deities not all that is divine, must be more or less entertained and will find expression.

It may come to expression in at least two ways even where the philosophical thought which can only rest in one ultimate Power, one unconditioned Being, one true God, is still undeveloped and untrained. To one of these ways we have just referred. Particular gods, all of them, may be dropped out of view, and the generic thought of God alone retained, so that the power of the powers, the god in the gods, is personalised, and alone invoked and worshipped. It was so in the case of the pious and thoughtful Ptah - Hotep, when he spoke of God simply, not of any particular god, in the way already mentioned. A distant approach was thus made towards monotheism.

Another way, another form of approximation,

was what has been called the henotheistic. When worship is ardent and earnest the particular god worshipped is apt to have ascribed to him the attributes, as it were, of all the gods—an almost absolute and exclusive godhead. Max Müller has shown how prominent a phenomenon henotheism is in the Vedas. Page Renouf has shown that it is very conspicuous also in the ancient inscriptions and hymns of Egypt. Horus, Ra, Osiris, Amun, Knum, were severally spoken of as if each were absolute God, invested not only with distinctive divine attributes but with all divine attributes.

The Egyptians had undoubtedly a sense of the unity of the Divine from the dawn of their history. And they expressed it so strongly in various ways from a very early period that they have been pronounced monotheists, not merely by theologians attached to a traditional dogma but by most eminent Egyptologists—De Rougé, Mariette, Brugsch, and Renouf. As these scholars, however, truthfully present the facts, they satisfactorily refute themselves. A religion with about a dozen great gods—distinct as regards their names, characteristics, histories, relationships, symbols, and worship—is not monotheism in the ordinary or proper sense of the term. A religion in which the Divine is viewed as merely immanent in nature, and the deities deemed physical as well as moral, elemental

as well as ethical powers, is rather pantheistic than monotheistic.

It has often been asserted that the unity of the Divine was most emphatically expressed in the earliest historical stages of the religion; but this is not borne out by any evidence which has yet been adduced. Renouf, I think, quite fails to prove what he affirms to that effect. The ascriptions of unity to the Divine which have been cited from the earliest records are neither so strong nor so founded on steady intellectual conviction as those which found frequent expression in later times. It was in the twentieth dynasty when Egypt was in all its glory, yet near its fall, and when the god Amon was pre-eminently honoured, that we find the greatest number of hymns monotheistically expressed, hymns which praise Amon as "the God alone without a second," "the Eternal God," "the Father of the Gods," "the maker of heaven and earth, creator and sustainer of all creatures," "the author of all life and goodness," and "the Ruler of all nations."

The Egyptian religion was monistic as well as polytheistic, but not a monotheism, although so far tending towards monotheism. It was a monism inclusive of polytheism and consistent with the utmost exaltation of particular gods; not monotheism, which is essentially exclusive of polytheism.

and recognises only one god as truly God. Hence when the monistic element in it was developed the result was not monotheism but pantheism. It is rather to monism than to monotheism that nature-worship leads; and naturalistic monism fully developed is not monotheism but pantheism.

At no period of its history was the religion of Egypt a self-consistent system of faith and worship, or even a generally intelligible one. The Egyptians cannot be denied to have been continually groping more or less after God, but it was always so vaguely and confusedly that they necessarily failed to find and see Him as He was. Their priests and sages might be religious and wise in a way, but they fell far short of such knowledge of God as the prophets and people of Israel were privileged to attain. It was at one time a favourite hypothesis that the Hebrew religion was largely drawn from the Egyptians; that circumcision, the ark, and cherubim, the distinction between holy and most holy places, the institution of the priesthood, the Urim and Thummim, the sending forth of the scapegoat, and even the principles of Old Testament morality, as well as the doctrine that there is only one God, were to be traced to that source. Later and more thorough research, however, instead of confirming that hypothesis, has led to the conclusion that the Hebrews derived comparatively

little of importance from Egypt. Monotheism in particular they could not derive from Egypt, because Egypt did not possess it. It had only a naturalistic, pantheistic monism, the secrets of which belonged to the priests, were compatible with the grossest polytheism, and entirely different from Hebrew monotheism. The common people of Egypt failed to see even the monism in their mythology. It is unreasonable to suppose that the Hebrews were able to see in it monotheism. Their connection as to religion, and especially as to the idea of God, would seem to have been much closer with Babylonia than with Egypt.

There are still Egyptologists, however, who exaggerate the extent of Israel's indebtedness to Egypt. Dr Lauth, for example, has believed himself to have found Egyptian traditions of Paradise, the deluge, and the building of a tower to reach heaven, although no one else has supposed himself to have seen anything of the kind. Then Dr Lieblein has maintained that the priests of On-Heliopolis had reached in their exoteric system a monotheistic faith to which they gave expression in a name by which the Godhead was described as *Chefara, the Being*; and that Moses was a scholar of the Heliopolitan priests who borrowed from them the thought and name and rendered the word *Chefara* into Hebrew by *Jahveh*, as also meaning *Being*. The

hypothesis, however, has received no proof. It has neither been shown that there was a priestly monotheistic deity named Chepra, nor that Jahveh means *the Being*.

The connection of Israel with Babylon and Assyria was undoubtedly much more intimate and fruitful than that with Egypt. The ancestors of the Hebrews came from the region where the greatest Semitic civilisations which have existed arose and flourished. Long before the time when, according to the chronology of Ussher, Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees, the Semites had established in the Mesopotamian valley a mighty empire, and a culture and art, a literature and religion, rivalling that of Egypt. The Hebrews came again into contact with Mesopotamian civilisation and religion at the exile. But whatever Israel may have, directly or indirectly, at one time or another, derived from the cultured nations in the Mesopotamia valley, it cannot have derived from them its monotheism. Their religions were all polytheistic, although the same monistic conceptions or tendencies may be discovered in them as in the Egyptian religion. The Accadians had a number of higher deities in addition to their hosts of inferior spirits. The Babylonians from the earliest times had upwards of a dozen greater gods of apparently nearly equal rank. The monotheism of Israel cannot reasonably be represented as

having originated in the polytheism of Babylon and Assyria. That it cannot have originated with such peoples as the Edomites and Amalekites, Moabites and Ammonites, needs no proof. These peoples were closely akin to the Israelites in character, speech, and natural religious tendencies, and but for a special providential education, for its prophets and psalmists, Israel would have had just the same sort of history as they, instead of its own altogether different and most wonderful mission and destiny. Their influence on Israel was not in the way of helping to raise it to a pure and lofty faith, but in enticing and reducing it from the truth which it had received, and in dragging it down to the level of their own superstitions.

IX.

IDEA OF THE DIVINE IN CHINESE THOUGHT.

EGYPT has long been dead. China has been for ages more or less asleep, but is in no danger of dying, and may at any time become awake and a power of tremendous strength. It covers an area fourteen times that of the British Isles, and has a vast and dense population,—the most homogeneous mass, as has been said, of seething humanity on the globe. The Chinese have become a peaceable people, but they belong to a Mongolian race, a race of terrible fighters,—and Lord Wolseley and General Gordon have testified that there are still no better soldiers than the Chinese when properly trained and led. China needs two things in order to give her a great future,—the discipline of an active, progressive, and enlightened dynasty such as Japan may come to supply, and a religious faith such as Christianity can alone give. Possessed of these, not Russia, or the United States, or any European Power, but

China, so often treated by rulers and statesmen as of little account, may become in the course of this century the strongest of all the nations of the earth. Unspeakably great issues for China herself, and for the world, may depend on the course she will take. It can be no loss of our time to consider what religion in China has been.

The Chinese religion is interesting in various respects. It is part of a civilisation almost as peculiar as was that of Egypt, and one which, like that of Egypt, was wrought out almost independently of foreign influence. China has been to a remarkable extent self-made. It exhibits to us the highest stage of culture and the highest expression of religion attained until very recently by a Mongolian (Turanian, Tartar) race.

The Chinese religion is, further, a religion of great antiquity. Its fundamental conceptions are not only as old as the most ancient of Chinese books, or the most ancient events recorded in Chinese history, but apparently as any words, as any verbal roots, in the Chinese language. Of the symbols by which the Chinese conception of divinity is expressed Dr Legge has written, "I am speaking within bounds when I say that by these characters we go back five thousand years."

The Chinese religion was also, as regards intrinsic character, very different from the Egyptian or the

Assyrian-Babylonian religions. They were essentially priestly religions. Their development was chiefly due to priestly thought and agency. Priests had little, if anything, to do with the religion of China. There is no class or caste of priest in China. The Chinese religion is essentially an ethical and political religion. It has been moulded and evolved chiefly under the influence of sages and statesmen, of social reformers, of political teachers. Of these the most honoured is Kong-tse (Confucius, who was born in 551 and died in 478 B.C.) He was no priest, prophet, or even philosopher, but simply a moral and political instructor of the purest Chinese type,—one who drew the wisdom which he imported from what had been written before him in the books called *Kings*, and from the precepts and examples of the wise rulers of Kau belonging to the Wan dynasty.

In judging of Chinese thought, whether philosophical or religious, certain Chinese characteristics must be borne in mind. One is the extraordinary stability of principles, customs, and institutions in China. Of all nations in the world she is the most conservative, the most averse to change, the most difficult to move. She has been overrun by invaders, but she has absorbed and assimilated them without being much altered. She is well acquainted with insurrections, and has even experienced great

revolutions, but somehow they produce no radical constitutional changes, and the effects of them are soon effaced. The ruling power in China may be said to be *inertia*, and the most marked defect the lack of progress.

Closely connected with the characteristic just mentioned is another, the veneration of the Chinese people for the past, their desire to preserve historical continuity. The past so rules, or rather so overrules, the mind of China, that its present may be said to be always feeble and hopes for its future always disappointed. It looks so exclusively to what has been that it forgets to study and strive for what ought to be. Ancient examples, old classic writings, ancestral customs are so faithfully copied, so servilely adopted, that there has hitherto been no sufficient room left for initiation, independence, originality.

Intimately related, again, to the characteristic just indicated is the dominancy in Chinese life of the patriarchal or paternal principle. The utmost significance is attached to the right constitution of the family. Youth is carefully taught to revere age. The only kind of worship observed in the households of China is ancestor-worship. The ceremonies connected with it are regulated and supervised by a high state official. Ancestor-worship is nowhere so prevalent and developed as in China.

It is not surprising, therefore, that it should have been often represented as the primitive worship, the original religion, of the Chinese people. For this, however, there is no satisfactory evidence. The great development of ancestor-worship in China is chiefly due to the fact that the conception of God entertained by the Chinese mind is of so vague and impersonal a character as to have slight influence on the heart, and to the restriction of the worship of the only being recognised as properly God to the Emperor alone. The causes referred to have naturally driven the Chinese to a worship in which the worshippers and worshipped have at least much in common. But no real evidence has been adduced that the Chinese ever worshipped ancestors as, properly speaking, gods, as independent deities. They certainly do not so worship them now. Ancestors are no more regarded as deities in China than saints or angels are regarded as deities in Roman Catholic communities.

The Chinese mind has also a peculiar character. The practical understanding predominates in it over the higher reason. It is well endowed with judgment but very deficient in imagination. There is no great country, perhaps, in which genius has so rarely manifested itself; and this is all the more remarkable, because education and culture are so widely diffused and so highly appreciated. The

Chinese mind, painstaking as it is, is great only in little things. It has produced an abundant and varied literature, but no work of the highest order in any department. It has shown its chief strength, perhaps, in the sphere of practical ethics. Still, even there, although it has excelled in clearness and judiciousness, it has not displayed any great subtlety, profundity, or originality of view. And as regards the ethical life itself, although that everywhere exhibits itself in China as conformed to external regulations, it comparatively seldom shows that it is ruled from within by the free exercise of conscience and affection.

The Chinese seem to be decidedly defective also as regards distinctively spiritual feeling and aspiration. The Egyptians, Hindus, ancient Persians, and indeed most other peoples, must be pronounced to have been more earnestly and deeply religious than the Chinese. The latter have a spiritually poor religion because they are content to have it. Superficial and traditional views of the spiritual satisfy them because they are, on the whole, an unspiritual people which scarcely see below the material surface of things. A sense of the ideal, the infinite, the divine, stirs feebly the Chinese heart. Hence that heart is most imperfectly conscious of its own failings, emptiness, and narrowness,—of its own imperfections and limitations. There is a deplorable lack of spiritual

aspiration in it; and hence there is a deplorable lack of progress in the religious as in all other spheres of existence and activity in China. "The Chinese religion," says Dorner, "*has stopped at God as measure.*" And there is much truth in that affirmation. The Chinese see in God little more than the rationality of the order of the world. Hence their highest standard of truth and their most elevated conception of the ultimate goal of life is merely *the mean*, the avoidance of extremes, a prudently calculated moderation of judgment and of conduct. By adopting such a standard and goal they rendered themselves incapable of attaining the heights of true greatness.

The history of Chinese thought has been a continuous history, and one which it is not specially difficult to trace. It is divisible into three periods. The first is indeterminate as to its commencement, but ends with the sixth century before the Christian era. In it appeared the class of writings called in China *the Kings* or emphatically *the Books*, works esteemed above all others as sacred and instructive. The civilisation and philosophy of China have throughout the whole course of their history been regarded as based on what is taught in those oldest and most sacred books. The oldest of all, the *Yi-king* or Book of Changes, is the most revered but also the most obscure and enigmatical even of

Chinese compositions. The author of it is traced back to Fo-hi, the reputed founder of Chinese civilisation and reputed inventor of Chinese writing. The doctrine taught in it originated just as philosophy originated in Greece in the age of Thales and Pythagoras. It was a consequence of the human mind becoming in China as in Greece, and one may add as in India and Egypt, inquisitive as to what was the beginning of things and as to how the world had become what it was. Fo-hi, or whoever was the author of the *Yi-king*, answered his own question by a hasty generalisation from the aspects in which nature presented itself to him. We may smile at his answer, but the question was one of vast importance, as the mere earnest asking of it was sufficient to open up the era of philosophical inquiry. The answer which he himself gave was that the universe had a dualistic origin; was a compound of Yang and Yin,—of the principles of heaven and earth and of the sun and moon,—of the masculine and active and of the feminine and passive,—of composition the only mode of origination, and of decomposition the only mode of dissolution. The creation of things he accounted for by combinations which take place in time and space and according to numerical laws. All laws he viewed as having numerical expression. Such as are expressed in odd numbers, and have consequently for their

basis unity, the symbol of the active or celestial principle, are perfect, whereas those that are expressed in even numbers, having for their basis duality, the symbol of the passive and terrestrial principle, are imperfect. Aristotle has told us that Pythagoras held that "numbers were the causes of existence," that "nature is realised from numbers," that "things are the copies of numbers." And here, long before and far distant from him, a Chinese sage is found with a very similar thought, and one which has a vast amount of truth in it. The more the universe is examined the more it is discovered to be ruled by numerical laws, and to consist of elements which bear definite numerical proportions to each other. Science is continually confirming the essential truth of the thought of Fo-hi and Pythagoras, the perfect truth of the sublime word of Holy Scripture, "The Lord hath weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance."

The ethical principles of the *Yi-king* are closely associated with its metaphysics. The conception of law in the moral world is rested on law in the natural world. Conformity to the law of things is held to be rectitude and departure from it perversity. Is law referred to a law-giver? Is it thought of as the law of God? Not as Christians, or even as true theists, do. The *Yi-king* is a system of naturalism held to be explanatory of all that is in physical

principles, not in an intelligence separate from the world. At the same time it is not mere materialism, inasmuch as it attributes to these physical first principles intellectual and even moral qualities. The active or heavenly principle in the *Yi-king* not only creates all things in union with the passive or terrestrial principle, but rewards the good and punishes the evil. While not to be identified with God, neither is it to be identified with any physical principle. Theism and atheism are terms alike inapplicable to such a system as that expounded in the *Yi-king*.

There is no truer or higher religion in the other *Kings*, and therefore they need not be dwelt on. The second of them, the *Shu-king*, is a book of annals in which there is a classification of all things through reduction of all things under generic conceptions. It describes the Emperor as the central and most essential category, the imperial pivot, around which not only all politics but all morality, all mental attributes, all suffering and misery, all heaven and earth, converge, so that the conduct of the monarch is the rule of the universe. It dwells on truth, integrity, and the proper exercise of authority, but makes no mention of a personal God, and leaves piety out of account. The *Shi-king* and the *Li-ki*—the third and fourth of the canonical books—are not unimportant, but cannot be dwelt on here.

The second great stage of Chinese philosophy and religion was marked by the teaching of Lâu-tse and Kong-tse (Confucius). They were contemporaries, but as the former was about forty years older than the latter, it is strange that almost all writers, in treating of the history of China, deal first with the character and doctrine of the second. I shall refer to Lâu-tse first.

He was altogether the opposite of the ordinary Chinese type of man. He seems to have been a reserved and solitary individual who, absorbed in his own abstract and mystical thoughts, kept contemptuously aloof from the affairs of the world. When Confucius at the height of his reputation visited Lâu-tse in his solitude, in order to learn from him what he could, Lâu-tse assailed him and his teaching with such directness and contempt, that on his return to his disciples he kept complete silence for three days, and when he did break it said to them: "At his voice my mouth remained wide open; my tongue came out of it with astonishment, and I had not the power to draw it back; my soul was plunged into perplexity, and has not been able to recover its previous calmness."

Lâu-tse is reputed to have been by his doctrine the originator of Taoism, one of the three religions of China, and, it may be added, one which has in the course of time come to be very greatly debased.

Unfortunately the only writing of Lâo-tse, the *Tao-teh-king*, is, by the confession of the most celebrated Chinese scholars, one of the most obscure in existence, at least as regards the philosophical thinking in it. The word *Tao*, which expresses the fundamental idea of the system, is variously rendered,—*Reason, Nature, Way*. The substance of what is said about it may be briefly stated. I make the statement after having read four translations of it,—Pauthier's, Stanislas Julien's, Legge's, and the most recent and most literal, that of Paul Carus. The primal and efficient cause of Heaven and Earth is *Tao*, Reason, the all-knowing and motive force which gives existence and form to the world. It is not an infinite, spiritual, and personal intelligence kindred to our own, but intelligence as a law, as an incomprehensible essence or agency which, under the name of reason, escapes all reason. It is being thought of as an energy which may assume an infinite variety of forms without ever truly disclosing itself.

According to Lâo-tse Tao has two modes of existence which he carefully distinguishes. The one is distinct, limited, and perishable. The other is indistinct, unlimited, and imperishable. The first is the phenomenal mode of the existence of the ultimate principle or absolute reason, and the second is its transcendental mode. These two modes of

being of the first cause are not co-eternal. The transcendental mode precedes the phenomenal, and it is especially to the transcendental mode that the name Tao is given. "Tao is the first principle, the perfect and incomprehensible being who existed before heaven and earth were brought forth; the first cause of all things, and the motive force in moral action; that which you look at and do not see, the colourless, the invisible; which you hearken after and do not hear, the soundless, the inaudible; which you reach towards and cannot grasp,—the bodyless, the incorporeal:—

"It is indeterminable, ineffable, and existed when there was nothing,—

A shape without shape, a form without form, an indefinable mystery.

Go back, you cannot discover its beginning;

Go forward, you cannot find its end."

Immediately before these lines are others, descriptive of Lâo-tse's trinity, which once produced quite a sensation in the European world of learning. M. Remusat in a "Memoir on the Life and Opinions of Lâo-tse," published in 1823, translated them thus:—

"That which you look at and do not see is called *ye*,
That which you hearken after and do not hear is called *he*,
That which you reach after and cannot grasp is called *wei*,—
These three are inscrutable, and blended into one;
The first is not the brighter nor the last the darker."

He further maintained that the names of the three objects (beings) in this trinity, *ye, he, wei*, had no assignable meaning in the Chinese language; that they were really not Chinese words, not words at all, not significant, but letters in a language which is without letters; and that those letters were the essential letters of the holy and distinctive name of God revealed to the Jews, *Yehewei* being equivalent to Jehovah. Not unnaturally that produced a great impression throughout Europe, and there was much theorising caused by the supposed discovery. It was not until 1842, twenty years later, when M. Stanislas Julien published his translation of the *Tao-teh-king*, and showed that the three syllables were not destitute of meaning, but that the first signified *colourless*, the second *soundless*, and the third *incorporeal*, that the matter was thoroughly cleared up and definitively settled. The syllables had been fitly employed by Lâo-tse to describe his ultimate principle, but they neither compose the sacred name of God nor imply any reference to the doctrine of the Trinity.

The leading conception of Lâo-tse was certainly not a theistic but a pantheistic one. Tao is not personal but precedes all persons. It is the principle at the root and beginning of all things,—that in which they live and move and have their being, and to which they will at last return. Tao being

the great creative law, to live conformably to Tao is the great practical moral law. Tao, at first undeveloped, has now been expressed; men can know it and live in it, and to do so is the great secret of all goodness. It makes a man superior to all rules and conventions—a law unto himself, one who does right spontaneously from an inner impulse. The supreme good, according to Lâo-tse, is identification with Tao, the loss of finite personal existence in the infinite impersonal soul, and it cannot be attained by the wicked. They after death will continue a wretched existence separate from the human body or even in the bodies of beasts. The only way to attain it is by mortifying sense, by eradicating desire, by passivity and contemplation. Tao is a poor substitute for God, a vague something without form or love or voice, without soul or personality.

The Chinese deem Kong-tse (Confucius) the wisest man of their race, and a wise and good man he undoubtedly was. His life was an active and troubled one. The great men of the Empire neither followed his example nor received his teachings. He left behind him, however, a considerable body of disciples,—three thousand it is said to have been at his death,—and they rapidly increased. Now there are hundreds of millions of them. No other human

being, perhaps, has had so many. China accepts and admires all that he has taught. He never professed to be more than a man or to have any special sources of inspiration, revelation, or knowledge; nor did he invent a religion or theology, but simply accepted what of them seemed to him to be true and useful.

The late Prof. Tiele described the ancient Chinese religion as "a purified and organised worship of spirits with a predominant fetichist tendency." Dr Legge has argued against that view, and maintained that in the ancient Chinese worship there was, and in the modern or Confucian form of Chinese worship there is, little which can properly be called fetichism; that in ancient Chinese writings Heaven is alone called God; and that the uniqueness of Heaven as God is, in fact, the most distinctive feature of the Chinese religion. He may, perhaps, have been right in that, but he has gone farther when asserting that the ancient Chinese were strictly and properly monotheists; that the ancient Chinese religion was "a monotheism in which Heaven (Ti) was to the Chinese fathers exactly what God was to our fathers." There I think he fails to substantiate by adequate evidence what he affirms; at least I cannot find that in the ancient Chinese Classics, which he has done so great a service by translating, there is evidence for it. The names for Deity (Ti,

T'ien, Shang-ti) alone are not evidence. In none of the ancient writings is the Being denoted by these names as fully personal and spiritual. Only in exceptional instances is that Being approximately so represented. The Chinese religion was monistic, the spirits of nature being regarded as merely subjects and servants of T'ien, but not monotheistic, T'ien not being conceived of as truly spiritual and properly personal. The fundamental characteristic of the Chinese religion is the indissoluble connection of the ideas of invisible Deity with the visible heavens. The Divine, as conceived of in China from the origin of the people and language to the present time, is a universal ruling power comprehending the visible heavens and an invisible, infinite, omnipresent force, to be seen not in itself but in manifestation in the azure of the firmament, possessed so far of intellectual and moral qualities, and working towards ethical ends. As far back as is ascertainable that was the idea which the Chinese had of the Supreme Being. There is no Chinese thought known to be older than that, as there are no Chinese words known to be older than those which denote it.

In almost all religions known to us God and the Heavens have been closely associated. All the higher races of mankind have seen the glory of the Divine to be revealed in the face of the sky,

and heard day unto day uttering speech, and night unto night teaching knowledge concerning the greatness and majesty of God. But in China alone have God and the Heavens never ceased to be indissolubly connected, but deemed inseparable and indivisible, Heaven not being regarded as a mere thing nor God as a distinct person. **天** T'ien, the symbol of heaven, is made up of two other primitives—*yi*, the symbol of unity, placed over *tá*, the symbol of greatness, and thus awakens the idea of the sky, which is above and over all, and to whose magnitude we can assign no limit. *Ti*, the primitive for God, symbolises lordship and government. Heaven is styled Shang Ti, and as frequently *Ti* without Shang. That addition, meaning Supreme, individualises and exalts the *Ti*. The names T'ien, *Ti*, and Shang-ti are constantly interchanged.

The shining, the brightness of heaven, apparently was what struck most the Aryans, and disposed them to worship it as God. Apparently its greatness, its being above and beyond all, was what impressed most the Chinese. The ideas of magnitude and of lordship were what they so associated with it as to be led to view it as Divine. Heaven alone appears to the Chinese as strictly speaking Divine, as their sole God. They believe, indeed, in a vast and indefinite number of spirits that are in all parts of the air and of the earth, and pay a certain sort

of worship to them. They deem it right to pray to them, and show to them reverence in certain prescribed ways. But they do not pretend to know much about them; and they seldom individualise them, but think of them and honour them as a body, without attempting to distinguish them. Such vague, ill-defined, and generally insignificant beings are not strictly gods. They are subject to T'ien as men are. T'ien and they are not beings of the same nature or of the same order. They are not related to T'ien as the gods of any definitely polytheistic system are related to the chief god of that system.

The Chinese conception of the Divine is one which falls so far below the Biblical idea thereof that the Jesuit missionaries in China for a time maintained that the Chinese were a nation of atheists, of civilised and educated atheists, who had not so much as a name for God among them. That opinion is incorrect, but hardly more so than that which credits them with a truly monotheistic faith. By T'ien, Heaven, they certainly do not mean merely the visible or material heavens, but neither do they mean a creator of heaven, a being distinct from heaven. They mean by it a force which moves, lives, and acts throughout the universe, as a sustaining and generative power, and as a principle of order and rationality to which individuals ought

to conform their conduct, and by which especially the national life should be regulated. They thus conceive of it as so far endowed with intellectual and moral qualities. Yet to them T'ien is not properly a person, as it has neither true consciousness nor freedom; neither affection nor will; neither love nor aversion towards individuals. Hence man is in reality nobler than it is. It is on him, not on it, that the harmony and welfare of the universe depend. When the golden mean of duty is kept by him, when equity is done, then heaven and earth are in repose, all the powers of nature work for good, and beauty and prosperity everywhere abound. When, on the other hand, man wills and does evil, the equilibrium of the universe is destroyed, the stars wander, the course of the seasons is disturbed, and disorder reigns among every class of existences. Thus human conduct absolutely determines the course of events. If it be what it ought to be prosperity cannot but ensue. Heaven must in that case ordain prosperity.

Man, however, means virtually the Emperor. The people have no external forms of devotion, of petition, or of thanksgiving to heaven. There is no separate priestly class in China. Although religious ceremonies form a part of the general, domestic, and civil life, the care of them is devolved on government officials. There is a total absence

of a sacerdotal order. In the Confucian system of religion there is room only for one priest, and he is the Emperor. In robes of azure he worships the sky; in yellow the earth; in red the sun; in pale white the moon; and in full court dress his royal predecessors. But it is not thought lawful for any of the people to worship heaven, or earth, or the imperial ancestors; they are allowed to worship only the elements, genii, and sages, these being considered to be inferior to the Emperor and under his control. Says one intimately acquainted with China and Chinese literature, Prof. Martin, "When taxed with ingratitude in neglecting to honour that Being on whom they depend for existence, the Chinese uniformly reply, 'It is not ingratitude, but reverence, that prevents our worship. He is too great for us to worship. None but the Emperor is worthy to lay an offering on the altar of Heaven.' In conformity with this sentiment, the Emperor, as the priest and mediator of his people, celebrates in Peking the worship of Heaven with imposing ceremonies." Thus he stands between his people and all that they themselves even conceive to be truly supernatural powers. Thus, even granting T'ien, Heaven, to be the Supreme Being, the Chinese people are by their system shut out from all direct reference to Him. To the Emperor alone is that privilege conceded, while the aspirations and adora-

tions of his subjects are forbidden to ascend higher than to himself. Thus religion as we conceive of it—religion as the communion of the soul with its Creator and Father—is made as impossible as a system can make it.

Heaven, Earth, Man,—such is what is known as the Confucian Trinity. It has obviously no real resemblance, as some have pretended, to the Christian Trinity. What it has a real resemblance to is the Comtist Trinity, of which the members or hypostases are the *World* or *Grand Fétiche*, *Space* or the *Grand Milieu*, and *Humanity* or the *Grand Être*. Confucianism and Comtism are, in fact, very closely akin. The former is ethically the superior, but it is hardly worthy of being called a religion. It is a sort of ethical rationalism which aims chiefly at promoting the advantage of the State, and which turns to no practical purpose the great truth of a future life. The followers of Confucius are shut out on all sides from the spiritual and divine, and “cribbed, cabined, and confined” within the limits of materialism. They are taught to concentrate all their aspirations, aims, and efforts on the earth. That makes faith and genius, self-sacrifice and self-devotion, almost impossible. Martyrs, heroes, great poets, great philosophers, can hardly be expected to live in such an atmosphere.

The system which Confucius sanctioned he did

not invent, and, indeed, he did not occupy himself much with religion. Like the rest of his countrymen, he does not seem to have had any very keen spiritual perceptions or deep sense of spiritual wants; and, at any rate, that was a region on the darkness of which he felt that he could cast no light, and he was silent. What he endeavoured to do was simply to find a religious sanction for social arrangements, and he thought he did so in the obscure expressions of the older *kings*; and accordingly, taking these as his guide, he developed what he conceived to be their meaning, and added nothing willingly of his own: for to his practical mind the toiling of thought amidst uncertainties seemed to be useless. The system described, however, was his system; and it is that of the great majority of the people of China, because it was his, and has the sanction of his authority.

Confucius was able to state with admirable clearness the various precepts of morality, but utterly unable to present motives and aspirations capable of giving them vitality and efficacy. He manifestly failed to ally morality with religion. Yet it is a strange fact in the history of human folly that what has been for so many centuries the manifest weakness of Confucianism, should during the past century have been repeatedly brought forward in France as a new and fruitful discovery which would perfect

alike European civilisation and Christianity. The chief leaders of the kind of French Socialism to which I refer—men of the ability of Saint-Simon, Fourier, Leroux, Proudhon, and A. Comte—have all tried their heads and hands at the invention of a new religion for the world, at the grotesque manufacture of “New Christianities.” Is it not a most striking instance of how even able men, when they will not accept the truth, may be given up to strange delusions,—that all of those already named should have made of the very essence of their systems the defect which had for so many centuries produced sterility in China? The so-called men of progress referred to, with all their abilities, and with all the enlightenment of the nineteenth century around them, when endeavouring to invent a religion which would satisfy the wants of their fellowmen, have only made manifest their utter incompetency for the attainment of such a task, by falling behind the enormous distance which separates Christianity from Confucianism.

The most influential disciple of Confucius was Mencius (Meng-tse). He was born about a century after the death of Confucius, but was a most zealous and successful propagator of his master's doctrine. In some respects he improved it. The most celebrated philosopher of the Confucian school after

Mencius is Seun, who flourished about B.C. 250. The chief difference between the doctrinal teaching of Mencius and Seun was that the former held man to be by nature evil and the latter that he is by nature good. They regarded human nature from two different but not, perhaps, two necessarily antagonistic points of view. Hence, while both have erred, they may both have done so only in so far as they were exclusive. Ideal goodness and original sin are not incompatible. Mencius goes too far when he predicates ideal goodness of the actual nature in any stage of its existence, and Seun also when he sees in the wish for virtue evidence only of badness, whereas there is in it evidence no less of an ideal goodness which the actual nature feels it incumbent upon it to realise. A true philosophy should recognise what is true in the teaching of both while avoiding the exaggerations which brought them into conflict.

The third or modern period of Chinese philosophy began in the tenth century of the Christian era. As its most metaphysical it may probably have been also in some respects its most interesting age, but, unfortunately, it still requires to be made known to the European world. Chinese scholars in Europe are few in number, and they have been embarrassed and burdened by the mass of literary treasure put

at their disposal. There are thousands on thousands of Chinese books in London, Paris, Berlin, St Petersburg, and other places, which no European students of Chinese have had time to read. Of romances, plays, poems, travels, biographies, encyclopædias, histories, treatises on ethics, metaphysics, and theology, there are immensely more of each kind than the most indefatigable student can grapple with, and hence we need not wonder in the least that a whole period of philosophy lies yet unrevealed to us. The Chinese enumerate fifteen different schools of philosophy, and have hundreds of books on philosophy, as on most things else. The doctrine of Tchou-tse still rules among them. It is more speculative than was the earlier philosophy, and yet seems to be essentially a materialistic pantheism which admits of no personal Supreme Being or future life beyond the grave. The morality inculcated in it is similar to that which was taught in Greece by Epicurus.

The Chinese have never, properly speaking, been, what they have often been called, atheists; but they have most unhappily adhered to a very poor conception of the nature or character of God. Edgar Quinet did not substantially err when in his *Génie des Religions* he wrote thus: "At the other end of the world a society is discovered whose prin-

principles are: Equality of all its members; intellect the sole ground of pre-eminence; personal merit the sole aristocracy. Everything is regulated there by the laws of human nature, its one great idol being good sense. But as soon as these marvels have aroused the admiration of the West, comes the discovery that this wonderful people neither moves, nor breathes, nor lives, and that all this wisdom has only ended by creating an automaton. Why is this? Because man is there deprived of an ideal superior to himself. . . . For want of a tie with the infinite source of renewal, life is worn out as soon as it commences, so that China is at once the oldest and youngest society in the world. Its distinctive trait is, that from its cradle it has represented rationalism in the East. Its god, without form or voice, is but the supreme heavens; the Void, but the void without either depth, or love, or hatred. The people are one; no castes, scarcely any traces of slavery, and up to a certain point no polygamy; but their god is without life, without personality, without soul. In kings or sages God never speaks or appears. Without preference, without inclination for any one, he is impartial as death; he has become in reality nothing but a political fiction placed at the head of the constitution. Would you measure all that earth can do without heaven, life without immortality, man without God, study China."

Since those words, however, of Quinet were written China has learned to become dissatisfied with herself and her religion. She has come under the influence of Christianity to an extent far from adequately realised throughout Europe. The great Tai Ping insurrection of 1852, and the various sporadic uprisings which have followed it, far from being a series of attempts to crush Christianity, have manifestly in most forms been produced by faith in Christianity sincerely held but imperfectly understood. For many years Chinese revolutionists have been spreading their opinions, and seeking to give effect to them by printing and circulating what they deem Christian truths and beliefs.

China may reasonably be expected to pass through a spiritual regeneration, a national re-birth. When that happens she may in all probability enter on a career as remarkable as that of Japan. Her inhabitants are of a race physically strong, eager for knowledge, well behaved, and exceptionally industrious, moral, and reasonable. The time may not be far distant when, with her four hundred millions of inhabitants, and in alliance with Japan, her civilisation may be as advanced, and her strength as great, as any if not all of the Powers that have so often wronged and insulted her.

X.

THE BIBLICAL IDEA OF GOD.

THE whole human race has more or less felt the need of seeking after God or gods if haply they might find them. Religion is a universal fact, and wherever religion is felt in any form there is some sort of impression or conception of a divine agent or agents to which some sort of regard or worship should be given. A sense of some sort of supernatural agency, of more than a merely material or human presence, is to be found in all varieties of mankind wherever situated, yet the greatest and most gifted nations of the ancient world failed to arrive at a satisfactory apprehension of a Supreme Divine Being capable of satisfying the wants of the entire nature of man. Egypt, Greece, and China so failed, although none might have been supposed more likely to succeed. Where the keen intelligence of the Greeks, the wisdom of Egypt, and the love of learning of the Chinese were disappointed, to small, stubborn, stiff-necked Israel a wonderful

measure of success was granted. The representation of God given even in the Old Testament is immensely superior to any to be found elsewhere in antiquity or in any ethnic religion. The superiority has been accounted for in various ways. By some it has been ascribed to special supernatural revelation, by others to a special spiritual instinct, and by still others to a peculiar historical development. But, however accounted for, the fact must be admitted, and should be admitted in all its completeness. It is a fact which manifestly demands explanation, while no explanation can be adequate which would in any measure explain the fact away. The fact is certainly a most marvellous one, and vast is the distance between the God of Israel and the deity of any heathen nation.

There is only one being who is throughout the Old Testament spoken of as truly God; and the idea of that being is central and all-pervasive in the Old Testament,—its beginning, middle, and end. The life recorded, described, and reflected in the Old Testament is life inspired by God, or at least life in relation to God. The Old Testament is a religious history, a religious legislation, a religious literature, all instinct and suffused with a sense of the presence of God. That is so manifest even at a first glance that it only needs to be stated. Further, God is in the Old Testament presented as

revealing himself historically—that is to say, in and through experience. It may be by and to reason in and through experience, but it is not to mere reasoning or reason itself. The God of the Old Testament is a God known in actions, commands, manifestations of various kinds; not a God found out merely by theorising and abstract proofs. Reason may be and is implied in the Old Testament faith in God, may be and is at times directly invoked to testify of God; but experience is the permanent ground of the faith. Were it not so, the teaching of the Old Testament as to God would be speculative but not religious, whereas it is just the contrary. It is entirely religious but not speculative. In the Old Testament the speculative or philosophical stage of thought was barely reached. The teaching as to God contained in the Old Testament can be compared with the teaching regarding him given by philosophy only with reference to truth and error, whereas it belonged to the order of popular religious representations.

What, then, is the substance of the faith regarding God which we find expressed and reflected in the Old Testament? Well, there is, in the first place, the firm conviction that God is, and that he lives, dwells, and works in heaven and on earth. Atheism as a clear reasoned belief was not a state of mind which presented itself in Old Testament

times, and hence it was not dealt with or even referred to in the Old Testament. Such atheism is a product of a kind of thought which appears only at a comparatively late stage of history. Nevertheless the Old Testament even is by implication, and from beginning to end, a continuous condemnation of atheism in every form. Atheism denies the legitimacy of belief in God. The Old Testament everywhere assumes that there is a God, constantly declares that there is a God, views everything in the light of what God is and in the light which God imparts. It proceeds from the first page to the last on the principle that atheism is foolishness, while to know God is true wisdom, and the prime duty and supreme blessing of human life.

Further, the God of Israel is recognised in the Old Testament to be alone properly God. The marvel of the religion of Israel was that it was *monotheistic* when other religions were *polytheistic*. The existence of traces of polytheism preceding or accompanying monotheism need not be denied. It is a matter for discussion whether or not the prophets understood the one sole Godhead of Jahveh in the strictest sense as altogether excluding the real existence of the gods of the heathen. It is a matter of certainty, however, that in the view of all the prophets no god but Jahveh was properly an object of worship; that they regarded

him as "God of gods" and "Lord of lords"; and looked forward to a time when the worship of all other gods should cease. It is argued by many that the accounts of creation, paradise, the fall, the deluge, &c., which we have in the Bible, are late forms of legends which were originally parts of a polytheistic mythology, and that in their primitive form they were thoroughly polytheistic. There is nothing improbable in that, or dangerous were it completely proved. But no one can deny that the accounts are in the Biblical form strictly monotheistic. There is not only no allusion in them to any other God than one, but there is even no place left by them for any God beside the one. If inspiration has had any concern in placing them where they are and giving them the form which they bear in Genesis, it has thereby directly and decidedly condemned Babylonian and every other kind of polytheism. Supposing inspiration to have had nothing to do with them, they none the less conclusively testify to the monotheistic character of the faith of those who gave them their present shape, and who accepted them in that shape.

Again, God is represented in the Old Testament as no mere essence, or substance, or force, or law, but as a self, a person, one who lives, knows, feels, and wills. That may be said to be an anthropomorphic and unreasonable representation of God, but

at least it cannot be denied to be the representation given of him in the Old Testament. There he is represented as distinct from and independent of nature, while it is created by and dependent on him. There the universe is viewed not as the necessary evolution of a divine substance but as the free creation of the divine will. There God is set forth as a person, and man as like God because a person. Scholars who have studied the Vedas and other oriental religious works for years have acknowledged that they could not tell whether they proceeded on a theistic, pantheistic, or polytheistic view of Deity, but the simplest reader of the Bible can be in no doubt that the god of whom it speaks is a personal god. The Jews of Palestine never fell into pantheism, were never subjected to that form of error. Had they been so tempted they would doubtless have succumbed to it no less than to polytheism. Alexandrian Judaism, the Kabbalah, the Medieval Jewish pantheists, Spinoza, and many other witnesses, show that the Jewish intellect is very far from having any native anti-pantheistic bias. Not a single passage of the Old Testament can be indicated in which polytheism is combated on pantheistic principles. No psalmist or prophet in opposing the one error falls for a moment into the other. All the authoritative teachers of Israel adhered steadfastly to the truth implied in the very

name Jahveh,—the truth that in God absolute existence and perfect personality are inseparable.

It will be remembered that even Matthew Arnold, when he denied that "God" was to be understood in the Old Testament as meaning *a personal being*, at the same time admitted that in the Old Testament God was constantly personified. That he could not possibly deny, nor can any honest intelligent man deny. He merely sought to diminish the significance of his admission by saying, "Israel, however, did not *scientifically predicate personality* of God; he would not even have had a notion what was meant by it." Mr Arnold, however, was himself in the same absurd predicament. He never made intelligible what he meant by the scientific predication of personality as distinct from ordinary predication of it. There can be no doubt that when the Hebrews personified God, as Mr Arnold himself admitted that they did, they firmly believed that He was not merely a "not themselves" or "stream of tendency," but a "person" with the powers or capacities of action, affection, and knowledge which they ascribed to personality. Whether they used their words in a literary or a scientific sense is probably not a question which they would have understood, although not the less on that account meaning by them just what they expressed.

It must be added that God is represented in the

Old Testament in a way as inconsistent with Deism as with Pantheism. He is certainly not represented as a merely extra-mundane Being, inactive in the life of the world and indifferent to its interests. The Theism of the Bible implies all that is true in Pantheism. The writers of the Old Testament never represent creation as independent of its creator, as capable of either subsisting or acting without his support and concurrence. Their language on that point is most explicit, and proves without a doubt that the agency of God is, in their view, concerned in every power and every product of nature. In the Psalms, for example, all the operations of nature are spoken of as the operations of Deity. The thunder is "the voice of God," the lightnings "His arrows," the earthquakes and volcanoes "His doings." "He looketh on the earth and it trembleth"; "He toucheth the hills and they smoke"; "He giveth snow like wool"; "He scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes"; "He casteth forth His ice like morsels"; "He causeth His winds to blow, and the waters flow." And so on. The quotations which might be adduced in illustration are very numerous; and indeed declarations of the kind are so numerous and so emphatic that it has seemed to some as if the writers of the Old Testament did not recognise natural agencies at all. But that is manifestly an exaggerated view, the result of a

dull and narrow method of interpreting religious phraseology. The Old Testament writers habitually regard natural operations as none the less Divine because natural; habitually go back to the First Cause without dwelling on the involved subordinate forces; habitually attribute the phenomena of the world directly to the primary and personal source of all energy.

Great objection has been taken to the fact that the Old Testament represented God as in many respects like men; that the Divine was conceived of in it after the analogy of the human; that Jahveh had ascribed to him eyes, ears, a mouth, and hands; is represented as sitting, driving, and dwelling in various places; and acts from such passions as anger, jealousy, pity, revenge, and repentance, &c., very much like a human ruler. Well, the fact on which the objection rests is real, and cannot be reasonably either denied or attempted to be explained away. The Old Testament representation of God undoubtedly is, and to no inconsiderable extent, anthropomorphic and anthropathic, and would have been an immense loss to humanity had it not been so. The most anthropomorphic expressions of the Old Testament writers had at least the merit of counteracting, discrediting, and dispelling zoomorphic representations of the Divine, such as were common among the Semites, and which the Hebrews

were in danger of adopting and acting on like the heathen around them. If no anthropomorphic representations of God had been given in the Old Testament it would never have touched the heart of humanity as it has actually done. Only through them could any living and practically active idea of God effect an entrance into, and make a firm settlement in, the human consciousness. To avoid them philosophers have often debated about the mysteries of the Divine Nature till they have landed themselves in a mere mental abstraction equivalent to a blank atheism. They have often set themselves against bringing God down to man's level, and ended by banishing God, as far as they could, by emptying the idea of God out of all positive content.

God is represented in the Old Testament writings as possessing all the characteristics of personality. These are life, knowledge, affection, and will. God possesses them all without the limits or defects peculiar to created and finite beings. All that the Old Testament says of God may be exhibited in connection with that representation of Him. Let us attempt thus to exhibit the Old Testament teaching as to God.

God is a person. Therefore God is one who lives. All living beings are not persons, but all persons are living beings. Whatever is dead is

impersonal. It is involved in the very notion of Jahveh that he is a living God, and he is very often expressly so designated. It is under the name of the Living God that he is represented as acting and speaking, hearing men's prayers and supplying their wants, in numerous passages unnecessary to quote. God is said to swear by his own life. "As truly as I live"—"As I live." Men are represented as swearing by the life of God. "Jahveh lives" was the most solemn oath which an Israelite could employ, and it is as the living God that Jahveh is most frequently contrasted with the gods of the heathen, who are *dead* (*methim*), yea, *nothings* (*elilim*).

The life of God is described in Old Testament Scripture as underived, unlimited by time and space, all-sufficient, and unconnected with a material organism. God has life and so has man, but Scripture compels us to note that God has life in himself, while man, like all other living beings, has only life which is derived from God. The Old Testament tells us that God is "the fountain of life," that "in Him are all the springs of life," that "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." Its most distinctive Hebrew name for God is *Jahveh*, *I am that I am*. If in possessing life, then, creatures are like God, in possessing only a derived life even the highest creature is inconceivably inferior to

the Creator, whose life alone is an essential and necessary possession, and has a property which can be ascribed to none but himself, and is even incomprehensible to us, although we may clearly *apprehend* that to deny or overlook it must lead to a destruction of every worthy and reasonable conception of the nature of God.

The divine life of the one Supreme Being is, further, wholly unlike creaturely life, in that it is unlimited by space or time. The life of every creature is bounded in both ways. The life of God is unbounded in both ways. His life has no limit in space. It is omnipresent. "Do I not fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord" (Jer. xxiii. 24). Everything is filled by God. All is in Him. He is the life of all that live. In Him we live and move and have our being. Creation is contained in God, but God is not contained in creation. Although essentially present with all His creatures, He is also above and outside them, and dwells and moves freely in himself. Go where the soul may, within creation or beyond it, it cannot escape from his presence, or flee away from his spirit. He was before creation, and cannot have been within it when yet it was not. As "the First and the Last" He is not only expressly affirmed to be unlimited by time but also necessarily implied to be unlimited in space. Nowhere is God represented as enclosed within any

bounds of space or confined to any part of space, although often exhibited to us as in special modes of manifestation present in certain portions of space. And He is as unlimited in time as in space, as omnipresent in the one as in the other. He "inhabiteh eternity," is "from everlasting to everlasting," "is and was and is to come." He only is eternal. Whatever begins to exist has a cause, and whatever exists without a cause is eternal. God only is without cause and eternal. None of his creatures are so. The existence of all of them will always be measurable and limited by time, but not so the Divine life. Time is not assignable to it. With God "a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years."

Further, whereas the Divine life is self-sufficient and all-sufficient, the creaturely life, as a derived and dependent one, is without any essential or inherent self-sufficiency. God, having life in himself and giving life to all, needs not to receive anything of any one in order to remain for ever most glorious and blessed in himself, while every creature needs other creatures, and all creatures are dependent on their Creator, in whom there is an inexhaustible fulness of life which can supply the wants of all without requiring aught from any one. That contrast between the Creator and his creatures—God and all other beings—is indicated and implied in so

many passages of Scripture that it is unnecessary to dwell on it. And it need only further be added that God is nowhere represented in the Old Testament as bound to any bodily conditions, dependent on any material organisation. He has a complete and independent personality, in that he is a spirit with the attributes of life, intelligence, feeling, and will, whereas material properties are not only not ascribed to him except in passages which are obviously metaphorical but revealed as inconsistent with his perfection. Matter is always referred to God's will or word, and thereby implied to be his creature, agent, or instrument, but not a condition, constituent, or essential of his being or nature.

The Old Testament ascribes to God in common with man intelligence or knowledge, but also assigns to him, in contradistinction to man, omniscience and perfect wisdom. Intelligence *per se* is an element of the Divine personality and of all personality. In its common possession, therefore, the likeness of God to man appears, but that likeness is compatible with the profoundest unlikeness. Man knows a few things, but God knows all things. Man has a finite intelligence. God has omniscience, and not only omniscience but infinite knowledge. There might conceivably be omniscience and yet not infinite knowledge. Were the universe finite it might be fully known by a finite being, and yet the knowledge

of it would only be finite. But the divine omniscience is strictly infinite, seeing that God not only knows the universe but knows also himself—knows his own uncaused, infinite, eternal being—his Trinity—his own boundless mind and boundless blessedness. We are apt to conceive of the Divine incomprehensibility as if it were an attribute of the Divine nature itself, but it is obviously only the relation of the Divine nature to our minds.

God is in no wise incomprehensible to himself. If he were, of course his knowledge would be limited; and he would be so, if not completely self-conscious,—a consideration which of itself shows how superficial it is to regard self-consciousness as necessarily a limitation of knowledge. God's own perfections are the most intimate objects of his knowledge, and as they are infinite a complete knowledge of them is an infinite knowledge. Infinite knowledge—absolute omniscience—cannot but be radically different from such knowledge as ours. It must necessarily exclude everything of the nature of inference and acquisition, and can only be an immediate, direct, and absolutely adequate knowledge. The very conception of omniscience or absolute knowledge implies a knowledge of everything in its inmost nature and entire relationships; of principles and issues, means and ends; of past, present, and future; a knowledge which is clear and certain and incapable of altera-

tion, addition, or improvement. It may appear to some that the Old Testament Scriptures do not attribute to God omniscience so explicitly and emphatically as might have been expected, but those who think so must overlook the fact that those Scriptures referred to aim directly only at producing the practical impression that man can hide nothing from God, and that it is vain to indulge in superfluous speculations, however interesting. Of that there is conclusive proof in such Old Testament passages as Job xxxiv. 21, 22, Ps. cxxxix., Ps. cxlvii. 5, Jer. xxiii. 24, Is. xl. 20, &c. Other passages of a similar kind remind us that in God knowledge is always rightly applied,—that infinite knowledge is infinite wisdom, that He is not only wise but the alone wise, that wisdom is his and the source of all true knowledge and right understanding.

God is further represented in the Old Testament as the subject of feelings, of affections, as not impassive or indifferent towards his creatures and towards their conduct with respect to good and evil. Although it is only in the New Testament that God is sublimely declared to *be love* (“God is love”), the representation of God in the Old Testament was a preparation for that great utterance and for the revelation of God as absolute love in Christ. All the affections ascribed to God in the Old Testament may be regarded as essentially

different phases or results of one affection,—the affection of holy love, love to holiness, with hatred of sin as necessarily involved therein. When wrath, jealousy, scorn, and the like are ascribed to God they will, whenever rightly viewed, be found to signify states of the hatred which is inseparable from love. Among the most prominent of the affections ascribed to God in the Old Testament is “goodness,” by which is meant benevolence or loving-kindness, the disposition to confer wellbeing and happiness. God’s election and deliverances of Israel are also often appealed to as exemplifications of that principle, but it is in no way confined to a particular people or to any class of his creatures. Connected with goodness as aspects and forms of it in particular relations are graciousness, mercy, and pity, and these elements of the Divine character are so often brought before us as to soften and beautify the representation of God. Indeed it is largely owing to them that the view given of God in the Old Testament is so immensely superior to that in the Koran.

Of course it can be said that there is another kind of feelings often and emphatically ascribed to God in the Old Testament. We read of his wrath, anger, scorn, and jealousy; and doubtless these words were often misinterpreted and misapplied. God is often described, for example, in

the Old Testament as *jealous, the jealous God*. But what is the divine jealousy, the divine *kinah*? Just, as Oehler says, "the energy of divine holiness" — *i.e.*, the zeal of God against what dishonours his name, sets aside his will, and denies his uniqueness, sovereignty, or sacredness; also the zeal of love for his people in so far as they are his holy people, abiding in his covenant and favour, and obeying his law. There is thus no arbitrariness and still less any malignity in his jealousy, as in the jealousy of the heathen gods. His jealousy is an altogether holy and an even truly loving jealousy. So *the wrath of God* (the *aph, ehemah, ebrah*, of God) is just his jealousy in manifestation, the zeal of his wounded love, and, as Ullmann has defined it, "the highest strained energy of the holy will of God." The attribution to him of such wrath cannot be charged with degrading or debasing the idea of God, except on the irrational assumption that all ascription of feeling and affection to the idea of God must degrade and debase it.

The Old Testament revelation of God may be regarded as in a general way completed by its differentiation of the will of God from that of man, and by ascribing to the former alone omnipotence, immutability, and perfect righteousness. Man has will as well as God, and God is personal like man in that he has will; but the writers of the Old

Testament constantly remind us that the will of man is weak, vacillating, and perverse, while the will of God they also assure us has all the perfections opposed to such defects. Omnipotence, for example, is ascribed to the Divine will with extraordinary frequency, force, and sublimity. The Book of Job, Psalms, and the writings of the Prophets have in that respect never been excelled or even equalled. The Koran is very emphatic, occasionally very sublime, in its descriptions of Divine omnipotence, but even there where it is at its best it is far inferior to the corresponding utterances in the Old Testament.

The will of God is further declared by one writer of the Old Testament after another to be immutable. God is free in willing, wills as he pleases, but never wills capriciously or inconsistently as man so often does. The one absolutely free will is the one unchanging will. "I am God, I change not," we read in Isaiah. Absolute truthfulness, absolute faithfulness, are but the necessary moral expressions of the immutability of his will as apprehended by the writers of the Old Testament, and to such truthfulness and faithfulness in God the testimonies of those writers are numerous and emphatic. In a multitude of places, forms, and connections the Old Testament likewise teaches us that the will of God is free from all perversity and perfectly righteous,—“righteous in all his ways and

holy in all his works." The monotheism of Israel, at least as taught by the prophets, was a profoundly ethical monotheism. The holiness ascribed by them to God designated not a particular ethical attribute but the absolute moral purity and consummate moral perfection by which God is raised above the finiteness, the defects, and especially the sins of the creatures, yet also the virtue whereby he seeks to free the fallen and evil from their iniquities and to sanctify them to himself. The thought of God as thus "the Holy One" pervades the entire Old Testament, is distinctive of the revelation it contains, and may be traced unfolding its significance stage by stage as the divine process advances. The "justice" or "righteousness" (*Tsedek*) of God is often spoken of in a way which leaves it almost indistinguishable from his "holiness" (*qadosh*). It is his perfect and immutable rectitude,—the quality of ever being and ever doing what it becomes him to be and do. It is not merely "justice" as commonly understood or the "equity" with which mere human law is conversant. Much harm has been the result both in theology and religion of conceiving of God's righteousness in that mean and narrow way. A man, however strictly just and equitable in that sense, might be a very poor type of man, a sort of Shylock. In the Old Testament, however, by the "righteousness" or "justice" of God is always

meant the rightness of a perfectly moral being. Hence we find it habitually associated with goodness, mercy, and loving-kindness, the forgiveness of sins, and salvation.

The view given of God in the Old Testament was, then, a unique and unprecedented phenomenon in the history of humanity. It was the expression of a faith singularly comprehensive, sublime, and practical,—a faith which rested not on speculation and reasoning but on a conviction of God having directly revealed himself to the spirits of men, and which, while ignoring metaphysical theorising, ascribed to God all metaphysical as well as moral perfections,—a faith which, in spite of its simplicity, so apprehended the relationship of God to nature as neither to confound them like pantheism nor to separate them like deism, but to assert both Divine immanence and transcendence,—an essentially ethical, elevating, and hopeful faith in a God holy in all his ways and righteous in all his works, who was directing and guiding human affairs to a destination worthy of his own character.

The existence of utterances in the Hebrew Scriptures which show that Hebrew faith was not always thus enlightened, and sometimes conceived of God as partial and cruel, is no reason for not acknowledging the general justice and grandeur of its representation of the Supreme Being.

The God of the Old Testament is also the God of the New Testament. Christ and the apostles accepted what Moses and the prophets had taught concerning God. They assigned to him no other attributes than had been previously assigned to him. Like Moses and the prophets also, they made no attempt formally to prove the existence or logically to define the nature of God, but spoke of him either as from vision or inspiration. Yet their doctrine of God had original and peculiar features which should be noted.

There was, for instance, in the Old Testament revelation a certain limitedness,—a certain particularism,—between that revelation and a particular people chosen to be its channel and recipient, which could only be transcended through the connection being broken. That is to say, between the narrowness of the Jewish mind and the comprehensiveness of the disclosure of the revelation of God made to it there was a certain inconsistency, the consciousness of which could not fail to grow and spread, and was designed to do so in order that the contradiction might in due time be removed. It was so removed through the revelation contained in the New Testament. God through his providence and manifold self-disclosures gradually freed the idea of himself from the limitations attached to it by its connection with what was temporary in

Judaism, and ripened the world for the reception of a universal religion and a universal morality in essential accordance with his own self-revealed character as the God of all the peoples of the earth.

There was not only in Judaism a particularism inconsistent with a full presentation of the idea of God, but also an externalism as inconsistent with it. On the Jews there was imposed the observance of a very elaborate ceremonial law and ritual. That was far from unnecessary in the circumstances in which it was given. The ritual was full of significance, instruction, and prophecy. The aim of the law was to secure due reverence for God, and the end was so far attained. God was recognised to be emphatically the Holy One, whose prime demand was that his people should be holy, separate from all defilement and iniquity. That was so far a great and true thought, and one which has given vitality to all the priestly and ritualistic systems of religion which have ever displayed a vigorous life; but there may be much one-sidedness in the thought, from which may follow and have followed serious evils. The Jewish people, for example, looked on holiness in the way they understood it, as the supreme and most distinctive attribute of God, or at least as the most sacred aspect in which God could be apprehended, yet the practical result

was even to them far from favourable to true holiness. It led to the forms of worship being deemed more obligatory than moral duty, and to an exaggerated value being attached to rites of purification, avoidance in ordinary use of the Divine names, rigid abstinence from secular work on Sabbaths, feast days, fast days, and the like, trust in work-righteousness or in righteousness without works, and, in a word, a service of God which, instead of springing from the heart spontaneously and lovingly, cherished the delusion that God was one who could be satisfactorily served in any such slavish way.

The prophets did all that could be done within the old dispensation to counteract the errors and sins of the people, but the only effective remedy which could be provided was such a revelation of the character of God as was given in the New Testament through Christ and the apostles. What is most prominent in the New Testament revelation of God is its disclosure of the divine fatherhood. That was taught with incomparable clearness and effectiveness by Jesus Christ as a fatherhood not merely of natural creation or election, but of spiritual relationship, of love, sympathy, mercy, and grace for all individual souls. Only through Christ was the fatherhood of God fully revealed. In all the ethnic religions it was very imperfectly

recognised. A clear and consistent knowledge of it will be sought for in vain even in the highest forms of the greatest of those religions, although some glimpses of it may be seen to have been vouchsafed even to the lowest and rudest. The voice of all heathendom was and still is as the voice of

“An infant crying in the night ;
An infant crying for the light ;
And with no language but a cry.”

Christ gave an essentially new view of God, although one which had been long and widely prepared for. “The Father,” “My Father and your Father,” was the way in which he habitually spoke of God, and he so spoke not only to his disciples or to particular pious persons, but to men of all classes,—to a vast mixed audience, for instance, like that which listened to the Sermon on the Mount. The woman of Samaria was told what worship was due to the Father. The prodigal son was represented as forgetting that he had a Father but not as ceasing to have a Father. The prayer which our Lord taught as a model of prayer for all begins with “Our Father.” In making known, however, the divine fatherhood in the way that he did, he failed not to indicate that he himself was “the only-begotten son,” and that the Father was to him a father in a closer and more special and

peculiar manner than to others. He said "my Father and your Father," and taught men to say "our Father," but never himself spoke of "our Father" in conjunction with others, although he explained to them how to pray to their Father. It is always apparent, alike in the Synoptic Gospels and in the Fourth Gospel, that he felt his own relation to the Father to be unique,—a relationship which did not enter only after his human birth but which dated "from before the foundation of the world."

Hence he made known the fatherhood of God even more by his life than by his doctrine, and not only taught with wonderful vividness and fulness that God was a Father, but also gave in his own person the example of a life of perfect filial love and obedience,—one in unbroken and complete communion with the Father, and of which the meat and drink was to do the Father's will. He showed that he was the divine son of God in and through being perfect as a human son; and his divine sonship thus revealed in the perfect human sonship which it is incumbent on all to realise, revealed that in God there was perfect fatherhood.

The divine fatherhood had thus its correlate in divine sonship as represented in the New Testament. In Old Testament representations of Israel, the

Messiah, and Wisdom, and in the Logos doctrine of Judæo-Alexandrian philosophy, some approximations to that conception of the Divine may be traced, but they fell far short of it. According to the New Testament, God is not merely infinitely exalted above the world and definitely distinguished therefrom, nor merely immanent and everywhere operative in nature, but also incarnate in Christ; and Christ is not merely "the Son of man," essentially sharing in humanity, and truly representing it before God, but also "the Son of God," essentially sharing in Divinity and giving the fullest disclosure of it to mankind. The foundation of the Christian faith as laid down in the New Testament is that Christ, through his unique relationship as Son to the Father, perfectly declared and expressed the nature and will of God in relation to human salvation.

Further, God is exhibited in the New Testament as "the Spirit," "the Holy Ghost," who dwells in the spirits of men, to work in them the will of the Father, and to conform them to the image of the Son. Only when thus exhibited can the revelation of the Divine Name be regarded from the New Testament point of view as other than manifestly incomplete. For even the manifestation of God in Christ, being objective and single, must be supplemented by a manifestation which is subjective and

multiple, before the one God, the one Christ, can find a place in the number and diversity of souls, the multitude of separate hearts and lives. The manifestation of the Spirit is the manifestation that was required, and through it has been completed in principle the revelation of the Christian idea of God,—the revelation of the threefold Divine Nature and Name. The threefold revelation of God as Father, Son, and Spirit can alone have enabled the minds of men to conceive of God in a true and reasonable way as Absolute Spirit, Absolute Love, and Absolute Holiness. It was so conceived of through the media of revelation granted to them, and it is just in virtue of the threefold representation of God given in the Bible that Christianity is continually drawing men to itself from all parts of the world, and still held by most of the world's clearest and profoundest thinkers as the final and perfect religion, the crown and consummation of religion,—a religion speculatively considered the fullest revelation of God, and practically considered “the power of God unto salvation” to all who yield themselves to the influence of it.

I shall venture to conclude with the words with which the late Bishop Westcott closed his singularly delightful and edifying work, “The Gospel of Life” (1892):—

“The ultimate criterion, the adequate verification,

of Revelation to man, in its parts and in its completeness, lies in its proved fitness for furthering, and at last for accomplishing, his destiny. That view of the sum of being accessible to our powers which under particular circumstances and at a particular time tends to establish the harmony after which all religion strives, to satisfy man's wants, to carry him nearer to his end, even conformity with God, must be accepted as a true interpretation of the Divine will. That view which has this fitness in the highest conceivable degree universally from its very nature: that which is shown to be most capable of aiding us in our endeavour to attain to the highest ideal of knowledge, feeling, action, under every variety of circumstance—that is, the view which corresponds most completely with our nature and with our circumstances, which interprets our nature and uses our circumstances for the fulfilment of our spiritual destiny, which gives assurance that which is best in us now is the seed of a corresponding better—must be the absolute interpretation of the Divine will for man. To doubt this is to doubt the existence of God and of Truth.

“This character belongs perfectly, as we affirm, to the Gospel. If it could be shown that there is one least Truth in things for which the Gospel finds no place: if it could be shown that there is one frag-

ment of human experience with which it does not deal: then, with whatever pathetic regret it might be, we should confess that we can conceive something beyond it: that we should still *look for another*.

“But I can see no such limitation, no such failure in the Gospel itself, whatever limitations and failures there may have been and may be still in man’s interpretation of it.

“Christ in the fulness of His Person and of His Life is the Gospel. Christ in the fulness of His Person and of His Life is the confirmation of the Gospel from age to age as we look to Him with untiring devotion and seek to see Him more clearly in the light of the fresh knowledge which is given us.”—(Pp. 304-306.)

Supplementary Note.

Principal Fairbairn of Mansfield College, Oxford, in an able work on “Studies in the Philosophy of Religion and History,” has maintained that there has been a fundamental distinction between the Indo-European and the Semitic religions as to the Fatherhood of God. He has thus stated his opinion: “There is one element of the Indo-European conception of God too characteristic to be overlooked—the element of paternity. He was conceived as Father—father of man. The Indians called him

Dyaushpitar. The Greeks invoked *Zēd pátēr*—could so little forget this essential attribute of their family deity that they transferred it to the great Olympian, Father of gods and men. The Romans blended name and character in Jupiter. The Germans, though they displaced the ancient *Tis*, did not forget his fatherhood, and so loved the thought of a father-god as to make the stormful *Wodin Alvater*. This is, perhaps, the characteristic which most distinguishes the Indo-European from the Semitic conception of God—the parent, too, of all other differences. Neither as Monotheisms, nor as Polytheisms, do the Semitic religions attribute a fatherly human character to their gods. Even the Old Testament knows only an abstract ideal fatherhood, which the Hebrews as a nation realise, but the Hebrew as a man almost never does. The Semitic God dwells in inaccessible light,—an awful invisible presence, before which man must stand uncovered, trembling; but the Indo-European God is pre-eminently accessible, loves familiar intercourse, is bound to man by manifold ties of kinship. The Majesty of God is an exalted Monotheism, like the Hebrew, is sometimes so conceived as almost to annihilate the free agency and personal being of man; but the Indo-European, as a rule, so conceives his Deity as to allow his own freedom of action and personal existence full scope. . . . Then, while the father in the Indo-European religions softens the god, and gives, on the whole, a sunny and cheerful, and, sometimes, festive character to the worship, the god in the Semitic religions annihilates the father, and gives to its worship a gloomy, severe, and cruel character, which does not indeed belong to the revealed religion of the Old

Testament, but often belongs to the actual religion of the Jews. The Indo-European loves the gay religious festival, the Semite the frequent and prolonged fast. The Semitic Polytheisms showed very early their fiercer spirit in the place they gave, and the necessity they attached, to human sacrifices; but the Indo-European religions, although perhaps, even in the earliest times, not altogether innocent of human sacrifices, yet entered on their more dreadful phase only after they had fallen under malign influences, home or foreign. The contrast might be pursued to their respective priesthoods, where, indeed, exceptions would be found but only defining and confirming the rule. These characteristics and fundamental differences in feeling, thought, and worship can be traced to the primary difference in the conception. The one class of religions developed themselves from the idea of Divine Fatherhood, but the other class from the idea of Divine Sovereignty, severely exercised over a guilty race."—(Pp. 34-37.)

What is said in the extract just quoted is interesting and suggestive, but it seems to me doubtful if the generalisation professedly arrived at in it be really proved, or even if it can be proved. That the Indo-Europeans (Aryans)—Hindo, Greek, Roman, and Germanic—had from very early times some conception or element of divine paternity may be readily admitted, but must also be admitted to have been a very slight, mean, and often even monstrous apprehension thereof. Jupiter himself was a begotten and limited god, and had ascribed to him qualities and acts most inconsistent with and unworthy of divine paternity. It was only in later times that a monotheistic and ethical view of him arose. In the third

century B.C. the physician Aratus of Cilicia, in a scientific poem called "Phenomena," sang thus :—

"Jove's presence fills all space, upholds this ball ;
All need his aid ; his power sustains us all,
For we his offspring are."

And in the same century the Stoic Cleanthes, in a hymn to Jove, wrote the following words :—

"Great and divine Father, whose names are many,
But who art one and the same unchangeable, almighty power ;
O thou supreme author of nature !
Thou governest by a single unerring law !
Hail King !
For thou art able to enforce obedience from all frail mortals,
Because we are all thine offspring,
The image and the echo only of Thy eternal voice."

The words italicised are those to which St Paul referred in his address to the Athenians—"As certain of your own poets have said, 'Τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμὲν.'" They imply little more, however, than a physical relation of creation or generation. They do not affirm to any extent or clearness the Fatherhood of God. St Paul's words merely repeated what Aratus and Cleanthes had said, and all that they had said implied little more than the physical relationship of creation or generation. The Fatherhood of God had been revealed long before in the Old Testament with incomparably more clearness and tenderness than any known in German, Greek, or Hindu literature. Homer and Virgil often described the Greek and Roman deities as so far friendly and paternal in their doings, but that does not entitle us to regard any of their

deities as a Divine Father in an accurate and worthy sense.

It is the natural tendency of polytheism to reduce the gods to the level of their worshippers, and of monotheism to represent God as an object of awful reverence. Familiarity, however, is not to be confounded with a filial spirit; nor ought God, by being known and loved as a Father, cease to be the object of profoundest awe. In no polytheism, Aryan or Semitic, is the idea of the fatherhood of God other than very superficial and inconsistent. All pantheism logically tends to the destruction of a true idea of God's fatherhood. Only in monotheism can that idea come clearly to the light.

The contrasts drawn by Dr Fairbairn between Aryan and Semitic religions are so far real and suggestive, but not so far as they are represented as being. The worship of Molech, a Semitic god, was as horribly cruel as the worship of the Hindu Shiva and Kali. Druidism, it is true, was not a species of Semitic polytheism, but the spirit of it was as fierce in the extreme and gave as terrible a place to human sacrifices as any Semites have done. The rites of Vishnu and Krishna were gay, festive, and licentious, but so were those of Adonis and of the "sons and daughters" of other heathen Semites. Buddhism presented—instead of the One eternal God and Father of Spirits—an abstract and unbending Necessity, an inscrutable and heartless Fate—Kharma—as the ultime and supreme in existence. Brahminism proclaimed a God who is all in all, but so indefinable, inaccessible, and devoid of everything that constitutes a bond of sympathy with created beings, as to be no real object of

trust and affection. Yet even in those systems there can be traced happy inconsistencies which have sprung from the felt need of faith in Divine sympathy, compassion, and help,—in a personal God with paternal features. All the qualities of religion are to be found more or less in the religions of every race.

XI.

DUTIES OF THE PEOPLE OF SCOTLAND TO THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.¹

THE theme of my lecture this evening is, How should the various classes of the community feel and act with reference to the Church of Scotland? And I wish to deal with it in a spirit in harmony with that in which this course of lectures originated, and by which, I trust, it has been pervaded. It is a course for which no court or committee of the Church can be reasonably either praised or blamed, but for which the lecturers themselves are alone responsible. The arrangements for it were completed before the present disestablishment agitation was publicly initiated, and the announcement of "the new departure" was merely deemed an insufficient reason for abandoning what had been resolved on. The lecturers—without exception, I believe—cordially rejoice that the Church to which they belong has left unnoticed the declaration of

¹ A Lecture delivered in Newington Parish Church on 2nd April 1882.

war made against her; has been content to allow the reason and conscience of the country to decide of themselves and for themselves on the motives, arguments, and policy of her foes; and has once more shown that she will not readily be drawn away from what is her true path and mission,—that of peace and conciliation, of patient endurance of undeserved reproach, of honest endeavour to amend all real faults which either friendly or unfriendly criticism may make manifest, and of steady, earnest, and hopeful Christian work. They have not felt that the interests of peace required of them as individuals absolute silence; but they have none the less felt, I doubt not, how unlovely and pernicious a thing is ecclesiastical strife.

It is unnecessary to do more than remind you that one class of the community, and an increasing class, consists of those who regard all Churches with aversion. Disbelief in the existence of a personal and righteous God, scepticism as to the sacredness of moral law, and a spirit of positive hostility to Christianity, are among us manifesting themselves in various forms, operating through various agencies, and spreading in certain circles and localities with formidable rapidity. They are growing tendencies of the age which threaten all Churches; but the Church of Scotland has, as a national Church, special reason to dread them. If

the alliance of Church and State in this country be eventually severed, it will only be, I believe, through the spread of religious scepticism making easy the task of religious sectarianism. National Churches may, it is true, hold such principles, and act in such ways, as to generate unbelief, and may thus make to themselves friends of the partisans of unbelief; but wherever they are substantially faithful, wherever even they are not markedly unfaithful, to Christian truth, they will have the honour of being first and chiefly assailed by the foes of religion. It would be strange if it were otherwise. The party of unbelief cannot fail to see that so long as a nation acts on the principle that to have any class of its people growing up in ignorance of God, and of God's law and Gospel, is a national sin and national danger,—that so long as a nation acknowledges itself bound to provide the means of spiritual instruction to old and young in every district within its borders,—the war against Christianity must be carried on in that nation under great disadvantages. It would be unreasonable to expect the party of unbelief not to desire the destruction of a national Church so substantially sound and essentially faithful as the Church of Scotland is admitted to be.

There is also a Catholic section of the community. Roman Catholics seem to themselves to see in Protestantism a great defection from the true

faith, and in its divisions and strifes the natural results of a schismatical spirit. They cannot, of course, be expected to wish that Protestantism in any form should possess special advantages, nor can they fail to perceive that Catholicism would gain from the disestablishment of Protestantism. No Protestant Church, severed from connection with the State, and relying merely on the mercantile principle and the voluntary principle, is nearly so well organised for conquest in poor districts, whether sparsely or densely populated, as the Roman Catholic Church. In the United States, Catholicism has decidedly outstripped any Protestant denomination,—enormously outstripped any Protestant denomination which deems it necessary to have an educated ministry.

There is no likelihood, however, that the Catholic Church will openly or actively side with the opponents of the National Church. She wisely keeps aloof from the feuds and fightings of Protestant Churches—wisely proceeds quietly, patiently, vigorously, on her own way. Besides, the Roman Catholic Church, like every Church of large dimensions which can count its existence by centuries, holds the truth as to the duty and importance of nations supporting and fostering religion. It would be inconsistent and unseemly in her to oppose a truth the worth of which she fully recognises, and has largely experienced. The establishment principle, like the

territorial principle, and endowments, have come down to the Church of Scotland from the time when she was Roman Catholic. There is no need for being ashamed of them on that account. These things in themselves were not the causes of any errors or corruptions into which the Church of Rome fell, and could contribute thereto no otherwise than health, or wealth, or any other of God's blessings may lead a man to folly and immorality, while without them she could never have rendered to religion and humanity those immortal services which only ignorance and bigotry will deny her to have performed. She had providentially devolved upon her the immense task of carrying Christianity through ages of confusion and violence, and of guiding and ruling the minds of the debased populations of the classical world, and of the rude barbarians who overthrew the Roman Empire. To a large extent she succeeded. She organised fierce and wandering tribes into civilised and Christian communities; diffused through all minds the idea of accountability before God for all the deeds done in the body, and through all hearts some sentiments of universal charity; created great and permanent establishments for the relief of affliction and the spread of knowledge; often opposed with success intellect to brute force, the law of God to human passion, and cast herself times without number be-

tween the oppressor and the oppressed; welcomed into her own ranks men from all classes, without regard to the distinctions of civil society, and asserted the equality before God of the laity from the king to the beggar; gradually abolished slavery; discountenanced impure love, and gained for woman her rightful place in the family; cared for the poorest and meanest of mankind, and hallowed their lives at every stage from birth to death by religious acts; raised up, and found scope for, a multitude of marvellously devoted and pious lives; and fostered art, theology, and philosophy when they most required protection. Can any man who knows anything about the conditions of existence in the middle ages believe that she would have accomplished what she did if she had trusted to "the sufficiency of the voluntary principle," and refrained from seeking to have power and authority on the side of truth and reason?

The relationship of the Episcopalian Church to the Church of Scotland is of a somewhat special character. Probably no Church would gain more in the first instance from the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland than the Church of England. Disestablishment would discredit Presbyterianism in the eyes of many. It would cause peace-loving men to flee to Episcopacy as a quiet haven. Those who believe that Presbyterianism, as a form of Church

government, has no exclusive divine right, while they hold that the duty of a national recognition of religion is enjoined both by the law of nature and of Scripture, would, as a matter of principle, find it easier, perhaps, to unite with Episcopalians than with Presbyterians who seemed to them to deny, or to have betrayed, a fundamental truth. If, however, we take a wider view, and anticipate a little more of the future, we cannot but see that the Established Church in England is vitally interested in there being an Established Church in Scotland. No reason can be given for destroying the Scottish Establishment which will not equally apply to the English Establishment. The former is as pure in doctrine, as national, as beneficial in its sphere, as the latter. If the one were cut down and the other spared, the only tangible reason for this would be, that the one which was spared was Episcopalian. But no establishment could stand on so narrow a basis. The fact that we have two established Churches in Britain—the one Episcopalian and the other Presbyterian—is a standing testimony to the truth that neither of them is established because of its mere form of government, but because of its divine substance, because of the treasure of truth contained in the form. It would be intolerable that a Church should be established either because of its Episcopacy or its Presbyterianism; and such is not the

ground on which either the Church of England or the Church of Scotland has been established. Intelligent Episcopalians will not fail to see, therefore, that the Church of England would in the end, and on the whole, seriously lose by the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. The real interest of each of the two national Churches is in the prosperity of the other. As a Scottish Churchman, I must heartily wish success to the Church of England in her great national mission; and I recall with pleasure that the Church of Scotland has long found many most enlightened and most liberal benefactors among members of the Church of England.

Turning to the United Presbyterian Church, it must be sorrowfully acknowledged that its relationship to the Church of Scotland is at present very different from what a Christian mind must wish it to be. The only satisfaction one has in contemplating it is, that the Church of Scotland has certainly not attacked the United Presbyterian Church. From the Church of Scotland point of view, the United Presbyterian Church seems, of course, to take a defective view of the headship of Christ over the nations, to accept an hypothesis as to political justice and equality which, if practically carried out, would greatly degrade and render almost impossible civil government, and to proceed according to a method which limits its religious usefulness, and

disqualifies it for the work of evangelising a country ; but the Church of Scotland has not deemed herself warranted on these or other grounds to carry on a crusade against United Presbyterianism ; nay, I venture to believe that in the Established Church there is a general and cordial acknowledgment of the faithfulness and zeal of the United Presbyterian Church, and of its many claims to respect and admiration. Much, however, has been said and done, and is being said and done, far from favourable to the development and manifestation of Christian affection between the two Churches. Is there a weak congregation connected with the Church of Scotland ? Then, the cause of disestablishment seems to be understood as requiring that every particular of its want of success should be made known to the public, through the Liberationist press, without the least regard to the feelings of minister and people. Is there a local squabble in which a parish clergyman is somehow involved ? Then, opposition to the connection of Church and State appears to be thought to demand that it should be dwelt upon as if it were an event of national importance, and that it should be distorted and exaggerated to any extent necessary for covering a parish minister with obloquy and ignominy. Warfare of this kind is carried on from day to day against the Church of Scotland and her clergy ; and yet even those United

Presbyterian brethren, who on so many platforms have assured us that they love us sincerely and seek only our good, have had no word of disapprobation for its meanness and unfairness, and have not, so far as I am aware, used their influence to stop it.

It may even be doubted if duty really demands that the United Presbyterian clergy should push their Church forward as they are doing into a position of direct hostility to another Church which is not seeking to harm theirs. They can speak and act, petition and vote, in their political or civil capacity, against the connection of Church and State. Might not that be sufficient? Why must they drag their Church into the political arena? They must surely admit that political agitation is a very bad thing for the spiritual life of the Church which engages in it. They can hardly suppose that the intervention of their Church is rendering the political atmosphere sweeter, more serene, more healthy. They do not venture to affirm that the Church of Scotland is not doing a vast amount of good; and as to the principle of establishment, their standards do not condemn it—and some years ago, in union negotiations with another Church, they were willing to regard it as an open question. They cannot fairly plead that the pressure of lay opinion is forcing them on. It is from the clerical side that the pressure manifestly comes. United Presbyterian

laymen would, in general, gladly be left to judge for themselves as to the propriety and expediency of a disestablishment crusade.

The United Presbyterian Church may consistently seek disestablishment. The Free Church can only consistently seek re-establishment. The United Presbyterian Church, when aiming at secularising the legislation and policy of the nation, is only acting in accordance with the voluntary principle which she has openly avowed. The Free Church can only engage in the same work in manifest violation of principle and profession. Yet a large section of the Free Church is now actively engaged in seeking, not re-establishment, but disestablishment. I do not know that any Church had ever more distinctly addressed to her the question, Are you going to be true or false to your principles?—than has the Free Church just now. I do not know that any Church was ever seen occupying a more equivocal attitude with respect to so plain a question than the Free Church at present. That she should have such a question pressing upon her at all, and still more that she should be to so lamentable an extent either hesitating as to the answer or prepared to choose the wrong alternative, should lead her to a serious self-examination as to how she has come into this strange position. Neither individuals nor societies are ever brought into such positions by the leadings

of Divine Providence, apart from faults of their own. Serious defections from principle can alone explain how any man or body of men should ever be found standing in such a relation to principle. And the plain reason, it seems to me, why the Free Church, so far as she is represented by the majority of her clergy, is just now engaged in the unedifying task of acting not only without principle but in defiance of principle, is, that she has not maintained, as she was bound by her own Disruption testimonies to do, the principles either of Christ's headship over the Church or of Christ's headship over the nations.

The Free Church secession was a great act of homage to the former principle, rightly or wrongly understood. It was not an act, however, which gained for the Free Church what she sought. It was not the victory of the principle contended for, but a heroic sacrifice which saved the honour and even increased the moral prestige of the defeated party. The Free Church, when constituted and organised, had still a vast deal to do in connection with the principle for which she had fought. She had still to strive to show that it was not, as her opponents said it was, an impracticable principle, which could not be exhibited in intelligible and definite demands which any Government could reasonably be expected to grant. But instead of trying to do this, she has acted as if she felt that

although she might make vague general declarations of her principle, she could not set it forth in a practical form which would bear the examination of the Legislature and the nation; she has acted as if she felt that her own Claim of Rights was unreasonable—as if she were conscious of having no case which would bear being tested by Parliament and the country, even when the feelings generated by the pre-Disruption conflict had passed away. In 1853 the Free Church Assembly professed to find that it was too soon to approach Parliament in order to seek for re-establishment with sufficient security for spiritual independence. In 1882 the leaders of the clerical majority of the Free Church are proclaiming that it is too late to do so; that it is useless now to ask for anything which the men of 1843 claimed; that the right thing to do is to go to Parliament with a demand only for something which they very decidedly disclaimed.

Then, the Free Church had also the task incumbent on her of showing that spiritual independence was not equivalent to ecclesiastical arbitrariness, and did not imply that the majority of a Church court might disregard constitutional principles and procedure, and deal in any way it pleased with a minority, or even with an individual. If the principle of spiritual independence be understood as requiring the sacrifice by minorities of their rights

to liberty and justice, it means the tyranny of ecclesiastical majorities and the slavery of ecclesiastical minorities. To the principle so understood, no man who has any sense of self-respect, or who really values spiritual freedom, can of course assent. The Free Church, if she did not so understand it, was all the more bound to show that she did not, because many people thought she did. Well, has she been careful in this matter? Very much the reverse. The union negotiations would have been carried through by a majority without regard to the constitution of the Free Church if fear of the civil courts had not prevented. In the recent Robertson Smith case constitutional procedure was manifestly set at nought, and the principle of spiritual independence almost openly identified with the doctrine of "the sufficient number." And no sooner has that case been ended than a new movement has been inaugurated, in which the majority of the clergy cannot possibly persist without oppressing the consciences of those who still consistently hold by the constitutional principles of the Church of 1843. No majority, however large, acting on mere grounds of expediency, can be entitled to put a minority, however small, conscientiously holding by the constitutional compact on which their Church is based, in the cruel position in which the majority of the Free Church

clergy are putting a minority by this disestablishment movement. A correct view of spiritual independence would save them from taking a course too likely to end in Cæsar being necessitated to decide where the Free Church is and who constitute it, and what duties its members owe to one another.

Above all, perhaps, was the Free Church bound to endeavour to show that along with Christ's headship over the Church she could steadfastly continue to hold Christ's headship over the nations. The two doctrines are certainly in themselves quite consistent; nay, a worthy view of either supposes a worthy view of the other. Christ, glory be to God, has a headship over both Churches and nations, independent of man and of man's acknowledgments, but Churches and nations as organised societies are equally bound to acknowledge His headship. To suppose that He should have the homage of the Free Church Assembly and the United Presbyterian Synod, but ought not to receive that of the Parliament of Great Britain,—to conceive of Him only as a Moderator of ecclesiastical courts and not as Lord of lords and King of kings,—is an inadequate and dishonouring view of His position in the universe. The Free Church was specially bound to maintain the full truth on this subject, because those who formed her recognised the truth so clearly, had testified to it so

strongly, and were so well aware that one of the chief dangers of separation from the State was that of forgetting it. Has the Free Church, however, done what she was thus specially bound to do? No.

It was lamentably significant when in the union negotiations the late Dr Candlish could apply his wonderful ingenuity to argue "that the principle of a national establishment of religion had at no period of the history of the Church of Scotland been regarded as a vital principle, and that what she had through all her contentions been struggling for was merely the independence of the Church, and the sole authority of the Lord Jesus in His own house." Such a reading of the history of the Church of Scotland is, of course, utterly inconsistent with every important historical testimony of the Church of Scotland from the first Scotch Confession downwards, as well as with the Free Church Claim of Rights; and all that any man can prove by adopting it is merely that he himself truly represents neither the Church of Scotland at any period of her existence nor the Free Church of 1843. Our forefathers never dreamed of limiting Christ's house in Scotland to Scottish Church courts; in their eyes all Scotland ought to be Christ's house, or rather but a room in Christ's house of many mansions even on

earth. The *ignis fatuus*, however, which flitted before the eyes of Dr Candlish between 1853 and 1863 has misled many others, until at length the light of it has become so diffused that the whole Free Church is to be invited to walk therein. The extraordinary misreading of the history of Scotland and of the Church of Scotland to which I have referred seems to have become a fundamental tenet of the New Free Church, which is being formed by ruining the Free Church of 1843. Now when faithful veterans of the Old Free Church utter a protest against disestablishment, they are told that they are not sound at heart to the Free Church. If we wish to know what the principles of the Free Church of to-day are as to Christ's headship over the Church and as to Christ's headship over the nations, it would appear that we must not listen to the declarations of either dead or living Disruption worthies, but that we must read with faith the editorial articles in Liberationist newspapers. "How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!"

Now, why have I insisted on all this? For one reason only. It is not to reproach or glory over the Free Church, nor is it with any feeling towards her which a loyal Free Churchman might not entertain. It is with no thought of imputing unworthy motives or personal insincerity to those

able and zealous men who have shaped and directed the policy of the Free Church. I am quite willing to grant the purity and excellence of their motives in connection with every step and stage of their policy. I concern myself not with motives, reasons, explanations, but with the fact indicated in itself,—a broad fact covering the whole recent history of the Free Church, and one which only those who will not see can fail to see, for, as the French say, it is a fact which “leaps into the eyes,”—and I concern myself with it merely because the Free Church, it seems to me, is bound in duty both to herself and others, before advancing farther in a course which has been continuously carrying her away from the truth and away from her own principles, to betake herself to a serious consideration of her relationship to her principles, of what she means by them, and of what obligations they impose upon her. If she thus do her duty to herself, she will also do her duty to the Church of Scotland. The Church of Scotland asks from other Churches no services ending or centring in herself; she asks from them only what is for their own good, for the good of Scotland, and for the promotion of Christ’s cause in Scotland. Hence she will be well satisfied with self-consistency from the Free Church, as it will greatly tend to all these results.

What, then, does this duty of self-consistency,

of truthfulness to herself, require from the Free Church at present? I answer, that it requires, first and above all, what has been so long and so strangely neglected, an earnest, temperate, practical consideration of what the principles and claims of the Free Church are, with a view to decide and define how they may be met and satisfied. It requires that the clerical leaders of the various divisions of the Free Church should meet in council, and in a reasonable, faithful, mutually conciliatory spirit, endeavour to arrive at a common understanding as to what concessions and guarantees on the part of the State the Free Church is pledged by her distinctive testimonies to demand, and as to how they should formulate the demands which they find themselves pledged to make. It will take them longer time, of course, to do this than it would do to draft a Bill for the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland, but then it is a work far more incumbent on the leaders of the Free Church, and also a work which would do the Free Church far more good. Indeed it is a work absolutely indispensable to her, and until it is done she will have no peace within her own borders, and will cause much useless and injurious agitation in the country.

When the leaders of the Free Church, and the clergy whom they represent, have agreed as to what

demands their Church may wisely and justly make upon the State, their next duty will be to ascertain whether or not she desires to urge these demands. The laity ought to be fairly and fully consulted. They have not been at all consulted as to the propriety or impropriety of originating and carrying on the present disestablishment agitation. They have only been asked to join in it. A certain number of the clergy have been pleased to decide for them that that is their duty. These same clergymen are, of course, asserting that the Free Church is in favour of disestablishment; but if the Free Church include the laity, they have no warrant to make the assertion. How many of the Free Church laity in Edinburgh or Glasgow, for example, are for, and how many against, disestablishment? On which side is the majority? Some people may guess one way, and others the other, but nobody really knows, for nobody has thought it worth while to consult the laity of the Free Church as to whether they wished a disestablishment agitation or not. The clergy have no right thus to decide for the laity of a Church on matters which are not merely ecclesiastical, but political and national. The question, Is or is there not to be a disestablishment agitation? should have been submitted by the Free Church clergy to the Free Church laity before such an agitation was begun. But that is not the whole

question which they should have submitted to them. *The* question which the Free Church clergy are bound by their principles and in self-consistency to lay before the Free Church laity is, Shall we seek re-establishment on Free Church conditions, or dis-establishment? It is a question which they should have laid before them long before now. It is a question which the Free Church laity have a right to demand should be laid before them. And they cannot exercise their right too soon or too decidedly, for it is "now or never" as to this question, the answer given to which must decide whether the Free Church is to be deemed a consistent and faithful Church or not. Those of the clergy who have set their hearts upon disestablishment will never of their own accord submit to them this question, because they cannot but be aware that the immense majority of the Free Church would prefer re-establishment, on conditions which they felt they could honourably accept, to mere disestablishment.

Suppose the Free Church, then, to have decided to seek re-establishment on carefully considered conditions, her next duty would be energetically to do so. The attempt would fail, we are told by those who prefer agitating for disestablishment. It is singular how often this assertion is repeated without any reasons being assigned. Why should it fail? Is it because the principles of spiritual independ-

ence and of national religion as understood by the Free Church are essentially impracticable? Surely the Free Church is both in honour and duty very much concerned to show that this is not the case; for what clearer proof than this could be given that she had misunderstood them, and that as a Church she was founded on false views? The Free Church is bound to claim re-establishment on conditions which she deems practicable, were it merely to cast off the reproach of having understood the principles to which I refer in an essentially impracticable, and therefore essentially false, way. Is it because the State is more Erastian now than formerly, more likely now than formerly to encroach upon the rights of the Church? To say so is simply ridiculous. In no period of Scottish history did the State show less disposition to oppress the Church or invade her rightful domain than at present. In no period of Scottish history would tyranny on the part of the State towards the Church be so little tolerated as at present. Is it because the Government now in power is likely to be especially hostile to a Church pressing claims on the ground of national religion and the spiritual independence of the Church? Why, there is reason to believe that even those members of the Government who believe in the voluntary principle would be willing to go far to satisfy the Free Church, in the hope thereby

to promote ecclesiastical peace in Scotland; while the distinguished statesman who is at the head of the Government certainly takes no low or unfavourable view either of the principle of national religion or of the principle of spiritual independence. True, he disestablished a Church—the Irish Church. But could any one have taken greater pains than he has done to point out that he did so simply because of the extremely exceptional circumstances in which that Church stood to Ireland? It is almost an insult to a man of Mr Gladstone's principles to ask him to lend his influence to disestablishment in Scotland, considering what the circumstances here are, merely because he disestablished the Irish Church. To ask him to aid in enlarging and consolidating an Established Church in Scotland, would be to ask him to do what is perfectly consistent with his principles, and what would be far worthier of him, because far better in itself. Is it because the Church of Scotland would take up a hostile attitude to the Free Church were she to seek re-establishment? I venture to say that unless the Free Church claims were of an extravagant and unjust character—such claims as the State would not be in the least likely to grant—the Free Church would have the heartiest good wishes of the Church of Scotland for her success. I venture to say with confidence that a reasonable and really practical

movement on the part of the Free Church towards re-establishment, reconciliation, peace, would be heartily welcomed in the Church of Scotland, and, I doubt not, would be aided by her as far as her aid was desired. Why, then, I ask, should such a movement fail? Alas! is there any other reason to fear its failure than just this, that many of those who are by their principles bound to promote it are likely to refuse to do their duty? I see no other reason. Oh that they would pause and reconsider their plans! It is not yet too late. The inconsistency of going back from what they have begun will be but slight compared with the inconsistency of going on with it. Whatever they may do, I would again say that, although I have felt constrained to speak very plainly of their public policy, I impute nothing to them in following it except error in judgment. The personal sincerity, and the zealous devotedness to the good of his Church, of a man like Principal Rainy, can be no more reasonably suspected than his rare powers and gifts of mind can be denied. No man in Scotland could so surely and wisely lead the Free Church along the path which would bring to her peace, true honour, and the blessings of thousands even who do not belong to her; but neither he nor any one can guide her to much good by merely counselling her to seek the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland.

If the general tenor of the foregoing remarks be correct, it follows as a necessary consequence that the whole Free Church is in consistency bound to move in the direction pointed out by Dr Begg, Dr Kennedy, and others, at the recent meeting in Inverness. It is the true direction,—the only course in which, consistently with principle, the Free Church can move, and the only course hopeful for the future of religion in Scotland. Those who recommend it do well when they oppose disestablishment; they do still better when they seek to have what they deem wrong in the religious condition of things around them put right. One error, I trust, will be avoided. It would be a great mistake if the Free Church clergy in the Highlands were to assume that the Free Church in the south is hopelessly bent on seeking disestablishment, and mainly given up to voluntaryism. It would be a great mistake in them to confine themselves to merely sectional action, instead of making every effort to carry along with them the Free Church as a whole. The Free Church in the south has really not yet been heard. Let those of the clergy of the Free Church who feel that their Church has something better to do than to agitate the country for disestablishment, insist that the laity in north and south get a fair opportunity for expressing their minds; and let those of the

laity of the Free Church who feel that they are not represented by the clerical majority rally round the minority,—then no pretence will be left for the charge that the Highlanders are following a divisive course; and very soon probably it will appear that even the Free Church in the south is decidedly not yet voluntary.

I must now pass on to those who belong to the Church of Scotland as members or adherents. It clearly follows that from their relation to her they have various duties to her. I shall very briefly indicate some of these duties.

To seek to follow with intelligence and sympathy the history of the Church of Scotland, and to try to appreciate aright what her place and influence in Scotland have been for so many centuries, is one of those duties, and not an unimportant one. Voluntaryism has arisen in no inconsiderable degree from want of historical insight and sympathy; its spirit is dogmatic and destructive as opposed to historical and constructive. Seek to know in some fair measure aright what the Church of Scotland has been and done in Scotland, and you may be found among those most active in endeavouring to improve her, but you will not be found among those who would simply destroy her as a national Church and leave no national Church at all.

Intelligently to appreciate the interests at stake

in the maintenance of a national Church is another duty. The existence of Christianity, we are often reminded, is independent of establishment or endowment. True, and it is independent of the welfare or ruin of Great Britain. If all Great Britain were fathoms deep below the surface of the Atlantic the kingdom of Christ would not come to an end, yet the submergence of Great Britain is a very undesirable event. Destroy the alliance of Church and State in Scotland, and religion in Scotland may survive the deed yet suffer greatly from it. That it would suffer greatly from it in many ways, previous lecturers have amply shown. Voluntary brethren tell us that the voluntary principle, in the sense of Christian liberality, is sufficient. Why, then, are they themselves not content to trust in it? Why do they start instead with the mercantile principle, and only bring in the voluntary principle as a supplement to it? Why do they charge seat-rents? That may be free trade, but it is not free giving; it is not voluntary beneficence. To say that a theatre adopts the voluntary principle because you can have a box in it if you please to pay for it, would be felt by every one as an abuse of language. It is precisely the same abuse of language to say that a Church, which depends largely on seat-rents, trusts in the sufficiency of the voluntary principle. It trusts in the mercantile

principle and in voluntary beneficence. Now it is the mercantile principle which limits the usefulness of a Church. When universally adopted by any denomination it makes it impossible for that denomination adequately to present the Gospel to the poor. And may I ask those who declare that there is no Scriptural authority for the State support of religion, if there be any for seat-letting in churches? Is any apostle known to have charged or recommended seat-rents? Voluntary Churches clearly do not believe that voluntary beneficence is sufficient. It is manifestly insufficient. Scotland plainly needs, and greatly needs, more than all the religious endowments which she possesses.

Intelligently to appreciate the principles represented by the Church of Scotland as a national Church is the most important duty of all. It is sometimes said that the Church of Scotland does not base her claims to national recognition on principle, but merely on expediency. There can be no more erroneous statement. He is a poor advocate of the Church of Scotland who rests his argument for her merely on the value of her endowments. It is true that Scotland is not so exceedingly rich or marvellously liberal that, with spiritual destitution rapidly increasing in many parts of the country, she can afford to cast about ten millions of money set apart for the advancement of religion into the

German Ocean, or even to make a present of it to the wealthier portion of the community. Far more important, however, than that money is the divine truth which would have to be cast away along with it. Is our country as a nation to acknowledge itself under God's sovereignty, under Christ's headship, or not?—is the gravest and greatest matter at issue between the Church of Scotland and her foes. The light of nature has taught all heathen nations which have attained eminence in the world that they could not without sin and danger nationally neglect religion. He takes a superficial and narrow view of the obligations of the moral law, who fancies that they do not extend to nations in their corporate capacities, as well as to individuals in their private capacities, and that they are exclusive of national homage to the Ruler of the universe. The Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament imply and proclaim throughout the duty and necessity of national religion. Christ came; and the central idea—the burden and tenor of all His teaching—was not the Church but “the Kingdom,”—a kingdom which claims to comprehend the State as well as the Church,—a kingdom of which the civil ought to be not less an aspect than the ecclesiastical. No individual may blamelessly withdraw a single faculty of mind or power or body from the service

of this kingdom; no Church on earth has any right specially to identify its claims with those of this kingdom; no state or government on earth ought to dare to separate itself from, or assert independence of, this kingdom. The King of it is Lord over all—King of kings—Prince of the kings of the earth—entitled to wear on His brow all the crowns of the universe. It was the doctrine of the kingdom which Christ Himself taught; the doctrine of the Church He left mainly to others to teach, or rather to evolve from the principles which He had expounded as to the kingdom; but the apostles never lost sight of His lordship over the nations in teaching His headship in the Church. If many in Scotland have come to think that outside of the Church secularism is the true theory of things, the notion is one which they have certainly not drawn from God's Word.

The Church of Scotland is by her very existence a testimony to the State's recognition of its duty to provide for the religious instruction of its people. Apart altogether from special revelation, natural reason is enough to show that such is the State's duty. If there were no Christianity in the world, it would still be the duty of the State to see that the principles of natural religion were inculcated on the national mind, and this for the plain reason that the principles of natural religion

are of far more influence in forming good citizens and promoting national greatness than the elements of grammar or geography. The obligation of the State, however, to provide religious instruction is, of course, immensely increased by the fact that God has been pleased to give such a wondrous revelation as that which we have through Jesus Christ,—a revelation, the best adapted conceivable to make nations, as well as individuals, what they ought to be,—the most profitable conceivable for the life which now is, as well as for the life which is to come.

The spiritual independence of the Church is another principle of the Church of Scotland, and in virtue of being the Established Church she has more spiritual independence than any other Church in Scotland. The Free Church, for example, is under the control of the civil courts of this country, both as regards doctrine and discipline, in a sense and to an extent which the Church of Scotland is not. In a case either of doctrine or discipline, any person who deems that he has been unconstitutionally dealt with by the Free Church can bring either her creed or her procedure under the review and control of the civil magistrate. From this subjection there is no possible escape. A hundred successive disruptions, although they might allow of a hundred changes of her constitution, would

not take her a step nearer towards freedom. She can only find deliverance from what she has often called Erastian dependence on the civil courts, by having jurisdiction, within proper limits, duly secured to her own courts by statute law. So long as she does not attain this, she lies, although it may be unwillingly, in "the house of Erastian bondage." Ought she to be content to remain there? I think not. I think she should wish to breathe the larger and freer ether into which she can rise only through establishment on proper conditions. Establishment, instead of necessarily involving what is called Erastianism, is the only way to sure and complete immunity from it.

That the establishment of the Church of Scotland implies no violation of the great principles of civil and religious equality, was shown in the lecture of Dr Alison by arguments which may be ignored or misrepresented but will not be answered. The notion that the Church of Scotland does not fully recognise the duty of voluntary beneficence or Christian liberality may be safely left to refute itself.

Further, we are bound to make a good use of our advantages, and faithfully to carry out our distinctive principles into practice. Churches, like individuals, must be judged of by their works. "By their fruits ye shall know them." In this respect self-humiliation far better becomes us than

self-satisfaction and self-assertion. In all ways we much need to pray for more faithfulness and zeal. I have spoken of another Church drifting away from principle. Let me confess that the Church of Scotland likewise is not guiltless of drifting from principle, although her drifting may have been of a somewhat different kind. For example, in large towns, have we in the Church of Scotland had anything like the respect which we ought to have had to the territorial principle,—the parochial idea? Has there not, on the contrary, been an inconsistent and most pernicious drifting into practical voluntarism? It is a shame to us, I think, as a national Church, that in the poor and populous districts of a city like this our parish churches should not be free to every parishioner who will come to them. If the endowments connected with these churches are insufficient to secure the services of able ministers, increase the endowments, but set apart free seats for the parishioners, and compel the ministers to draw their congregations from their parishioners. Men living on daily or weekly wages, who may at any time be thrown out of employment, and whose sickness or death may leave their wives and children in destitution, cannot reasonably be expected to pay seat-rents, either to support a minister or to augment his income; and the mass of men so circumstanced will certainly not do it.

If we shut them out, however, from our churches by our seat-rents, let us not fancy that they will go to our mission-stations to hear inferior discourses from inexperienced or inferior men, and to be treated themselves as an inferior class. If we do not, in districts of the kind to which I refer, throw our churches freely open, without money and without price, to the poor, we shall lose them altogether. It is an appalling fact that, in Glasgow alone, there should be about 130,000 persons who go to no place of worship, and make no profession of religion. And no Church in the land should feel herself so responsible for, and so ashamed of it, as the Church of Scotland.

There is next the duty of desiring and seeking that the advantages of the Church should be as widely shared as possible. They are designed for the good of the nation; and our wish and aim should be that the nation, as a whole, may participate in them. It has, I am sure, given much grief to every worthy son of the Church of Scotland to see how much her endowments are needed in the Highlands, and how useless they are there at present. In the Highlands, even large Free Church congregations—congregations of 800 or 1000 adherents—doing, I have no doubt, their very best, cannot raise above £80 or £100 for the Sustentation Fund. Out of 201 Free Church congregations in the Gaelic

Highlands, only 31 are self-supporting. Were the Free Church in the Highlands to form itself into a separate Church, it would soon have to resign itself to the ministry of uneducated men, like those Methodist preachers but for whom enormous territories in America must have been left almost wholly without Gospel ordinances. And yet there are in all the Highland parishes endowments which—especially when supplemented by the Christian liberality which the Highland people have acquired under Free Church training—would be sufficient to provide for religious wants in a secure and proper way. Truly Christian wisdom and Christian statesmanship could not be better employed than in finding a remedy for the present deplorable state of matters in the Highlands.

While, however, the ministers and members of the Church of Scotland cannot fail to regard any movement towards a better settlement of the religious situation in the Highlands with sympathy, the Free Church brethren in the north ought not, I think, to expect that the Church of Scotland will take to public agitation, or active interposition, in their favour. By doing so she would only tend to render their movement among Free Churchmen sectional, instead of what it ought to be, general, and would lay herself open to the imputation of trying to divide the Free Church of the north from the Free

Church of the south,—a meanness of which I trust she is incapable. The Free Church must present her own claims,—must formulate her own demands. The Church of Scotland is not entitled to do so for her, and would be very foolish if she attempted to do so. The duty of the Church of Scotland is not to interpose, but to allow the Free Church full time and opportunity to make known her wishes, to remove as much as possible obstacles out of the way of her realisation of them, wherever they are reasonable, and to welcome every decision come to, and step taken, which tends to bring the two Churches more closely together.

Should it be found that the Free Church either cannot, or will not, state what she wants, or that disestablishment alone will satisfy her, then, it seems to me, the Church of Scotland may become in duty bound to consider whether or not the election of parish ministers might not be transferred to the whole Presbyterian church-membership and church-adherentship of our parishes, and whether or not the minister elected might not be chosen from any of the Presbyterian bodies holding by the Westminster Confession of Faith, if he were willing to subscribe our existing formula. I have, on another occasion, in another place, indicated that, personally, I regarded with favour an analogous opening up of our Divinity Halls. I deem it in-

opportune, however, to advocate any scheme for thus extending the Established Church, until the Free Church has definitely shown us what her attitude towards us is to be.

Another duty which I would simply mention, although I think it very important, is that the Church, in dealing with doctrinal questions, should combine fidelity with liberality. The Church of Scotland is established as a national Church on conditions which bind her to give heed that the Gospel of Jesus Christ be presented to the people in purity and with fulness. Her standards show her clearly what is expected from her. She has no right to tolerate sceptical teaching and fundamental heresy. But neither has she a right to repress variety of opinion, or to act in an inquisitorial spirit, or to violate constitutional procedure, or to treat all errors as heresies, or to be over-rigid with any man. I think the Church of Scotland is very far from needing to be ashamed of the chief representatives of what is called her Broad Church school. I think the same may be said of the Free Church. I believe in faithfulness in dealing with doctrinal matters; but there is an ultra-conservatism in this connection in which I do not believe, and against which I think Churches should be on their guard. At the same time, I fully admit, sorrowfully admit, that the most terrible

danger before all our Churches is the spread of a sceptical spirit among the religious teachers of the people, making them ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. If this spirit should take possession of the Church of Scotland, certainly she will fall, for no external or constitutional advantages can then make her worth preserving.

I must conclude, however, although there is still much which I should gladly have said. I should have liked to have spoken of the special duties of the clergy to the Church; of the importance of the Church maintaining a thoroughly independent attitude towards the political parties in the State, and not allowing herself to be drawn into political complications and entanglements; and of the duties of politicians to her, and to the country in connection with her; but both your time and my strength forbid that I should deal with these themes. May what has been said prove, through God's blessing, not wholly without use, and to His name be glory and honour for ever. Amen.

XII.

DUTIES OF THE PEOPLE OF SCOTLAND TO THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.¹

(Concluded.)

THE unsatisfactoriness of the present ecclesiastical condition of Scotland is so apparent that all Scotsmen recognise it more or less clearly, and feel it more or less deeply.

Where there should be a united Church, one in organisation, spirit, and aim, there are separate and antagonistic denominations; and, although no one will be so unjust and uncharitable as to deny that in all these denominations there is a large amount of Christian life and activity, and that much good work is done by them for Christ's cause, neither can there be any one so blind as not to perceive that there is also a large amount of sectarian feeling and striving displayed by them, and that much which they do to secure their success as denominations is far from fitted to ad-

¹ Also a Lecture delivered in the same church and year.

vance the cause of Christ. This divided state of the Church in Scotland has unquestionably exerted a most powerful and baneful influence in the suppression of Christian sympathy and the prevention of co-operation in Christian work among Christian men, and especially among Christian ministers. It has obviously caused in many places a wasteful multiplication of religious agents and means, of clergy and churches, tending not to the benefit but to the injury of Christianity, and not helpful but burdensome to the community. It has as obviously led, in other places, to a distribution of them which is unwise and inept, and which at the first glance tells of sectarian competition and bitterness. And it is not merely thus injurious but inherently irrational and sinful,—a discredit alike to the common-sense and to the Christianity of the Scottish people.

I fully admit, then, that the present ecclesiastical situation in Scotland is bad. It seems to me that through familiarity with it most of us have become insufficiently alive to the evils of it, and fail to realise as we ought our obligations to seek a remedy for them, and the restoration of those great blessings of Christian unity, love, and peace, which we have to so lamentable an extent most deservedly lost.

There is, however, never a bad but there may be a worse. And, unfortunately, what we are

threatened with just now is what would be very much worse than even the position we are in. The policy of mere disestablishment and disendowment would not remove, would not diminish, any of the real evils from which we suffer at present; its only tendency is to perpetuate, increase, and intensify them. It is a policy not of conciliation but of provocation, not of peace but of war, and even should it succeed as to its immediate objects, these objects being simply the humiliation and weakening of a particular Church and the secularising of the provision for the maintenance of religion transmitted to us from former generations, the attainment of them can only gratify sectarian jealousy, leave the country poorer so far as the means of religious usefulness is concerned, further alienate and embitter the contending parties, render all hopes of the reunion of the Churches futile and chimerical, and, in a word, instead of helping us to secure, hinder us from obtaining, those higher and ulterior ends which are alone creditable and Christian, and which I am far from denying that many even of the advocates of this wretched policy have chiefly in view.

If no better alternative to our present condition than this be set before us, our duty is very clear. We are bound to resist whatever would bring about

such a result. In doing so we shall be involved in a conflict of the most painful kind, but it is not one in which we can refuse to engage. The responsibility of the strife must lie on those who force it on,—who choose to take the part of assailants. And their responsibility must be great. There is no foreseeing how long the battle which they provoke will last; or on which side victory will eventually declare itself, if fought on the lines of mere conservatism on the one side and mere destruction on the other.

It is useless to tell us that an experienced parliamentary hand is prepared to draw up in a couple of hours a bill for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of Scotland, so long as nobody can tell us whether a bill so easily framed will ever receive the sanction of both Houses of Parliament, and so long as we know quite well that no such bill is in the least degree likely to give satisfaction to the majority of the people of Scotland. The time for carrying disestablishment and disendowment simply by assault may just as probably have slipped past as drawn near. Thirty years ago a combined attack like that now threatened against the Church of Scotland would, doubtless, have been successful; but thirty years of continuous and rapid progress have vastly increased the strength of the institution assailed. The party of defence is now confident of

having ceased to be a minority. We do not know how long the fighting may go on; but we know that so long as it goes on religion and the country must suffer. We do not know which side will be victorious; but we know that if the assailants are so, their victory will be the reverse of beneficial even to themselves, and will lower and weaken all the Presbyterian Churches. We know, further, that in the present state of opinion in Scotland it is impossible for them to obtain an honourable victory. They cannot gain it by obtaining the approval of a majority of the people of Scotland, but only by obtaining, through political manœuvring and strategy, a parliamentary majority which misrepresents the mind of Scotland on the Church question. A victory thus gained, however, will be a far greater obstacle to ecclesiastical reunion, a cause of far greater religious division and animosity, than any which at present exists.

So long as there is no more hopeful prospect than this placed before the country, so long as it is merely asked to exchange its present state for a worse, and one which can only be reached through years of strife, it is the part of wisdom, of patriotism, and of Christian duty, not to listen to those whose voices are for change and war; but to discourage the reckless zeal of sectarian ecclesiastics; and to let self-seeking and partisan politicians know that

in interfering with the Church question in Scotland, so long as it is in the form described, and as public opinion in Scotland regarding it is what it is, they are grasping at unripe fruit which can only set their teeth on edge; that the question must be shaped into greater clearness, and solved, in the general mind of the Scottish people, before Parliament can deal with it either with credit or advantage; that until then the politicians should let it alone; and that to attempt to settle it by associating it with a question like Home Rule in Ireland is insulting to Scotland, dishonourable in itself, and calculated to produce lasting mischief.

There is still, I trust, however, another alternative open to the country than that between its present state and a worse. It may yet, I hope, choose between its present state and a better. There is surely another and a nobler policy possible than either that of the conservation and defence of the existing ecclesiastical situation or that of renewed and intensified strife which can only lead to the Churches drifting farther away from one another, and becoming more alienated and embittered. There is the policy which will directly aim at their union, which will earnestly seek to bring about a satisfactory understanding between them, and which will not shrink from making to secure its end whatever concessions are compatible with faithful-

ness to principle. This seems to me to be the true, the patriotic, the Christian policy.

If it is to be taken up and carried on to a successful issue, it is obvious that the laity of Scotland must do so, to a very large extent, from beginning to end. They ought not to depend mainly on the clergy. The supreme courts of our Presbyterian Churches have committed themselves to decisions which must bring the Churches they represent into collision and conflict. If the laity of these Churches are content simply to follow the lead of the clergy as embodied in the decisions of the majorities of these courts; if they do not take independent action, and combine and co-operate in a comprehensive and organised movement in favour of conciliation and union, what inevitably lies before us in the immediate future are weary years of hateful strife, barren of good but fruitful of evil.

They can join in no worthier movement. The cause is not merely good; it is one of the best and noblest which Christian and patriotic hearts can here in Scotland seek to promote. We have had far too much discord and division in the past. What duty demands of us in the present as the most urgent of requirements is to undo as far as we can the evils which strife has caused, and to seek to obtain the blessing which Christ pronounced

on the peacemakers. Better fail in attempting to fulfil such a duty than succeed in carrying out any policy of useless or hurtful contention.

But why should a general and earnest movement of the kind fail? Can any of us be so ignorant as to what our neighbours think and feel, and of the real state of public opinion in Scotland, as to be able even to doubt that what such a movement would seek to effect is what the vast majority of the people of Scotland actually wish, and not either establishment and endowment as they are or mere disestablishment and disendowment? In Scotland, whatever it may be elsewhere, it is no secret but a matter of general notoriety that the resolutions of the Presbyterian Church courts on the Church question are not expressions of the national mind, but only indications of the positions into which these courts have unhappily drifted.

Not a few voices have been lifted up among us in behalf of conciliation and union, and they have always been gladly heard. For a long series of years the venerable Bishop of St Andrews¹ has earnestly pleaded the cause even of the union of the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches. And his pleadings have had at least these results: that he has gained for himself in a remarkable measure the respect and affection of Presbyterians, raised

¹ The late Bishop Wordsworth.

his own Church in public esteem, and done not a little so to influence opinion that, although most of those whose thoughts are turned towards ecclesiastical unity in Scotland will naturally desire to bring together first the Churches which are least widely divided from one another, and therefore the Presbyterian denominations, they will only aim at such a union of these as will tend not to hinder but to facilitate a more comprehensive union in the future. The General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland from 1870 to 1885 emphatically pronounced in favour of conciliation and union; and, although later Assemblies have deemed it necessary to take measures organising resistance to organised assault, they have not in any sense disowned the professions and decisions of previous Assemblies. The Free Church minority which opposed the negotiations for a union of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches, urged as a reason for their action that what ought to be sought was a union of wider scope; and there is ample reason to believe that very many who have voted in the Free Church majorities for disestablishment have so voted neither from indifference to union nor hostility to establishment, but because no general movement towards ecclesiastical reconstruction was being made. It would be a mistake and an injustice to conclude that the Free Church majorities for disestablishment

consist only, or even largely, of men who would not welcome any clear prospect of a peaceful and conciliatory settlement of differences.

It may be different with the clergy of the United Presbyterian Church. As a class they have certainly made no attempt and manifested no wish to come to an understanding with the Church of Scotland, while they have pressed forward into the political arena with demands for its disestablishment and disendowment. But in thus acting they cannot fairly plead that the pressure of lay opinion has forced them on; it has been manifest all along that the pressure came from the clerical side. Even among the clergy of the United Presbyterian Church, however, there have been those who have recommended a worthier and wiser course,—conspicuous among whom was Prof. Calderwood. No one could have shown better than he did that the future prosperity of Scottish Presbyterianism is dependent on its several divisions doing their utmost to come to an understanding and agreement as to their differences, with willingness to give and take, and a sincere desire for peace and unity; no one could have presented more clearly the considerations which most deserve the attention of those who seek a satisfactory solution of the Church question in Scotland. Schemes of Presbyterian reunion have been again and again propounded and advocated by men so well entitled

to be heard that they are not likely to have spoken altogether in vain ; and there have even been some attempts at practical association with a view to bring such reunion about, although not on a scale which could be expected to produce any considerable effect.

The differences which separate the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland are considerable, but they are not such as ought to separate them, or as would separate them, if they had more of the unity of the Christian spirit. It is incredible that Churches with so very much in common, and so very little to distinguish them, would be unable to find enough of common ground for agreement and union, if they sought for it in a reasonable and conciliatory spirit.

The two chief matters in dispute, the only two which present serious difficulties, are endowment and establishment. Endowment is not held to be essentially wrong ; it is not objected to in itself. The United Presbyterian Church admits that there is nothing to be said on the ground of principle or equity against any of the recent endowments of the Established Church ; that the Established Church has, therefore, a clear proprietary right in these ; that the State cannot, without manifest injustice, deprive her of any of these. There is, therefore, no dispute as to these endowments between even the Established and the United Presbyterian Church. It is only as to the old endowments, those of our original

parishes, that there is controversy. In regard to them the views prevalent in the two Churches are decidedly and directly opposed. The opposition turns, however, almost entirely not on principle but on a question as to historical fact. United Presbyterians say that these old endowments differ from the new ones, in that they are State endowments, whereas the others have been bestowed by individual benefactors; and hence involve, what they deem morally objectionable, the appropriation of national resources, the application of public funds, to the furtherance of religious purposes, while the others do not. The answer given on the part of the Church of Scotland is that this is utterly un-historical; that the old endowments never belonged to the State, were never given or paid by the State; that their sole source was individual piety or beneficence; that the State has merely recognised the right of the Church to them; that the old and the new endowments stand precisely on the same footing. The difference of view here, I say, is primarily and mainly not as to principle at all, but as to historical fact; it is a kind of difference which could not exist if plain facts of history were looked at without bias and prejudice. It is none the less difficult to get over on this account; and I fear it is hopeless to attempt getting over it by inducing the opposing parties to cultivate historical impartiality, or by

endeavouring to educate the party which happens to be mistaken into knowledge of the truth.

Established Churchmen cannot reasonably be expected to consent to a simple alienation of the teinds to secular purposes. Holding, as they do, that the teinds represent a part of a patrimony, inherited by the Church, not from the liberality of the State, but from the charity of the pious of former generations, and designed for the maintenance of religion in the nation, and especially among the poor, obviously, for them to concur in the appropriation of these teinds, without commutation or equivalent, to a secular use, must seem malversation of a trust, injustice to religion, and robbery of the poor. On the other hand, Voluntary Churchmen, while not objecting to endowments *per se*, regard the teinds as endowments so contaminated through contact with the State, that they cannot in conscience avail themselves of them. The difference of opinion is manifest and considerable. But is it enough to justify disunion? Far from it. On the contrary, if common-sense prevailed more and controversial subtlety less in ecclesiastical councils, it would not even be felt to be a serious difficulty. The simple apostolic advice, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind," would be quite sufficient to settle it.

Why should the Church judge either for its

ministers or for its members in such a matter? Why not leave them to the guidance of their own consciences? If one minister has faith to feed on teinds, and another only faith to partake of seat-rents and recent legacies, is that a sufficient reason for their judging one another so hardly that they will not belong to the same Church, although both might find within it the sustenance which their faith would allow them to take? Were there a reconstructed Church of Scotland in which certain churches, the original parish churches, retained teinds attached to them, a minister who held the view as to teinds which is prevalent at present in the United Presbyterian Church would not be under the slightest necessity to accept the charge of any of these churches; he would be perfectly free to accept only the charge of a recently endowed or a self-supporting church. There could be no objection even to his making, either at his entrance into the ministry or at any other time, such a declaration of his opinion as to teinds as he deemed his conscience demanded of him. He would only require to allow his stronger- or his weaker-minded brethren who thought differently on the point to have the same liberty as himself; to tolerate their keeping and acting on their view as he did on his. Were men to break up the unity of the State as they break up the

unity of the Church on pleas of conscientious difference of opinion on such a point as this, Great Britain would soon be divided into thousands of Liliputian states, each consisting of perhaps peculiarly conscientious but certainly altogether impracticable people.

If the difficulty as to endowment cannot be got over thus, it might, perhaps, be dealt with in this way. The State might purchase the teinds, and give their commuted value to the Church, under the obligation of providing for the religious wants of each parish in proportion to the commuted value of its teinds. This arrangement would cost the State nothing, as it would get full value for its money, and would be free to use the teinds for either general or local purposes. The arrangement would also, I think, be decidedly advantageous to the Church concerned in it. The teinds are in various ways a troublesome and unsatisfactory kind of Church property, and are likely to become increasingly so. For one thing, they involve clergymen in far more disputes with their parishioners and appeals to Cæsar than are desirable. Further, such an arrangement would obviously go far to remove the difficulty which United Presbyterians feel, so far as endowment is concerned, to union with the Church of Scotland. They might consistently object to the arrangement as implying on

the part of the State a recognition of a proprietary right in the Church of Scotland to the teinds; but they could not question her right to the endowment which the arrangement gave her, or represent that endowment as an obstacle to union.

Another plan deserves consideration. It is that of intrusting the administration of the teinds to representative parochial committees, while not diverting them from the purpose for which they were conferred—the supply of religious wants. This plan is liberal and impartial in idea, but might be very disappointing in practice. Were the teinds allowed to be divided and distributed among denominations at the will of committees, the tendency would be to multiply sects and to overspread the land with small, poor, and superfluous congregations. Two or three hundred pounds doled out each year in grants to all denominations that could get a footing in a parish might do, instead of good, so much mischief to religion in a parish, that even sane and sober-minded men might wish the teinds secularised, or even “cast into the German Ocean.” The administration of teinds by parochial committees must be hurtful unless it be so conditioned and regulated as to promote and maintain unity, not to aid and encourage dissension, and as to benefit not the rich but the poor. I do not think that thus conditioned and regulated the Episcopal

Church could profit much from it: in a few parishes the endowments would go to the Roman Catholic Church, and in three northern counties almost exclusively to the Free Church. Those who have hitherto pronounced in favour of the scheme to which I refer have, so far as I know, only done so in a crude and vague way. Little real thought has as yet been given to endeavouring to determine how it could be so carried into effect as not to increase and intensify, instead of remedying and removing, the chief evils of the present ecclesiastical situation.

But we must pass to the question of establishment. As to establishment, State Churchmen must necessarily resist to the utmost any demand simply for its removal, and must deem the Scottish Presbyterians who make the demand inconsistent and inconsiderate. No Scottish Presbyterian Church holds that the State discharges its duty to religion simply by not recognising that it has any duty to it. The United Presbyterian Church found in its negotiations with the Free Church that it had a testimony to bear as to the religion of the State, not essentially different, it thought, from that of the Free Church.

But if so, surely it is most reasonable and necessary that the Churches should endeavour to come to an understanding as to how far they are agreed as to the positive truth which underlies establishment;

as to how far they can affirm it and secure for it practical recognition, and how far it can be safeguarded otherwise than by establishment;—before they come to a definite resolution as to the question of establishment *versus* disestablishment. The positive truth which they hold in common should not be sacrificed or endangered through the exclusive pressing of a point which divides them.

That truth is no other than the principle of national religion; the principle that the nation no less than the Church, or the family, or the individual, is under the law of God; that the officers and members of the State are, within their proper sphere of action, as much bound to obey and glorify God as the ministers and members of the Church; that the Divine Kingdom ought to be inclusive of the State as well as of the Church; that Christ is not only the Head of the Church but the Prince of the kings of the earth. The Church of Scotland will never, I hope, desert this principle, or unite with those who refuse to bear testimony to it. If there is ever to be union between the Established and Non-Established Churches it must, I believe, be on the basis of a common testimony to this principle. I do not doubt that the Non-Established Churches are able to join in such a testimony.

Were the Non-Established Churches able to say to the Established Church, We have left the

teinds, or their equivalent, for religious purposes; we have gone as far as we can in agreement with you as to Christ's Headship not only over the Church, but also over the nation; we shall let questions of application and of minor importance as to that principle be open questions; and on the basis of the truth we hold in common we are willing to unite with you in forming one Church; but we are constrained in conscience to ask you to surrender establishment;—were this course followed, I can easily enough conceive Established Churchmen coming to the conclusion that they could not, even for such a union, pay so costly a price, make so painful a concession; but I cannot conceive them doing so without a sorely depressed and divided mind, or resisting the proposal with the same confidence and keenness as they will that for disestablishment and nothing else. And if the Church of Scotland refused the compromise there would still be Scotland to which to appeal.

The compromise would not, in my opinion, involve any abandonment of principle. There is, strictly speaking, no principle of establishment. *There is a principle of national religion.* And because a principle it is invariable and inviolable; equally true for all times, places, and circumstances. Establishment is not a principle but simply a fact. It can only be claimed to be an application of the prin-

ciple of national religion; but all applications may vary with times and places and must conform to circumstances. The establishment of a Church as national may be plainly reasonable and right at one time and in a given set of circumstances, and at another time in another set of circumstances manifestly absurd and unjust.

I believe establishment to be in this country, even at present, a most fitting application of the sacred principle of national religion, and to be further a safeguard of the principle, although the defenders of establishment are apt, I think, to injure their cause by exaggeration on this head. I do not believe it to be in the least degree inconsistent with religious equality in any sense in which that doctrine is true or credible, or to warrant in the least degree the imposition of civil disabilities because of religious belief, or any other sort of intolerance. And I deem it a very serious objection to disestablishment that it would free the Imperial Parliament from the religious obligations imposed by the Revolution Settlement and Treaty of Union, without much, if any, likelihood of others being obtained. But, on the other hand, the evils of our religious divisions in Scotland are so numerous and grievous already, so sure to multiply and become worse, and the advantages of religious union could scarcely fail to be so vast, that to get rid of

those evils and to attain those advantages, hardly anything except committing injustice or betraying principle could be too great a price. Establishment, as I have said, is not a principle; and should the Church of Scotland prefer an honourable union of the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland even to establishment, she would make a great sacrifice, but she would not surrender or disavow any principle.

It is vain to expect Presbyterian union as the *consequence* of disestablishment. Disestablishment gained through strife can only perpetuate, increase, and intensify disunion. If disestablishment and union are to be connected at all, it can only be through such a union being arrived at as may be the *condition* of disestablishment—*i.e.*, such a union as can be accepted by those who uphold establishment as an equivalent for the loss of it.

I have spoken merely of Presbyterian union, but simply because no practical purpose could be served by speaking of any more comprehensive union in connection with the Church question before Scotland at present. I have not done so from any belief in the Divine right of Presbytery or any zeal for Presbyterianism as such. I have no belief of the kind, no zeal of the kind, and no desire for a union of the Presbyterian Churches on any other basis than a broad and liberal one. I earnestly desire

such a union, however, as a remedy for existing evils and a protection against threatening evils.

These cannot be removed or warded off by any easy and superficial device. Some eager friends and more eager foes of the Church of Scotland wish to settle the matter in dispute at once by a plebiscite, confident that it would be in their favour. Probably it would; but even if it were, how would it settle the controversy, seeing that it could not arrest the growth of opinion? A plebiscite on the subject would merely be a precedent for other plebiscites on the same subject, and on others. Legislation by plebiscites is the most unreasonable and dangerous that can be conceived. A nation which has not patience to allow great questions to be settled by the natural progress of thought, but hastens to decide them by scratch majorities of the whole population, is a nation which must be ruled by charlatans, and is drawing near to catastrophes.

Besides, what is the precise question which the plebiscite is to answer? Is it to be, Establishment or Disestablishment? But there is a very obvious and very great objection to the question in that form. It leaves out of account those who wish neither the one nor the other. But, unless I am much mistaken, the great majority of the people of Scotland wish neither the one nor the other, neither

the present state of things nor the state which mere disestablishment would produce.

We may be confident that what is generally wished by the people of Scotland is that the Churches would come to mutual understanding, conciliation, and peace. To labour that this wish be not frustrated by the strategy or the impetuosity of political and ecclesiastical zealots, but helped onwards to a happy realisation, will be, it seems to me, for not a few years to come, one of the chief duties of good and patriotic Scotsmen. May God grant to all such labour His abundant blessing.

THE END.

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