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THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

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THE
SPIRITUAL WORLD

✓ BY
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P R E F A C E

*M*AX MÜLLER has made us familiar with the phrase "Chips from a German Workshop." This is a volume of chips from a theological workshop. The several chapters of this book are fragments,—fragments of theory, fragments of practice, fragments of interpretation. Still, there is an underlying thought everywhere, which gives a unity to the whole. It is the thought upon the nature of religion. Some day the author hopes to show at length how this one conception of religion, a conception towards which all Philosophy and Theology seem tending, can give us a new and more satisfactory Apologetic, Dogmatic, and Ethic, binding indeed into one great whole the profounder thought of all ages and climes and creeds. But while this large task is being prosecuted in the

factory, a few splinters are here sent forth, at the earnest and frequent solicitations of hearers who have listened to parts of these lectures when publicly delivered.

December, 1893.

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PART I

*THE SPIRITUAL WORLD THE LAST WORD OF
PHILOSOPHY*

Lectures I.—III. were delivered at the Mansfield Summer School of Theology, July, 1892. Lecture IV. was given at Newcastle during the meetings of the British Association, and was printed in the "Andover Review" for November, 1890.

LECTURE I

RELIGION AS PERCEPTION OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

I N the preface to his able *Philosophical Basis of Theism*, Dr. Samuel Harris, of Yale, makes a highly just remark. "When I began," he says, "to give instruction in Systematic Theology, the discussions in the class-room were continually forcing us back to preliminary philosophical questions, pertaining to the reality, processes, and limits of human knowledge, and to the constitution of man as a personal being." Dr. Harris's experience is, it is probable, the experience of every systematic teacher of the doctrines of religion. The problems of theology inevitably run back into the problems of philosophy.

No more than any other science can theology either live or die to itself. The geologist cannot move a step without a prior knowledge of mineralogy and of biology. The psychologist can only approach his special and engrossing studies through a previous knowledge of physiology, comparative as well as human. There is a solidarity in knowledge as well as in practice; and in science, as in life, if any member

suffers, every member suffers with it. To learn algebra you must begin with arithmetic. "Nay, much more those members which seem to be more feeble are necessary"; you cannot do long division until, with both ease and accuracy, you can add and subtract and multiply.

Similarly, the theologian must be a philosopher perforce. The stars in their courses fight against him if he fails to acclimatise himself in philosophy. For instance, let the theologian identify, as he too often has identified, Theology with Biblical Theology, and Nemesis is instantly on his track, and every fundamental problem, whether of Inspiration, or Atonement, or Future Punishment, or the very Existence of Deity, straightway runs back into the philosophical sphere, and must be fought in the arena of the common reason of man before it can be settled in the arena of the Bible. To put the point sharply, one need not hesitate to say, Tell me what philosophical doctrine of perception a man holds, and, if he is a logical man, one can instantly tell where he will stand in Theology.

To this dependence of Theology, the science of religion, upon Philosophy, the science of mind, all Christian history testifies.

If the earliest opponents of Christianity borrowed their weapons of attack from the Platonic Schools, from the same schools came the weapons of defence dear to the earliest Apologists. Porphyry and Celsus were not more consistent Platonists than Justin

Martyr and Origen. If Tertullian, castigating heretics, speaks of that "wretched Aristotle, who invented their logic for them," anon the wheel of time revolves, and the same Aristotelian logic becomes the predominant theological method. When Hypatia hurls Plato at Cyril, Cyril retorts Plato upon Hypatia. To grapple successfully with the creed of Rome, you must first wrest from Rome her philosophical assumptions. Whence came the Deistic wave of thought but from the phenomenalism of Locke? Who shall estimate the influence of Descartes and Leibnitz and Spinoza and the leading philosophers of the last two centuries upon the theological systems of the modern era? As Sir William Hamilton said, "the examination of the faculties and phenomena of mind is the primary condition of every theology." For, as Hamilton goes on to say, "whatever we know or endeavour to know, God or the world, mind or matter, the distant or the near, we know and can know only so far as we possess a faculty of knowing, and we can only exercise that faculty under the laws which control and limit its operations." The same truth Aquinas expressed when he said, "*Scientia est secundum modum cognoscentis.*" As said, too, the lamented Professor T. H. Green, "Know yourself as you truly are, and you will know the truth of God, freedom and immortality."

It is, then, with this border-country between Theology and Philosophy that these lectures will

be for a while concerned. I desire to speak of an application of the Philosophical Doctrine of Common Sense, which provides, as it seems to me, the basis for any and every theology, for any and every systematic treatment of the facts of religion. Indubitably the subject is not easy, nor popular. For, alas! as Lessing says, "but one in a thousand perseveres with reflective thought when the process becomes laborious." But it is necessary sometimes to appeal to the one in a thousand. After all, as said the saintly Bernard, "the greatest pleasure the mind can have is understanding what it already believes."

Therefore patient attention is invited, and the promise is made that, while we travel together, many a glimpse will be obtained into great and timely questions,—such momentous questions, for example, as the reality of the Spiritual World, the laws of the Spiritual Life, the basis of Inspiration, the seat of the authority of Scripture, the self-evidence of the individual Christian consciousness, the apologetic value of that collective Christian consciousness which is the *Zeitgeist* of the Church of God.

In other words, we are to be concerned for a while with that branch of study, at once so eminently influential to-day and so widely pursued, which is called the Philosophy of Religion. The foundations of such a philosophy were laid by Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Jacobi, Schleiermacher, and Hegel; and the

structure thereof has been added in various styles,—in Germany by Lotze, Pfeiderer, Lipsius, Biedermann, Gloatz, Teichmüller, Rauwenhoff, Hermann, Kaftan, and Siebeck ; in England by Mansel, Max Müller, Calderwood, John and Edward Caird, Martineau, and A. M. Fairbairn ; and in America by Harris, Bascom, and Kellogg.

Abstract as is the theme, it is inevitable. The inquiry must be undertaken. For in our days two powerful attacks have been delivered against the Christian position, from the shock of which a full rally has not yet been seen—namely, the Agnostic attack in England, and the attack of the Ritschlians in Germany: for attack the latter really is under the guise of removing crumbling and dangerous outworks, and so strengthening the Christian position. Neither attack can be successfully parried without entering upon such an inquiry as the one before us. Indeed, the theme before us can scarcely be better propounded than by dwelling for a little while upon the fundamental contentions of the Agnostics and Ritschlianner. Two birds can thus be killed with one stone ; for whilst the necessity of such an inquiry as this is illustrated, the general outline of the inquiry itself will be clearly presented.

Agnosticism is upon everybody's tongue ; but how few realise that its main contentions are simply a corollary upon a philosophical doctrine of perception !

Leave that doctrine unchallenged, and whatever else you join battle with, you are but playing at war—you are but exhausting your resources in capturing this bastion or that turret, whilst the central keep hangs out its banner unsinged. Concede the Agnostic theory of knowledge, and inevitably in time, if you are consistent, you must go the whole way, blotting out God and immortality and reality. Agnosticism is the outcome of a consistent adherence to the Kantian theory of perception. This Mr. Herbert Spencer has always avowed. He has always put forth his theory of the Unknowable as but “carrying a step further the doctrine of knowledge put into shape by Hamilton and Mansel.” In this matter, moreover, Hamilton and Mansel but follow Immanuel Kant, the great thinker of Königsberg.

When I say that I know anything, what do I mean? To take a concrete instance, when I say that I see you, what do I mean? Of course I am speaking of something in my consciousness. What is in my consciousness? Different answers have been given. Some have said there is in my consciousness an image of you. I have an intuition of your image. All I know about you is my intuition. My entire knowledge of you begins and ends with the subjective. For convenience and clearness, I put the matter as simply as possible, although, remembering what a world of yours there is, and what a world there is in each you, I fully recognise how much truth there is in Kant's doctrine of “the

manifold of intuition.”¹ Well, then, some say that in seeing you there is an image of you in me, and that in that subjective image my knowledge of you begins and ends.

But others have said there is more in the consciousness. They certainly have in their minds an image of you ; but that is not all their knowledge. They know *themselves* as having your image in mind. When they have an intuition, the intuition is consciously *theirs*,—*they* have the intuition. To a subjective knowledge of your image there is added a subjective knowledge of themselves.

Yet again, in seeing another, others have said they have the image of the other in mind. But more, they have themselves in mind. And yet more, they have the other in mind. To any subjective knowledge of you and of myself, I add objective knowledge of you. When I see you, I know something about *you* as well as about your image.

Now, all this may seem, if not trivial, highly amusing,—a good puzzle to while away a few hours. But observe. Upon the decision to which you come in such an instance depends your entire mental history, if you think. You may refuse to think upon the matter at all ; but if you think upon it, your thought is momentous. If in cognition you only know images, phenomena, you must inevitably, if

¹ Compare Bowen, *Modern Philosophy from Descartes to Hartmann*, 1877, pp. 173, 174.

consistent, become an Agnostic. Like Mr. Spencer, you will be compelled to say that "the illusion" of the freedom of the will, for instance, "consists in supposing that, at each moment, the Ego is something more than the aggregate of feelings and ideas, actual and nascent, which then exists." On such a theory of knowledge, the universe, including ourselves, becomes, to use Jean Paul's phrases, an automaton; God becomes the uniformity of physical law; the future becomes a coffin. Such a theory, consistently held, annihilates God, banishes freedom, enervates prayer, annuls morality, disembowels religion.

Indeed, history has shown that a speedy punishment overtakes such a use of reason.

In our own times the German Pantheists boasted that, on the basis of the Kantian philosophy, "they had wrested from the Deity His attribute of omniscience, and had seated themselves on the throne of God." I quote from Hettinger's *Lehrbuch der Fundamental-Theologie*, part of which has been translated under the title of *Natural Religion*. Yet "within a very few years," continues Dr. Hettinger, "these men were forced to confess their boast a delusion, and to see their vaunted science succumb to absolute scepticism, or to a degrading materialism, which denied the very existence of reason, and reduced men to the level of the brute."¹ Perhaps the most painful expression of the intellectual consequences

of such a philosophical position has been given by Fichte in his oft-quoted words from his *Ueber die Bestimmung des Menschen*, where he says: "There is nothing lasting either within me or without me, but everywhere ceaseless change. I know nothing whatever of any other being, and nothing of myself. There is no being. I myself know absolutely nothing, and I am nothing. Images exist. They alone are, and they know themselves after the manner of images, —images which flit by, without there being anything before which they flit; images which by images depend upon images. I myself am one of these images; indeed, I am not even this, but merely a confused image of these images. All reality becomes a mysterious dream; without life as the object, or intellect as the subject, of this dream,—a dream which itself depends solely upon a dream." As says Goethe in his *Zauberflöte*,—

"Er irret und irret
Von Wahne zu Wahn."

The lesson is worth learning. Unless in every cognition you know at once objective cause and subjective ego, unless in every perception there is given to you in consciousness at once percept, perceiver, and the thing perceived, you cannot attain as a philosopher to the liberty of a Christian, nay of a religious, belief. Now, in the Kantian philosophy—or, to speak more accurately, in the Kantian theory of cognition—all knowledge of the ego as such is

denied ; so is all knowledge of the non-ego ; and all we really know is things as they appear to us, images, phenomena—not things as they are in themselves, things imaged, noumena. Happily, what Kant extruded by his theory of knowledge—namely, God, self, and immortality—he reintroduced by his theory of ethics. Nevertheless, from his theory of cognition come in due and logical course the principles of Agnosticism.

In reading, however, Mr. Herbert Spencer's writings, it is difficult to repress the conviction that Mr. Spencer's treatment of religion as such is of the scantiest. In writing of *Biology and Psychology and Sociology*, Mr. Spencer seems fully at home ; but in writing of religion he seems to write as a foreigner. But on German soil Agnosticism has penetrated to the very recesses of religion ; and what in Spencer is inference and suggestion, has become actual fact and elaborate exposition in Ritschl. Not that in any sense Ritschl is a follower of Spencer. Ritschl is a Neo-Kantian, and, like Spencer, accepts the Kantian doctrine of cognition. The influence of Ritschl is sufficiently pronounced to excuse a statement of his principles.

Whilst Ritschl's most important book is his *Christian Doctrine of Justification and Atonement*, his most important work was his lecturing at Göttingen, which for many years drew a large and interested audience. Indeed, as Principal Simon has said in the preface

to his translation of Stählin's *Kant, Lotze, and Ritschl*, "during the last fifteen or twenty years a controversy has been going on in Germany, which, like some Indian cyclone, has had for its pivot the theological system of Albrecht Ritschl. From year to year, as the numbers of his pupils and disciples increased, and as others became aware of the true tendency of his teaching, it has grown alike in compass and intensity. Things have looked, in fact, as though the German theological world were destined to split into two great camps, whose respective cries would be 'Here Ritschl!' and 'Here Anti-Ritschl!'"

That there is in Ritschlianism not only much that peculiarly addresses itself to the spirit and needs of our age, but also much that is very admirable in its attitude towards the self-evidencing power of Christianity, should be frankly acknowledged. The fact of spiritual perception is the very basis and strength of the influence of Ritschl. But it is neither with the causes of the widespread influence of this new school of theological thought, nor with its incidental good points, that we are at present concerned, but with its philosophical foundation, and the inevitable consequences which must be built upon such a foundation.

This latest school of German theology, the disseminators of *Ritschlianism*, attaches itself, as has been said, to the philosophy of Kant, at the same time professing to be directly descended from Luther and Schleiermacher. Its declared aim, like Herbert

Spencer's, is to reconcile religion and science. This reconciliation it aspires to effect along what are really Positivist and Agnostic lines. Ritschl's ceaseless ridicule of metaphysics inevitably reminds one of Comte and Littré.

Accepting all that the religious consciousness teaches, the school refuses to have anything whatever to do with metaphysics and metaphysical theology as such. The school recognises effects, but not causes : honours no facts but feelings. The school speaks by preference of the Christ that is in us to-day, being more sure of present religious experiences than of the historical Christ of the Gospels. Ritschl is only concerned with feelings, and puts away all inquiries about causes of feelings as metaphysical. That a thing is, he thinks we may know ; how it is, we cannot know. With Kant, Ritschl insists on the purely subjective character of all our knowledge. As for knowledge of a spiritual world apart from us, ascertainable by analogy or intuition or induction, Ritschl will have none of it. A spiritual world is a "metaphysical formula." A spiritual world is the outcome, thinks Ritschl, of "Rabbinical exegesis." All Ritschl knows are religious experiences. All he desires is the deepening and rectifying of religious experiences by the religious experiences of others, who have a sort of genius for more profound and beautiful and inspiring religious experiences. The phases of the Christian consciousness are all the religious facts Ritschl recognises. Of causes of these mental facts

he knows and cares nothing. Like the Positivist, Ritschl deliberately shuts out from view all theology which deals with causes. Like the Agnostic, Ritschl knows no more of a supreme Deity than that He exists. With religious experiences Ritschl begins and ends.

At the present moment, be it remembered, this Ritschlian system of belief is interesting to us because it is wholly deduced from a theory of cognition, the Kantian doctrine of knowledge. Ritschl indeed distinguishes in contemporary theology three underlying theories of knowledge—that of Plato, which is realism, that of Kant, and that of Lotze. Ritschl declares for the theory of Kant as expressed by Lotze.

Now, Lotze's theory of knowledge may be summarised as follows:—We can, in Lotze's view, only know phenomena. Still, in phenomena, the modifications of which succeed each other in a limited space and a determinate order, we may know the thing to some extent. For we may know the thing, *first*, as the *cause* of the attributes which act upon us; *second*, as the *end* to which the attributes serve as means; and *third*, as the *law* which regulates the constant modification of attributes. All which is just the position to which Herbert Spencer has familiarised us—namely, that things as they appear to us we know, and that these apparent realities have a basis in things in themselves we know, but what these things in themselves are we know nothing more than their existence. So of things in themselves Ritschl knows nothing, but only

of their influence upon us. Ritschl examines man to learn all he can of the universe.

According, then, to such a theory of knowledge, what are the data of theology? These, and these only, the spiritual experiences of man. Ritschl concerns himself wholly with the analysis of the Christian consciousness, as Schleiermacher did before him, diverging from Schleiermacher, however, inasmuch as he finds, as Schleiermacher did but uncertainly, the Christian consciousness in the History of the Church as a whole, as well as in individual Christian experience. In the spiritual experiences of man, then, Ritschl has his *fons et judex*, his source and his test of all religious truth. The supreme source and test of all religious truth, the ultimate canon of belief, is not objective revelation as given by God to man, but subjective revelation of God as found in man.

From such premisses observe the consequences which inevitably follow. Nor does Ritschl shrink from these consequences; he has the courage of his convictions. Ritschl knows no soul in man, but only the three functions of feeling, knowing, and willing, together with some unknown and inscrutable cause of these functions. Ritschl knows no God in the universe, but only man's sense of the Divine and an inscrutable cause of this sense. Ritschl knows no Saviour, but only the consciousness of redemption, and an inscrutable cause of this consciousness. Ritschl knows nothing of the Divine

Logos, either as pre-existent or as exalted to the right hand of the Father. All he knows of the Logos is His earthly life and His present influence upon men—an influence, of course, solely attributable to the influence of the historical records of His life on earth. What Christ is in Himself may remain behind as an inscrutable mystery, a something unutterable; but we can make no affirmations thereon. In all that the Christian Church believes and confesses concerning Christ, there is nothing objective—all is subjective; there is nothing at all but the religious feelings either of the individual Christian or of the Church. Ritschl refuses to stir a step beyond the Christian consciousness. To use his own words: In Jesus Christ "is given a fellowship with God, such that His life-work is the work of God. So far as we mean to be Christians, we have to recognise this datum,—this relation to God to which Christ gave expression. . . . We must refrain altogether from attempts to get behind this datum, to show how as to its individual elements it came to pass—to account empirically for its existence."¹ In other words, Ritschl says that Christ and His work were elements of the consciousness of the Apostolic age. The value of the New Testament is that it is a record of the religious consciousness of the Apostolic age. The sentiments of the Apostolic age may be repeated in us as we read the record of those sentiments. But in

¹ *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 29.

them and in us all we know are states of religious feeling. In states of religious feeling we begin, and in them we end. Notwithstanding, we are at the same time at liberty to believe that these states of feeling have some unknown and unknowable causes. Happily, Ritschl himself is not quite thorough-going, and in many points his creed and his practice are better than his theology. Nevertheless, to him prayer is but "a manifestation of humility and patience, and a means of establishing ourselves in those virtues." As for petitionary prayer, "a petition," says Ritschl, is "simply a modified form of thanksgiving."

It is scarcely wonderful, in view of such opinions, that Godet should have written, in the *Chrétien Evangélique* for 1891: "If really there was an agreement to recognise the revelation in the person, the life and the teaching of Christ, and contest only took place concerning a complementary apostolic revelation, the situation would be grave, but possibly I should have uttered no cry of alarm. But it is the teaching of our Lord Himself which is in question. His testimony upon a number of points—such as the divinity of His person, His expiatory work, the existence of good or bad angels, His future return, the resurrection of the body, etc.—is presented as having no authority for the Christian consciousness. All these subjects are considered as belonging to theology, and not to the religion properly so called of which Christ is the initiator: this religion is reduced to the revelation of the holiness of God and of His love for

humanity, as well as to the duty of men to love each other. This, if I understand rightly, is the point of view of our modern reformers.”¹ Godet was speaking of France and Switzerland, but his words are not without a reference to England. Whether consciously or not I do not know, but it is *Ritschlianismus* which prompts such utterances in a recent work on *Old Testament Theology* as these: “We look for the present revealed God, and we find Him in those men who are one with God, who utter God’s Spirit and God’s love”; or again, “We find the Christ and the voice of Christ to-day in those who are new creatures in Christ Jesus”; and again, “Thanks be to God, we can hear His mind to-day only in the thinking minds of to-day.”

The illustration of the point before us—namely, the inevitable philosophical foundation of all and every theology—has been lengthy; but I was anxious to show that I am dealing with a pressing present-day problem. And a common criticism which has been passed upon Ritschl, and his reply, will bring us back to the point I desire to press.

Ritschl, who is always declaiming against theology as metaphysics, has not unnaturally been accused of employing metaphysics to dismiss metaphysics. Ritschl’s reply is that his procedure is deliberate. There can be, he says, no theology without a theory

¹ Pages 385, 386.

of knowledge, and a theory of knowledge is assuredly metaphysics. Nevertheless, Ritschl continues, having attained by means of metaphysics to a theory of knowledge which declares metaphysics impossible, he thenceforth eschews all metaphysics. Let me quote his own words. "With the exception of the doctrine of God," says Ritschl, "Christian Dogmatics offers no further occasion for regarding any metaphysical thought as theological. All the other problems of theology are so specifically spiritual, that metaphysics is only taken into consideration as the formal rule which presides over the knowledge of religious quantities and of their relations. But in this respect every theologian, in his character as a man of science, is obliged to proceed according to a determinate theory of knowledge—a theory of which he ought to have a clear consciousness, and the right of which to existence he ought to be able to demonstrate. It is thus thoughtless to pretend that I eliminate all metaphysics from theology. If, indeed, I possess in theology any scientific ability, I must follow a theory of knowledge, which, in determining the objects of knowledge, must be regulated, according to a precise idea, which, in other words, must be metaphysics."¹

Here Ritschl is indubitably right. There can be no theology, there can be no scientific formulation of the facts and inferences of religion, without a prior doctrine of perception, consciously or instinctively

¹ *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 38.

held. Further, there should be no theology, pretending to be scientific, which is not the outcome of an express doctrine of perception *consciously* held. Further, if in perception we see only an external world, we shall, if consistent, become Materialists; and if in perception we see only the percipient Ego, we shall, if consistent, become Pantheists; and if in perception we see only the perception itself, we shall, if consistent, become Agnostics.

In short, our theological position must follow upon our philosophical position. Every theology treats scientifically of the religious facts known to us; therefore every theology implies perception of religious facts; but what religious perception is, is a philosophical problem.

What, then, is religious perception? This is the fundamental problem of every theology. And what knowledge is given to us in religious perception? Is that knowledge subjective, or objective, or both? Theology, in its most generalised meaning, is the science of religion, and religion is all the contents of religious perception, and it is a vital and primary question what knowledge is given to us in religious perception. For if religious knowledge is subjective only, if in religious knowledge there is nothing objective, then religion of any kind, which appears to give us objective knowledge, is illusion. For, as Steude has said, in his *Beiträge zur Apologetik*,¹

¹ Page 216.

“all the assaults of French Positivism, of German Materialism, and especially of Thoroughgoing Radicalism, against the Christian religion, draw their support from the opinion that religion is illusion, the great universal self-deception of man, who hypostasises his own nature, and thence makes objective deities.” Therefore, as Steude continues, “all useful proofs of the truth of Christianity—the practical proof, and the historical proof, and the proof from the history of religion—do but float in the air, and are in the last resort mere appeals to the personal certitude and the personal experience of the religious man, and for the most dangerous and radical opponents of Christianity have no stringency at all, unless they are based upon the philosophical proof of the objective character of the religious relation.” The words are wise. Theology is the science of religion; and religion is the outcome of religious intuition, of spiritual perception; and the crucial question concerning spiritual perception is whether what it teaches us is subjective only, or whether the knowledge it gives is also of an objective kind. The fundamental question in every theology is, What knowledge is given to us in spiritual perception?

Now, this fundamental theological question as to the knowledge obtainable in religious perception has much light thrown upon it by the fundamental philosophical question as to the knowledge obtainable in perception of an external world. What is called the philosophical doctrine of Common Sense has

solved the problem of the contents of external perception. What is called the philosophical doctrine of Common Sense will, I conceive, solve the problem of the contents of spiritual perception.

The exact point at which we have arrived is this:—Man has much knowledge of various kinds. In the ultimate analysis, however, all human knowledge is intuitive or reflective or recollective—is, to use different terms for the same genera, perceptive or conceptive or representative. All our knowledge comes from one of these three sources: intuition, reflection, memory,—perception (by which we apprehend single things), conception (by which we generalise from individual things), recollection (by which we recall previous intuitions and generalisations). In other words, man is capable of receiving perceptions of various kinds, by the instrumentality of his intuitive powers; from these perceptions he can frame conceptions or ideas of greater or less generality by means of his reflective powers; and both past perceptions and previous ideas he can recall because of his powers of recollection. In short, most generally stated, man has three great intellectual endowments,—he can perceive, he can conceive, and he can remember. For the moment we are concerned with our *perceptive* or intuitive powers, the elements of all knowledge however composite.

But our perceptions or intuitions are of several kinds. Thus, there are intuitions of sense (sense-perceptions), there are intuitions of self (self-perceptions), and

there are intuitions which originate neither in sense nor self, but in a spiritual sphere beyond both (spirit-perceptions). That is to say, our intuitive powers, our powers of apprehending what is passing at one moment of time, afford us knowledge,—elementary and primitive knowledge, but yet knowledge,—first of phases of our own minds (self-perceptions), next of phases of the external world (sense-perceptions), and thirdly of phases of the spiritual world (spirit-perceptions).

Under sense-perceptions comes all that we learn of individual objects from our senses—that is to say whatever the eye can see, the ear hear, the nose smell, the touch handle, the tongue taste, the general sensibility convey. Under self-perceptions come highly interesting and important perceptions, such as the consciousness of self in the various emotional moods, as self-loving or self-angry,—the consciousness of self in the several intellectual processes, as self-judging or self-syllogising,—the consciousness of self in the several volitional attitudes, as self-willing or self-suspensive,—in short, the phases of self as related to the true, the good, and the beautiful. Under spirit-perceptions comes a third class of perceptions, which will not permit themselves to be explained away for long. Spirit-perceptions, religious perceptions, the experiences of religion, are as genuine facts as either self-perceptions or sense-perceptions. Indeed, as has been well said, “a being whose nature is exhausted in sense-objects could never transcend sense-objects.

Everything would be to him what it seems. The stick would be a stick, not a fetich. The sun and moon must be lighted disks, and not gods. To get such a being beyond the sense-object to a religious object, we must endow him with more than sensation or animal fear."¹ Happily, to-day the long fight as to the universality of religious perceptions has been won, upon which more in the next lecture. As to the fact of religious perceptions to-day there is no quarrel; whatever differences of view there are refer to the implications of these religious perceptions. For it is commonly acknowledged by the Agnostic as well as the Ritschlian, that, just as man has been endowed with eyes to see and with intellectual organs to discriminate and identify, just as man has been endowed with an intuition of self, he has also been endowed with a capacity for religion. Religious perception is as natural to man as sense-perception or self-perception. Spiritual hunger is no less a human character than physical inanition: it is as common to pray as to hunt; the sense of the supernatural is as universal as the sense of the mundane. If some men have an atrophied spiritual sense, and are animals, so some men have an atrophied intellectual sense, and are idiots. If some ears cannot catch the music of the heavenly spheres, some are deaf to earthly music. In short, religion is natural to man as man. Nor is this universality negatived, but

¹ Bowne, *Philosophy of Theism*, p. 3.

rather affirmed, by occasional instances of undeveloped or of excised function.

To recapitulate :—We are in search of the contents of perceptions, and especially the contents of religious perceptions. For perceptions are of three kinds—of an external world, of an internal world, and of a supernal world.

I now come to the main point upon which I desire to insist, and from which I intend to draw in the next lecture some important corollaries. The point is this :—The same law governs each kind of perceptions. In every perception, whether of sense or self or spirit, there is given to us in an indissoluble experience, not only the perception itself, but a thing perceived and a person perceiving. Every *perceptio* involves a *perceptum* and a *percipiens*. If in self-perceptions or sense-perceptions there is real knowledge, knowledge of reality, knowledge of the objective, so is there in religious perceptions. Religious perceptions are no more illusion than self-perceptions or sense-perceptions. The ordered attack of the century upon religion, commenced in Positivism, continued in Agnosticism, reappearing in Ritschlianism, has made its most deadly weapon the impotence of the human faculties where any real and objective knowledge of Divine things is concerned. In the view of all these opponents, the human mind is either too weak, or too capricious, or both, to gain reliable religious knowledge. And these anti-religious views, sound enough

if their fundamental position as to perception is sound, and which are much more than academic, seeing that they are constantly filtering down to lower social levels, must be examined at their basis. As Dr. Martineau has well said, this "despair of [religious] knowledge must be encountered at the outset; . . . we cannot afford either to enter a Paradise of Fools or to miss any heaven of the wise."¹

Therefore this attack upon the reality of religion must be met by an inquiry into the doctrine of perception, the one doctrine of perception of self and sense and spirit. For what have we in perception,—in perceptions of the external world, and in perceptions of the internal world, and in perceptions of the supernal world? Have we feelings only, and a mere illusion of objective reality? Is our knowledge of an external world simply a concatenation of feelings, without any knowledge of a real world without us—"a series of feelings, with a background of possibilities of feeling," as John Stuart Mill put it? Is our knowledge of an internal world simply a concatenation of feelings without any knowledge at all of an ego unifying these feelings? Is our knowledge of a religious world simply feelings without objective basis, illusion and not reality?

To all such questions one and the same answer may be given—that in every perception, of whatever

¹ *A Study of Religion*, vol. i., p. 38.

class, we have knowledge at once of a thing perceived and a person perceiving, at once a knowledge of object and subject. Man has, by his senses, a direct perception of the physical world: when I look at a tree, I know *the tree* is there, and *I* know the tree is there. Similarly, there is given in religious perception a supernatural fact perceived and a person perceiving: when I experience the sense of the forgiveness of sins, I know a God forgiving, and a sinner forgiven.

“The little pool, in street or field apart,
Glasses the heavens and the rushing storm;
And into the silent depths of every heart
The Eternal throws its awful shadow form.”¹

Man as man has a spiritual capacity by which he can apprehend the supernal, an organ of spiritual sight by which he can see the Divine: this spiritual organ gives us spiritual perceptions; and in every spiritual perception, as in every perception, we are conscious of an object known and a subject knowing. Let the external world come in contact with our senses, and the senses disclose that external world: let the internal world present itself to our organs of introspection, and these organs reflect that internal world: further, let the spiritual world approach the human spirit, and that spirit perceives that spiritual world. As Hegel has said, “religion is a relation of spirit to spirit.”² To world-consciousness, as the

¹ Charles Edwin Markham, in *Century Magazine* for 1888, p. 184.

² *Philos. der Religion*, vol. i., p. 6.

Germans say, and self-consciousness, man adds God-consciousness. Moreover, as the eye does not see unless there is somewhat to see, nor the mind perceive itself unless there is a self to be perceived, so spirit cannot be supposed to be conscious of the divine unless there is a divine world to be conscious of. In short, as sense-perceptions guarantee the existence of an external world, and self-perceptions the existence of self, so perceptions of the divine and supernal guarantee the existence of the divine and supernal.

All this, you see, is but carrying a stage further the Philosophic Doctrine of Common Sense. It is Common Sense in the Spiritual World. Now, as Dr. Veitch has so well said,¹ "the Philosophy of Common Sense is none other than the attempt to analyse knowledge or consciousness—our experience, in fact—into its elements." Sir William Hamilton, for example, "has explicitly and with reiteration shown that by 'Common Sense' he does not mean the transfer to philosophy of 'a sound understanding applied to vulgar objects, in contrast to a scientific or speculative intelligence,' as an instrument of research. 'It is in this sense,' he says, 'that it has been taken by those who have derided the principle on which the philosophy which has been distinctly denominated the Scottish professes to be established.' He has further explicitly shown that the Argument from Common Sense, or the method of the Philo-

¹ *Hamilton, by John Veitch, LL.D.*, pp. 103, 104.

sophy of Common Sense, though 'an appeal to the natural convictions of mankind, is not an appeal from philosophy to blind feeling. It is only an appeal from the theoretical conclusions of particular philosophers to the catholic principles of all philosophy.' As it has been well put: 'It carries the appeal into a sphere where the philosophic and the vulgar have ceased to be distinguished; it shows that not the mind of the philosopher, and not the mind of the vulgar, but the mind of man, is what philosophy has to deal with, and that its office is to resolve current beliefs into their elements, not satisfied until it has reached the final and absolutely pure deliverance of consciousness.' For 'the first problem of philosophy is to seek out, purify, and establish, by intellectual analysis and criticism, the elementary feelings and beliefs in which are given the elementary truths of which all are in possession.'"

In short, the Philosophy of Common Sense insists that there is some knowledge—namely, our elementary experiences, our perceptions, our intuitions—the contents of which are to be decided by an appeal to man as man. In such experiences the philosopher is no more trustworthy than the ordinary mind. Whether, for instance, a given geranium is scarlet or crimson, whether a given sky is bluish or greyish, whether a given flavouring is sweet or bitter, in the decision of such elementary experiences the philosopher is no more able, perhaps is slightly less able, to pronounce dogmatically than the practical man.

In such experiences the appeal must ever be *ad vocem populi*, to the common sentiment.

To recur to a previously cited analysis of human knowledge, all we know consists of the results of conceiving, perceiving, and remembering. All we know is either perceptions, or conceptions, or perceptions and conceptions remembered. Now, says the Philosophy of Common Sense, where our conceptions are concerned, our ideas, our reflections, the philosopher, with his trained analytic faculty, has a decided preponderance of authority ; whereas, where our perceptions are concerned, the ultimate appeal must ever be, not to any individual perceiver, but to the collective perceptions of mankind, to the common sentiment, to the common sense. Concerning the contents of our elementary experiences, the final resort is to universal experience, to the common sense. The judge of consciousness can only be consciousness. The judge of the common consciousness can only be the common consciousness. What is in the common sense the common sense must decide.

Now, applying this method of study to the fundamental problem of knowledge, the Philosophy of Common Sense, on the basis of common sentiment, has rejected the view that, when we perceive anything, all we know is our own feeling, our perception simply ; there is also given in every perception a person perceiving and a thing perceived. The Philosophy of Common Sense appeals to the universal consciousness of man as to the deliverance of that

consciousness, and asks confidently whether, when we see, or hear, or taste, we are only conscious of a seeing, or a hearing, or a tasting, or whether we are not equally conscious of ourselves as seeing, or hearing, or tasting, and equally conscious of a something seen, or a something heard, or a something tasted. That our knowledge in perception is objective as well as subjective the Philosophy of Common Sense declares on the testimony of Common Sense.

Now, this doctrine of Perception may be pushed a step further, and we may say that it is shown by the common experience of man to be true, not only of sensuous but of religious perception. When I pray, I am not only conscious of praying, but I am conscious of myself praying—nay, more, in my less formal moments, I am also conscious of an Ineffable Person to whom I pray. In the consciousness of the forgiveness of sins, there is given to me, I am conscious, not only the feeling of forgiveness, but a double personality—myself forgiven and the Deity forgiving. And that this consciousness of mine is the consciousness of many more than me, I appeal to the common sentiment of Christian men.

Thus I have but opened my great theme. There is much to be said by way of elucidation and emphasis. But if the position assumed be warranted, the Agnostic movement in the religious sphere has been sapped at its foundation. For even Ritschl has said, as we have seen, that “every theologian,

in his character as a man of science, is obliged to proceed according to a determinate theory of knowledge, a theory of which he ought to have a clear consciousness, and the right of which to existence he ought to be able to demonstrate." Assuredly the basis of every theology which pretends to any objective knowledge of the divine must be well laid in a sound theory of cognition, recognising, as the common sense of men recognises, an objective and real world outside, as well as reflected in, the consciousness of man. In the next lecture more will be said by way of emphasis and inference upon this doctrine of an objective spiritual world as given in cognition.

LECTURE II

FAITH, INSPIRATION, AND REVELATION AS THE ORGAN, ENERGY, AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

IN the preceding lecture little more was done than emphasise the fact of the spiritual perception in man. The several positions were as follows. First, the fact was illustrated that all the problems of theology inevitably run back into the problems of philosophy; nay, that the fundamental problem of philosophy is also the fundamental problem of theology,—the problem in both cases being the reality of knowledge. As Professor Veitch has said in his *Knowing and Being*,¹ “the problem of Philosophy may be said to be twofold: on one side is the question, What do we know? on the other, What is? Obviously, the first question has its main interest for us as leading to the second.” The same two problems, or rather the same two sides of the one problem—viz., What do we know in spiritual perception? and Is our knowledge illusory or real?—are the fundamental problems in theology. Further, how fundamental this

¹ Page 1.

problem of the contents of spiritual perception is was suggested by an examination of the two most prominent attacks of this century upon the reality of religious knowledge—viz., Agnosticism and Ritschlianism. Secondly, we proceeded to inquire as to the knowledge given to us in religious perception. Thirdly, the assertion was made that this fundamental theological question as to the knowledge obtainable in religious perception has much light thrown upon it by the long debated philosophical question as to the knowledge obtainable in perception of an external world. Fourthly, assuming that the only approximate solution of the perception of an external world is given by the Philosophical Doctrine of Common Sense, according to which the perception of an external world is an intellectual act in which there is given to us, besides the initial sensation, a knowledge of a person perceiving and of a thing perceived—according to which, in short, in one indivisible act, there is given to us knowledge of both subject and object,—I went on to say that in spiritual perception there are given to us at once a knowledge of a spirit perceiving and a spirit perceived. Still, altogether, little more was done than to suggest the reality and implications of spiritual perception.

Let the reality of the Spiritual World be now approached from another side.

In that profoundly interesting book *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, a letter of the great

naturalist is quoted in which he expresses himself as follows: "In my most extreme fluctuations I have never been an Atheist in the sense of denying the existence of God: I think that generally (and more and more as I grow older), but not always, an Agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind."¹

It is to be feared that in these perplexed days there are many who are Agnostics, though not Atheists. For this Agnostic attitude two reasons are alleged: on the one hand, that there are no religious facts that man can know; and, on the other hand, if there are religious facts awaiting our knowledge, man has no faculties by which these religious, these spiritual, these supernal, these divine facts can be known.

Let the two objections be restated. They are very intelligible, and they are very crucial; indeed, if the objections hold, no theology of any kind is possible.

The possibility of any science, be it remembered, is absolutely dependent upon two conditions. This is one indispensable condition—the science must have facts to deal with; and this is also an indispensable condition—that the facts must be cognisable by the human faculties.

To every science there is an objective condition, and a subjective condition,—the objective condition being that there are facts to investigate, and the

¹ Vol. i., p. 304.

subjective condition being that there are faculties in us capable of investigating the relative facts.

If either of these conditions be unfulfilled, a science is impossible. For instance, there can be no science of astrology, there can be no scientific study of the astral laws which govern human affairs, political and individual, because the objective condition is unfulfilled: evidence is altogether wanting that the stars as such influence human life and society at all. Again, there can be no science of the fauna and flora of the moon, at least at present, because the eye of man, even aided by the most powerful telescope extant, is too weak to catch even a glimpse of any flowers or animals in the moon. Selenic biology is excluded from selenology by the subjective condition.

There may, however, be a science of geology, or of chemistry, because, on the one hand, there are geological and chemical facts to observe, and because, on the other hand, the observation of chemical and geological facts is within the range of human faculties.

Apply all this to theology. If there is to be any theology, any science of religion, one pre-requisite is that there be religious facts to observe, and another pre-requisite is that the observation of these religious facts be within the capacity of man. Now, the Agnostic sometimes denies the existence of religious facts, and sometimes denies the existence of any faculty in man by which religious facts may be apprehended. Sometimes the Agnostic denies that man has anything to do with a supernal world; but,

more frequently, he prefers the position that the human mind has no capacity by which it can attain knowledge of facts supernal. One stock argument of the Pyrrhonist in religion, is that a science of religion is impossible because there are no divine facts to study ; and another stock argument is that a science of religion is impossible because the human faculties are incompetent to attain to any knowledge of divine facts, even if such exist. On the one hand, in short, theology is said to be impossible because man has no spiritual perceptions, and, on the other, because he has no spiritual perception.

To these two stock arguments there are two plain replies. One reply is that religious facts are as manifest in the world as physical, to those who will look for them. The other reply is that the religious sense, religious perception, is as universal in man as any other sense.

Thus religious facts, it may be asserted, spiritual perceptions, are as common as physical facts, sensuous perceptions, and certainly as common as psychological facts, self-perceptions.

As Theodore Parker said : " Religion is the first spiritual thing man learned ; the last he will abandon." ¹ Even in the savage state, religious perceptions everywhere appear in the wonder and awe and fear which the powers of nature evoke, felt as

¹ *A Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion*, Works, vol. i., p. xlvi.

they are to be transcendent. At every turn the world confronts man with beings and energies beyond and above his comprehension. Man cannot but perceive that superhuman and spiritual forces lie behind the inaccessible sky, the silent forests, the infinite ocean, and are active in the dawn, in the storm, in the springing of grass and flowers, and in all the mysterious course of birth and life and death. Everywhere and always confronted and awed by what transcends his full grasp, man feels himself hemmed in, limited, dependent. This sense of dependence upon the unseen is universal. Man, as man, has a perception at once spontaneous and intuitive of the infinite, or the spiritual, or the supernal, or the divine, whichever name be preferred for the potent fact.

Religious perceptions are universal. They are implied, too, in the world-wide and voluntary doing of religious acts. Worship, and prayer, and sacrifice are universal. What else is fetichism but the perception of the supernal in everything—in trees, and stones, and mountains, and stars? Does not polytheism, in the very multiplication of gods, unmistakably witness to the religious perceptions of man, finding the supernal as it does in every subdivision of the physical processes, in organic growth, in the personal, domestic, social, and political life of man; seeing its naiads in the streams, its satyrs and fauns in the woods, its gods in the heavens and earth and underworld, its sacred guardians of the home and the temple, of the village and the nation? Surely the

facts of religion, whether as cultivated by the several ethnic systems, or as expanded by Christianity in its various forms, are palpable enough both for recognition and scientific examination. This wide range of spiritual perceptions is assuredly open to human observation, waits for human experiment, demands human classification, stays for human inference—in a word, awaits scientific study. That religious perceptions are universal anybody may see upon investigation.

Indeed, the naturalness of religious perceptions to man is proven by an appeal to fact. Travel where men may, wherever they have found other men, they have invariably found them possessed of some forms of religious belief and practising some form of religious ritual. As so qualified a student of religions as Dr. Tiele, of Leiden, has said: "The statement that there are nations or tribes which possess no religion, rests either on inaccurate observation, or on a confusion of ideas. No tribe or nation has yet been met with destitute of belief in any higher beings, and travellers who asserted their existence have been afterwards refuted by the facts. It is legitimate, therefore, to call religion in its most general sense a universal phenomenon of humanity."¹ Similarly says Gustav Roskoff, in his *Das Religionswesen der rohesten Naturvölker*: "As yet no tribe has been discovered which has no trace of religion."² And says Oskar

¹ *Outline of the History of the Ancient Religions*, p. 6.

² Page 178.

Peschel, in his *Völkerkunde*: "If we ask the question whether anywhere on earth a tribe has been found without religious emotions and ideas, the question must be distinctly negated."¹ And says Von Hellwald, in his *Naturgeschichte des Menschens*: "It is right to speak of a religion of the savage; for hitherto no tribes have been found absolutely religionless."²

It is true that this universality of religious perceptions has been frequently challenged, as by Sir John Lubbock, Darwin, and of course by Büchner; nevertheless, the universality of religious perceptions, after a somewhat protracted controversy, is now generally conceded. The opinions of Max Müller thereupon are too well known to need quotation. And perhaps no fairer or more conclusive statement of the question, once at issue, but now solved, can be found anywhere than appears in Dr. E. B. Tylor's *Primitive Culture*.

Thus, in the eloquent words of Abbé Théron, it may be fearlessly said, on the evidence available: "From the origin of the world, man has prostrated himself before a superior power at the feet of altars, and, from all quarters of the globe, a powerful voice has ceaselessly lifted itself to heaven, carrying the vows and adorations of mortal men. In all climates, under all latitudes, amongst peoples civilised and savage, in the heart of great towns and in the depth of forests, the same tendency appears, analogous instincts and common aspirations. Man, indeed, does

¹ Page 260, 5th edit., 1881.

² 1883, p. 95.

not live in time only ; his destiny is not limited to earth ; his body, it is true, is subject to material influences, to physical impressions ; pleasures captivate, enchant, attract him ; but his soul soars above this outer world ; existing one day, it would last for ever. There is a tendency in our hearts towards an infinite good, a desire of immortality—in a word, a dream of the divine.”¹

The same thought has been tersely expressed by Miss Cobbe, when she says, “There are no azoic rocks in the geology of man’s religion.”²

One condition of every theology is therefore fulfilled,—there are facts to be investigated ; for in all nations and times there are and have been pronounced convictions as to the reality of a spiritual world.

Next, what is to be said of the subjective condition of any theology,—is there or is there not in man a faculty capable of investigating these facts ? Spiritual things are spiritually discerned : is there a spirit in man ?

On this point let us hear what Dr. Fairbairn has to say in his *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion and History*. “Religion,” Dr. Fairbairn has been saying, “is as universal as man, but as varied in type as the races and nations of men” ; and Dr. Fairbairn substantiates this statement by adding that this uni-

¹ *Etude sur les Religions Anciennes*, 1884, pp. 8, 9.

² *Studies, Ethical and Social*, pp. 90, 91.

versality of religion is due to the universality of the religious faculty: "The universality admits of but one explanation—the universal is the necessary. What man has everywhere done he could not but do. His nature is creative of religion, is possessed of faculties that make him religious. Religion is not an invention or discovery, but a product, a growth from roots fixed deep in human nature, springing up and expanding according to natural laws. No one discovered sight or invented hearing. Man saw because he had eyes, heard because he had ears: the sense created the sensation. Language, too, is neither a discovery nor an invention. It grew, and man was hardly conscious of its growth,—grew out of the physical ability to utter sounds, and the mental capacity to think thoughts which, as allied, we term the faculty of speech. And so religion is the fruit of faculties given in our nature, spontaneously acting. Hence man gets into religion as into other natural things, the use of his senses, his mother-tongue, without conscious effort; but to get out of it he has to use art, to reason himself into an attitude of watchful antagonism at once to the tendencies and action of his own nature, and to ancient and general beliefs. No man is an Atheist by nature or birth, only by artifice and education; and art, when it vanquishes nature, is not always a victor. The world has before now seen a mind, which had cast out religion as worship of God, introduce a religion which worshipped man, or rather idolised the memory of a woman.

Religion, then, as natural is universal—as universal as the natures which deposit and realise it.”¹

So far Dr. Fairbairn; and although I do not quite follow him when he seems to speak of the human origin of religion (the eye does not create the external world, but perceives it; so the spirit does not create the supernal world, but perceives it), his words as emphatically as eloquently insist on the universality of the religious sense.

The point is important. The Agnostic in religion, who thinks theology of any kind impossible, inasmuch as religion presents no facts which can be scientifically studied, must be confronted with the universality of religions, all affording innumerable facts capable of scientific investigation. Indeed, religious facts being as common as physical facts, theology is as legitimate as physics. Moreover, when the Pyrrhonist in religion, preferring possibly to express no opinion as to whether theology deals with facts or not, goes on to assert that theology of any kind is impossible, because the capacity for studying supernal facts is lacking in man, another important factor in the case should be insisted on—viz., the religious sense in man, the spiritual sense.

Partly, it is true, the Agnostic is right. All knowledge, he says, implies a subject who knows as well as an object which is known; and theology, consequently, is impossible, because of the inherent limita-

tion of faculty in the subject who knows. Reason cannot have supernal contents, it is said. By thinking, man can only gain knowledge of his own thoughts, and these thoughts pertain to the natural and not to the supernal sphere.

But this objection, which is true as far as it goes, ignores a vital aspect of the case. Let it be frankly conceded that man by thinking cannot find out God. But what then? Neither by thinking can man find out man. Nor by thinking can man find out nature. Only when nature presents itself to man can man find out nature. Only when man presents himself to man can man find out concerning his fellow-man. Similarly, it is not contended that man has a knowledge of God unless God also presents Himself to man. God must take the initiative in our knowledge of Him. The supernal world must present itself to man before man can apprehend in any degree that supernal world. The real point which the Pyrrhonist in religion needs to ponder is, whether man as man has not a spiritual capacity by which he can apprehend the supernal world should that world approach him. For the serious question at issue is, whether, when a Divine light shines forth upon man, man has a spiritual vision which can see that light. The crucial point is whether there is a spirit in man by which spiritual things may be discerned.

Granting that the mind of man cannot evolve God and the world supernal, theology is by no means thereby rendered impossible, for the further question

remains as to whether God can affect man, as to whether the Divine approach to our mundane sphere causes any thrill in man's nature. So stated—as to whether God and the divine can find man and the human—the settlement is surely not difficult. Human nature is endowed with a spiritual faculty. As surely as man has a vision for the world of sense, he has also a vision for the world of spirit. The supernal revealed in consciousness is, as Pfeiderer has said, “the ground thought of all philosophy of religion : it sets forth religion in its absolute truth, while it recognises in it the progressive steps and changing forms through which the spirit elevates itself to the true freedom in God which in its essence it demands”;¹ or, as a greater than Pfeiderer has put it—Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: “He who has not broadened his heart beyond the impulse of the finite, who has not attained to the exaltation of himself to the eternal, and who has not seen into the pure atmosphere of spirit, let him not hope to touch the matters here to be handled.”²

Assuredly the Pyrrhonist in religion is right so far as he maintains that the five senses afford no intuition of the supernal, and he is also right so far as he contends that the logical understanding as such cannot attain to any knowledge of the supernal ; he is as clearly wrong in his failure to see that the nature of man has spiritual organs as well as organs of sense

¹ *Religionsphilosophie*, p. 137.

² *Philosophie der Religion*, vol. i., p. 6.

and intellect. As Dr. Harris has said, in his *Self-Revelation of God*: "As man, being as to his body included in nature, is surrounded by a physical environment which is constantly acting on him and presenting itself to his consciousness, so man as spirit is surrounded by a spiritual and supernatural environment which is constantly acting upon him and presenting itself in his consciousness."¹

It is part of our birthright to have some sense of God and of the divine world. To ignore our conscious relation to the supernal is to ignore a characteristic and most blessed fact of life.

Theology, then, is possible, a scientific treatment of religion is possible, whatever the Agnostic may say, because, on the one hand, religions are universal, and, on the other hand, because a religious faculty, religion, is universal. Religions may be analysed; so may the religious sense; and upon our analysis an intellectual synthesis, theology, may follow.

Here an interesting fact emerges. Analysing all religions, so as to learn what is and what is not essential to religion, this result is ultimately reached; namely, that all religions are the outcome of religion, and that, in its most elementary form, religion is religious perception,—perception of the supernatural, the divine, the infinite, the spiritual, the supernal. Again, analysing the religious sense, we know little

¹ Page 32.

more about it than this: that its product is, in its most elementary form, religious perception,—perception of the divine, the infinite, the supernatural, the supernal, the spiritual. The basis therefore of every theology is the nature and contents of religious perception.

The definition of religion, the statement of what exactly differentiates the religious from the social or political or physical, is by no means an easy problem. All religions imply religion, whatever else they imply. But what is religion? As I say, the problem is not easy. But, happily, the problem has been long and very carefully considered. And from the lengthy inquiry a tolerable unanimity of opinion has been reached.

No careful thinker to-day is satisfied with those superficial explanations of religion which once obtained, according to which religion is the child of ignorance, or fear, or fraud. Thus, according to Bayle the causes of religion in man are as follows:—First, ignorance of natural causes. Men observed the marvellous course of nature in the midst of which they lived, and, unable to detect the physical causes from which they actually spring, attributed them to the action of invisible beings, which they anthropomorphically invested with form and qualities resembling their own. Second, fear, excited by the stupendous forces of nature—by the flash of the lightning, the roll of the thunder, the fury of the waves and the shock of the earthquake.

“Primus in orbe deos fecit timor ardua cœli
Fulmina dum caderent.”

Third, the fraud of the ruling classes, of priests and kings, who played upon these natural predispositions of the people by stamping them with the seal of their own superior authority, to exalt their own importance as priests and kings.¹

Exquisitely superficial ; as are those usages of the word “religion” for any form of enthusiasm, be it for science or art or morals. Thinkers have penetrated deeper. They have seen that religion has both an objective and a subjective sense. Objectively, religion is a matter of observation ; subjectively, it is a matter of experience. Yet again, thinkers have seen that each of these two classes of meanings has two well-defined sub-classes. Used subjectively, religion means *either* a state of mind *or* a faculty of mind. Besides, if there seems some confusion in speaking of religion, on its subjective side, as both a feeling and a faculty, this is only a consequence of the facts : in the paucity of language the facts of the case are responsible for the twofold usage. Religious feelings are so universal that they point to a religious faculty : it is as natural for man to worship as to hear. Again, objectively considered, religion is *either* knowledge *or* practice.

Standing, therefore, on the broad platform of religion in general, of natural as well as revealed religion as the phrase goes, religion means one of

¹ Comp. Boedder, *Natural Theology*, pp. 68, 69.

these four things,—a homage to a superior power, or the faculty which prompts that homage, the knowledge possessed concerning the object of homage, or the mode of worship addressed to that object. Thus, when we speak of the religion of a man, we mean his capacity for worship possibly, or his feeling in worship it may be, or what he thinks he knows about his deity perhaps, or even the rites by which he desires to approach his deity.

Religion, that is to say, shows itself on careful examination to be either religious sentiment, or religious knowledge, or religious cult, or religious faculty. But thinkers have not stopped here. They have sought to yet further simplify their thoughts. They have striven to discover what common property distinguishes religious knowledge, and religious sentiment, and religious cult, and religious faculty. They have sought to define the qualifying term "religious." With this result ultimately, and after long discussion, the phases of which I do not delay to recite:—Religion, they say, is primarily a perception, a perception of the supernal, of the infinite, of the divine. At bottom religion is our perception of the supernal.

In its widest sense religion is our perception of the divine. As says Novalis: "Religion embraces in itself the whole sphere of the so-called super-sensible and super-terrestrial."¹ As says Dr. Martineau: "All religion resolves itself into a conscious relation, on

¹ *Hymns and Thoughts on Religion*, translated by W. Hastie, 1888, p. 73.

our part, to a higher than we ; and, on the part of the rational universe at large, to a higher than all.”¹ As says Principal Simon : “ My own position is essentially that of Jacobi. I believe that as we are endowed with a sensitivity through which the material world finds access to the mind, so are we endowed with a sensitivity through which the invisible world, especially God, finds access to the mind.”² As says Franz von Baader : “ It is the radical error of the rationalistic philosophy and theology that it thinks it can know God without God, or know about God without Him, from human reason alone. . . . By God Himself we are enabled to know God.”³ As says Dr. Dorner : “ Religious certainty is an immediate certainty. . . . God . . . is self-communicative, man spiritually receptive thereto. The coalescence of that act of communication and this act of reception . . . is religion. . . . Faith already possesses immediately the spiritual intuition of God. . . . Religion presupposes something divine and a perception of the divine. . . . We can only have the idea of God through God.”⁴ And many similar statements might be given from Krause, Pflleiderer, August Dorner, Gloatz, Heman, Kaehler, Frank, Biedermann, Fechner, De la Saussaye, Harris, and Kellogg.

¹ *A Study of Religion*, 1888, vol. i., p. 137.

² Stählin, *Kant, Lotze, and Ritschl*, p. xvi.

³ Pflleiderer, *Philosophy of Religion*, ii. 32, 33.

⁴ *System of Christian Doctrine*, vol. i., pp. 73, 174 ; vol. ii., pp. 106-116.

Says Kellogg: "Man, then, by nature has a faculty or capacity for religion. Yet that alone would not account for religion. A man may have eyes, but so long as he is shut up in a dark cave he cannot see. So a man might have a faculty of apprehending God and His relation to Him, but without a revelation of Him he could not have a religion."¹

The essential characteristic, then, of religion wherever it is found is,—a perception of the divine, the supernatural, the supernal. The objections which are apt to arise upon such a doctrine may possibly vanish on the fuller description of what religion essentially is.

In enumerating the essential characters of religion, observe, first, *it is a perception*. The function is religious perception; its products are religious perceptions. Man has, it is contended, a spiritual sense, a perception of the divine, an intuition of the supernal. Perception, intuition, is, as etymology implies, an analogous act to vision. The eye sees, it does not reason; it affords perceptions, not conceptions—images, not ideas; its knowledge is immediate, not indirect; if questioned as to the authority of its deliverances, it repeats them; its ultimate appeal is to itself, not to any prior or subsequent conclusion. "Intuition [perception]," says Dr. Calderwood, "is a direct beholding of the object or a truth. It is immediate knowledge of the thing itself. It stands in contrast with knowledge of one thing through

¹ *Origin and Growth of Religion*, pp. 171, 179.

means of another, as in reasoning, and also in contrast with admission of real existence without personal observation of the thing, as in belief. . . . It is direct vision. . . . It is a single and direct act in contrast with a mental process.”¹ If the eye is an instrument for gaining indirectly much abstract knowledge, all this abstract knowledge follows from reasoning upon its perceptive knowledge : first comes that which is perceptive, afterwards that which is abstract. What is true of the eye is true of every sense. All our knowledge of the external world is primarily perceptive. Further, what is true of the senses is also true of some other mental functions. Self-existence is an intuitive, perceived, not a reasoned truth ; and just as that I do see a tree is the only proof possible that I see a tree, so that I feel that I exist is my only possible proof of my actual existence. All perceptive knowledge must advance for itself the woman’s reason. “From cause to cause,” says Vinet, “we must arrive sooner or later at a moment in which we say, ‘This is because it is.’ If we will not make up our mind to utter this last word, it is plain we shall not believe.”² This self-evidence of perception is a consequence of our nature. For, as James Tait has said : “A spirit has advantages and disadvantages : among advantages are —oversight from secret places of observation, and power of action everywhere, itself unseen ; among

¹ *Mind*, 1876, p. 201.

² *Life and Writings of Alex. Vinet*, by Laura M. Lane, p. 257.

disadvantages are—the possibility of being altogether overlooked, or even unknown; *direct revelation* of a spirit can never rise above self-assertion in the consciousness.”¹

Observe, again, that *religious perception is a perception of reality*. As has been said, this perception of the divine world belongs to the realm of perception, sense, apprehension, feeling, not to the realm of conception, intellect, comprehension, reasoning. Whatever knowledge this religious perception gives belongs to experience, not idea. As Max Müller has said: “It is a *sensus*, an immediate perception; not the result of reasoning or of generalising, but an intuition as irresistible as the impressions of our senses. In receiving it we are passive—at least as passive as in receiving from above the image of the sun, or any other sensible impression.”² About this religious perception there is, therefore, something indeterminate. As Lowell has so beautifully said,—

“As blind nestlings, unafraid,
Stretch up wide-mouthed to every shade
By which their downy dream is stirred,
Taking it for the mother-bird;
So when God’s shadow, which is light,
My wakening instincts falls across,
Silent as sunbeams over moss,
In my heart’s nest half-conscious things
Stir with a helpless sense of wings,
Lift themselves up, and tremble long,
With premonitions sweet of song.”

¹ *Mind in Matter*, 2nd edit., 1887, p. 6.

² *Science of Language*, 2nd series, p. 145.

Religious perception is an *impression* which has not yet attained to *expression*. It is the intellectual faculties alone which, bringing to bear their discrimination, their analysis and synthesis, can give to these or any perceptions passably adequate expression.

Doubtless expression is not easy. Who can exactly define the more voluminous impressions received by sight and hearing, the undulating landscape or orchestral music? Who can define self of which all are conscious? Or who shall express that massive impression which the devout soul feels when God is present with his spirit during prayer? To translate perception into terms of the intellect is ever difficult. Man feels; the poet expresses. Man feels; the prophet expresses.

None the less is the perception a perception of reality. Let the external world come in contact with the senses, and the senses image that external world. Further: let the internal world present itself to our organs of introspection, and these organs reflect that internal world. Yet further: let the supernal world approach the human spirit, and that spirit mirrors that supernal world.

Let me again remark here that this is not a question of the finite finding the infinite, but of the infinite seeking out the finite. It is not man finding God, but God finding man. And yet further: the eye does not see unless there is something to see; the mind does not perceive self unless there is a self to be perceived; similarly, the spirit is not conscious of the approach of the spiritual world, unless there is a

supernal world to come near. When the soul of man vibrates, it is at the touch of a heavenly realm. And yet again : sensuous perception, as the Philosophy of Common Sense so rightly insists, manifests the existence of an external world ; and self-perception manifests the existence of an internal world ; and—as I venture to add—spiritual perception manifests the existence of a spiritual world.

And observe, yet again, that *religious perception*, like all perception, external or internal, *may become blurred and dulled by misuse*. Muscles unused become flaccid. Eyes, in unlighted caverns, become sightless. The parasite dwindles in size and faculty. So, too, he who ignores the sense of the divine finds that sense less and less impressive. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Who shall say how much of the darkened spiritual perception of man is due to selfishness and sin continued through generations ?

And observe, yet once more, that *religious perception*, like all perception, *may be purified and strengthened by culture and exercise*. The course of the journey from the relative blindness and ignorance of nature to clearer and more vivid vision of the divine is evident. Every step is practical. Religious exercise will strengthen religious perception. The spiritual eye which has been dimmed by misuse or disuse must be fortified by use and right use. As Dr. Martineau has so beautifully said : “Whoever is faithful to a first grace that opens on him shall have

a second in advance of it ; and if still he follows the messenger of God, angels ever brighter shall go before his way. Every duty done leaves the eye more clear, and enables gentler whispers to reach the ear ; every brave sacrifice incurred lightens the weight of the clinging self which holds us back ; every storm of passion swept away leaves the air of the mind transparent for more distant visions ; and thus, by a happy concord of spiritual attractions, the helping graces of Heaven descend, and meet the soul intent to rise.”¹ Doubtless the religious perception of the heathen is often rudimentary and largely atrophied ; on the other hand, how much more than rudimentary our religious perception may become let the saints of Christendom testify—such men, for example, as the Apostle John, Thomas à Kempis, St. Bernard, and Zinzendorf. Theirs is conscious intercourse indeed with the spiritual world. Theirs is open vision. They knew the truth of Von Hardenberg’s aphorism : “ Praying is in religion what thinking is in philosophy.”² As Keble says,—

“ The child-like Faith that asks not sight,
 Waits not for wonder or for sign,
 Believes, because it loves aright,
 Shall see things greater, things Divine !
 Heaven to that gaze shall open wide,
 And brightest angels to and fro
 On messages of love shall glide,
 ’Twixt God above and Christ below.”

¹ *Seat of Authority in Religion*, p. 107.

² Novalis, *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 106.

So much, then, for the reality and characteristics of religious perception. Religious perception, spiritual perception, with all that is given therein of a supernal world, is a fact against which the armies of Positivists and Agnostics may throw themselves again and again, ever to recoil confused and crushed at every advance. Man as man has experience of the divine; and this experience, implying as it does the existence of a divine world, is open to scientific investigation. As James Tait has well said: "The faith of the Theist is not a mere conclusion resting on a logical process: it is a truth impressed by the self-revealing power of God. . . . He who created the instruments by which human spirits communicate, can penetrate the seat of conviction and demonstrate Himself."¹

Further, it is just this religious perception which the gospel of Jesus quickens and develops. As says the late Dr. Stearns, in his admirable *Evidence of Christian Experience*: "The susceptibility for the divine life is innate. No soul but possesses it. It is, indeed, perverted by sin and shrivelled by disuse. But it still exists. What the Divine Grace does is to restore it to its normal exercise, and then present to it its appropriate object."²

Spiritual perception, then, that universal human endowment, however rudimentary or rude, implies, first, human perceptivity of the spiritual world; second,

¹ *Mind in Matter*, 2nd edit., p. 1.

² Page 263.

human perception of the spiritual world ; and, third, a spiritual world mirrored in perception because of the prior perceptivity,—implies, in short, spiritual faculty, spiritual image, and spiritual world. Now, these points clearly seized, some highly interesting definitions of some spiritual things, very difficult to define, straightway follow : I mean the definition of Faith, Inspiration, and Revelation.

Faith, says the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, is *ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων*, which I venture to translate, as I believe with perfect accuracy, “ Faith is our confidence in our spiritual hopes, our conviction of the realities unseen.” Faith is trust in our spiritual intuitions, confidence in our spiritual perceptions. It was by confidence in their spiritual perceptions that “ the elders obtained a good report.” It was by his confidence in his spiritual perceptions that “ Abel offered unto God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain.” It was by this confidence in his spiritual perceptions that Enoch pleased God, and Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house, and Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went. It was by his strong confidence in his spiritual perceptions that “ Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau even concerning things to come.” By confidence in his spiritual perceptions Moses “ forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king ; for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.” Through confidence, too, in his spiritual perceptions Moses “ kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the

blood, that the destroyer of the first-born should not touch them." By confidence in her spiritual perceptions "Rahab perished not with them that were disobedient, having received the spies with peace." And, in the language of the sacred writer, "what shall I more say? for the time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David, and Samuel, and the Prophets, who (through confidence in their spiritual perceptions) subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens." Faith is our confidence in our spiritual perceptions.

Note, then, a corollary. If faith be our confidence in our spiritual perceptions, then religious faith is in full analogy with the constitution of man.

As I have said more than once, there are three worlds of which we have perceptions—the outer world, and the inner world, and the upper world; and knowledge of each world, however elementary, demands in every case an act of faith. By sense-perception we know the external world; by self-perception we know the internal world; and by spirit-perception we know the supernal world.

Moreover, answering to these three worlds are three varieties of faith, as well as three varieties of perception: there is sense-faith, and self-faith, and spirit-faith. By sense-faith I mean our confidence

in our perceptions of the external world. When I make so simple a statement as that "this sky is blue," or "that water is clear," my ultimate authority is really my faith in my perception. By self-faith I mean our confidence in our perceptions of the internal world; and really we can make no assertion concerning ourselves, our pleasures, our pains, our internal perceptions of any kind, without an act of faith, without taking on trust and putting confidence in our perceptions of the inner world. Similarly, spirit-faith is our confidence in our spiritual perceptions.

This truth of the primacy of faith is very unwelcome, I know, to some minds, who seem to expect that all belief must be the outcome of deductive processes and of demonstration, forgetful that you must take your axioms and postulates and definitions on trust. The fact is that religion is no exception here either. For in all three worlds faith precedes proof, perceptive processes are necessarily prior to intellectual processes. If religion must precede theology, and if religion implies faith in our spiritual perceptions, exactly the same prerequisite exists in the psychological and physical kingdoms as well as in the theological. Consciousness must precede psychology, and the deliverances of consciousness must be accepted by faith. Sensation, again, must precede physical science, and all sensations must be accepted by faith. Indeed, objectors to the primacy of faith in things theological, if they would

be consistent, should equally rebel against the primacy of faith in things mental and in things physical.

Intuitions, perceptions, are the basis of all our thinking in whatever sphere, and faith is but our confidence in our perceptions in whatever sphere, and without this confidence we can take no step whatever to further knowledge. There must be confidence in our perceptions of the external world—faith, before we can move a step towards any physical science. There must be confidence in our perceptions of the internal world—faith, before we can move a step towards any psychological science. Therefore, it is scarcely to be wondered at that there must be confidence in our perceptions of the supernal world—faith, before we can move a step towards any theological science.

Neither induction nor deduction can give us all our knowledge ; for all deduction and induction, all reasonings, run back to the concrete, and the concrete is known by intuition, by perception, and in intuitions, in perceptions, our convictions are not the result of demonstration, involving argument, but of vision, involving faith. If there is reasoned truth, where belief is based on obedience to logical processes, there is also perceived truth, where belief is based on confidence in our perceptions. Nay, more, in every instance, perceived truth is always the basis of reasoned truth. Apprehension precedes comprehension ; faith precedes reasoning. To demand, therefore, in theology, spiritual perception as an indispensable

prerequisite is simply in the analogy of all knowledge. We do not accept the reasoning of a blind man upon colours, nor of a deaf man upon music; the student of æsthetic science must have a strongly developed æsthetic sense. Similarly, all theological conceptions ultimately reposing upon religious perceptions, a keen and cultivated religious sense is naturally demanded—in other words, a life of faith. *Pectus facit theologum.*

Again, spiritual perception implies, as we have seen, according to the analogy of all perception, both objective spiritual facts and subjective spiritual faculty. What, then, is the law of clearer spiritual perception?

What else than the law of clearer perception in general? That law is twofold. The fact observed may be nearer to us, and so our perception may be more vivid; *or* the faculty observing may be stimulated, and thus our perception be more vivid. On the one hand, for instance, an invisible star may come within the range of vision; on the other hand, the eye may be aided by a telescope.

Just so there is a twofold mode of increase in spiritual perception. The spiritual fact to be observed may approximate more nearly to us, or from some cause or other the spiritual faculty may become strengthened. On the one hand, there may be a nearer approach of the spiritual world to us, and therefore a more vivid perception, or even a perception otherwise impossible; on the other hand, there

may be an invigoration of the observing faculty, and therefore a more vivid perception, or even a perception otherwise impossible. Thus the supernal world may show itself more intimately to some men ; and, at the same time, another cause will sometimes lead to a parallel result ; for some men seem to have a genius, so to speak, for things spiritual. Further, the two laws of increase frequently co-operate ; one and the same observer is blessed at once by a communication from the world supernal, and by a gift of exalted faculty, as when the ancient prophets heard words of God spoken only to them, being at the same time mentally quickened to hear. Increased spiritual perception, then, depends, like all increased perception, either on the closer proximity of the object, or on the quicker perception of the subject.

But the closer proximity of the spiritual world is *revelation* ; and the quicker spiritual perception is *inspiration*. Thus the law of increased spiritual perception runs as follows : an increased spiritual perception results either from revelation or inspiration, or both.

Thus I have touched, and only touched as yet, upon truths of the highest speculative and practical importance. There is a world above us, of which faith is the organ, inspiration the energy, and revelation the knowledge. The further development of the relations between spiritual perception and revelation, and between spiritual perception and inspiration, I

leave to my next lecture. In that lecture also the relations between revelation and the Bible, revelation and the Christian Consciousness, revelation and the Church, will be considered. As I trust to be then able to show, this one unifying idea of spiritual perception brings under one purview the whole spiritual history of man from his creation to his glorious consummation.

LECTURE III

*SACRED BOOKS, THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS,
AND THE CHURCH AS WITNESSES TO THE
SPIRITUAL WORLD*

FEW who attended the International Congregational Council of 1891 will soon forget the well-set, seemingly robust, and almost youthful figure of Dr. Stearns, Professor of Doctrinal Theology at Bangor Theological Seminary, Maine. Then how frank, clear-sighted, fearless, balanced, and hopeful was his memorable address on the Religious Outlook!

With an extract from Dr. Stearns' book on the *Evidence of Christian Experience* (alas, that we shall have no fuller statement of his views!), let me summarise what I have previously said. Having remarked that various theories have been advanced as to the origin of religion, Dr. Stearns goes on to say: "Rationalistic orthodoxy has explained it through the hypothesis of a primitive revelation, which in the case of the heathen has become corrupt; or has joined with Deism in accepting the theory of innate religious ideas. Unbelief has had its other theories besides the one mentioned. The old explanation, that religion

was a human invention originating in priestcraft and the policy of kings, has yielded to finer, if not more satisfactory, views. The same may be said of the theory—as old as the days of classic heathenism, but revived in the last century by Hume, and in our own by Dr. F. Strauss—that fear is the cause of religion, *primus in orbe deos fecit timor*. The hypothesis which has received most favour in the present generation, on account of its ready combination with the scientific doctrine of evolution, is animism. According to Tylor, who has developed this view in his *Primitive Culture*, men are led to the belief in a soul that is independent of the body by the phenomena of dreams, of death, and of certain morbid states. The idea thus originated they transfer to other forms of existence—plants, animals, and even lifeless things. Thus they are led to infer the existence of higher spirits, which became objects of worship. According to Herbert Spencer, who closely agrees with Tylor as to the origin of the idea of the soul, religion has its source in the worship of ancestral spirits.”

“But all these theories,” Dr. Stearns goes on to say, “are inadequate and artificial. The simple, and only satisfactory, explanation of the origin of religion is identical with the explanation of its maintenance and present existence. The actual presence of God, and His influence upon a spirit made for communion with Himself, account for religion in all its stages. God reveals Himself to men and communicates Himself to them in all ages, in all nations, and under all

conditions. The defect and perversion of the human soul may dull the vision of God, and make it possible for men to fall into the grossest errors respecting Him. But all have some knowledge of God, and find their souls going out to the divine in some response to His revelation. God Himself is the cause of the beginning, the progress, and the present power of religion.”¹

So far Dr. Stearns. He thus says, under slightly different phraseology, what I have been saying all along. My main points have been these:—First, religion is primarily religious or spiritual perception. Second, spiritual perception demands two conditions: viz., on the one hand, a spirit, a spiritual sense, a capability in man for consciously perceiving any phase of the life supernal which may present itself to him; and, on the other hand, a world supernal, which under some form or other comes into relation with man’s spirit. Briefly, religious perception follows upon the contact of the spirit in man and some disclosure of the divine; in other words, spiritual perception results from the coalescence of spiritual fact and spiritual faculty.

And, thirdly, another very interesting and vital fact has emerged in our previous discussion:—Spiritual perception is capable of becoming finer and finer.

Indeed, as we have seen, there are two mani-

¹ Pages 38, 39.

fold conditions of this progressive refinement. The spiritual faculty may be improved, or the spiritual fact may become more vivid. Man may cultivate his spiritual sense, or God may approximate more closely to man.

If Christian apprehension of the divine, for example, is superior to heathen apprehension, the fact is no more anomalous than the more precise vision of the educated observer, and the more delicate ear of the skilled musician. Exercise develops any sense, whether external or internal. Drill the hand of the dyer or the tongue of the tea-taster, and hand and tongue become daily surer and more sensitive. Cultivate introspection by introspection, and the philosophical faculty of self-observation becomes daily more minute, accurate, and complete. Similarly, strengthen the perception of the divine by attention to the divine, and these divine intuitions become clearer, more frequent, and more growingly significant.

The point is of importance to every student of every theology. For wise thoughts upon God will be a slow birth, and will be dependent upon intellectual power; but strong sense of God, religion as contrasted with theology, may be a rapid growth, and will be largely dependent upon spiritual exercise. Both intuitions of the divine and thoughts upon the divine have their place; they are each to be had by appropriate cultivation,—increased religion by religious culture; increased thoughts upon religion by theological culture: further, perceptions of the divine are

empty, are experiences which are incommunicable, if they do not pass over into thoughts of the divine ; and thoughts of the divine also are vain, if they be not based upon perceptions of the divine. In religion, as in all other matters, the relation between thought and perception is this :—Perceptions are the basis of thought, and the more vivid the perception the more solid is the basis : thought is the superstructure, but the superstructure is wholly in air unless it have a basis of perception. There is also a reciprocal effect : perceptions themselves become purer and stronger as thought is brought to bear upon the earlier and less distinct perceptions.

Now really, as has been well said by Thomas Hill, formerly President of Harvard : “ In our power to see these intuitions lies the glory of our intellectual nature—in the power to see things divine ; and it is the salvation of the soul, when, seeing divine truth, we seize it with the living and earnest grasp of faith. It is this ability to see and believe the things of God which enables man to receive the revelation through the written and spoken word ; and the higher the native ability of a man, the greater the value of the revelation to him.”

“ It is in vain,” continues Dr. Hill, “ to give the best instruction in geometry to a student who is utterly deficient in mathematical power ; but the best text-books and instruction are of most value to those who have the highest native genius, and who can appreciate their opportunities. Thus also

in theology : those whose vision of divine things is by nature clearest, and whose hearts are most nearly free from sin, are, in general, the very persons who most eagerly welcome, and most thoroughly profit by, the revelations made upon Mount Sinai, and upon the Mount of the Beatitudes, on the Mount of Transfiguration, on Calvary and on Olivet." ¹

I have said that there are two great modes of increasing our spiritual perceptiveness. On the one hand, our spiritual faculty, like all our faculties, may be invigorated ; and, on the other hand, the spiritual facts to be perceived may be increased. You may improve the faculty, or you may add to the facts. In other words, on the one hand, our spiritual perceptions may themselves be augmented either by a divine gift of new revelations, or by a human assimilation of past revelations. But, on the other hand, there is another mode of augmentation. You may invigorate the perceptive faculty itself, and that in two ways. Not only may our spiritual faculty be developed by exercise, but it may also be immediately increased by a divine energy. You may strengthen a faculty by giving new life to it, as well as by putting its old life into exercise. Inspiration may recreate as well as exercise. There is an increase of vitality which may come from the breath of the Almighty, which, to say the least, is quite as

¹ *A Statement of the Natural Sources of Theology, etc.*, Andover, U.S.A., 1877, p. 28.

real as the increase of vitality which comes from exerting what spiritual force we already possess.

Thus the methods of increasing spiritual perception are fourfold—two divine, and two human: viz., by revelation and by inspiration, which are divine; and by assimilation and spiritual exercise, which are human.

Upon that divine energising which is Inspiration, and upon that human increase which results from Spiritual Culture, or Exercise, I do not here say more; but upon revelation and assimilation, especially in relation to the Bible, and Christian Consciousness, and the Church, it is desirable to add a few words.

Observe, then, that I use the term “revelation”—and, as I venture to believe, with strict justice—in a very wide sense.

Every supernal fact which discloses itself immediately to man I call a divine revelation. I do so because similar things should have identical names. Spiritual faculty does not suffice to give us spiritual perception, any more than the possession of the sense of vision gives us objects of sight; spiritual sight, like visual, only follows upon having something to see, and spiritual vision ensues whenever some supernal fact comes sufficiently near to man that man is conscious of the heavenly approach. And all such disclosures to us of supernal facts I call revelations. All perceptions of the spiritual world, all spiritual perceptions, I call revelations.

Revelations, then, are not confined to the Bible. Indeed, strictly speaking, to me—to any living soul

of this nineteenth century—the Bible is not a revelation, at any rate of this direct kind; for its contents, whatever they were to the prophets and apostles of whom they speak, are not to us immediate perceptions, but mediate reproductions—reproductions of what were once immediate perceptions; in short, strictly speaking, the Bible is not a revelation to us, but a record of revelations to others. Later on I speak of these revelations as mediate. It is true, however, that, sometimes, as I read, a sudden light may flash upon the page, or rather upon my soul, and by the divine grace what was a record of a past revelation to another becomes a present revelation to me. Thus, at times, the presence of the Holy Spirit with me transforms a mediate record, a mediate revelation we may allowably say, into an immediate perception, an immediate revelation; nevertheless, in the Bible as such we rather have a record of revelations than revelations themselves. Revelations appear wherever, and to whomsoever, the supernal and spiritual world discloses—reveals—itsself in immediate spiritual perception. In every spiritual perception there is a spirit that perceives, and there is a spiritual fact that is perceived; and that spiritual fact is a revelation, a disclosure, to man of some aspect of the spiritual world.

Certainly every prophet of ancient Israel had these spiritual perceptions; every prophet received revelations from above.

In the prophets we see the junction of earth and

heaven, of man and God, of human percipience and divine revelation. Man listens with intelligence to the word of God. In this exalted spiritual state, as I have said in my *Inspiration of the Old Testament Inductively Considered*, without trance, without coma, the inner eye, the spiritual sense, received such quickening that it directly apprehended the divine revelation presented. The prophet had audience of Deity, and saw things he could never have seen of himself, and heard words which no acumen of his would have enabled him to hear. The prophets were men, made in the image of Deity, who, with intelligence and insight, heard once more, as it were, "the voice of God walking in the garden toward the time of the breeze." The prophets had many spiritual perceptions—in other words, received revelations.

In the apostles, again, we see the same spiritual perception, the same capacity for receiving revelations. The truths, for instance, which Paul announces he declares to be of heavenly origin. "I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received." "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia." What Paul taught, he declared to have been received from above. His spiritual knowledge was not the product of his own thinking. He

simply "made known" that which he had learned in direct contact with heaven; he had many a spiritual perception; his was the gift of receiving revelations.

Further, in our Lord Himself this faculty of spiritual perception is at its highest. In His lightest words there is perception of the unseen,—revelation. When we know little about these unparalleled words of Jesus, we may think little about them; when we know more, we greatly wonder; and the more we know, the more distant they show themselves from the range of the highest, to say nothing of ordinary, human achievement. His is the purest and most exalted spiritual perceptiveness: His is the clearest sense of the reality of revelations.

Consider, for a moment, in illustration, the calmness of Christ's speech. There is no throb of excitement in it; there are no signs in the utterance of any thrill of nerve, of any quickening of pulse, of any beating of heart; not even when His words deal with the profoundest and most moving truths. Contrast, for instance, the addresses of Isaiah and Jesus. Isaiah's words throb manifestly; they communicate their movement to us; our souls beat in response. It would seem that the truths which Isaiah conveyed so moved and excited him that his very words, read centuries afterwards, start a quicker current of feeling. On the other hand, it would seem that the truths uttered by our Lord were in no sense new to Him; they were His familiar thoughts; all the things He

speaks of are to Him the veriest commonplaces, and therefore He is as calm in utterance as in thinking. If the reading of the seventeenth of John moves us ever more deeply as we think and sympathise, the words themselves are almost cold in their repose. He who speaks so movingly of the "many mansions," and "glory," and "the Father," and "union," breathes the atmosphere of all this, and tells simply what are to Him the plainest and commonest facts.

The life of Jesus is a life of constant spiritual perception. The revelations of the Father are His hourly experiences. In Christ our Lord we have spiritual perception at its highest, and revelation therefore of the clearest and most continuous kind.

All this is highly important truth. Revelation, the approach within the range of mortal vision of the world supernal, appears conspicuously in the prophets and apostles of Scripture, to say nothing of Him who is the Antitype of every prophet, and the Potentate of whom every apostle was the ambassador.

But, at the present juncture of Christian thought, it is equally important to remember that spiritual perception is the privilege of man as man, and that there has been revelation, immediate disclosure of the heavenly world to man, outside the range of Holy Scripture.

Every spiritual experience of the Christian man—I do not say every thought, for thought is but a mental chewing, so to speak, of the cud of perceptions previously had—every spiritual perception of

the Christian consciousness, has also an element of revelation about it ; for in every such experience or perception there is a something perceived, and that something perceived is a revelation made by Heaven to me. God has not withdrawn Himself wholly beyond the range of my spiritual vision. There are times, when He and His messengers condescend to come within the range of my spiritual sight ; and at such times, what I learn, I learn by supernal disclosure to me, I know by revelation. Theology, therefore, the scientific study of religion, is not confined to Biblical Theology, the scientific study of the doctrines and facts of the Bible ; for religion is primarily spiritual perception, and spiritual perception implies a spiritual world perceived, and a spiritual world perceived implies a spiritual world which reveals itself. Seeing, then, that there are spiritual perceptions, revelations, given to me again and again in my Christian consciousness, a necessary part of theological study is just my Christian consciousness.

Further, this perceptive gift of the Christian consciousness becomes in some rare minds during the history of Christianity as distinctive as genius in the poet or artist. There are men who by native gift and cultivation see where others argue, apprehend in the sudden flash of intuition where others laboriously follow by the slow light of reason. There are some great men whose greatness appears in their goodness, and whose goodness gives them a clear vision of the divine. Being pure in heart, they see God. Being

holy men, they speak as they are moved by the Holy Ghost. Theirs is a life of open vision. Their saintly lives are lives of constant spiritual perception, of constant revelation. Therefore a necessary part of theological study is the Christian consciousness of such saintly men.

Nay, more, there are times in the history of the Christian Church when spiritual perceptions of an identical kind are given apparently to many souls at once. The heavenly disclosure is made to many at once. Revelations are given, spiritual perceptions are imparted, to the elect, as well as to one elect soul. The church of a whole country or epoch seems stirred by some common anxiety, or some common sense of new truth. Here, too, if similar things are to have the same name, we have revelation also; and the Trinitarian trend of the fourth century of our era, for example, and the Soteriological trend of the Reformation, and the trend to-day towards Catholicity, are, it would seem, due to spiritual perceptions given from above to many minds at once, are due to revelation of the world unseen.

Revelation appears, that is to say, in the individual Christian consciousness, and in the collective Christian consciousness, as well as in the books of the Bible, and, wherever appearing, calls for scientific study.

Yet more,—in the light of what has already been said,—there are, if spiritual perceptions are given to man as man, revelations outside the pale of Christianity altogether.

In the heathen mind there are doubtless many ideas of a purely human origin, due to personal thought and to the thoughts of contemporaries and predecessors. But the heathen mind apparently has spiritual perceptions as well,—has disclosures, therefore, to itself made from the world supernal,—has revelations.

Sir John Lubbock, for example, in his *Origin of Civilisation*, quotes from Arbrousset's *Tour at the Cape of Good Hope* the following touching remarks of a Kaffir: "Your tidings," he said, "are what I want; and I was seeking before I knew you, as you shall hear and judge for yourselves. Twelve years ago I went to feed my flocks. The weather was hazy. I sat down upon a rock, and asked myself sorrowful questions; yes, sorrowful, because I was unable to answer them. Who has touched the stars with his hands? On what pillars do they rest? I asked myself. The waters are never weary; they know no other law than to flow, without ceasing, from morning till night, and from night till morning. But where do they stop? And who makes them flow thus? The clouds also come and ago, and burst in water over the earth. Whence come they? Who sends them? The diviners certainly do not give us rain. For how could they do it? And why do I not see them with my own eyes when they go up to heaven to fetch it? I cannot see the wind. But what is it? Who brings it, makes it blow, and roar and terrify us? Do I know how the corn sprouts? Yesterday there was not a

blade in my field ; to-day I returned to the field and found some. Who can give to the earth the wisdom and power to produce it ? Then I buried my face in both my hands.”

Mr. Budge, in his *Babylonian Life*, cites the following Akkadian Psalm to God :—

“ In heaven who is great ? Thou alone art great !
 On earth who is great ? Thou only !
 When thy voice soundeth in heaven, the gods fall prostrate.
 When thy voice soundeth on earth, the spirits kiss the dust.
 O thou, thy words who can resist ?
 Who can rival them ?
 Among the gods, thy brothers, thou hast no equal.
 God, my creator, may he stand by my side.
 Keep thou the door of my lips !
 Guard thou my hands, O Lord of light !
 O Lord, who trusteth in thee, do thou benefit his soul.”

Says one of the Orphic hymns (I quote from that fascinating book *The Unknown God*, by C. Loring Brace) :—

“ O Zeus Kronios, sceptre-bearer, most high, mighty one, self-begotten, father of gods and men, begetter of all, beginning of all things, end of all things, earth-quaker, increaser, purifier, all-shaker, lightner and thunderer, creator Zeus, hear me ; thou of many forms, grant me health without fault, and divine peace, and the glory of wealth without stain !”

“ On an unpublished tablet in the British Museum ” (I quote from the second volume of Freeman Clarke’s *Ten Great Religions*), “ is this prayer of King Asshur-ba-ni-pal, B.C. 650 :—

“ May the look of pity that shines in thine eternal face dispel my griefs !

“ May I never feel the anger and wrath of the God !

“ May my omissions and sins be wiped out !

“ May I find reconciliation with him, for I am the servant of his power, the adorer of the great gods !

“ May thy powerful face come to my help ! May it shine like heaven, and bless me with happiness and abundance of riches !

“ May it bring forth in abundance, like the earth, happiness and every sort of good ! ”

The ancient Mexicans recognised a Supreme Being and addressed Him as “ the God by whom we live ” ; “ thou Omnipresent, who knoweth all our thoughts, and giveth all gifts ” ; “ without whom man is nothing ” ; “ invisible, without body, one God, of perfection and purity ” ; “ under whose wings we find repose and sure defence.” They even baptised children with the formula : “ Let these holy drops wash away the sin that it received before the foundation of the world ; so that the child may be new-born.”

Prayer, indeed, is universal. There is no people which does not present supplications to the supernal world. Men pray in China and in India. Prayer is a large part of the worship of the Mohammedan. Prayers, in great numbers, have been sculptured on the pyramids of Egypt and in the libraries of Assyria.

Even the Buddhist prays, as when he says before the image of Buddha :—

“Thou in whom innumerable creatures believe !
 Thou Victor over the hosts of evil !
 Thou All-wise, come down to our world !
 Made perfect and glorified by innumerable bygone revolutions ;
 always pitiful, always gracious !
 Look down upon us ; for the time has come to pour blessings
 on all creatures.
 Be gracious to us from thy throne built in thy heavenly world.
 Thou art the eternal redemption of all creatures ; therefore bow
 down to us with all thy unstained heavenly societies !”

Now, what shall be said concerning such utterances, and the myriads like unto them? Shall we say they are nothing but man seeking after God? Shall we be satisfied to declare that they are gropings in the dark wholly self-originated? I prefer to say they are the outcome of God's seeking after man. Must we not avow that, gropings in the dark as they are, they are gropings suggested by feelings which are God-originated? Surely they are the outcome of spiritual perceptions, reflected doubtless upon mirrors very marred by sin and sensuality ; but still the outcome of perceptions, of poor *impressions* and miserable *expressions* doubtless—still the outcome of revelations from the world supernal. In the experiences of the heathen man I cannot but find room for revelations of the unseen ; and these, too, any theology worthy of the name must study.

And yet again, what is the real basis of our so-called Natural Theology? The facts of Nature, many

have said. And what are the actual results of our so-called Natural Theology? Arguments for the Being of God, many have said. With neither conclusion can I agree, in the light of what I have said. The basis of Natural Theology is not the facts of nature, but our spiritual perceptions by which we interpret nature,—revelations from above by which nature becomes unified and glorified. Nay, I do not hesitate to say, that there are no valid arguments for the Being of God, whether it be the Argument from First Cause, or the Argument from Order, or the Argument from Design, or the Argument from the Nature of Man, or the Argument from History, or the Argumentum a Consentu Gentium,—there is, I say, no argument whatever for the Being of God which does not derive almost its entire cogency from facts prior to all arguments—I mean the facts of spiritual perception, the self-revelations of the divine. Having, by revelations to us, a sense of the divine, we are able to blend our *impressions* with all our knowledge, and so give *expression* to our perceptions in terms of intellect,—we are able, that is to say, to build up a Natural Theology.

All spiritual perceptions, then, whether in the Bible, in the Church, in the Individual Christian, or in the Individual Man, imply perceptions of external spiritual facts,—imply, that is, a spiritual, heavenly, and supernal world: in a word, imply revelations. The point is of the supremest importance. For it at once clarifies and unifies all theology. Theology is

the science of religion, and religion is fundamentally spiritual perception, and spiritual perception implies revelation. Theology, then, is the science of revelation ; and that whether Revelation, the self-disclosure of the supernal, is found in Nature (Natural Theology), or Heathenism (Ethnic Theology), or the Bible (Biblical Theology), or the Individual or Collective Christian Consciousness (Church Theology). But upon this more presently.

Observe, next, the high importance of the *assimilation* of past revelations. All our knowledge is not perceptive. There are the thoughts we derive from perceptions—thoughts of a greater or less complexity. And there are perceptions of the past which are merely the memories of the present.

It is so in all science. There are the observations we ourselves have made, there are the much more voluminous observations which others have made, and there are the inferences which have been drawn by us and others from these collective observations,—inferences, too, which are often inferences from inferences.

The same is true of our knowledge of the world supernal. There are the spiritual perceptions, the revelations we have individually had of the supernal world, mostly a very limited series ; and there are the spiritual perceptions which others have had of the supernal world, which is a series of a much more extended range ; and then there are the thoughts

and inferences which our minds have drawn from these spiritual perceptions.

Now, in the education and information of the spirit of man much is due, doubtless, to our personal experiences of the spiritual kind ; but much more is due to our knowledge of the personal experiences of others ; and, again, much is due to the thoughts of others suggested by these personal experiences.

The process of spiritual acquisition, indeed, is something like this :—First, personal experiences are gained by our own spiritual faculties ; next, these experiences of a spiritual kind we attempt to express in language more or less ably ; next, more accurate intellectual hold upon our experiences, whether by the way of ascertaining exactly what our experiences are, or by the way of ascertaining exactly what our experiences involve, is gained by knowledge we obtain from others. Other minds have enjoyed the same experiences, have grappled with the thoughts which these very experiences have suggested to us, have built up systems of thought and expression upon the foundations we are endeavouring to build upon.

Besides, records many abound of these experiences, and their expression and their unfolding. All these records are important aids to our knowledge.

Thus steadily we assimilate the spiritual perceptions given to us, harmonising them in thought with our other perceptions, physical and psychological ; and, by the aid of the experiences and thoughts of others which we also assimilate, we build up the structure of

our beliefs and convictions. The process is protracted. It is only with slow steps that we pass from the unreasoning to the rational state. As Lord Bacon wisely said: "It is true that a little philosophy [he means intellectual study] inclineth man's mind to Atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion; for while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them and go no further. But when it beholdeth the chain of them confederate, and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity."

Spiritual perceptions are apparently given to every man; the translation of those perceptions into terms of the intellect is a prolonged, tedious, and painful process. It ever requires a laborious education to do these two things well at one and the same time,—to feel and to think. It is easy to feel, and it is easy to think; but in the endeavour to combine feeling and thinking, the perception is apt to be dulled whilst the intellect has not arrived at clearness. Nevertheless, we must advance from the state of feeling to that of knowledge, from perception to cognition, from apprehension to comprehension.

Therefore, alas! the path of the religious thinker is too often like the journeying of ancient Israel,—a wilderness intervenes between Egypt and Canaan, so tangled and wearisome at times that the weaker spirits long to return to the flesh-pots of the land of sense and appetite. The religious thinker cannot escape from the condition of all knowledge. His

career commences in feeling. God and Christ, sin and salvation, are experienced rather than intelligently known. His first strong perceptions will probably lessen in intensity at the outset, and for a time he may seem to lose more than he gains. He must just persevere. In the end he will attain a more lasting and certain experience, when intense feeling, keen intellect, and robust will have arrived at harmonious and delightful working in the fearless realisation of Christian truth.

Let me state the thought before me with all brevity. It is this :—The data for all Christian thought are perceptions, spiritual perceptions, the spiritual perceptions of ourselves and of others. These perceptions, if they are to be of any permanent value, must become part of our intellectual furniture,—they must be assimilated. Perceptions unassimilated are incommunicable. They are empty memories of feeling which we are incapable of describing to ourselves or to others. These spiritual perceptions must be assimilated, must be translated into the language known to us, and their inmost implications sucked out by careful thought. To have revelations is much ; to assimilate revelations is more.

Indeed, the law of spiritual knowledge would appear to be this :—To catch a glimpse of some spiritual fact, then to assimilate ; when we have extracted its very marrow, to catch a glimpse of some further spiritual fact, then to assimilate ; again, when we have exhausted the sweetness of this further fact, to catch

yet another glimpse of some additional truth : and thus to advance up the pyramid of truth,—one step upwards, then rest on the level ; another step upwards, and another rest on the level ; and so on from height to height.

It is this necessity for the assimilation of spiritual perceptions that renders the Bible so supremely important. Not only were spiritual perceptions of an exalted and ever progressive kind given to the patriarchs and prophets and apostles of whom the Bible speaks, but we find in Holy Scripture revelations assimilated, expressed, endowed with growing power.

Hence, too, the value of our liturgies and preachings, our systems of religious thought, our hymns, our churches, our sacred literature,—all are spiritual perceptions, and thoughts suggested by spiritual perceptions, not in vague and unlettered sentiment, but assimilated.

Let me now gather up the threads of what I have been saying.

The great need of our time is a new theology,—a theology, and a new theology. I know it has for some time been fashionable to deride theology and theologians. But circumstances are compelling many to pay heed to the thought expressed so ably by Dr. Martineau, when he says : “ Theology, says Mr. Macaulay, in his mischievous way, is not a progressive science. It may, however, be retrogressive,

and it is sure to repay flippant neglect by lending its empty space to mean delusions. To its great problems *some* account will always be attempted; and there is much to choose between the solutions, however imperfect, found by reverential wisdom, and the degrading falsehoods tendered in reply by the indifferent and superficial. Even in their failures there is a vast difference between the explorings of the seeing and the blind.”¹

Yes, the need of our age is a theology worthy of the closing years of this nineteenth century. For after all, whatever may satisfy Mr. Frivolous and Mr. Skim-the-surface or Mr. Whatever-is-is-best, Mr. Earnest Man, who realises even faintly the critical, the sceptical, nay the destructive tendencies of our day, and who recognises in any degree how increasingly necessary, and at the same time how increasingly difficult, is the life of faith, will not be able to rest until he has done what he can to give, first to himself, and then to others, a reason for the faith in the divine which is in him. It is not without justice that Mr. W. R. Greg has said: “The religion of a nation ought to be the embodiment of its highest intelligence in the most solemn moments of that intelligence. It should be, if not the outcome, at least in harmony with the outcome, of the deepest thoughts, the richest experience, the widest culture, the finest intuitions of the best and wisest minds

¹ *Essays, Philosophical and Theological*, vol. i., pp. 329, 330.

that nation counts among its children. . . . The religion of a nation—its creed, its notions concerning supernal natures and invisible things—its views of God and a future life, in short—ought to be such as the noblest and most enlightened Intelligence of the nation can cordially accept and embrace, and will not either last, or guide, govern, purify, and elevate the nation if it be not.” And, alas! is there not some reason for what Mr. Greg goes on to say, though it must be owned in a somewhat too Cassandra-like fashion: “Now, I allege that in England the highest intelligence is not only not in harmony with the nation’s creed, but is distinctly at issue with it; does not accept it; largely, indeed, repudiates it in the distinctest manner, or, for peace and prudence’ sake, discountenances it by silence, even when it does not demur to it in words.”

Nor is unbelief confined to some leading intellectual circle. The sceptical spirit has filtered down and down, to lower and lower social levels. The satire of Claus Harms, in his *New Ninety-five Theses*, is not without point amongst us, as when he says: “We read in an old hymn, ‘Two places hast thou, O man, before thee.’ But in our day they have abolished the devil and plugged up hell.”

In all this I see the need of a New Theology.

By a new theology I do not mean a new religion. Theology is not religion: it is the science of religion. Religion affords the facts with which theology deals; these facts have not many additions: theology changes

from age to age as man sees more clearly the bearings and unity of the unchanging facts of religion.

What I mean by a new theology is a theology written in the light of modern needs and modern knowledge. A new theology is not a new Bible, but a new and more exact interpretation of the old Bible. Nor does a new theology part with the historic faith of the Church. The staple of any new theology must necessarily be truths long known reset. A new theology, being nothing but an attempt to grasp the meaning of divine revelation in its entirety, whatever of truth the past has brought forth it must embody under pain of being incomplete.

And any new theology must be extra-confessional. The day of French, and Scotch, and Genevan, and German, and American theologies, of Episcopal, and Baptist, and Presbyterian, and Congregational theologies, is almost closed, and Protestant Theology is beginning to assume an extra-confessional development.

Nor can theology stay there. Side by side with the historic Protestant Churches are the historic Romish Churches and the historic Churches of the East. Theology is, or ought to be, one and not many. Researches must be pushed until there is but one Christian Theology. As R. D. Hitchcock has said: "Sectarian answers [to the question as to what is Christianity] are behind the time. No creed of Orient or Occident, ancient or modern, has spoken the final word."¹

¹ *Eternal Atonement*, p. 84.

Nay, more, the new theology should be international. Theology should be universal as man, reasoned as logic, lasting as the soul. Theology should be universal and unassailable, reasoned and reasonable, infallible because true, eternal because the just rethinking by man of the thoughts of the Eternal. In short, the great intellectual need of the time is being felt for a theology which is truly catholic, and really international, and surely scientific. Towards this goal the age seems moving. In fact, what Rome pretends to teach—catholic and infallible truth—all religious thinkers consciously or unconsciously are endeavouring to discover and proclaim.

And this new theology must have a wider basis than Schleiermacher gave it. Schleiermacher made Theology synonymous with Christian Theology. According to his view, theology is a doctrine of Christian faith; possessing Christian faith, theology will give intellectual clearness, Christian faith being the faith of the regenerate. In such *Glaubenslehre* there is much of the highest value; and although German theology since Schleiermacher has been almost wholly narrowed to this view of theology as Christian Theology, it has given to the world much theological thought of the highest value. Still, the theology I contemplate is a theology for man as man, as well as man as Christian. The Mahometan and Hindu and Buddhist should find in this new theology full credit for what of truth he holds, whilst this proposed science should show him clearly why

and where truth demands that he go further. If God has revealed anything of His will to ethnic peoples, theology, the science of all revelations of the divine, should take account of ethnic as well as Christian revelations.

Indeed, this new and international theology will be the scientific classification and unification of all the revelations given in the spiritual perceptions of men. Those revelations, those disclosures of the world supernal, are found in what is called Natural and Ethnic Theology as well as in Theology which is Biblical and Churchly.

Further, as this idea of a new theology goes beyond Schleiermacher and the common German conception, so it must go beyond Ritschl. In two respects:—First, Ritschl finds the ultimate source and test of truth in the spiritual consciousness of the Christian: the theology I am thinking of would find that source and criterion of truth in the spiritual consciousness of man. Second, Ritschl knows nothing in the Christian consciousness but feeling; his theology is based upon what is purely subjective: the theology I have in mind knows in the religious consciousness the objective causes of consciousness; it is a theology with objective foundations.

Two tasks, in short, lie before any adequate theology.

The first task is to determine the sources of religious truth, and their relative value—to rigorously examine

that is to say, whether Scripture, or the Church, or Reason, or Intuition, or the Christian Consciousness constitutes the criterion of religious truth, or whether some combination of these sources is the test of truth, and which is the supreme source. Very briefly, our task is to frame a Fundamental Theology.

The second task is, by the aid of the principles established in Fundamental Theology, to construct a system of religious truth. To a Fundamental Theology a Doctrinal Theology must be added.

One problem of any adequate theology, I say, is to investigate the validity and relative value of the several sources of religious knowledge, such as the revelations of the divine in Nature, in the Ethnic Religions, in the Bible, in the current of Christian History. Track, for example, the great, the apparently irreconcilable divisions among religious thinkers to their primary causes, and they are mostly found to originate in differences of view upon the validity or upon the relative value of the sources of religious truth. When the Rationalist differs from the Mystic, the Protestant from the Romanist, the Deist from the Agnostic, the Buddhist from the Mahometan, the Brahman from the Parsi, track these pronounced diversities of opinion to their origin, and they are all seen to depend on initial differences concerning the validity or relative value of the several sources of religious knowledge, whether nature, or heathendom, or parts of heathendom, or the Bible, or reason, or the Church, or any Church—in other words, they are

all primarily differences of view in Fundamental Theology.

Indeed, if the middle walls of partition between faith and faith, and sect and sect, are to fall, the blasting material must be supplied by Fundamental Theology. Well might Mark Pattison close his instructive essay on the "Tendencies of Religious Thought in England from 1688—1750," in the *Essays and Reviews*, by the wise words with which he concludes,—they refer to all time, as well as to the days of the so-called *Seculum Rationalisticum*. "Whoever," he writes, "could take the religious literature of the present day as a whole, and endeavour to make out clearly on what basis Revelation is supposed by it to rest, whether on Authority, on the Inward Light, on Reason, on Self-evidencing Scripture, or on a combination of the four, or some of them, and in what proportions, would probably find he had undertaken a perplexing but not altogether profitless inquiry."

The opinion is just. The intellectual struggles of the modern religious world are essentially *Battles over Standpoints*, as I am accustomed to say. All theological disputes run up into Fundamental Theology, which deals with the validity and relative value of the sources of religious truth. These sources are fourfold: viz., the revelations of the supernal world, first, in man; second, in the ethnic faiths; third, in the Bible; fourth, in the historical course of Christianity. Fundamental Theology, therefore, treats of the validity and relative value (1) of Natural Theology,

(2) of Ethnic Theology, (3) of Biblical Theology, and (4) of Historical Theology.

Fundamental Theology having thus framed its great governing laws and principles, in the light of these laws and principles a system of doctrine may be built up. To the elaboration of this international and extra-confessional theology—one, universal, reasoned, reasonable, infallible because true, eternal so far as it is the just rethinking of the thoughts of God—may many of our best and noblest give their best years. “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few.”

Finally, there are a few practical conclusions suggested by the study of the facts and implications of spiritual perception.

For the culture of our spiritual perception, our religious sense, surely the following hints have been suggested:—

First: Repress competing senses, whether of sense or self.

Second: Seek inspiration from above by prayer, and from below by intercourse with inspired books, and inspired men, and inspired societies.

Third: Seek immediate revelation from above by personal thought and act, and by assimilating the records of revelation in the Bible and in the treasures of the history of the Church.

For, in the words of Tertullian, “these testimonies of the soul [spiritual perceptions, that is] are as

simple as they are true, as trite as they are simple,
as common as they are trite, as natural as they are
common, as divine as they are natural."

" Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste
His works. Admitted once to His embrace,
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before:
Thine eye shall be instructed; and thine heart,
Made pure, shall relish, with divine delight
Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought."

Cowper.

LECTURE IV

THE FOOLISH CONFLICT BETWEEN RELIGION AND SCIENCE

THAT there has been, and still is, a conflict between Religion and Science, I do not stay to illustrate at any length. Let it be granted that the treatment of Galileo by the Inquisition is an indelible blot upon the Church of that day. Let it be also granted that the burning of Giordano Bruno was a crime. Nay, for the sake of argument, let the somewhat coloured and warm description presented by Dr. Draper, in his well-known *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, be esteemed to be truth, cold and colourless truth. For physical science has indubitably had to fight its way, harassed on all sides by the mounted troops of religion. And I am old enough to remember with shame the personal attacks which were made in many a pulpit and religious periodical upon the illustrious author of that remarkable book which has revolutionised, nay constituted, the science of biology,—I mean, of course, Darwin's *Origin of Species*.

All I venture to say in extenuation of the conflict is that the fault appears to lie rather in human than

in religious nature. Not without advantage to the race, all new truth has to pass through war to victory. All new views, whether concerning nature or man or God, must be prepared to throw down their gage, and be ready to do battle with all comers, before they can be received into the honoured company of accredited truths. I do not even know that it would be right to say, Would it were otherwise! But if there be fault, the fault is a fault of human nature, not merely of religious nature. Religious men treat scientists no worse than they treat religious men—nor, let me add, than scientists treat each other. Man is slow to learn that coercion is a poor minister of truth, just as man is slow to believe that all persecution for opinion, of whatever kind, is ill-advised. Alas that toleration is a virtue of such slow growth! Alas that freedom of opinion is a doctrine more frequently preached than practised!

In what I have to say upon the conflict between religion and science, I am anxious not to take either side. Acknowledging, and lamenting, the existence of the conflict, believing, as I do, that the conflict is based largely upon mistake and wholly on unwisdom, my desire is to say a few words as a mediator and peacemaker. For let men calmly and carefully consider what science is, and what religion is, and they will speedily come to see that any conflict between religion and science is, like so many great wars, the result of misunderstanding.

For what is science ?

Science is not nature : science is the product of the human mind considering nature. The distinction is important. God creates nature ; man creates science. Science is man's interpretation of nature. Nature is divine in origin ; science is human. Doubtless, in endeavouring to acquaint himself, by observation and experiment and thought, with the facts and laws of nature, the man of science is endeavouring to rethink the divine thoughts embodied in nature ; nevertheless, man's rethinking is *man's* rethinking. From the facts nature provides man constructs the science. Algæ and fungi, mosses and ferns, horse-tails and lycopods,—acrogens, endogens, and exogens of many kinds exist in nature ; man observes and classifies these facts of vegetation, and constitutes the science of botany. The habits and instincts and structure of man, the wide world over, are open in nature to observation ; therefrom man builds up the science of anthropology. Science, then, is not nature : science results when man carefully considers nature.

Now what is religion ?

Religion is not theology. Again the distinction is important. Religion provides the facts from which man makes theology. Theology is the product of the human mind considering religion. In fact, theology is to religion what science is to nature. Nature is the subject-matter of science ; religion is the subject-matter of theology. Religion, like nature, belongs to the domain of facts, not of the interpreta-

tion of facts; theology, like science, belongs to the domain of the interpretation of facts. Like nature, religion is divine in source; theology, like science, has a human origin. Just as the mental characteristics of man are open to the observer, whence man makes the science of psychology, so, similarly, the religious characteristics of man are open to the observer, and he constructs therefrom the science of theology. As nature affords the materials for science, so religion affords the materials for theology. Science is nature observed and systematised; theology is religion observed and systematised. Religion must be no more confounded with theology than science with nature. Religion is not theology; theology is not religion: theology results when religion is carefully investigated.

From these two considerations—namely, that religion affords us facts, not their interpretation, whereas science affords us the interpretation of facts, not facts themselves—some important conclusions follow.

One conclusion is that religion and science cannot be compared. They belong to different realms. They can no more be likened than a skylark and Shelley's poem on the skylark; or, to be more exact, they can no more be likened than the moon and selenology. Religion is fact; science is man's co-ordination of fact.

And another conclusion is that religion and science cannot rightly be in conflict. For if religion

is fact, and science is the interpretation of fact, no interpretation of fact can ever affect fact. In all inquiry we are compelled to assume the harmony of things, and one class of facts cannot be supposed to be in conflict with another class of facts. Indeed, any conflict between religion and science is very like a conflict between a lion and a fish, or between a book and a mountain which the book describes. The combatants belong, as has been said, to different spheres.

And upon this yet another conclusion follows: the title of this lecture must be amended. Though there cannot be conflict between religion and science, there may be conflict between theology and science; and it would be a very superficial consideration of the momentous intellectual struggle of our times, if I failed to ask whether there is any necessary antagonism between *theology* and science. In the view of some thinkers manifestly, both theologians and scientific men, theology and science are in irreconcilable antagonism. Nay, in the opinion of a few prominent writers, the battle is already ended, for theology, they think, has been relegated for ever to the limbo of witchcraft and astrology and phrenology. The comfort is that some prominent scientific men cannot always draw the line between their hypotheses and proven theory.

Is there, then, any conflict, any necessary conflict, between Theology and Science?

I fail to see how there can be ; for, ridiculous as it may appear to some to say so, the theologian is a man of science. The grounds of the contention are readily put.

Again, then, I ask, What is a science? And framing now a positive and not a negative reply, I answer, Every science has four characteristics. Upon these four characteristics there is a very general agreement. One characteristic of a science is that it deals with facts ; in the words of Professor Bain, "it employs special means and appliances to render knowledge true." A science, for instance, of the men in the moon is impossible, at any rate at present, because there are no facts to go upon. Another characteristic of a science is that it strives to reach laws, principles, generalisations, doctrines, whichever name be preferred. For, as Kant so tersely and pertinently said : "Concepts without intuitions [ideas without facts] are empty, and intuitions without concepts [facts without ideas] are blind." Science cannot rest satisfied with an unrelated series of facts ; its endeavour must always be to unify facts ; from isolated facts it must ever strive to rise to general knowledge. As Dr. Bain puts it : "Knowledge in the form of science is made as general as possible." Yet a third characteristic of a science is that, for scientific purposes, it limits its view to one class of facts. Mathematics concerns itself with number and space, not with life ; psychology concerns itself with mind, not with the physical forces. As Dr. Bain has said : "A science

embraces a distinct department of the world, it groups together facts and generalities that are of a kindred sort." Science deals with all facts; a science deals with one class of facts. A fourth characteristic is that a science systematises; it adopts a certain appropriate order in the investigation and exposition of its subject-matter. As Dr. Bain has expressed it: "A science has a certain arrangement of topics, suitable to its ends in gathering, verifying, and in communicating knowledge."

Let these four characteristics be present in any branch of knowledge and you have a science; let any one characteristic be absent and the name of science must be withheld. Every science must treat of facts, must treat of facts of a distinct and related kind, must seek to obtain generalisations from those facts, and must arrange its facts and doctrines in a due order. Inquiry which does not deal with facts is speculation, not science; a series of facts without laws is a catalogue, not a science; an examination of facts and laws in general is universal knowledge, and not a science; an investigation into facts and laws which is not digested into system is an encyclopædia, and not a science.

Upon all this there is a general agreement. George Henry Lewes is at one with Bain; Spencer is at one with Comte, or even Kant; the biologist is at one with the physicist; and the mathematician with the exponent of sociology.

But if these four are the characteristics of a science,

one may venture, with all modesty, but with extreme firmness, to ask, *first*, does not theology deal with facts? *second*, does not theology consist of a genus of facts sufficiently well defined? *third*, does not theology diligently strive to pass from facts to laws? *fourth*, are not arrangement and system peculiarly manifest in theological results? If every form of knowledge is science which follows upon the blended use of observation, classification, valid inference, and due arrangement, is not theology a science? If, in other words, there are four factors in every science—namely, data, unity, laws, and order—is not theology a science, constituted as it is of these four factors? Really, that theology is not a science is one of the most unscientific prejudices of some scientific men.

And in this connection I am glad to be able to quote the opinion of Professor Huxley, who has written: "By science I understand all knowledge which rests upon evidence and reasoning of a like character to that which claims our assent to ordinary scientific propositions; and if any man is able to make good the assertion that his theology rests upon valid evidence and sound reasoning, then it appears to me that such theology must take its place as a part of science."

Can it be shown, then, that "theology rests upon valid evidence and sound reasoning"? Let the nature of the case be considered.

Is it not incontestable that theology has to do with

facts,—facts as manifest and related as the facts of number or the facts of life?

For theology, which is the science of religion, is manifestly concerned with religion, and religion is itself a fact. I mean by religion that intuition of the divine which, universal as man, is at the basis of all the religious development of man. The universality of the religious sense is now commonly conceded. Religion is as universal among men as eyesight, or taste, or hearing. That some men are blind and some are deaf does not say that sight and hearing are not human attributes; and that the sense of taste shows great diversities in quality and intensity, varying with inheritance and growing with cultivation, does not say that it is not human to have the sense of taste. Now, with the facts of religion, facts as evident as any other anthropological facts, theology is concerned.

And another series of facts with which theology is concerned is the facts of revelation. By revelation I mean knowledge about God and man divinely imparted. Now, the religious intuition itself is, and must be, revelation. I know that attempts have been made to explain the religious sense by evolution from a belief in the spirits of our deceased relatives, by evolution from animism, as it is called. But such an explanation fails to touch the very point requiring explanation. The actual point calling for explanation is, not that men picture the divine to themselves as they picture to themselves the spirits of their ancestors, but how they come to attribute to their ancestors

a divine value. That the sense of the divine is in man at all is the point to be steadily borne in mind. Can the finite attain to the infinite? Surely not. All sense of the infinite must come from the infinite. All intuition of the divine, even though it be suggested by a fetich, must come from God. In a word, the intuition of the divine, religion, is really a divine revelation, that "light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Not that this general and world-wide revelation affords all the facts with which theology deals. It also deals, as we have seen, with specific revelations.

For example, there is the series of facts which underlie the entire Old Testament—the facts of prophecy. Prophecy was specific revelation. The prophet communicated to man revelations he personally and consciously received. For prophecy was revelation, not divination. Soothsaying came from human presentiment; prophecy followed upon divine revelation. I simply indicate this very interesting series of anthropological facts. Now, the facts of prophecy theology investigates and unifies.

Then theology treats of another remarkable series of facts: those connected with the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the most stupendous and influential range of facts in the entire history of man. For man cannot be understood without Christ any more than Christ can be understood without man; and the anthropologist who excludes Christ from his view, or who permits his view to be guided, or rather

misguided, by preconceived but not closely tested opinions, is a partisan rather than a man of science in that particular. Alas! the physical treatment of psychology has blinded the eyes of many a diligent inquirer to many indisputable facts, thus leading to a one-sided and partial psychology. And, alas! the physical treatment of anthropology fails to give due weight to many important anthropological facts, preventing a really scientific anthropology.

Yet another important series of facts with which theology deals I content myself with naming. I mean the facts, not of the general religious consciousness, but of the specific Christian consciousness. The entire history of Christianity, past as well as present, is the source of those facts. How real they are, how distinct they are, how alike they are, any expert in Christian history can aver.

Theology deals, then, with facts,—with the facts of general revelation and the facts of specific revelation. At least, here lies the stress of my contention. If the religious sense, if prophecy, if the Theanthropos, if the Christian consciousness, be imaginations and not facts, then theology must be classed with astrology and necromancy, not with astronomy and chemistry. But if these theological data are facts, and facts of a distinct and definite kind,—aspects of religion,—then one great reason for calling theology a science has been found, indeed the weightiest reason. For when once it is conceded that theology occupies itself with an important variety of human facts, few will hesitate

to say that theology is systematised: the common complaint is that theology makes too much of system. Nor will many hesitate as to whether theology deals, or not, with inferences and generalisations. It is true these inferences are called in theology doctrines rather than laws; but that these inferences are not mostly logical conclusions drawn from the relative data it would be ridiculous to affirm. Not that all theology consists either of facts, or of logical conclusions from those facts: theology, like all the sciences, deals with science in the making, with asserted facts, that is to say, which call for further verification, and with averred conclusions which call for validification. But if hypothesis, if the use of the imagination, is a much-belauded instrument in physical science, it is difficult to see why it is a much-belaboured instrument in theology.

For these reasons, then (which are rather suggested than adequately illustrated), I venture to reaffirm that, theology being itself a science, there is no necessary conflict between theology and science. Theology is simply one branch of science, and the science of theology can only conflict with any other branch of science in the very limited sense in which mathematics may be said to conflict with biology, or physics with psychology.

And here I may be permitted to say that Mr. Herbert Spencer's treatment of theology has always appeared to me singularly inconsistent. To me it

seems that all that Mr. Spencer claims to have established, in his doctrine of Nescience, might be conceded, and, at the same time, the inference he draws from his doctrine—that theology of any real kind is impossible—might be not only denied, but shown to be incompatible with his own practice. Mr. Spencer maintains that “objective and subjective things” are “alike inscrutable in their substance and genesis,” or, as Kant would have expressed the same thought, that “things in themselves” are beyond our present knowledge. Even this appears to me an exaggeration of a great truth; but I am concerned for the moment with Mr. Spencer’s positions, not with my own. Now, the ultimate religious proposition, according to Mr. Spencer, is that “the Power which the universe’ manifests to us is utterly inscrutable” (he means by us). But then, in Mr. Spencer’s view, the ultimate scientific ideas are also inscrutable. Space and time, matter and motion, force and self, known in their effects, cannot be known in their causes. So, we are told, it is the man of science who more than any other truly *knows* that in its ultimate essence nothing can be known. Then it is not God alone who is unknown and unknowable in His ultimate essence; it is space and time, self, matter, motion, and force as well. Now, in all this there is nothing new—at least nothing new to the theologian. That man cannot know God as He is; that a mental image cannot be formed of God; that God cannot be exhaustively known in the mystery of His being

and in the infinitude of His attributes ; that our knowledge of God is partial ; that His thoughts are not as our thoughts ; that we cannot by searching find out God,—these are the commonplaces of theology. If there is anything new in Mr. Spencer's contention, it is to the student of physical science. Now, such being Mr. Spencer's theory, what is his practice ? According to Mr. Spencer's theory, religion and nature both confront us, in the last resort, with things unknown and unknowable. God is unknown and unknowable, but so are space and time, and force and self. But should not such a statement land Mr. Spencer either in a universal scepticism or else in a tolerance for theology ? For, on the one hand, if the being unknown and unknowable in itself renders all real knowledge of a thing impossible, then not only is theology, the science of religion, excluded, but science, the science of nature, is excluded as well ; for, according to Mr. Spencer, we know as little about the essence of matter and force and motion as about the essence of God. On the other hand, if some knowledge of matter and motion, force and space, time and self, is possible to the scientific student of nature, why is some knowledge of God not possible to the scientific student of religion ? Either, according to his premises, Mr. Spencer must deny the validity of natural science, or he must concede the validity of theology. If mathematics may allowably deal with space (which is unknown in itself), if physics may deal with force (which is also essentially

unknown), if psychology may rightly investigate self (another of the things declared unknown and unknowable), why may not theology treat of God, not in Himself (for in His essence He is unknown and unknowable), but in His manifestations (which certainly may be known)? It seems to me that Mr. Spencer, if he would be consistent, ought to add to his large volumes on the Principles of Biology, of Psychology, and of Sociology, a volume or two on the Principles of Theology.

In concluding this lecture, let a couple of objections be considered.

Thus, it may be said, if theology is a science, how comes it that theologians differ?

Let the differences of theologians be frankly admitted. And without much lamentation. For differences are inevitable in theology, as in all other sciences, so long as the perfect stage has not been reached. It is ever so. Knowledge is the product of conflict, for conflict is inseparable from the process of verification. There is an ideal theology, as there is an ideal anthropology, upon the way. Towards that theology—one, true, satisfactory, final—all theology is consciously or unconsciously striving. But the perfect theology is not yet. Not improbably, too, the very contention of some theologians, that they do possess a perfect theology, is the real source of much of the present conflict with and in theology.

But be it remembered that when stress is laid upon

the differences of theologians, two considerations mitigate the inference commonly drawn from those differences. One consideration is that there is, after all, a remarkable unanimity in theological circles. Recently I have been reading with care four great recent systems of theology,—one written by an American Baptist, Dr. Strong; another written by a German Roman Catholic, Dr. Scheeben, of Cologne; a third written by a Swiss Protestant, Dr. Gretillat, of Neuchâtel; and a fourth written by a very able member of the Orthodox Church of Russia, Bishop Macarius. Daily my amazement has grown at their large agreement, despite their differences. The other consideration is this—that, as is well understood, a science arrives at perfection sooner or later, according to its simplicity or complexity, as Comte would say. Thus no one expects sociology to be in as relatively advanced a state as mathematics or chemistry. Now, theology is, and must be, the most complex of all the sciences, not excluding sociology.

Another objection likely to be taken to my line of remark is that theology is non-progressive, and therefore cannot be a science.

But is not such an objection the outcome of a confusion of thought? The facts of theology, it is true, are given once for all, and are non-progressive; but surely the appreciation and systematising of these facts are gradual and progressive. As I have previously said, religion, like nature, is fixed, settled, defined; theology, like natural science, is ever best

when advancing. And, as a matter of fact, the progress in theology during this century has been as manifest as in any other branch of science. The Bible has been born again. Biblical Theology has grown to manhood. Comparative Theology has been born. Indeed, the closing half of this century is witnessing as immense an upheaval and advance in theology as recent years have seen in geology, and largely from the same cause. Geology was insular ; then the geologies of other lands and continents came to be studied ; and geology had to cease to be insular and become world-wide, not without conflict. Similarly theology has been insular ; each land and each sect has framed a theology of its own ; but our commerce and our research have broadened our knowledge of mankind ; and this enlarging knowledge is compelling theology to cease to be insular and to make itself universal ; and naturally this compulsory approximation to the theology which is one and perfect is being worked out not without disturbance. In some ages the task of theology is simply to raise the roof, so to speak, of an existing structure, or to add new wings ; in this age apparently a larger work of construction has to be undertaken. The need is being increasingly felt of an international theology. The world has had, and still has, many English, and Scotch, and Genevan, and German, and Gallican, and Roman, and Eastern, and American, and Buddhist, and Brahman, and Mahometan theologies. The great need of the age is one scientific theology,—a

theology one and universal, an international theology. Further, as is increasingly seen, two tasks lie before this international theology. The first task is to determine the sources of religious truth and their relative value,—to rigorously examine and to indisputably determine, that is to say, whether Reason, or Scripture, or the Church, or Intuition, or the Christian Consciousness, constitutes the supreme criterion of truth, or whether, and in what order, some combination of these sources constitutes the fount and test of truth—the *fons et iudex veritatis*.

In brief, as has been previously said, one task is to frame a Fundamental Theology, or Science of the Foundations of Religion. The second task is, by the aid of the principles established in Fundamental Theology, to construct a system of religious truth, building upon the theological foundation the theological superstructure. At any rate, any scientific theology must be an international theology, and any international theology must be scientific—meaning by scientific, framed according to the method which has shown itself so potent in physical science.

Would that theologians and physicists might work together, in the perfecting of man, without suspicion, without recrimination, nay, with respect and mutual esteem! Should, too, each keep a watchful eye upon the other, their reciprocal watchfulness can only aid the cause of truth. There is a great future before the science of nature as there is a great future before the science of religion. And, happily, the way to all truth

is more sure than ever before, and more trodden. Many a height has already been scaled—many a height still stretches above us; let, therefore, theologian and physicist cheer each other, as they climb, with the constant cry, *Excelsior!* For wider and clearer vision of God and man and their relations to each other cannot but reward each upward step.

PART II

*THE SPIRITUAL WORLD THE FIRST WORD
OF CHRIST*

Lectures V.—IX. were delivered as the Ancient Merchants' Lectures for the month of October, 1893, under the title of "The Gospel for To-day."

LECTURE V

THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF TO-DAY

PERMIT me, at the outset, to express my thanks to the electoral body of this Lectureship for the honour they have done me. Almost invariably the Merchant Lecturers have been men of affairs and the occupants of our prominent pulpits. But mine has been and is the life of the theological scholar. It was necessary, therefore, to very carefully weigh the invitation you so cordially and unanimously sent.

It soon became clear to me that I was not wholly unfitted to carry on the work of this Ancient Merchants' Lecture. On research I readily found its original history. It ran as follows. In trouble both at home and abroad, Charles Rex—as the profligate Charles the Second, with a curious intermixture of English and Latin, preferred to head his proclamation—had issued, in 1672, his famous Declaration for an Indulgence. In this Declaration it was stated, amongst other things, to be the royal will and pleasure “that the execution of all and all manners of penal laws in matters ecclesiastical, against whatsoever sort of Nonconformists or Recusants, be immediately suspended, and they are hereby suspended.” “And,”

continued this royal Indulgence, "that there be no pretence for any of our subjects to continue illegal meetings and conventicles, we do declare, that we shall from time to time allow a sufficient number of places, as they shall be desired, in all parts of our kingdom, for the use of such as do not conform to the Church of England, to meet and assemble in, in order to their public worship and devotion; which places shall be open and free to all persons."¹

The effect of this Declaration of Indulgence was immediate. As Green says, in his picturesque manner: "Ministers returned after years of banishment to their homes and their flocks; chapels were reopened; the gaols were emptied; Bunyan left his prison at Bedford; and thousands of Quakers, who had been the especial objects of persecution, were set free to worship God after their own fashion."

Indubitably this Declaration of Indulgence was unconstitutional, giving rise, after the manner of the day, to a great war of pamphlets, many of which I have read; and indubitably the motive which prompted this Declaration was not love of Nonconformity or interest in ecclesiastical questions. Nevertheless, Parliament being dispersed, this Declaration gave the distressed Nonconformists time to breathe. As Neal puts it: "The Dissenters had rest." How this Declaration of Indulgence was welcomed and utilised throughout the country let any one read

¹ Jeremy Collier, *An Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain*, edit. 1852, vol. viii., p. 454.

for himself in Sylvester's *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ* or in Orme's *Memoirs of Owen*.

One immediate and not unimportant effect of this Declaration was the foundation of this Lectureship by the contributions of Merchants of this City of London. Not without pathos, for instance, Richard Baxter tells us: "The 19th of November, my baptism day, was the first day, after ten years' silence, that I preached in a tolerated church or assembly: some Merchants set up a Tuesday Lecture in London, to be kept by six ministers, at Pinner's Hall, allowing them twenty shillings a piece each sermon, of whom they chose me to be one."¹ As far as I can discover, the original purpose of this Lectureship was threefold: namely, in the first place, to show the substantial unity among Nonconformists in doctrine and practice; in the second place, to support the doctrines of the Reformation against the prevailing errors of Popery; and, in the third place, to expose the errors of Socinians and Infidels.² Now, translating these phrases into modern speech, it may be said that the aims of this Lectureship are, first, *Catholic* (declaratory of the Catholicity of Nonconformity); second, *Protestant* (maintaining the Protestant standpoint in faith and practice); third, *Apologetic* (standing for the defence of Christianity against non-Christian views, whether upon the Person of Christ or upon any

¹ Orme, *Life and Times of Baxter*, forming the first volume of Baxter's Practical Works, in 22 vols. 1830;—vol. i., p. 298.

² Neal, *History of the Puritans*, 1732, vol. iv., p. 451.

other Christian doctrine). With these several aims I felt myself in the keenest sympathy.

Moreover, the conviction grew upon me that in some respects the original worker in theological inquiry might be peculiarly fitted for a post like this. There are so many theological subjects which, whilst demanding the close examination of a specialist, are nevertheless best treated, or at least most usefully treated, in a non-academic manner,—subjects for the most part of pressing and immediate interest to a wider audience than the collegiate. The times appear to be ripe for the specialist to address that wider audience which is formed by all cultivated people. Nowadays articles in periodical literature, and even in the daily press, not infrequently proceed from the pen, and often have the signature of specialists. At the Mansfield Summer School of last year, the attention, the fervour, the enthusiasm, sustained for many hours a day, clearly showed that the times had come for lectures, of the type of University Extension lectures, upon *theological* themes. Nor is it wonderful that the several branches of Theology—Philosophical, Ethnic, Biblical, Historical, Apologetic, Doctrinal, and Practical—should afford to a very large class of thinking men and women themes of the supremest interest and of the highest educational value. I should esteem it a very high privilege indeed if any study of mine could be of service to any of our hard-worked ministry or our hard-worked laity.

My first idea was to make this opening course a

Study in the Philosophy of Religion in its bearing upon the fundamental problems of Theology, and especially of Theism—a subject which has deeply interested me for some time. The lectures were fully sketched out indeed. But I soon saw that I must have eight lectures, and not five; and, further, some practical conclusions, on the method and subjects of preaching and teaching, which I had reached during my studies on religion, seemed to offer a subject at once more popular and more immediately useful. In hesitation as to what was best to do, my thoughts wandered for a while to a course of lectures upon some prominent book of the season: for instance, Dr. Fairbairn's *Christ in Modern Theology*, Professor Orr's *Christian View of God and the World*, or that curious hotchpotch of Congregational opinion designated *Faith and Criticism*. However, it seemed to me in the long-run that my second thoughts, and neither my first nor my third, were best. Hence these lectures on the Gospel for To-day. Let me distinctly add, however, that without my previous studies in the nature of religion these lectures could not have been prepared. May God grant that their delivery may be for the spread of His kingdom!

It is a cardinal law of Homiletics that introductions should very rarely be personal. Personal introductions are apt either to imperil the reputation of the speaker for modesty, or else—there is so exquisite a flavour about the personal—they endanger the

success of the after-discourse. The rule has already been broken, and more harm can scarcely be done by breaking it again.

If I have a hobby in life, it is to have a good library ; and having early learnt that the taste for books must be circumscribed if it is to be good, my hobby is to collect two kinds of books. From the commencement of the study of theology, I have purchased, as a sort of counteractive, a few choice specimens of modern illustrated books. Having always had a profound horror of the pedant there is in every scholar, I have endeavoured to crucify pleasantly the pedantic man by such a cultivation of the æsthetic tastes. A few years ago I came across an illustrated book which, oddly enough, has again and again inspired my reverence for the Gospel of Jesus, when the embers of that reverence were burning low. The book is an English rendering of an old Persian poem, written nearly nine centuries ago, the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam. Quite recently this brilliant poem has been brilliantly translated by Mr. Edward Fitzgerald, who died in 1883 ; whilst Mr. Fitzgerald has been happy in being most sympathetically and wonderfully illustrated by an American artist, a Mr. Elihu Vedder. Further, poet, translator, and artist have been fortunate in those modern reproductive processes nowhere better utilised than at the famous Riverside Press, at Cambridge, Massachusetts. The book is itself a treasure ; but its greatest charm for me has been that again and again it has been an

unanswerable argument for the need of the Gospel of Jesus.

Omar Khayyam was at once the greatest astronomer as well as the greatest poet of his age. As memorials, he has left behind him a great work on algebra, a reformed calendar ("A computation of time," writes Gibbon, "which surpasses the Julian, and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian tables"), and these quatrains of passionate verse, these *Rubaiyat*. They are an awful wail of the natural man, full of beauty, full of insight, full of a marvellous faculty of expression, full, too, of an incisive humour, and, alas! full of sadness—"saddest, perhaps," as his translator says, "when most ostentatiously merry." These quatrains move our sorrow, our sympathy: they purify by their tragedy; they rouse by their woe.

Hear the theory of life of this man of genius. I put in my own way the complex impression left by the poem and its inseparable illustrations. What is life? asks this astronomer-poet; and he replies—At the end a skull and a few fallen rose-leaves. What are our highest worldly hopes? Snow on the desert's dusty face. What is beauty? A robe to be speedily cast off as we pass into the unlighted tomb, stilling our senses with poppies. What is intellectual endeavour? At best so many mouldering brains and so many cobweb theories. Yes, continues Omar, I gladly confess that upon the face of every child that enters life I see hope, but do you also in turn confess that upon the face of every thinking adult

you see despair. Engrossing as is research, after all, is it not as the toil of the alchemist, who diligently seeks for the secret of life night and day, whilst death is manifest to every onlooker in the inquirer's face?

“O threats of Hell, and hopes of Paradise!
 One thing at least is certain—*this* life flies;
 One thing is certain, and the rest is lies—
 The flower that once has blown for ever dies.”

There is some rest certainly, Omar allows, in the thought of the universal reign of law,—the rest of a man who believes in a remorseless fate which can crush but cannot love!

“We are no other than a moving row
 Of magic shadow-shapes, that come and go
 Round with this sun-illuminated lantern, held
 In midnight by the Master of the Show.

“Impotent pieces of the game He plays
 Upon this checker-board of nights and days,
 Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays,
 And one by one back in the closet lays.”

Speculate upon the pitiable end of the world, says our poet, as you may, is not this the result? Will not the Paradise Regained be very like the Paradise Lost? For in it there will be a man, and a woman, and children, and a serpent; but with differences it is true, for the serpent will be tightening his coils to strangle, and the earth beneath their feet will be but the mortal dust of the prior centuries.

“I sent my soul through the invisible,
 Some letter of that after-life to spell,
 And by-and-by my soul returned to me,
 And answered, ‘I myself am Heaven and Hell.’

“Heaven but the vision of fulfilled desire ;
And Hell the shadow of a soul on fire,
Cast on the darkness into which ourselves
So late emerged from, shall so soon expire.”

What hope is there, then, for man? asks Omar. None whatever, he replies. The recording angel steadily writes in his great book each deed of our lives as it passes, his ears being closely covered, so that no cry of pain or appeal of agony should cause his heart to throb or his pen to falter.

“The moving finger writes—and having writ,
Moves on ; nor all your piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.”

In face, then, of these facts, as indisputable as stern, what, asks Omar, is the true philosophy of life? His conclusion is the old Epicurean conclusion, otherwise expressed :—

“Some for the glories of this world, and some
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come ;
Ah! take the cash, and let the credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant drum.”

Horrible, thrice horrible, all this, is it not? It is Pessimism *in excelsis*. But let us do Omar justice. Let us frankly acknowledge that it is only the superficial thinker who, possessing none of the consolations of Jesus, can look, with even a passing contentment, upon himself, his race, and their destiny. There are only two ultimate philosophical solutions of the problems of life—Christianity and Pessimism. It is true, as Professor Wallace says, in his article on

Pessimism, in the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, that "the ordinary human being, so long as he is engrossed with action, and identified with his immediate present, is neither Optimist nor Pessimist." But as Dr. Wallace continues: "In proportion as reflexion awakens, as the fulness and vigour of will give place to the exhaustion of age or to brooding thoughtfulness, there comes a sense of doubt as to the value of the aims on which energy is spent, and as to the issue of the struggle with nature." Yes, how terrible is life where hope is not! How terrible is death where immortality is not! How terrible is evil where Christ is not!

And here comes in an interesting controversy. Some have declared that Omar has been misrepresented by Fitzgerald—that the English version of Omar is Fitzgerald, and not Omar. If this be so, the fact is the more suitable to my purpose. If Fitzgerald has but read into the past the Pessimism of this nineteenth century, it is with the closing years of this century I am concerned. Once again the Pessimistic spirit has fallen upon thinking men,—a spirit which Hartmann regards¹ as the *deeper* mood. An intense melancholy is abroad. Gloom is settling upon many hearts. Political Nihilism has its base in philosophical Pessimism. How little there is of general hopefulness, how little of buoyancy! How clammy a sense there is as of deepening darkness!

¹ *Selbstzersetzung des Christenthums*, p. 96.

Through the brightest of our popular songs there runs a deep undertone of tears. The same thing is true of our literature. How few glimpses does our Art afford into a larger and more blessed world!—technique improves, inspiration fails. How much of Pessimism there is in our philosophy! How much of *ennui* amongst the polite! How much of misery amongst the masses! From all lands, and from all sorts and conditions of men, there rises a wail of terrible pain and frightful unrest. Once more in the history of man a chill as of darkest night has struck home. On many hands there is a disgust at life and an attractiveness in annihilation. “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,” is a popular sentiment. Men are sympathising with the Russian writer who says: “Unhappily, I was born one dark night; happily, I shall die some fair morning,—these are my only certainties: only, seeing the little I am, I should have preferred not to be; let us end matters, therefore, as speedily as possible, either by universal asceticism, or by a universal suicide”;—a passage which recalls Schopenhauer’s “The life of the animal is more to be envied than that of man; the life of the plant is better than that of the fish in the water, or even of the oyster on the rocks. Non-being is better than being, and unconsciousness is the blessedness of what does exist. The best would be if all existence were annihilated.” Once more, I say, in the history of man—as at the close of the last century, as at the close of the dark ages, as at the close of the pre-Christian era—the

tone of literature declares a great dissatisfaction, a growing despair. It is only at such times that a Zola and an Ibsen, a Leopardi, a Schopenhauer, and a Hartmann, have a message to their thousands. As Caro has said in *La Pessimisme au XIX^e Siècle*: "The whole of Germany has become attentive to this movement of ideas: Italy, with a great poet, had outstripped the current: France . . . also has her Pessimists." Only this morning¹ I read a similar utterance in the *Times*. It occurs in an Inaugural Address at a Medical College delivered by one of our greatest specialists in mental diseases—Sir James Crichton Browne, a Lord Chancellor's Visitor in Lunacy: "Pessimism or Pessimistic tendencies are widely diffused, and many thoughtful persons . . . echo . . . the opinions of Schopenhauer. . . . The old faiths have lost their hold. Life is no longer a probation, but an end in itself, and the passion for wealth possesses the poor human soul. Society is destitute of real gladness, and is permeated by ostentation. Art is lugubrious, literature uninspiring, poetry neglected, enthusiasm discredited, and science, while adding largely to material possessions, has no spiritual consolation to offer. The type of insanity has changed, and our asylums contain a far larger number of miserable melancholics."

And observe this curious fact. This Pessimistic spirit has not broken forth in an age of decadence or

¹ October 3rd, 1893.

enslavement. It is, as a French writer has said,¹ "in full nineteenth century, when all horizons are broadening, when the dreams of our ancestors are excelled; in a century of creation and activity, in which discoveries are multiplying, in which the sciences have a prodigious scope, in which commerce and industry have had an unheard-of extension; in which the people, arrived at a consciousness of itself, claims and obtains its rights in almost all the countries of Europe; in which so many noble causes have triumphed—that of the enfranchisement of the slave, that of liberty of conscience; whilst other causes, such as the abolition of war, are making their way in public opinion;—it is in this century that we hear cries of bitterness and imprecations which have not been raised in the darkest days of history, that we find uttered the radical condemnation of life in its origin and in its manifestations." Or as Karl Peters² has said: "Hand in hand with the colossal forward development of our race in all departments, goes the fact that the sorrow of earthly existence is felt to-day more keenly than ever by the masses. A decided Pessimistic current goes through our time."

The fact is remarkable, though by no means inexplicable. Epochs of sadness by no means coincide

¹ M. Milloud, in an able article on *Le Pessimisme et les Pessimistes*, in the *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie*, for January, 1893.

² *Willenswelt*, pp. 109, 224, quoted by Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 455.

with the epochs of great political, social, and physical calamities. Pleasure and pain come less from our circumstances than from the way in which our circumstances are regarded by us.

Yet there is a comfort in all this current of melancholy. At least Pessimism shows a sense of pain, and pain comes from a sense of mutilation. Pessimism is the protest of humanity against injury in a vital part. Pessimism testifies to the greatness, not the littleness of man, for it shows him conscious of a greater destiny than he enjoys. Nay, Martensen,¹ in his *Christian Ethics*, does not hesitate to say that a Pessimism like it "can only be found in the Christian world, where the infinite craving for personality has been awakened." Pessimism, whether philosophical or sentimental, bears witness that man as man feels himself fitted for a worthier experience than is his lot.

And man's extremity is God's opportunity. An outbreak of Pessimism really declares that the night is almost through, and the day is at hand. So it has ever been, and so it ever will be. Pessimism tells of conscious need; and it is not far, in God's great love and mercy, from conscious need to conscious satisfaction. When, in the night of the soul, seas are wild, and storms are high, and clouds are sable, and a chill has struck right home, it is just then that the

¹ Vol. i., p. 178 (Eng. Transl.).

advent of the morning star becomes the harbinger of dawn. The fruit of the centuries is ripe and ready to fall at the feet of Jesus.

Pessimism, I say, declares a sense of mutilation. Nor is there much difficulty in diagnosing the seat of the disorder, and in declaring what parts of man's nature, what organs, are mutilated.

Listen, for instance, to the voices of our English world which insist most strongly upon their sense of pain and loss, and the disturbance can be readily localised. The mutilation from which men suffer is a mutilation of the religious sense. Hear Matthew Arnold, as he says so delicately but so sadly :—

“The sea of Faith
Was once too at the full ; and round Earth's shore
Lay, like the folds of a bright girdle, furled ;
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long-withdrawing roar.”

And some will remember how the late Professor Clifford, so sanguine and so bright a soul, uttered more than sadness when he said : “The loss of belief is a very painful loss. . . . We have lived to see the sun shine out of an empty heaven, to light up a soulless earth ; we have felt with utter loneliness that the great Companion is dead.”

Says Physicus, in his *Candid Examination of Theism*, speaking very candidly indeed of his own philosophical and destructive labour : “So far as the ruination of individual happiness is concerned, no one

can have a more lively perception than myself of the possibly disastrous tendency of my work. . . . I am not ashamed to confess that, with this virtual negation of God, the universe to me has lost its soul of loveliness; and although from henceforth the precept to work while it is day will doubtless but gain an intensified force from the terribly intensified meaning of the words that 'the night cometh wherein no man can work,' yet when at times I think, as think I must, of the appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of that creed which once was mine, and the lonely mystery of existence as now I find it,—at such times I shall ever feel it impossible to avoid the sharpest pang of which my nature is susceptible."¹

Says the author of *Ecce Homo*, in his book on *Natural Religion*: "Not only in Tauris or in Mexico, but here in England, religion has been and is a nightmare, and those who flatter themselves that they have shaken off the horror find a colder, more petrifying incubus, that of annihilation, settling down upon them in its place, so that one of them cries out, '*Oh! reprends ce rien, et rends-nous Satan*' ['Take away this nothingness, and give us back Satan']"²

Thus the daringly horrible dream of Jean Paul which he entitled "The Speech of Christ, after Death, that there is no God," has shown itself scarcely overdrawn, in the despair actually born of non-theistic

¹ Page 114.

² Page 239.

conviction. Indeed, as Frances Power Cobbe has expressed it: "[Men] wander to and fro hopelessly through the wilderness of doubt; and if any come to tell us of a land flowing with milk and honey, the glory of all lands, which they have found beyond, we dismiss them with a complacent sigh, even if they bring back from their Canaan the noblest fruits."¹ Or hear the words of a French journalist who says: "We have no chapel wherein to kneel, no faith on which to lean, no God to whom to pray. Our heart is empty; our soul bereft of ideal and hope. You who have the happiness of believing in a Sovereign Ruler, pray Him to reveal Himself to us, for we hunger and thirst to suffer and to die for a belief and for an idea."²

Man's extremity, I therefore repeat, is God's opportunity. The sense of need is the most necessary step to satisfaction. The times seem ripe for another great demonstration of the power of Christianity to impart new faith and new hope. The souls of men cry for bread. The physicist offers a stone, and the secularist a house, and the ritualist a dress. Naturally enough, the souls are not sustained, and still cry for spiritual bread. The spiritual part is starved, and men almost know it; the spiritual members are cauterised, and men half suspect the seat of the

¹ Preface to *Collected Edition of the Works of Theodore Parker*.

² Quoted by Petavel, *Problem of Immortality*, pp. 10, 11.

mutilation. Be it ours, by much prayer and study, to understand the signs of the times, and to preach a genuine gospel. The hour of the night is late, and therefore very dark ; but catching sight of the coming day, let us proclaim the near advent of dawn. He who sides with God may ever announce with sureness the break of day. Even Hartmann himself—whose first philosophical work on Pessimism, *The Philosophy of the Unconscious*, had a vogue as great as any novel—has distinctly recognised in his later work on *The Religion of the Future* the need there is to-day for a religion, and has endeavoured in his own peculiar way to supply that need. Once more we have come to the hour of the Son of Man.

How it behoves, then, every Christian preacher and teacher, however humble and circumscribed the audience he addresses, to seriously and diligently inquire whether he has a genuine gospel to preach. Have we a gospel which is fact and not sham, reality and not cant? Have we actual glad tidings to proclaim to a suffering age? Is the Saviour we preach really rest to the weary, light to the benighted, joy to the sad, hope to the despairing? The preacher, however humble, stumbling, or unpolished, who preaches to an age like ours a clear, straightforward, and credible gospel is among the greatest benefactors of man. No credible expounder of the Christian method of the amelioration of man is a workman needing to be ashamed. Establish right relations

between man and God, and right relations between man and man will inevitably follow.

I have now reached the main thought of these lectures, and I hesitate to utter it. It would give me great pain to know either that I undervalued the work of the humblest servant of Christ, or put any stumbling-block in the way of the tiniest child in the family of God. But for long a conviction has been growing upon me that the Gospel for which this age waits is the Gospel as presented by Christ rather than as presented by Paul or Peter.

Reading much lately, for a specific purpose, of the literature, especially the letters and biography, of the commencement of this century and the close of last, I could not but see how the Gospel of Paul, the Gospel as presented by Paul, was the great moving element in the Evangelical Revival of those times. The state of our English world was such that naturally Pauline turns of phrase, Pauline consecution of thought, Pauline descriptions of man and his needs, were the great subjects chosen by the preachers of the day for their work of advancing men. It was also evident that to some extent the Gospel of Paul was misunderstood and misrepresented, for Paul never laid the stress upon the punishment of sin in hell that the leaders of the Evangelical Revival did. Paul spoke of falling short of the glory of God.

As I read on, it soon became evident to me that much that was said then would have little influence

now, and that the message which then roused and saved would scarcely move to-day. Nay more, the common mind would have to undergo a sort of theological education before it could understand much that was said. The terminology of the time was not the terminology of to-day.

The thought once set going, I soon came to feel that many modern sermons are only intelligible after a similar somewhat extended theological training, and that much that is said about sin, and faith, and righteousness, and redemption, and law, and gospel, and justification, and reconciliation, has a distinctly Pauline tinge. Nay more, the thought grew that the Jewish training of Paul, the familiarity with the Old Testament language and worship, being no longer characteristic of our times, the Pauline Gospel was frequently misapprehended. And more, the conviction grew that our audiences listened to much that we had to say, when so expressed, with that slight attention which courtesy rather than interest demanded. I could not but fear that something of unreality had begun to creep into much public utterance.

Further thought and prayer, however, began to show me that there was in the Gospel as presented by our Lord Himself a message of a more universal kind, a message more to man as man, a message, too, which seemed to be the peculiar remedy for the disorders of to-day, the very reply to man's deepest questionings, an answer for which the whole discipline and thought of our century had been preparing the

way. If modern Pessimism proclaims the sense of mutilation which follows the atrophy or starvation of the religious sense, here in the Gospel of Jesus was the divinely-given restorative, imparting immediate vitality, and ever-renewed vitality, to the decayed organ.

For what is the Gospel of Jesus? Is it not this—the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of the Spirit, is at hand? Nor is the emphasis so much upon Kingdom as upon God, Heaven, Spirit. What our Lord made men see was that the Kingdom of God, the Divine Kingdom, the Divine Realm, was near. What our Lord made men see was that the Kingdom of Heaven, the Heavenly Kingdom, the Supernal Realm, was at hand. What our Lord made men see was that the Kingdom of the Spirit, the Spiritual Kingdom, the Spiritual Realm, was their possession as much as the kingdom of this world, the Physical Kingdom, this mundane realm. To man, pained at the mutilation of the religious, the spiritual, sense, Jesus comes and says: “Be thou made whole—whole for ever and ever.” To man, painfully conscious of his restriction to things present and mundane and physical, Jesus comes and says: “Another realm is yours, eternal, supernal, and supernatural.” “How can I reach this realm?” when man asks, the reply is clear: “See it, and you are in it,—except a man be born again, be born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” “But, alas!” says man, “I cannot see this kingdom.” “Never believe

it," says Jesus ; " have faith ; use your spiritual eyes, which are blind, but not stone-blind ; exert your spiritual organs, exercise them, bestir yourself ; if at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again ; you can and shall see the Spiritual Kingdom, and seeing, you are in it." " But this Spiritual Kingdom is so dim ? " " True, ' do My will ' ; true, ' pray ' ; true, ' come to Me ' ; and every act of obedience, and every movement in prayer, and every effort to approach Me will be a bestirring of spiritual organs ; and as these strengthen and grow robust, so will your whole spiritual nature ; and I can reach you better, and help you better, and your spiritual vision will share the invigoration of returning health, and you shall see Me more and more. ' Do My will, ' ' pray, ' ' come, ' and you shall see ever more clearly ; and as you see, My Father's world is yours ever more and more, and I am yours." " Repent, thus doing My will," says Jesus ; " believe, thus making spiritual effort ; pray, thus continuing your spiritual effort ; come, and as you come I will come, and My Father will come ; and in the Divine Realm, where I am King and blessed, you shall be subject and as blessed as I." Here is a gospel for man as man. Here is a gospel which exactly meets the uppermost needs of to-day.

Thus I have but opened my subject. The subsequent lectures will expand and qualify what I have said. It is a comfort to me to speak out my thoughts. If they are useful in any way to you, I shall be profoundly thankful : if they are shown to be erroneous and dangerous, I think I shall be equally thankful.

LECTURE VI

THE SPIRITUAL IN MAN AND GOD

THE points of my last lecture were four. First, I called attention to the manifest Pessimistic spirit which is abroad in our times. Men are asking, in the stress and narrowness of their lives, whether after all life is worth living. The passing mood which comes to us all at times, and which Tennyson has so faithfully and beautifully described in his "Two Voices," has become much more than a passing mood in our age, and prominent leaders of our literature and philosophy and art are asking, as if the question were the expression of the final word of wisdom,—

"Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be?"

More painful still, the same intense dissatisfaction with things has filtered down from the school to the market-place, and from the solitary thinker to the masses. From all the lands of Europe, in the speech of France and Italy, Germany and Russia, Scandinavia and England, a wail of pain, almost a cry of rebellion, has gone up, because of the state and surroundings of life. An intense melancholy is abroad. On many hands there is disgust at life as it is, and

an actual attractiveness in the thought of extinction. In the phrase of Schopenhauer, many feel that "the best would be if all existence were annihilated." Once more in the history of man a chill as of darkest night has struck home.

Second, I desired to emphasise the fact that Pessimism, whether in the thinker or in the practical man, invariably testifies—has always testified, and still testifies to-day—to a sense of mutilation. Pessimism is the symptom that points unmistakably to the existence of some diseased or atrophied organ. For the most part, too, this mutilation that man is conscious of is a mutilation of the religious sense. Man is so constituted that he cannot rest satisfied with surroundings and with a life concerned simply with mundane enjoyment. In an environment which is only terrene, the animal is happy, the human being can never be happy. The pig is satisfied with his trough ; the lion desires no larger world than his forest ; but satisfy all the bodily needs of man, and he is not content. Let his physical environment be all that heart could wish, in our somewhat thoughtless phrase, man is still restless. The fact is that men are so framed by their Maker, that their hearts—to adapt a phrase of Augustine's—are restless, until they find rest in God. Man is made for a divine as well as a human fellowship and environment ; and when man is not religious, when he is conscious of the mutilation of his religious nature, a Pessimistic attitude cannot but result.

A third point, therefore, followed, which was that the intellectual and moral attitude of to-day was a most suitable soil for the seed of the Gospel—or, let us say, was most suitable fruit to be harvested in the garner of Christ. Everything in our age emphasises the fact that man has reached that state of self-knowledge and self-dissatisfaction that will lead him almost instinctively to accept the Gospel of Jesus. To repeat a somewhat bold figure, the fruit of the world is ripe and ready to fall at the feet of Jesus.

Here a fourth point intervened—namely, that the Gospel as expressed by our Lord Himself seems more especially suited than that of Paul, or I might add that of Peter or James, for the present aid of man.

Upon this fourth point let me dwell for a few moments.

That there are different types of teaching in the New Testament has become increasingly evident since the Bible has been more carefully studied. There is a great underlying unity, undoubtedly, beneath all these types, or perhaps it would be better to say that the teaching of Jesus is the great corrective to misunderstanding these other types. But that the Gospel is presented in a different way by Paul, and Peter, and James, and John, cannot but be evident when once attention is called to the matter. Each type starts from a different standpoint, and addresses a different variety of experience. Thus Paul's main idea is the contrast between the Law and

the Gospel, and he thinks by preference of man as having broken the Law, and as being forgiven and restored to privilege in the Gospel. Peter's leading thought is salvation, redemption, being saved and redeemed as from a spiritual Egypt and journeying towards the ideal Canaan. To James the Gospel is a higher ethic. To John the Gospel is a revelation of light: "This is the message which we have heard from Him, and announce unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." The Gospel of Jesus, however, is glad tidings about a spiritual realm open to man. Said a leading biologist to me one day, when discussing the materialist tendency of a book which had recently appeared: "Let us never forget that there are four kingdoms—mineral, vegetable, animal, *and human.*" "Five," I instantly rejoined: "AND DIVINE." It is this divine realm, this spiritual realm, which is the centre of all our Lord's teaching. Before His advent, John heralded that advent by crying, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"—the Heavenly Realm is near. And when our Lord entered upon His public ministry, this was the great burden of His address: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God"—the Divine Realm.

Now, it is certainly conceivable that these several types of teaching may have each a peculiar application and a special instructiveness for different individuals and different ages. And as a matter of fact, as I said in my last lecture, the great Evangelical Revival of the close of last century did move along

the lines of Paul. Nay more, that movement to some extent misrepresented the teaching of Paul ; for whilst Paul insists upon sin, or the breach of law, as causing all men to fall short of the glory of God, he does not insist that all sinners will undergo eternal torment in hell, a feature of the Evangelical Preaching of that age and movement upon which I do not delay to expatiate.

On the other hand, all the tendencies of our age seem to declare that the message of specific importance at the moment is the message of our Lord Himself to the world. "Back from Paul to Christ" needs to be our watchword : for two reasons,—on the one hand, because it is Christ's message which is specifically glad tidings to an age so disciplined as ours has been ; and, on the other hand, because it is just Christ's message which interprets and preserves from perversion the messages of Paul and Peter, of James and John.

Had I time, I think I could show that it is for this message of Christ's that all the tendencies of our age, scientific, political and social, ethical and philosophical, biblical and ecclesiastical, have been preparing the way. At least this may be said—that our Lord's message of the Heavenly Realm is just the necessary complement to Darwinism, and to Pessimism, and to Socialism, and to Positivism, and to Agnosticism, to select but a few of the trends of our times. To the Darwinian—not a little answerable, I suspect, for the Pessimistic tendencies around us—

it is necessary to declare, in the language of the Book of Job, "There is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding"—which is just the message of Jesus. To the Pessimist, whatever be the cause of his brooding despondency, it is necessary to proclaim, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," the Spiritual Realm is near—which, again, is just the message of Jesus. To the Socialist, anxious for a diffusion of the means of happiness through the very lowest strata of society, it is necessary to preach, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you"—which is, again, the message of Jesus. To the Agnostic and Positivist, whilst allowing that along their lines they are right, doing full honour as they do to the teachings of sense, we must insist that there is a realm above sense, a Divine Realm, a Kingdom of God—which is, again, the very quintessence of the message of Jesus.

The Gospel of Jesus, as I have said, is glad tidings about a spiritual realm, man's natural environment from the first, lost sight of for a while by man, reopened to his vision by the tone and teaching of Christ. The Gospel of Jesus is the Gospel of the Kingdom, and the Kingdom is a Spiritual Kingdom, boundless in extent and everlasting in duration, embracing both heaven and earth. In Mark and Luke this central thought is usually styled the Kingdom of God; in Matthew, usually, it is called the

Kingdom of Heaven. As Reuss has so well said: "The fundamental idea which is reproduced at each instant in the teaching of Jesus is that of the Kingdom of God."

But here let one important point be borne in mind. This Kingdom of God is not first political, or even first ethical—both aspects of life which the commonest mind can understand: it is first spiritual, and requires a specific experience to appreciate. This Kingdom of God is inconceivable by the ordinary mind: this is another remarkable characteristic of the Gospel of Jesus. Recall those memorable and almost hard words of Jesus, when the disciples came to Him and said, "Why speakest Thou unto them in parables," and when He answered and said, "Because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matt. xiii. 11). Thus Jesus Himself declares that He proclaimed the Gospel of the Kingdom as a revealed mystery.

Observe, then, that this kingdom, according to our Lord's revelation, is *something new in the world*. "From that time"—from the time when John was cast into prison—"Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." The new world is not simply the old world continued; the Kingdom of God established by Christ is not simply the old Jewish conception of a theocracy renewed. "And He turned Him unto His disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things which ye see, and have not seen them;

and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (Luke x. 23, 24). Again, this Kingdom of God is *something now present*. It is not something to come; it already is. "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or Lo there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is among you" (Luke xvii. 20, 21). Again, the idea is close at hand that this Kingdom of God is *something spiritual*. It belongs to a higher sphere of life than this visible creation, and can only be seen after spiritual change. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven"; "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (Matt. xviii. 3; John iii. 3). Again, this kingdom is *something growing*, which from small beginnings develops itself in accordance with its spiritual nature. "And He said, So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed upon the earth; and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how. The earth yieldeth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear" (Mark iv. 26-28). Again, this kingdom is *incomparably glorious and blessed*: therefore our Lord says, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God," seeing that its possession is the pledge of all other blessings. Again, this kingdom is *destined to be universal*. "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations" (Matt. xxiv. 14).

In a sentence, the Gospel of Jesus is the Gospel of the Kingdom, and the Kingdom is a Spiritual Kingdom.

The Kingdom of God is very different from any visible church open to the eyes of man ; the Kingdom of God is a *FIFTH KINGDOM*, which only those can see and appreciate who have themselves become initiated into its ranks. The Founder and King of the kingdom is Jesus. Of this kingdom angels are servants, devils are enemies, spiritual men are subjects. To enter the kingdom a spiritual quickening, a quickening of the spiritual sense, is necessary. In this kingdom death is not exile, the destruction of the present order is not annihilation ; death is transfiguration, and the end of this age is the transition to a palingenesis.¹

Such was the Gospel of Jesus, and it was delivered without sentimentality or pedantry. Substance and form are in perfect accord. He touches nothing which He does not adorn. His is the brightest fancy, the most piercing intellect, the profoundest imagination, the clearest thought ; yet in their use Jesus is always King of Himself ; all His faculties are in the most exquisite and therefore the most beautiful equipoise. His is the perfectly balanced and therefore the perfectly beautiful nature. How often the intellectual man is pedantic ! and the man of deep feeling sentimental ! and the active man fanatical ! But

¹ Compare Oosterzee, *Theology of the New Testament*, sections x.—xvi.

Jesus has deep feeling without sentimentality, great thoughts without pedantry, strong volition without fanaticism. Yes, in Him we see the perfectly balanced and therefore the perfectly beautiful nature. And his speech on spiritual things shows the deepest truth united with the most intimate beauty—a beauty which, like its message, is itself spiritual.

What then, in plain speech, is the Gospel of Jesus? And I reply once more: The Kingdom of God, the Divine Kingdom, the Divine Realm,—the Kingdom of Heaven, the Heavenly Kingdom, the Realm Supernal,—the Kingdom of the Spirit, the Spiritual Kingdom, the Spiritual Realm. To men pained and distressed and despairing at the mutilation of the spiritual sense Jesus comes and says: “The Kingdom of Heaven, the Spiritual Realm, is at hand.” “How shall I reach this realm?” “See it, and you are in it,” is the reply of Jesus. “But, alas! Lord, I cannot see this kingdom: animal I know, and human I know, and this world I know; but what is spiritual, what is divine, what is the kingdom which is not of this world? I cannot see this Spiritual Kingdom.” “Never believe it,” says Jesus; “have faith; use your spiritual eyes, which, though very blind, are still not stone-blind; bestir your slumbering and deadened spiritual nature, and you shall see this Spiritual Kingdom, and seeing, you are in it.” “But this Spiritual Kingdom is so dim, my spiritual vision is so dim!” “True, do My will; true, pray; true, come unto Me; and every act of obedience and every

movement in prayer, and every effort to approach will be an exercise of your spiritual organs, and I will come to you, and as your spiritual organs become more and more robust I can reach you better and help you better, and you shall see Me more and more. This is My method and My message. Do My will, pray, come, and you shall see ever more clearly ; and as you see, My Father's world is yours ever more and more, and I am yours. As you come, I will come, and My Father will come, and the Comforter will come ; and in the Divine Realm where I am King and blessed, you shall be subject and one day blessed as I."

Once more, therefore, I say, here is a gospel which exactly meets the uppermost needs of to-day—the weariness, and *ennui*, and contraction, and low aims, and dying hopes of to-day.

Life in the Spirit, or the Spirit in life—this was intended to be the normal life of man. This spiritual life has two factors—namely, a spirit in man, and the Spirit of God. There is a spirit in man. This human spirit, in the divine idea, was intended to find its exercise and sustenance in contact with the Spirit of God. Unless the human spirit is in this constant, and as it were electrical, contact with the Divine Spirit, thence receiving ever fresh relays of divine energy, the human spirit decays.

Thus the life of man, which normally should be a life of man's spirit uninterruptedly nourished by the

Spirit of God, becomes unhealthy, disordered, diseased, decadent. Life without the Spirit is abnormal. Sin is abnormal, outside of God's desire and purpose for man. So is an ebbing spiritual vitality. Further, as the sense of the divine ebbs, spirit not only ceases to rule in man's structure, but the dominion of spirit becomes less and less appreciable by man. Rule is surrendered to the intellectual or emotional or sensuous nature. Ponder the fact: when the human spirit is supreme in the human organism, in other words when life is life in the Holy Ghost, life is normal; when the human spirit is degraded from supremacy in any degree, life is abnormal.

To restore man to his normal and divinely intended state, the first stage is to reveal to him the Spiritual Realm, the Kingdom of God; and the second stage is to place him in that Spiritual Realm in ever-renewed contact with the Holy Spirit. Let man, by divine education and assistance, see the Kingdom of God, and obey its laws, and share its privileges, and the normal state, the truly natural state, has once more been reached. The revelation of the Kingdom of God, its laws and its privileges, is just the differentia of the teaching of Jesus.

Is there not here, then, a peculiar message to our times?

To man despondent and despairing and pessimistic in the face of imagined but unrealisable ideals,—to man made by advancing civilisation more sensitive to pain, but less capable of righteousness,—to man

perplexed by terrible social contrasts and frightful social crimes,—to man who knows that refinement, alas! does not always mean purity, nor ethical knowledge moral power,—to man who has enough spiritual vision to know his duty, but not enough to do it,—to man limited, not without rebellion, to this narrow present,—to man therefore gloomy, depressed, dispirited,—to man who feels himself fit for a larger destiny which yet seems withheld, Jesus comes and proclaims the Kingdom of God. “Look up, brothers,” Jesus says in effect, “look up; you are kings’ sons, though as yet you are breathing the air and doing the work of the poverty-stricken and illiterate: look up, for you have wings to soar, though it seems to you that some fault of structure or of atmosphere ties you to the interminable commonplace: look up, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” “Take heart of grace, friend,” says Jesus; “the dawn of heaven’s day breaketh.” In this making credible to man the reality of the Spiritual and Heavenly Kingdom you have the quintessence of the Gospel of Jesus.

For a while the Divine World had almost died out of human thought—at least was uninfluential in human activity. Thus the divine energies of life were sapped at the fountain. Spontaneous goodness became a dream. The splendid faculties of man developed, it is true; but in the absence of constant contact with the Divine World degenerated. Then came the announcement of the Kingdom of God,

which once more made a spiritual realm and higher destiny credible to men; victory was once more possible over the forces of disturbance, decay, and dissolution; a return was made possible from the false trend of human development. The Kingdom of God in the message of Jesus meant man with God and God with man. Will divinely inspired meant goodness; life divinely inspired meant life eternal; development divinely inspired meant growth into the divine likeness. Man with God and God with man meant holy life, immortal life, ever-developing life. Man with God and God with man meant freedom from the bondage of corruption, attainment to the liberty of heavenly life, residence for ever in the glorious free air of the sons of God.

In further illustration of our Lord's conception of the Reign of God, the Kingdom of Heaven, recall the touching scene at Nazareth at the commencement of His public ministry. Immediately after the crucial experience of the Temptation, Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit, Luke tells us, into Galilee, and taught from synagogue to synagogue. "And He came," Luke continues, "to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because

He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor ; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. . . . And He began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

This, then, was the Gospel of Jesus—not good news of political deliverance from the Roman, no message of instantaneous social or political rescue, but none the less a message of glory and blessedness. The Gospel of Jesus was glad tidings of that Spiritual Realm which made poverty a bearable incident in life eternal, which was spiritual deliverance to those in the bondage of sense, which was sight to the spiritually blind, which was freedom to the spiritually mutilated, which was welcome to the Spiritual Kingdom. In a word, the message of Jesus was a revelation and invigoration of the spiritual faculties of man.

To men who were thinking of the outward evils they had suffered, who lamented their natural enslavement, who were constantly wounded by heathen religious customs in their midst, who were seriously impoverished by the extortion of Roman tax-gatherers, and who were liable to have their blood mingled with their sacrifices by a Roman soldiery, this Preacher of the Kingdom of God points out quite a different ideal of life, a membership in a spiritual realm, which makes poverty and suffering and oppression relatively unimportant. Jesus proclaimed

a reign of God whose blessings were spiritual and could be enjoyed at once. Thus those who longed for spiritual blessings were straightway attracted, whilst those who cared only for earthly things were taught of a realm of life which they ignored.

And in yet further illustration let us bear in mind our Lord's specific parables of the kingdom, delivered to the multitudes on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

The Kingdom of God is as a sower going forth to sow. The seed is the word of the Kingdom, which has a varying history, according to the soil into which it falls. Humanity as such is God's corn-field; the seed is the same in each instance—news of a spiritual realm; but the seed has a varying history, according to the heart on which it falls: here it is devoured by the birds, there it is choked; in one place it is scorched; and in yet other places it germinates and bears fruit, thirty or sixty or a hundred-fold. So the story is told of the antipathies of a blunted spiritual susceptibility.

But the announcement of the Kingdom of God has actual positive hindrances to overcome. For the Heavenly Sower is opposed by an inimical sower; and side by side with the Gospel, the good-spell, of the Kingdom of Heaven, is the bad-spell of the kingdom of this world.

A third parable informs us of the gradual and silent growth of the Kingdom of God. For no sooner is the seed sown than growth proceeds of itself: first

the green blade shoots forth, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear, and last of all the ripe grain. With time and patience the Spiritual Kingdom, working according to its own natural though spiritual laws, will bear the golden heads of full harvest.

And a fourth parable tells how the tiniest seed may become the largest tree ; for it is the quality, not the size, of the germ which determines its subsequent expansion. For it has an essential expansion, an expansion which is irresistible, and works steadily but surely like leaven, as the parable of the leaven declares. Yet again, a share in the Spiritual World of Christ is like finding hid treasure, or purchasing a pearl of great price. Yet again, the Kingdom of Heaven is as a net in the great sea.

Gathering up the threads of what I have been saying, the following points appear, as characteristic of the message of Christ to men.

First, in His life and teaching our Lord ever assumed the reality of the Spiritual World. It was not that He argued its existence ; He bore witness concerning it. God is a Spirit, He averred, and man too ; for man is to worship God in spirit, if he worship at all. According to the testimony of Jesus, man is concerned with the world to come, the coming age, as well as with this present world, the age that now is ; and this coming age is not wholly future—it is only future as regards its final and most glorious phase, its victorious and exclusive phase ; for really

this coming age has already begun—"the Kingdom of God is among you."

There is a Divine Realm, says Jesus, as well as a human; and man in the divine intention, and according to his essential ideal, belongs to this Divine Realm, this Kingdom of God, this Reign of the Supernal.

Nay, not only does our Lord always assume the reality of the Spiritual World, but He lives in that world during His earthly life as much, if not more, than in the world of sense. His prayerfulness, His authoritative utterance, His manifest *savoir faire*, His calmness, His confidence, His unshaken and unfaltering and never-doubting attitude, tone, and speech on the reality of the Spiritual Sphere, help us wonderfully to believe in that sphere too.

It is not that at one moment of exultant and almost excited belief He speaks of this Heavenly Realm, whilst at another moment He is in doubt, paying for His mood of exhilarating faith by a reactional mood of despondent dubitation. About our Lord's testimony there is neither ups nor downs, neither the "hill-tops of communion" nor the valley-deeps of despair. His is one calm consistent testimony.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen,"—this is His invariable attitude: "I speak that which I have seen with My Father"; "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was"; "Father,

I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am ; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me : for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." This is the characteristic tone and manner at all times. Even the momentary faltering in Gethsemane is no faltering of spiritual conviction, is no faltering of belief in the Kingdom of God : " Father," " Father," is still the uppermost epithet in prayer and agony.

Jesus does not speak with a literary warmth and energy, as if the truth He utters is new and is just given to Him from above, stirring His soul with the unexpected, quickening His pulse with the previously unrealised sublime. In His speech about the loftiest and most spiritual things there is, as I have previously said, no throb of excitement, no thrill of nerve, as in the language of Isaiah. Our Lord seems only to be uttering the most familiar thoughts which have long been known to Him. Though His word concerning the " many mansions " and " glory " and " union " strangely move us, to Him they are manifestly the plainest and commonest facts. He talks of them in the most matter-of-fact manner ; to Him the facts of the Spiritual World, of the Kingdom of God, are the veriest commonplaces. Thus His whole tone, as well as His entire testimony, declares, and helps us to perceive, the reality of the Spiritual World.

Second, in His life and teaching our Lord ever assumed the reality of a spiritual faculty in man,

however dulled and depleted. This conviction also underlies His whole manner with men. He talks of the things of the Kingdom of God, expecting men to understand. He does not argue ; He states. He does not reason ; He declares. Instead of the lawyer-like precision and logomachy of the scribe, He speaks with authority, assured that His words will demonstrate themselves to His audience to be authoritative.

Nothing is more remarkable than this in His constant and continued dealings with men. He does not descend to their level, and attempt to raise them by carefully adjusted Baconian fact or Socratic question, preparing the way elaborately for their ultimate apprehension ; He assumes that they are already at His level in the possession of spiritual faculty, which faculty He straightway addresses.

Apologetics He eschews, and the apologetic attitude ; His is the dogmatic method and temper. He meets a sinful woman by a well-side, and talks to her about the spirituality of God and the need of spirituality in worship, as if she could not but understand. To a poor woman taken in adultery, He says "Go and sin no more," as though she knew already all about sin, and, besides, all about its conquest.

That men must be convinced that there is a spiritual world, that men must be reasoned into believing that there is a spiritual kingdom to which they may aspire, that it is necessary even to awaken

a desire for entrance into that spiritual realm—these are not convictions of Jesus. He everywhere assumes the existence of a spiritual faculty in man, and the desire of the spiritual faculty for due food and exercise. That man can find God He does not teach; but that there is no insuperable obstacle to God's finding man, this Jesus does invariably assume. That human nature can apprehend spiritual things, that man as such has a vision for the things divine, that the heart of man is not restricted by constitution to the finite, that man is a spirit as well as God, that there is a mutual need of each other in man's spirit and God's—these are axioms with Jesus. That the nature of man has spiritual organs as well as organs of sense and intellect; that "as man, being as to his body included in nature, is surrounded by a physical environment which is constantly acting on him and presenting itself in his consciousness, so man as spirit is surrounded by a spiritual and supernal environment which is constantly acting upon him and presenting itself in his consciousness,"—all this is axiomatic with Jesus.

That there is in man a spiritual faculty, however rudimentary, stunted, or atrophied, is the foundation of the whole attitude of Jesus. That the sense may be sadly dim He knows, and speaks of methods of invigoration; that the sense may be sadly stunted He knows, and He speaks of methods of development; that the sense may be sadly atrophied He knows, and He speaks of methods of cure; but that

man has such a spiritual faculty He never questions, but addresses Himself straight thereto. In man as man Jesus ever saw a spiritual capacity by which he can apprehend the Supernal World, an organ of spiritual sight by which he can see the Divine, a faith which, bestirring itself, can lay hold upon the Kingdom of God.

Thirdly, in His life and teaching our Lord ever assumed that there is no obstacle in God to man's entrance into the spiritual sphere, into the Kingdom of God. If there are difficulties in the way of a free and frank reception of prodigal man back into the Father's house, difficulties on the part of the Father, then the Father will Himself effect their removal. Penetrating and profound words of Jesus certainly imply again and again, as I shall have to insist later on, that there is a strangely abnormal task before Him prior to the full and free proclamation of welcome to all to the kingdom ; but all this supernal adjustment and restoration to normality Jesus ever assumes the Father and He will perfect. God Himself takes the initiative in welcoming man back to the spiritual world. God seeks man, finds man, welcomes man. The doors of the kingdom are thrown wide open to all who desire to find there a lasting and true home.

Lastly, in His life and teaching our Lord ever assumed that the obstacles in man to return to his rightful place in the spiritual kingdom may be overcome, on the one hand by faith, and on the other by obedience.

The door to the kingdom is wide open to those who care to see the door, and seeing is believing, seeing is faith, a faculty man has only to exercise and exert, for he has it as surely as he has eyes. Back through the doors of the kingdom there need be no return, if obedience to its laws and its King are frankly conceded. Certainly there are human obstacles to entrance into the kingdom; and the parables of Jesus peculiarly emphasise these obstacles. But Jesus also emphasises the ease of return. To the sinful, the lost, the sick, the lame, the blind, the maimed, to all, He said, "Seek *first* the Kingdom of God," with stress, strong stress, on the *first*, which even meant forsaking those things which specially deterred.

Thus Jesus proclaimed constantly and as the gist of His whole message the Kingdom of God. The Divine World He said was man's true world, and it was open to all. To see this world man had eyes, spiritual eyes, which, however closed or weakened, were not stone-blind. This sense of the divine was capable of exertion and exercise, and Jesus demanded both. Exertion of this spiritual sense was faith; exercise of this spiritual sense was obedience, which in many of its forms is self-denial. These are the secrets of Jesus. They underlie His "Come unto Me." They also underlie His "Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

LECTURE VII

THE METHOD OF SPIRITUAL ADDRESS

AS I pointed out at the close of my last lecture, the message of our Lord to men displayed two great characteristics. His message always assumed the reality of the spiritual world, the Kingdom of God ; and His message always assumed the reality in man of a spiritual faculty, however dulled or deadened, a faculty which expressly fitted man to see and enter the spiritual world, the Kingdom of God.

Nor are these assumptions difficult to understand. Spiritual facts and spiritual faculties are the common inheritance of man. Thus a Theodore Parker could write : " Looking, even superficially, but with earnestness, upon human affairs, we are driven to confess that there is in us a spiritual nature, which directly and legitimately leads to Religion ; that as man's body is connected with the world of Matter, is rooted in it ; has bodily wants, bodily senses to minister thereto, and a fund of external materials wherewith to gratify these senses and appease these wants ; so man's soul is connected with the world of Spirit, is rooted in God ; has spiritual wants, and spiritual senses, and a fund of materials wherewith to gratify

these spiritual senses and appease these spiritual wants." Similar convictions led a Renan to say: "If your vibrating faculties have never given out that great unique sound we call God, I have no more to say; you lack an essential element of your nature." And an Emerson said the same when he wrote: "Before the revelations of the soul Time, Space, and Nature shrink away. . . . With each divine impulse the mind rends the thin rind of the visible and finite, and comes out into eternity, and inspires and expires its air." So too says Sir Edwin Arnold, when he writes:—

" This sphere obscure, viewed with dim eyes to match,
 This earthly span—gross, brief—wherein we snatch,
 Rarely and faintly, glimpses of Times past
 Which have been boundless, and of Times to last
 Beyond them timelessly: how should such be
 All to be seen, all we were made to see ?

.
 How should this prove the All, the Last, the First ?
 Why shall no inner, under, splendours burst
 Once—twice—the Veil ? "

And a Plato said, in his *Republic*: "As the eye sees first the light and then the sun its source, so the mental vision opens first to the truth, and secondly to the Fountal Truth, the sun of the spiritual world, to God."

A conscious relation to the supernal world, a sense of relationship to the divine, Jesus everywhere regards as part of our human birthright. In man as man Jesus ever saw a spiritual capacity by which the supernal world can be apprehended. He announced

the Kingdom of God, the realm divine, the world of spirit, and expected man to be able to understand what He said. And His conviction concerning man was as manifestly right as His conviction concerning God. As M. Sabatier has finely said : " Observe the natural and spontaneous movement of piety : a soul feels in peace and light that it believes : it is strong, humble, resigned, obedient ; and it straightway refers its strength, faith, humility, and obedience to the action of the Divine Spirit within itself. An Anne du Bourg, dying upon the block, prays : ' Do not abandon me, O God, for fear I should abandon Thee.' The prophet of Israel says : ' Convert me, O Lord, and I shall be converted.' And the father, in the Gospels, says : ' Lord I believe ; help Thou my unbelief.' " " And so to feel," continues M. Sabatier, " in our personal activity the action and presence of the Spirit of God within our own spirit, is the great mystery, and possibly the only mystery, of religion." ¹

However, it is not upon the naturalness to man of our Lord's great assumptions in His Gospel message, nor even upon the fact of those assumptions or of that message, that I wish now to dwell, but upon the tone and manner in which our Lord's announcements were ever made.

The tone of Jesus was magistral. His manner was confident. " He taught as one having authority."

¹ " *Essai d'une Théorie de la Connaissance Religieuse,*" *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie*, 1893, p. 216.

He spake as one having a superior knowledge. This assured manner, this air of knowledge, this accent of conviction, is His at all times. Jesus seldom uses impassioned language. He rarely indulges in stirring declamation. His is never the appeal of peroration. In vain in His speech do we listen for the thunder of the Baptist: "Repent,"—"Wrath to come,"—"Chaff," "Unquenchable fire." Very plainly but very firmly does our Lord always speak. There is a quiet insistence about His whole utterance which is more convincing than noise or shouting. He speaks as men speak when they are perfectly sure of what they say. To a child in danger we do not say, "Do not, I earnestly beseech you, my dearest child, put your finger into the fire," exhausting all our powers of eloquence to round the appeal: we just say, "If you do, you will burn yourself." Nor does a man of science lay all his faculties of persuasion under tribute to convince men that it is the earth which moves, and not the sun: he simply says, "Whether you believe it or not, it is a fact; verify it if you will." It is in this matter-of-fact manner that our Lord speaks of the Kingdom of God. There is no elaborate choice of eloquent words; but in plain and calm speech, as absolutely sure of His ground, He says what He has to say with quiet authority.

Listen, for instance, to His application to the Sermon on the Mount: "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man, which built his house upon a

rock ; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell not ; for it was founded upon a rock." List to that royal, that masterful, that authoritative, " *I will liken.*" " He taught as one having the authority of superior knowledge, and not as the scribes."

The point is notable. Ever assuming the reality of the spiritual world, and ever assuming man's capacity for the spiritual world, ever declaring the Kingdom of God and man's fitness for that kingdom, our Lord states what He knows, He does not argue ; He declares His message, He does not reason it. His is the authoritative method and temper. His is ever the tone of the ambassador telling the mind of his monarch ; not His is the tone of the counsel for the defence.

And the Gospel for to-day must be a Gospel of authority, on the one hand coming from God and announcing His kingdom, and on the other addressing itself to man as the destined subject of this kingdom.

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God is never so much a Gospel as when it is declared without apology. This Gospel of the Kingdom is the true Word of God, " which is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and is quick to discern both the imaginations and thoughts of the hearts." The Gospel of Christ is a spiritual message to men who are spiritual, and is to be delivered without hesitation or a suspicion of in-

credulity. A spiritual and believing man addressing spiritual men—this is our Lord's method of spiritual address. A man who sees and lives and rejoices in the Kingdom of God, appealing to men who are capable by constitution of seeing the Kingdom of God—this is our Lord's method of spiritual address. The same method has been beautifully expressed by the Apostle John in his First Letter, when he says : " That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us) ; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us,"—the longest, but by no means the least important, of the utterances of St. John.

The aim, then, of every worker for Jesus being to introduce men into the Kingdom of God, the appropriate method is threefold : first, to keep before men the fact of this spiritual kingdom and its laws ; second, to keep before men the fact of their possible access to that kingdom ; and, third, to keep before men the fact that he who announces speaks from actual knowledge of that kingdom.

Men cannot become members of the Kingdom of Heaven unless, first, there is a Kingdom of Heaven ; second, they are fitted for entrance into the Kingdom

of Heaven; and, third, the Holy Spirit, working through a spiritual man, introduces them into the kingdom. A spiritual world, a spirit in man—these are the two facts to be constantly manifested by the Christian worker; and in announcing these two facts the actual and evident acquaintance with a spiritual world, the actual and evident possession of a spiritual nature, are indispensable aids. He who would bring others as recruits into the Kingdom of God must at one and the same time show unto men that entrance it is the prerogative of the Holy Ghost to give, that entrance into the spiritual realm the Holy Ghost has given to the recruiting agent himself, and that the would-be recruit possesses the same faculties for the kingdom as the agent himself.

The spirit in man, the spiritual kingdom—these are the great facts which every worker for the great King of the spiritual kingdom must constantly display in both practice and creed. Our unquestionable belief and membership in the Kingdom of Heaven are the necessary requisites to the unquestionable belief and membership of others in the kingdom.

Let me recapitulate. The method of spiritual address, according to reason and the example of Christ, is threefold: first, it is an appeal to the spiritual nature of man; second, concerning the spiritual world and its laws; third, by one who speaks experimentally and therefore authoritatively concerning the spiritual world.

Let me dwell for a while upon each point.

First, then, the method of spiritual address, the method of appeal to men concerning the Kingdom of God, is to speak straight to the spiritual nature in man. That spiritual nature has needs, great needs, crying needs, and these needs may be taken for granted. To present bread to a starving man is enough, without argument as to the value of bread. To present God to a spiritually needy man is enough, without argument concerning his need of God. "O God, Thou hast cast us off, Thou hast scattered us, Thou hast been displeased; O turn Thyself to us again"—this is the true language of the soul. "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God"—this is the genuine utterance of the spirit of man.

Let me emphasise this aspect of method by contrast. For there are many rival Gospels which attempt the satisfaction of human wants.

For instance, there is the Gospel of Socialism. According to this Gospel, man is to be lifted up from discontent by improving his physical and social condition. The ameliorative method of Jesus is different. Jesus has taught us to improve the spiritual condition of man; then his physical and social condition may be left to right themselves.

Let no man hide his eyes to the sorrows of our times; let us each do all we can to help our suffering fellow-men; but let us beware lest we become sceptical of the method of Jesus.

Two great problems lie before our modern civilisa-

tion,—the selfishness of wealth, and the degradation of pauperism. Now, far be it from me to deny that there is room for a much closer adherence to the spirit and practice of Jesus than the Christian churches have yet displayed. It is indubitable that there is much room amongst the best of us for a much more affectionate and general manifestation of Christian brotherliness. Far be it from me also to encourage for a moment the idea that the way is clear to a full and satisfactory solution of these two gigantic social problems. I believe there will have to be much thinking, and much experiment, and much failure, and much persistence in well-doing, before any solution whatever, that is worthy of Christian men, shall be arrived at, and before the doctrinaire theorist has been banished by the wisely practical man. I believe also that in the interval there will be much room for a Christian generosity of sentiment and purse. Indeed, it is surely better to err by over-generosity, than by over-scrupulousness as to the results of indiscriminate aid to the unfortunate. Nevertheless, every contributor of even the tiniest wisdom to the solution of the pressing problems of plutocracy and pauperism should be hailed a benefactor of men. All this should be strongly averred. But should it not be averred as strongly that the preacher of the Christian view of things, that the proclaimer of the Kingdom of God, is also a great philanthropist, though, like Peter, he be compelled by circumstances to say, "Silver and

gold have I none," whilst adding in the same breath, "Such as I have I give unto thee"?

Duty to God involves duty to man. Establish right relations between man and God, and right relations between man and man will inevitably follow in due course. The Christian spirit has many victories still to win. The laws of the Kingdom of God, the great laws of reverence for God and love to man, have not as yet had full scope. Therefore, whatever minor things we are able to do in politics, in society, in family life, in individual effort, for the amelioration of man, a steady insistence upon the Gospel of Jesus, a consistent and persistent declaration of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, is also an invaluable contribution to the healing of the woes of men.

What I mean is this:—The method of solving social problems adopted, say, by Wesley and Whitfield was more efficacious than the method of the French Revolution.

I appeal to a greater instance still. Remember the apparently insoluble social problems which confronted the first century of our era,—slavery, the degradation of woman, disgusting impurity, a debased social life, a nepotic political life, a sensuous religious life. Now, how did Paul propose to meet these pressing problems even in the great metropolis of the Empire? "I am ready," he says, "to preach the Gospel to them that are at Rome also." "For," he adds (despite the culture, the prowess, the misery,

the sin of Rome), "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation." Vehemently desirous of transforming the Kingdom of this World into the Kingdom of God, Paul thought the directest course to compass his magnanimous end was to preach the Gospel. Surely Paul was right. The method seems slower, it is true, than our modern gospels, but it is more sure. Plutocracy and pauperism would die were there but a higher sense in rich and poor of the facts and laws of the Kingdom of God.

There have been many forms of the government of men. Peoples have ruled themselves, and we have had democracies. More often peoples have been ruled by a would-be superior class, and we have had aristocracies. Yet more often peoples have been ruled by a superior person of the would-be superior class, and we have had monarchies, absolute and limited. But there is another form of government worth trying,—not democratic, the kingdom and rule of the people; nor aristocratic, the kingdom and rule of the few; nor monarchical, the kingdom and rule of the monarch: I mean *theocratic*, the kingdom and rule of God.

It is time to try with some heartiness a form of rule in which God Himself is the one source of law, honour, and property.

In such a polity, the polity of the Kingdom of God, rulers would be consciously divine vicegerents; landlords would know themselves to be Jehovah's

tenants-at-will ; priests could not forget they were servants of God.

In such a spiritual world the good of all polities would be secured, and the harm of all polities avoided. Indubitably kings have their uses ; they have their dangers, too ; but the harm of them is reduced to a minimum if they are consciously responsible to the King of kings. So, too, capitalists and landlords, priests and commanders, lords and masters, have their risks as well as their uses ; but, again, the liability to mischief is reduced to a minimum if all—capitalists and priests and generals, lords and landlords and masters—are consciously answerable to God for the discharge of secular trusts which have thus become sacred. Nay, it will be a blessed day for mankind at large when all owners of property, and governors of armies, and officers in states, when once all rulers and ruled, who, being but human, have all a tendency to tyrannise and aggrandise when in power, shall have their natural tendencies neutralised, nay transmuted, by a conscious recognition of the Kingship of Jesus. One Kingdom of God the world has seen ; it failed because of the weakness of man, and the hardness of man's heart. Another Kingdom of God is on the way, which will not fail. May the coming age speedily appear !

Good as are many of the socialistic ideas of the day, Socialism can never be a lasting rival to the Kingdom of God. For consider what the Kingdom of God is able to do. It can give due and effective

supremacy to what is highest in man. It can satisfy and invigorate and give prominence to the spiritual nature of man: it can bring man to God; it can make man a willing and obedient subject in the Kingdom of God.

The fact is worth considering. For satisfy all the physical, intellectual, and social needs of man—feed him well, house him well, teach him well, amuse him well, rule him well—and you will speedily find there are in man profounder needs which are left unsatisfied. Hunger of soul bites more than hunger of body. There are exacting and clamant spiritual faculties in our human birthright. The nature of man is orchestral, and full and rich and entire harmony is only produced when many fingers play thereon—fingers of God as well as fingers of sense and fingers of self. Besides man's relations to the outer world of sense, and the inner world of self, he has relations with the upper world of spirit, with the divine realm, with the Kingdom of God. Of course men do not readily bare their deeper spiritual sentiments to every rude gaze; but our common nature assures us that, however latent or concealed, those spiritual needs and yearnings are always there. The First Father has so made us that His children cannot remain alienated without pain. Feelings of estrangement rankle none the less painfully that they are borne in silence. Separation from God is a very real woe. Hence the timeliness and the appositeness of the Gospel of Jesus, the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Indeed, the relief and gladsomeness of the Gospel of Jesus was never painted more vividly or more touchingly than by our great Master Himself. "And when he came to himself"—away from the father's house he was beside himself, you see—"he said, I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, I have sinned against heaven and before thee." *There was relief in return to God.* "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." *There is the kiss of reconciliation for every returning prodigal.* "But the father said unto his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry." *There is festival on return to God.* The Kingdom of God means spiritual relief, a genuine home-feeling, a non-evanescent joy.

Address to the social needs of man can never therefore possess the inherent force of address to his spiritual needs. The Service of Man is not at so high a level of permanence and usefulness as the Kingdom of God. He serves men well who deliberately addresses himself to meet their spiritual needs; he serves men better who deliberately announces and makes credible to men the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, its nature, its method of admission, and its privileges of residence.

I have dwelt upon one rival panacea for human

distress—namely, the Gospel of Socialism. But there are many others. I name some, without delaying upon their consideration. They are all good, in their way, for ameliorating some part of man's complex nature. They fail, however, as all-sufficient gospels, on the one hand because they address themselves to part of man's nature, and on the other hand because the part of man's nature addressed can never be made supreme and dominant without disaster. The Gospel of the Kingdom of God addresses itself also to but one part of man's complex nature at the outset; but, then, it addresses itself to that part of man's constitution which was destined to be supreme and gubernative.

Thus there are the gospels of intellectualism, making its appeal to the intellect; and moralism, making its appeal to the ethical nature; and of æstheticism, making its appeal to the artistic nature; and of symbolism, making its appeal to the imagination. In extremer forms each of these exaggerates a part of man's nature which cannot be dominant without great loss; and even in the less extreme and more admirable forms, they attempt to minister to the spiritual nature of man through some subordinate faculty, with a fore-ordination to failure. Man needs God. The spiritual nature is the organ of access to God. The intellect can only bring us to *thoughts* about God, not to God. Morals can only bring us to *determinations* of God, not to God. Æsthetics can only bring us to *repre-*

sentations of God, not to God. Symbolism, however exquisite and suitable, can only bring us to *symbols*, and not to the divine facts symbolised.

I have now dealt with one aspect of the threefold method of spiritual address. In endeavouring to help men to see the spiritual realm, the Kingdom of God (to which they normally belong, if the normal be judged by the divine intention concerning man), one point of method is that an appeal be made to man's spiritual nature. Ever assuming as our Lord did that there is a spiritual nature in man, with its own specific and indestructible needs, address must be made to that spiritual nature, attempt must be made to satisfy those needs. A second point of method is that our address to the spiritual nature be a presentation of the fact of a spiritual world and its laws. Man, created to become a subject of the Kingdom of Heaven, all his deeper instincts craving, whether he quite understands the craving or not, for life and happiness and activity in the spiritual sphere, the Kingdom of God must be proclaimed to him. If a man has been without food for a while, you may assume that he is hungry, and you may also assume that a meal will be acceptable. If a man has been without spiritual sustenance for a while, there is no great assumption in acting on the one hand as though he is not without spiritual hunger, and on the other hand as though spiritual food will be both useful and welcome.

It is an important matter, therefore, in ministering to minds diseased and depleted, that the right food be administered. Alas! there is a good deal of saw-dust, and stew, and sausage-meat, and indigestibles, set in these days before the spiritually hungry and dyspeptic. News of the kingdom is what is wanted; not that the news will feed, but it will put the sufferer in the way of being fed. It is the Spirit of God which can alone revivify and sustain the spirit of man; and when in a state of exhaustion for want of intercourse with the Divine Spirit, it is supremely important that the exhausted nature go quickly and straight to where supplies are. As I have said, you and I cannot satisfy the soul-hunger of men, but we may help to prevent application in wrong quarters. If we cannot feed the spiritually destitute, we can clearly point to where food is accessible.

Nor let us ever forget that in so presenting the Kingdom of God, with its King and Life, to men, we have their deepest instincts on our side. At the base of the heart of every man is some remembrance, however vague and inexpressible, of a possible blessedness which he has missed. Man, however degraded, knows himself to be the great King's son. To hear of the kingdom is to hear good news from home.

This is the point which I fear Professor Drummond has so sadly missed in his presentation of Christian truth. "The attitude of the natural man with reference to the spiritual," Professor Drummond has told

us, in his charming *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, "is a subject on which the New Testament is pronounced." "Not only," he continues, "in his relation to the spiritual man, but to the whole spiritual world, the natural man is regarded as *dead*." Now, a *dead* man one would have thought had once been alive; but this is not Professor Drummond's view. He does not view man as having lost a faculty he once enjoyed, but as never having had the faculty. His words are: "[Man] is as a crystal to an organism. The natural world is to the spiritual as the inorganic to the organic."

But such a view not only makes man unspiritual by nature, but unblamable, irresponsible. Man cannot be condemned for neglect of spiritual influences which he has never experienced or known. How, then, could Christ say to men, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth"? Or how could our Lord complain, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life"?

Again, how are men to become spiritual according to Professor Drummond? By the impartation of a wholly new faculty, by the creation of a wholly new organ. Life of the spiritual kind is originated by the Lord and Giver of life imparting entirely new life, and thus bearing them "across the bridgeless gulf between the natural and the spiritual."

Surely not. Man already possesses spiritual organs, however atrophied or undeveloped, and the Spirit of

Life, the Holy Spirit, who has so blessed an office of inspiration in the Kingdom of God, can breathe His vitalising breath into the stunted and diseased spiritual organs until they pulsate and begin to grow healthily.

The spiritual state is natural to man, if by natural we mean what expresses the primary intention of God. In his primitive state spiritual intercourse should have been unbroken between the spirit of man and the Divine Spirit. In the divine idea the ceaseless flow of Divine Life into man was to maintain a harmonious action of both sides of human nature, spirit ruling body, and body obeying spirit. Further, the continuity of divine intercourse was to have secured to man that spiritual life by which, in the phrase of Paul, the first Adam, or natural man, was to become the second Adam, or spiritual man.

When the relations between God and man were disturbed by human self-reliance, the flow of the Divine Life, the intercourse with the Divine Spirit, ceased, and, as necessary consequences, immortality was lost, there was a disturbance of moral balance, and growth in Godlessness became inevitable. Not only so, but, by the solidarity of man, and the constitution of the universe, posterity suffered, and thus, in increasing degree from generation to generation, the Divine Life, in plain speech the Holy Ghost, no longer energising the spirit of man, the race degenerated, death reigned in man's body, passion ruled in man's mind, sense governed spirit. Such are the

terrible and ever-widening effects consequent upon sin—viz., death, disturbance, carnality.

How, then, shall man be restored? Surely there is but one answer: by a return of the Holy Spirit. Starve the body, and it dies; starve the spirit, and it dies. Feed the body, and it lives and grows; feed the spirit, and it lives and grows. And the Divine Inspiration, life in the Holy Spirit, or, better perhaps, the Holy Spirit in our life—this is the appropriate pabulum of the spirit of man. Renew the spiritual intercourse between God and man, and the effects of the loss of the Holy Spirit shall be first neutralised and then rectified. The poison shall find its antidote, and proper food shall be administered; nay, the administration of right food shall be the conquest of the poison.

Now, it is the prerogative of Jesus, the King in the Kingdom of God, to give of the Holy Ghost to men, and His gift of the Holy Ghost means divine life, heavenly life, spiritual life, eternal life, the appropriate pabulum for helping man to his best.

Therefore let us present to man the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, praying the great King of the Kingdom to accompany our words with the gift of the Paraclete. The Gospel of the Kingdom of God does not so much demonstrate the reality of the spiritual world; it makes belief in the spiritual world instinctive.

One point of method remains:—In addition to

appealing to the spiritual nature of man, concerning the spiritual world, and its laws, let us also learn from the manner of Jesus, that our speech about the Kingdom of God should be authoritative, the unquestionable tone of the spiritual expert.

A great preacher gives a striking picture of a stone fountain distributing refreshing water. Rarely perhaps, in the great mercy of God, the water of life may flow from very stony vessels. But as a rule it may be assumed that the more spiritual the messenger, the more rich will be the spiritual effects of his message. Oh for more cultivation of our spiritual natures, that we may quicken many! The finest spiritual propaganda work by a sort of spiritual contagion.

Divinely provided means of spiritual grace are to our hands in the divine word, and in prayer, and in self-sacrifice, and in obedience: let us use them diligently, that we may be useful. And the Holy Spirit Himself but waits our earnest and sincere appeal, a recognition of His power and willingness, to endue us ever more richly with His gracious energies. Let us therefore remember our Master's priceless and stimulating words: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask an eel, will he give him a

serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" Or, as Luke puts it: "How much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."

LECTURE VIII

THE PLACE OF THE ATONEMENT IN SPIRITUAL ADDRESS

AT the outset of these lectures attention was called to the fact that, in the great Evangelical Revival at the close of the eighteenth century, the dominant message was the Pauline Gospel. The Gospel as presented by Paul showed itself peculiarly adapted to the spiritual needs of the time. The state of our English world was such that Pauline turns of phrase, Pauline consecution of thought, Pauline descriptions of man and his needs, were the great subjects chosen by the preachers of that day to compass the elevation of mankind.

Whilst so saying, it was also necessary to insist that to a very appreciable extent the Pauline Gospel was misunderstood and misrepresented, the instance being then adduced of the stress laid by the leaders of the Evangelical Revival upon the punishment of sin by eternal torment. Another instance may be found in the emphasis laid upon the Doctrine of Atonement. The Doctrine of Atonement seemed to be the beginning, the middle, and the end of the Gospel. Saving faith was faith in the Atonement.

Nay, salvation was faith in the Atonement. The question as to whether the Atoning Work of Jesus might have influence where that work was unknown or unrecognised, the question as to whether the Atoning Work of Jesus must be consciously apprehended by man before it can produce spiritual results—this crucial and very important question seems never even to have suggested itself. That Christ cannot work upon the soul which is ignorant or sceptical of His Atonement seems to have been an axiom.

Herein indubitably lay a truth, and a very important truth; but the undue stress, the exaggerated emphasis, laid thereon made the truth almost as dangerous as serious error. From this false emphasis upon the Atonement sprang most of the mistakes and shortcomings of the Evangelical Revival, and the great movements of recoil. To believe in the Atonement of Jesus was to enter the Kingdom of Heaven: to continue to believe in the Atonement of Jesus was to remain in the Kingdom. In both statements lie very subtle dangers. Indeed, the largeness of Christian life, the growth Christwards by Christ's ceaseless and long-continued aid, the development under spiritual influences of the whole man, the growth to saintship by the Holy Ghost, were missed because of this false emphasis.

And, as I have said, this false emphasis, which straightway became a misrepresentation of Christianity, and which, more disastrously still,

narrows and belittles the greatness of life in Christ is not Pauline. It is a misreading of Paul.

For what was Paul's Gospel?

The answer is neither easy nor simple. Paul has many Gospels, or rather many ways of presenting his one Gospel. The Gospel Paul preached was not a kind of cistern which held so much truth and no more, to be always drawn at the same few taps. Rather was it a spring of living water, now breaking soil here and now there, affecting one by its usefulness, and another by its beauty, and another by its limpidity, and another by its tastiness. To Paul the Gospel was a glorious divine gift, like sunlight, or like the sea, or like flowers, more readily felt than described. Indeed, Paul is the great model for variety in the presentation of the Gospel. At one time he painted in glowing and almost passionate words the effects of the Crucifixion; at another he would lucidly argue the manner by which man can obtain forgiveness. In one place some startling occurrence suggests to him the Gospel he would preach, and in another place the Gospel is presented as the ripe product of a long life of thought and experience. At Athens an altar to an unknown god is the starting-point of his Gospel, and he shows how Christ is the fulfilment of the yearnings of heathendom. At Corinth the love of pleasure is his starting-point, and he shows the fulfilment in Christ of human desire for pleasure. At Jerusalem the

Gospel becomes the fulfilment of the best in Judaism. In Paul's view the Gospel of Jesus was satisfaction of the spiritual needs of all men, having its point of contact with the experience of all men, if only that point could be found and utilised. "Every road leads to Rome," Paul heard the common people around him constantly saying, and "Every experience leads to Christ" was the principle underlying every sermon he preached, every letter he wrote.

So much it seems necessary to say to guard against the not infrequent misapprehension that the Gospel of Jesus was to Paul, what it is to some, a reiteration in every utterance of a few truths in the same monotonous order,—ruin, retribution, redemption.

Nevertheless, Paul's outlook was not like that of some would-be broad preachers, so broad as to be all mist. Paul could put his Gospel tersely and compactly enough, if he wished. The Epistle to the Romans is a fine example.

Not having visited as yet the little congregation of Christians in the great metropolis of the Roman Empire, his heart burned, Paul tells us, with a desire to preach the Gospel to them. Prevented again and again from visiting Rome by his multifarious labours in Asia and Europe, Paul determines at last, not being able to go himself, to send these Roman Christians a letter. Personally ignorant of them, he not knowing them, and they not knowing him, observe what Paul does. Taking his stand upon our common human nature, Paul preaches an all-

round Gospel, earnest, loving, and reasoned. Thus this Epistle to the Romans stands out from all the other Epistles as the one consistent and thoroughgoing handy guide to the religious life.

Read this Epistle carefully, and one can readily see what Paul's Gospel was. It was a power of God unto salvation—a divine energy for saving men—the divine way of human betterment. Paul's Gospel made two assumptions. One assumption was that all men knew something of God and His law: "For the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity; so that they are without excuse: because that, knowing God, they glorified Him not as God"; "For when Gentiles, which have no law, do by nature the things of the law, these, having no law, are a law unto themselves: in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their reasonings one with another accusing or else excusing." Another assumption is that all men know they have sinned, and that their sin has brought them under condemnation: "We before laid to the charge, both of Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin . . . that all the world may be brought under the judgment of God . . . for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God." Further, Paul's Gospel itself is good news of reconciliation to God by the blood of Jesus: "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of

God; being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God purposed to be a propitiation, through faith, by His blood." Further, this reconciliation becomes consciously ours by faith: "We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith." Further, this Gospel of reconciliation is much more than the forgiveness of sin: it is peace with God, it is joy in suffering, it is the first-fruits of the Spirit, it is sonship, it is present realisation, it is future hope, it is gradual restoration to the image of God, it is all that is meant by the inseparable love of God—it is all the faculties and delights and duties of the Christian consciousness in this world, and also in the world to come. In view of such a Gospel, well may the Apostle break forth into the anthem of his eighth chapter, the Grand March of the Redeemed, the Marseillaise of the Kingdom of Heaven. "What shall we say to these things?" Are they not a life-long God-with-us? Do they not tell of God-with-us in struggle, wrestling, and despondency? Are they not an antidote to fear, for He who justifies rules? Do they not make us more than conquerors—that is to say, conquerors of conquerors, conquerors of death, conquerors of life, conquerors of devils, conquerors of time and sense and of all things which are simply instruments of God?

In such a consecution of ideas, a due and very important place is given to the Atonement of Jesus. But the truth of the Atonement of Jesus is by no means all Paul's Gospel. That Gospel is glad-tidings,

glad-tidings of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, a redemption which has important postulates, and a redemption which has an important development, —a great and gladsome growth of experiences, and a great and self-sacrificing evolution of duties.

All this false emphasis upon the Atonement of Jesus, as if the preaching of the blood of Jesus were the full-orbed Gospel, has become increasingly evident of recent years. An inevitable recoil has come. The Atonement forms to-day a very subordinate part of preaching. I venture to think that this extreme recoil accounts for much of the paralysis which seems to have fallen upon Christian effort. The preaching of the new life in Christ was never more prevalent, but probably it was never more sterile. Power to convert men to God seems to be a very rare attribute of the modern pulpit.

Further, it is doubtful whether, in the entire course of the history of the Christian Church, there was ever a time when more recognition obtained of the Divine Source of all spiritual transformation, and when men more longed for and talked of the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life ; and yet, remarkably enough, the converting and transforming grace of the Holy Spirit is more talked of than experienced. Is it not possible that the absence of the Atonement from modern preaching lies at the root of our modern lack of spiritual results ?

These are the facts :—When the Atonement of

Jesus was preached with too great an exclusiveness, spiritual results were conspicuous ; since the Atonement of Jesus has receded to the background, spiritual results have been much rarer. Thus may not the due inference be that in such facts we have causes and effects? If it is the office of the Holy Spirit to convince us of the truth of Christ, to superadd to human sowing of truth divine fertilisation, may it not be that the absence of fertilisation is a consequence of withholding the seed? The question is at least of some pressing interest.

What, then, is the Place of the Atonement in Spiritual Address? In other words, in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus, the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, what place has the Atonement?

In considering this important, nay vital question, observe, in the first place, that, in the change from the Gospel of Paul to the Gospel of Jesus, the Atonement of Jesus does at first sight seem to have been displaced.

The Gospel of Jesus is the good news of an open spiritual kingdom, which man can enter, and which man is called to enter. And after all this is fundamentally the Pauline view, with its Gospel of reconciliation, for reconciliation is just an open way to the Kingdom of God. Still, in the teaching of Jesus, there is less emphasis upon the Atonement than in the teaching of Paul. Paul's mode of presenting the

Gospel attaches to man as sinner: the emphasis is upon man's sin and its cure. The mode of presenting the Gospel visible in the speech of our Lord attaches to man as man. As I have said, the differences are very slight, but often much depends upon a difference of stress, especially in adaptation to different needs. The teaching of Christ starts from the Biblical view of man; the teaching of Paul, from the Biblical view of man's sin.

To appreciate this Gospel of the Kingdom, of an open spiritual world, let us dwell for a while upon the Biblical Anthropology. In the religious region little can be expected from an anthropology which, to use the common distinction applied to History, is profane, and not sacred.

What, then, exactly, was God's idea in creating man? What, according to the testimony of Scripture, was the divine aim in making man?

There are three characteristics of man when first created which, in the present connection, it is desirable to bear in mind. Man was created morally pure; at creation man was not beyond the reach of death; and man was without experience.

Consider, I say, that, when man left the creative hand of God, he was morally pure, innocent,—innocent, but not perfect; pure, but not holy: he was wholly free from sinful taint or tendency. That is one thing to be borne in mind,—man was morally pure. Further, although man knew neither disease nor death, although man was perfectly healthy,

although he was not as yet mortal, still he was not beyond the reach of death, he was liable to death under certain conditions, he was conditionally mortal: in a word, at creation, man was no more superior to the possibility of death than to the possibility of transgression. This conditionality of death is a second thing to bear in mind. And there is a third thing—man's immaturity; for, endowed with splendid but unexercised faculties, man was but a babe in experience.

Is this all the Biblical Anthropology which is of interest to us, in the relation we are examining? Was this all that was contained in God's ideal of man? Did the great Father of our spirits desire man to remain for ever pure, but automatically; healthy and sound, but conditionally; immature and childish, whilst capable of an almost infinite growth?

By no means. The questions answer themselves. It was manifestly the divine intention that man should become volitionally as well as automatically pure, holy that is to say as well as innocent, a very different matter,—immortal rather than conditionally mortal, a much higher destiny,—and actually as well as potentially developed on all sides of his various nature.

According to the divine plan, man was to become holy as well as innocent, that is deliberately and not mechanically good, righteous from choice as well as by nature. To that end man must be tried, put through his baptism of fire, severely tested by

alternatives. Holiness is impossible without temptation. Holiness is the developed muscle of goodness slowly gained by much wrestling. Then also, according to the divine intention, man was to become immortal; was to pass, in Pauline phrase, from the psychical or natural state to the pneumatic or spirit state. Again, according to the divine plan, man being endowed with fine faculties of many kinds, physical, æsthetic, intellectual, emotional, voluntary, spiritual, these faculties should be developed by use, until the embryonic became mature, the latent evident, promise reality.

Consider one further aspect of the Biblical Anthropology.

How was innocence, automatic goodness, to become holiness, goodness as voluntary as habitual? Not alone by human effort in the hour of trial and testing, but by divine help. How was life to become life eternal? By God's free gift, by divine assistance. How was immature to become developed man? Not solely by human effort and exercise, but by God's gracious aid.

Here we are at the heart of the Biblical teaching. Man can only fulfil his destiny as he is a member of the Kingdom of God, as he is in constant contact with the Spiritual World. Man can only attain to God's ideal concerning him by the abiding presence of God in his life. For the secret of holiness, and of immortality, and of right development, is really the abiding presence of God. In the abiding presence of the

Holy Spirit, in His constant co-operation with our human faculties, lay at once the purpose and fulfilment of the divine thought concerning us. God being with us, holiness was assured, immortality was given, and spiritual growth, growth of the spiritual nature, growth therefore of the great regulative force over all other faculties, growth ceaselessly Godwards, was guaranteed.

All this was fact quite apart from sin. All this would have remained fact had man never sinned. Only in the Kingdom of God, only in a conscious and vital contact with the Spiritual World, only in a continuous and blessed co-operation of the Holy Ghost with man, could man fulfil his destiny, could man approach his ideal. Placed in a mundane sphere, the mundane environment could exercise and therefore develop many of the human faculties, but by additional supramundane associations alone could man attain to full and rounded culture. Man unfallen must remain in the Kingdom of God if he is to reach his best ; man unfallen required the spiritual agencies of the Kingdom of God to go forward towards his destined ideal.

Man's need of the Kingdom of God showed from the first, and prior to his fall. His fall increased that need. Alas! into the primary Paradise sin found its way, and with sin its own most awful consequences. Man had withdrawn himself from the Spiritual World ; man had abdicated his place in the Kingdom of God. Amongst other consequences of man's

sinful act and attitude came this—that God withdrew Himself for a while from man, and intercourse with the spiritual realm was interrupted. The diviner influences of human life were sapped at the fountain. Straightway liability to death became death; innocence became depravity; growth ceaseless and continuous towards God became growth ceaseless and continuous away from God.

Such were the awful results of man's determination to walk alone. The spontaneity of innocence was no more; all things came beneath the shadow of death; the faculties of man commenced their life of constant development, but no longer under the domination of a spiritual nature spiritually sustained, fed, and inspired, and ceaseless development was constant degeneracy. The Spiritual World became less and less realisable; spiritual vision became more and more dim. How terrible a comment upon such words has been the history of man!

Nay, as yet the whole case is not before us. Man, though an individual, is part of an infinite series. No man can be good without affecting others, and no man can be bad without exercising a pernicious influence. But this is, I say, not the whole case. The solidarity of the race means much more. Besides its influence upon its own environment, each generation has a most subtle and penetrative influence upon the generation that follows. In the constitution of things, there are all the wide-reaching effects of the hereditary relation. A righteous race

would propagate a race with a predisposition to righteousness. A sinful race originates a race with a predisposition to sin. Sin became a sinful nature. Again, how terrible a comment upon such words has the history of man become!

The discussion has been prolonged, but it is near its conclusion. Another question arises. Man having lost his place in the Kingdom of God by sin, how shall he regain it? By a twofold process. By opening man's eyes to the Kingdom of God, and by opening man's way to the Kingdom of God.

This is just what Christ does for us. This is the salvation He announces. Sin is a venom, let us say, which the Old Serpent has injected into us, causing stupor and paralysis of our spiritual faculties. Christ by the gift of His Spirit first neutralises the venom, and then vitalises us anew. Thus Christ opens our blind eyes to see once more the Spiritual World, the Divine Kingdom. Further, sin has closed the Spiritual World itself, and Christ declares that Spiritual World to be again open to us.

This opening at once of the gates of our eyes and of heaven is just the salvation which Christ proclaims. He who came to save His people from their sins proclaims the Kingdom of God, entrance into which is salvation; and this salvation is conquest over sinful tendency by the might of the Spirit of God, by the energy which an open Spiritual World imparts; it is victory over death by the might of the same Spirit

it is overcoming the false trend of our development by the might of the same Spirit.

Nay, the salvation Christ offers is a positive as well as a negative boon. Open way to the Kingdom of God implies God with us again; and God with us again means holiness—God with us again means eternal life—God with us again means growing God-likeness. Open eyes for and an open gate to the Kingdom of God, the Spiritual World, are glad tidings indeed, for they mean Paradise Regained,—perception of the Divine Realm once lost restored, position in the Divine Realm once lost restored.

Such a discussion fits us to see the stupendous import of the work of Jesus Christ for us. His Gospel declares a possible fulfilment by man of the divine purpose concerning him; His Gospel declares that man may be divinely aided to do just that in life here and hereafter, which God meant him to do. The vitalising energies of the Spiritual World are declared to await man's use if he will.

But in all this what reference is there to the Atonement of Jesus? As I have said, at first sight none. Our Lord ever declares to man that the way back to the Kingdom of God is open if man desires to return. Jesus ever assumes that there is no obstruction in God.

Again, then, let the question be asked, What place is there in spiritual address for the Atonement? And again let the question be considered under this

form : What place is there in the spiritual address of Christ for the Atonement ?

Now, it is quite true that in preaching the Gospel our Lord does not lay the stress upon the Atonement that Paul does or John. Nevertheless, occasional sayings suggest that quite another current of thought occupied His mind. Mysterious words are said to the disciples, in an hour of special discipline, which declare, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." To the same prepared circle, at the Last Supper, Jesus says, "This is My body which is given for you," and speaks of His "blood which is poured out for you." Much earlier in His great career the Saviour amazes His hearers by saying, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven : if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever ; yea, and the bread which I will give is My flesh, for the life of the world." "The Good Shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep," Jesus says, adding with strange significance, "I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself." To His disciples, after His resurrection, He spake, opening their mind that they might understand the Scriptures : "And He said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer . . . and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations."

Thus from first to last of His public ministry the

thought of atonement passed before Him. I select salient passages only from His speech, which point to some great necessity that He should die for men. The answer to our query is this :—The proclamation of the Open Kingdom had as postulate the Atonement.

Examine our Lord's own words carefully, and you will find that He opened the kingdom to men as well as declared it open. If there was no obstruction in God to man's return to the Kingdom of Heaven, the reason was that Christ did not so much talk of removing as actually remove obstruction.

The problem of salvation was twofold,—on the one hand, to counteract the *constitutional* effects of sin, such as moral corruption and blindness of spiritual vision ; and, on the other hand, to counteract the *imperial* effects of sin, the disorder introduced into the realms governed by God and the final closure of the door of the Spiritual World against man. Transgression is a breach of law as well as a breach of nature.

Sin, affecting man's nature, separates from God and unfits for the Spiritual World,—this is one defect which salvation must deal with. Sin, affecting God's rules, separates from God and unfits for the Spiritual World,—this is another aspect with which salvation must deal. To give eyes to the blind in order to see a Kingdom of Heaven which is shut, would be damnation, not salvation. To declare the Kingdom of God open whilst the spiritual eye remained closed, would also be damnation, not salvation. Both aspects of

the salvation of man must be borne in mind. We are not saved from the penalty by being delivered from the sin. We are not saved from the imperial effects by being delivered from the constitutional effects. Remission is remission of retribution ; retribution is the penalty which moral government demands when restitution is not made. The problem of salvation was—to abolish the effects of sin in man's body, and at the same time in God's Kingdom, thus re-establishing the original relations between the Divine Father and King and His human child and subject.

Thus the Atonement of Jesus, which deals with the effects of sin in God's Kingdom, is the necessary postulate of the Restoration of Man, which concerns the effects of sin in man's body. The constitutional effects of sin may be neutralised and overcome by restoring man to the privileges of membership of the Spiritual Realm, not the least of these privileges being the gift to man of the healing and vitalising energy of the Holy Spirit. By such restored vital union we may be increasingly rescued, and our children after us, from the corruption and decay which are in us by our birth connection. The counteraction of the imperial effects of sin, the atonement for the breach of a divine and holy law, the removal of the iniquity of rebellion, the healing of the schism introduced by sin into the universe, are met by the death and sufferings in our behalf of the Lord Jesus. The damage wrought in the universe as well as in the nature of man must be repaired, as

our Lord hints in many ways and at many times. The open way to the Kingdom of God requires as postulate the Atonement of Jesus.

To the soul anxious to be rid of the constitutional effects of sin the Gospel to be preached is, "Ye must be born again" :—" Strive to see the kingdom, and you are in it, and its beneficent relations are yours." To the soul anxious to be rid of the effects of sin manifest in the disturbed relations between man and God, the Gospel to be preached is, in Peter's words, " Who His own self bare our sins in His body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness."

New Birth into the Kingdom of God is the great remedy for sin in man ; the Atonement of Jesus is the great key which opens the closed Kingdom of God. No painful cross, no open kingdom ; no open kingdom, no race restored.

If Jesus says little concerning the sacrifice by which the kingdom was opened, actions speak louder than words.

What place, then, has the Atonement in spiritual address? If there was exaggeration in representing the Atonement as the whole Gospel, if there was exaggeration in regarding a belief in the atoning force of the blood of Jesus as the beginning, middle, and end of the Gospel, is the tendency to ignore the Atonement so apparent to-day wise or unwise?

Now, as I have said, whether the Atonement of

Christ be preached or not, it is the great fact which constantly underlies any Gospel that is preached. Paul's is a Gospel of Reconciliation, but the reconciliation is by faith through the blood of Jesus. Our Lord's Gospel is glad tidings of an open Kingdom of Heaven to which we can straightway come, accepting its duties and sharing its immunities, but His own atoning work is the constant postulate of the open way to the kingdom.

But although, as compared with the Evangelical teaching of the commencement of the century, the stress upon the Atonement of Jesus has considerably changed, for many reasons, I venture to think the Atoning Death should occupy a prominent place in all modern preaching and teaching.

Thus it is the Cross of Christ which shows sin at its worst,—the blindness it causes, the cruelty it engenders, the self-confidence it breeds. Oh the tragedy that the Cross throws around the words, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not"! Therefore the Cross of Christ is the finest instrument of arousing the conscience.

And the Cross of Christ shows man at his best. That mingled humbleness and majesty, that blended endurance and tenderness, that intermixed power and control, that magnanimous self-sacrifice, fire enthusiasm. Therefore the Cross of Christ is the finest instrument for stimulating self-sacrifice.

And the Cross of Christ shows God at His nearest. There the Heart of the Spiritual World lies bared.

There the innermost meaning of the words speaks to us, "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son." The Cross of Christ is the finest instrument for showing the divine love for man.

Finally, the Cross of Christ shows the Spiritual World and its laws at their clearest. In that world righteousness and justice rule, as well as love and tenderness. The love of God is righteous, and His tenderness is just. In that world holiness obtains, the voluntary though painful doing of the right. There Fatherhood and Sovereignty harmonise. Nay more, there the deepest moral instincts of man, instincts which never show themselves so tenacious as when aroused by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost which convinces of sin—there those long concealed but inevitable instincts of the sinfulness of sin and the demand for atonement find their lasting answer and satisfaction. There are spiritual convictions in sinful and estranged man which only the blood of Jesus can allay. The Cross of Christ is the finest instrument for giving peace of mind to the awakened sinner.

LECTURE IX

THE PLACE OF THE BIBLE IN SPIRITUAL ADDRESS

FOR a moment or two permit me to review the way we have travelled in the last four lectures.

In the first lecture, dealing with the Human Needs of To-day, I endeavoured to show that those needs were pre-eminently spiritual needs. Starting from the common pessimistic attitude of our times amongst thoughtful men, and remarking that pessimism invariably testified to some sense of mutilation, I dwelt for a while upon the fact that in very many quarters the despairing tendency bore unmistakable witness at once to conscious spiritual needs and to conscious non-satisfaction of these spiritual needs. As I then pointed out, such an intellectual atmosphere was unusually fitted for the advent of the Gospel of Jesus, the Gospel of a Spiritual World which was both open and welcome to all who desired to enter it.

In my second lecture I dwelt at some length upon the peculiar nature of the message of Jesus, the message of the open spiritual kingdom, that message

which so exactly meets the weariness of to-day, and sense of contraction, and sentiment as of lowering clouds and narrow horizons. Jesus made credible to man the reality of a spiritual and heavenly realm, and in so doing gave new birth to faith and hope and love. Himself believing so firmly and so calmly and so reasonably in a spiritual world, His actions ever accrediting His words, Jesus made it easy for man to believe with Him in the great spiritual realm which had almost passed out of memory as well as thought. Ever assuming in existence a spiritual world, and ever assuming in man a spiritual eye, Jesus taught men their inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven.

From the platform thus reached the two next lectures treated of two pressing present-day problems. By the light of the central idea of the thought of Jesus, on the one hand the method best adapted to religious teaching and exhortation was considered, and, on the other hand, attention was bestowed on the place to be accorded in any religious teaching to the doctrine of atonement by the death of Jesus.

The same cardinal principles of the Gospel of Jesus which have guided us all along will throw light upon another pressing and timely problem,—I mean the problem of the relative value of Holy Scripture.

Some Scriptural problems are rather of scientific than practical interest. The current discussions, for instance, concerning the absolute inerrancy of Scripture are rather academic than practical. As a theologian, indeed, the careful discussion of modes

of inspiration and the minute investigation of the verbal accuracy of Scripture interest me much, and ought to interest me ; for all such questions are part of the inheritance of thought which still calls for further examination. As a theologian, I say, every theological question is of high intellectual interest to me individually, and ought to be so ; nay, my thought in such realms may possibly help the thought of others, as their thought has helped me. Some thinkings of mine might be lamps to guide in the darkness, or, perhaps as usefully, beacons in the bog to warn. But of such intellectual questions the busy practical man need take no more account than he does of the hypotheses and stumblings and discoveries of any other man of science delving in recondite regions.

But there are practical views upon Scripture which every parent and Sunday-school teacher and class-leader and preacher should have who instructs man, woman, or child in the Bible. Now, some such practical views of Holy Scripture, views of the supremest value to every spiritually minded person, nay of the supremest importance to every human being who as such possesses spiritual faculties, and may possess spiritual lands and riches, our previous studies in the Gospel of Jesus may readily give us.

What, then, is the Bible to man, who, being man, can understand and enter and enjoy the Kingdom of God? To this question let us now direct our thoughts ; it is very practical, very interesting, very momentous.

It will help us much if we clearly seize a few distinctions.

First, then, what is meant by revelation ?

Two replies have been given. On the one hand, that knowledge, it has been said, is called revelation which is given to man by God or His messengers, but which it is beyond the powers of man to discover. More briefly, revelation is superhuman knowledge divinely imparted. This is the view of Wolff, and Leibnitz, and many others. On the other hand, it has been said that all knowledge is to be called revelation which is given to man by God or His messengers, but which, although at the time beyond the power of man to discover, is not necessarily beyond the powers of man. More briefly, revelation is knowledge which is divinely imparted, but which is not essentially superhuman. This is the view of Locke, and Lessing, and Kant, and Herder, and many others.

Now, Dr. William Lee, in his well-known book on *Inspiration*, has combined both views, and has said, with as great clearness as caution : "By revelation I understand a direct communication from God to man, either of such knowledge as man could not of himself attain to, because its subject-matter transcends human sagacity or human reason, or of information which, although it might have been attained in the ordinary way, was not, in point of fact, from whatever cause, known to the person who received the revelation." To put the difference sharply :—Man can know nothing about the future, and on the one

hand it is said that revelation is just such knowledge about the future. But man might also receive from above information about the present, such as he might have gained for himself, and on the other hand, it is said, revelation is also all such knowledge.

It is needless to delay upon the difference. Surely any kind of knowledge which is divinely imparted to us is revelation. Or, by the light of what we have previously said, let us say that there is a spiritual realm, a Kingdom of God, and there is in man a spiritual faculty by which he may receive communications from the spiritual realm. Now, all such communications from the spiritual realm to the spiritual faculty are revelations. Any divine facts which are brought within the cognisance of the human faculties are revelations.

A further question now arises as to whether there are different kinds of revelations. To a few varieties it will be helpful to call attention.

Thus some revelations are direct and some are mediate,—some are general and some are unique,—some are fixed or final and some are progressive.

Some revelations, I say, are direct and some are mediate.

The prophecies which were given to such a man as Isaiah, for example, were, in the first instance, of a direct kind. Thus Isaiah was ordered at one time to appear before Ahaz, and at another before Hezekiah, with some express message which was

directly given to him by Jehovah. But these prophecies, which were primarily revelations of a direct kind, direct revelations to Isaiah, may be committed to writing, and become permanent records, and in such a case they become mediate revelations. Thus when the primary revelations are gone, and even when the prophet himself who received them has passed away, what was knowledge divinely imparted at a single moment may become knowledge divinely imparted for all time. To the prophets themselves their revelations were direct ; but to man generally the record of these prophecies, the printed or written page, is an indirect, a mediate revelation. Naturally the value of the mediate revelation depends on its more or less accurate representation of the direct revelation. Nature, too, which is not improperly called a revelation, is a mediate revelation, a permanent record of the thoughts of God.

And some revelations, I further say, are general and some are unique.

There are revelations which come to all men or to many men, and are general, as the revelation of the sinful state before God ; and there are revelations which come to select men, and are unique, as the revelation to Malachi of the Messenger of the Covenant who should suddenly come to His Temple, refining like fire, detergent like soap. In other words, direct revelations may be of very different kinds, and consequently mediate revelations may be of very different kinds : for some direct revelations may be given to

many, and even given commonly, so to speak universally ; whereas some direct revelations may be given to very few, or even to one, and only to one, thus being unique.

Accordingly, revelations may vary much in value. For, as we have seen, to a direct revelation two things are necessary—namely, a spiritual fact to be perceived, and a spiritual faculty to perceive the fact. Now, the spiritual fact disclosed is the revelation. And these spiritual facts may be of very different import. Indeed, the value of direct revelations varies with the value of the facts disclosed. Thus some divine facts disclosed may be of common value, and some of extraordinary ; some may be of general and some of unique interest. To some recipients of divine knowledge, for example, the fact of sin may be disclosed, as it is to multitudes ; to other recipients the fact of the Saviour from sin may be disclosed, as it was to Peter at Pentecost. Indeed, direct revelations may be of very different grades, as judged by the divine knowledge imparted ; and it should be remembered that, whilst some revelations are given to many men, and even some to man as man, and are general, there are other revelations which are given to select men, and are unique. And what is true of direct revelation is also true of the direct revelation when embodied in writing—that is to say, of mediate revelations.

Further, some revelations are final and some are progressive.

For the difference contrast the Natural World with the Christian Church. In the Natural World the divine thought has been given to us once for all : if our knowledge of Nature progresses, the revealed mind of God as seen in Nature is fixed and final. In the Christian Church how different are the facts : receiving revelations from God from age to age, revelations which grow in intensity, depth, and extent, these revelations can only be named progressive, and not fixed.

In the light of these several distinctions, let us return to our question as to the value of the Bible to man.

Any communications from the Spiritual World to man, which are intelligible by him, are revelations, we have said. Any divine facts which are brought within the cognisance of the human faculties are revelations. The special importance of the Bible follows from the circumstance that it is full of such revelations given in a unique succession and tending to a unique goal.

Think awhile upon the revealed character of Holy Scripture. The Bible contains records of many revelations.

Of course as records these revelations are mediate. But these mediate revelations were direct revelations to the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles whose words and experiences are recorded ; and, amidst all the din

of controversy and the strife of tongues as to the absolute or practical inerrancy of Scripture, I have come across no one who, believing in the Bible as a record of revelations at all, has declared that these revelations are so ill recorded that they are valueless to later generations. It is true that as a theologian I may have a keen intellectual interest in the issue of the controversy on inerrancy, but as a preacher and a practical man I have no more concern with the points at issue than this: to show that, by common consent, as revelation, the mediate revelation of the record is practically as reliable as the direct revelations recorded. Now, the supreme interest of the Bible centres in the fact that it is a credible record of many revelations, of many communications to men from the Spiritual World, of many precise messages from the Throne of the Heavenly Kingdom.

Observe, for instance, that our Lord's words and life as they are narrated for us are revelations, if mediate revelations. In virtue of His unique personality, our Lord, in the days of His flesh, was the perfect and absolute prophet. For the prophet was the human medium of divine revelation. As messages came from the Spiritual World, it was the mind of the prophet which, being sufficiently attuned to vibrate in harmony, gave out the divine note.

Now, Jesus was God and man. As such He was the perfect instrument of revelation. Jesus was the ideal prophet whom all preceding prophets had but dimly foreshadowed. It was but occasionally that

the prophet was in the Spirit and heard the words of Jehovah ; but in Jesus there is an intercourse between God and man so exalted, so intimate, so uninterrupted, that even unfallen man as such could never have attained thereto. No Edenic fellowship, however unbroken, could, by any progressive impartation of divine influence, have transmuted Adam into God in human form. No inspiration could parallel in effect conception by the Holy Ghost. No revelation could equal the knowledge which the Divine Word had with the Father or ever the world was. To earlier prophets generally the Word came ; this Supreme Prophet was the Word.

Thus the revelations of Jesus, the narratives of His relation to the Spiritual World as recorded in the Gospels, are the final revelations for this epoch of the world-order. His words are the truth. So true are His words that they accredit themselves as divine words. So pure was His life that the reflecting quality of the mirror of His mind was without distortion. He alone, in the history of prophecy, to say nothing of the history of man, can adequately receive and reflect the messages of Heaven. On His pure Spirit the Spiritual World could mirror itself without contraction or perversion. When He claims full knowledge of the Father, the claim is not ridiculous. Being in so constant an attitude of receptiveness for the divine, His silences are as eloquent as His speech. As the perfect example of the highest possible intercourse between the Divine World and the human, Jesus

was the unparalleled exponent of the Divine World to man. To Him the Spiritual World was ever open ; in Him the Spiritual Faculty was ever full and receptive ; and hence His every word, nay His every act, is a revelation to men. His life is an uninterrupted series of direct revelations ; and the record of both His words and acts, though mediate revelations, remain revelations of a most precious and inspiring and unique kind. Nay, in Jesus revelation is self-revelation, and of this supreme kind of revelation the very words which record that self-revelation partake. As a narrative of the wonderful words and works of the Son of man, the Bible must ever be a priceless inheritance, even though that narrative were the one pearl in a dunghill.

But the Bible contains more revelations than those of Jesus ; the Bible is a record of revelations, of communications from the Spiritual World, made to many patriarchs and prophets, to many saints and apostles. The heavenly ladder, with its ascending and descending angels, which came to Jacob in a dream, depicted the frequent and almost daily experience of many of the Old Testament and New Testament saints whose words and experiences have reached us. From the days of Adam to the Apostle John, of which lengthy period the Bible treats, credible accounts have reached us of the spiritual experiences of many generations of men, spiritual experiences which argue the existence of a Spiritual World quite as much as they argue spiritual faculty in those experiencing.

Were the Bible nothing else than a record for all time of the spiritual experiences common to our race, a record of general revelations, it would have an undying interest : as a record for all time of exceptional spiritual experiences, a record of unique revelations, it has an interest not only undying but indispensable.

But there are further characteristics of the revelations of the Bible which must be considered, if its value is to be estimated with any fairness.

Thus the Biblical revelations are for the most part given by the instrumentality of religiously susceptible men, of a special class, who belong to a single nation, and who possess the attributes if not the name of prophets. For although under special circumstances God may allow some sordid person like Balaam to be the medium of unique revelation, the rule, nevertheless, holds good that in general the instruments adopted for unique revelations are those who, through their moral and religious character, were peculiarly fitted by nature and training to appreciate divine things.

In the prophetic gift we see the junction of earth and heaven, of man and God, of human percipience and divine revelation. The prophetic man hears and understands the Word of God.

In signal hours, by means of a co-operation of the Holy Spirit with his spirit, the prophet saw things he could never have seen of himself, and heard words which no acumen of his could have enabled him to hear. What the prophets spake, therefore

they spake as the interpreters of Deity. Hence they prefaced their messages by formulas, such as these: "The word which came from the Lord"; "Thus saith the Lord"; "Hear ye now what the Lord saith"; "The utterance of the word of the Lord"; "The Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth."

If all this be so, if the Bible presents us with a series of unique revelations given by a unique prophetic class, the supreme place of the Bible among the sacred books of mankind is assured. The faithful record of many unique revelations made through prophets has a secure place amongst the literatures of the world. Other books possibly besides the Bible have been written by prophets, and I have no desire to quarrel over the name. But the Biblical revelations to man are for the most part unique, as well as direct, and the instruments of these revelations are also unique. Such a phenomenon as the Biblical line of prophets, culminating in the Biblical line of apostles who were practically prophets, can be matched in no other religion.

Nay, before passing on, there is a side-light upon the phenomena of Biblical prophecy worth lingering on for a moment. Sometimes, according to the testimony of Scripture, revelations, and direct and unique revelations, are received by means of men outside the range of the unique prophetic circle; such revelations being given by means of dreams, as to Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar. So, too, occasionally unique reve-

lations are given by means of great divine acts witnessed by many, as in the passage of the Red Sea, or the punishment of Korah and his company. Yet here appears a significant fact. Even in these exceptional cases of immediate revelation, the men of prophetic gifts are still instruments. For the dream requires the man of prophetic gifts to interpret it, and the great miraculous act requires the man of prophetic gifts to work it.

Again, the Biblical revelations are progressive. The communications from the Spiritual World contained within the pages of Scripture show a very marked progress.

Not that the progress is a mere naturalistic advance, a simple ordinary growth. The Biblical revelations do not simply develop more and more as from dawn towards the perfect day, like the rising of an unclouded sun. The Biblical revelations are characterised by distinct epochs. In place of the steady unfolding of one single germ, new germs are introduced from time to time. It is evident that when once divine truth has been given to men, it is permitted to work its way persistently, if slowly, into the minds of men, and so far there is a purely natural progress. But this is not the whole statement of the facts. By special divine interpositions new truths are given. Thus the course of revelation is as follows: A direct revelation of a unique kind is given; this becomes mediate, and as such is absorbed into many minds: then another direct revelation is given, and

this again, becoming mediate upon being recorded, diffuses itself: then yet another direct revelation follows, which in turn enters upon a process of slow and natural assimilation; and so on. Very distinct epochs of revelation are associated with the days of Moses, David, Elijah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Malachi, Jesus.

But these successive unique revelations are not disconnected: they are united by very subtle links, links so subtle as to argue one Divine Author. The New Testament lies hidden in the Old; the Old Testament is made clear in the New. Indeed, the unfolding of the divine purposes to men is not more clearly seen in the geological record than in the Biblical. The most superficial observer cannot fail to note the progress of the divine communications, from the simple intercourse and knowledge of primeval days to the covenant with Noah, thence to the covenant with Abraham, and thence to that with Israel, and thence onwards throughout the days of the Old Covenant to the New. Throughout the Bible there is, at epoch after epoch of unique revelation, an ever clearer manifestation of the Divine Nature and Attributes, of the Divine Purposes and Redemption. God has spoken to men in many portions as well as in many ways, and all parts of the revelation press on in an ever-augmenting manner to the complete revelation in Christ.

In illustration of this progress by epochs any doctrine of Scripture might be selected, whether concerning God or man, whether concerning some wide

or some restricted range of Biblical facts ; but, for the moment, the prophecies of the advent of Christ may suffice.

The Bible contains a very remarkable series of unique divine revelations, "spoken at sundry times and in divers manners," concerning the Saviour of men. The several instruments in these revelations, if they knew the connection of the past with the present, certainly could not know the connection of the present with the future. And yet, as a matter of fact, easily verifiable by any one who will take the trouble to consider, in the so-called Messianic prophecies and in the Messiah of the Gospels, there is a remarkable series of predictions and fulfilments, belonging to a cycle all their own, and promising from the origin of our race onwards and in no measured terms a remarkable deliverance of an ever-widening and ever-deepening kind, a great spiritual deliverance. No sooner has sin entered the world than a promise is made of deliverance in connection with the seed of the woman. Centuries pass, and at length this First Evangel becomes a promise to Abraham of deliverance through Isaac. Ultimately the Patriarchal Age closes in such a way as to keep the eyes of the Sons of Jacob intent upon a Coming Deliverer, a son of Eve, a son of Abraham, a prince of the house of Judah. Years later Moses foretells the advent of a prophet like himself. Four centuries again pass, and the unique revelations made centre once more around the earlier prince idea, and in

many forms of expression, and by more prophets than one, the Great Deliverer is proclaimed, who shall be of David's blood, but Jehovah's Anointed, Jehovah's Son. Thus the Coming Deliverance having merged in the Coming Deliverer, and the Coming Deliverer having grown into now the Coming Prophet and now the Coming King, yet again a third idea is introduced, and the Coming Man is to be a Coming Priest and Sacrifice.

So the Old Testament goes upon its way, illuminating the path of man, but not wholly. Is this Hope of the Ages who is a Prince the same as the Prophetic Man? or is either Prince or Prophet the same as the Priestly Man? Who shall tell in Old Testament times? It is only on the appearance of the New Testament revelation that the difficulties are solved. It is only in the New Testament Messiah that a satisfactory solution is found. Jesus is the master-key which unlocks all the wards. In Jesus of Nazareth there really appears a Great Deliverer, who is the greatest of the prophets, the Royal Priest, the Universal King. In Him the unique revelations of several epochs and many prophets find their crowning and final and explanatory revelations.

So long then, surely, as the Bible, whatever else it is, and whatever else are its characteristics, is a record of unique revelations, given by the instrumentality of prophets and apostles, and displaying a progress from the elementary to the final of so remarkable a kind that the very progress argues a Divine Author, the

future of the Bible need concern us little. The Bible, as the trustworthy record of God's dealings with men from Adam to Christ, as the trustworthy record of the communications made from the Spiritual World to man from the partial to the perfect mundane stage, is, and must ever be, until the break of the day of the Second Advent, the supreme guide to, the supreme mediate revelation concerning, the Spiritual World.

For what other revelations and guides to the Spiritual World are open to man?

The question is worth asking. There are the revelations of Nature, and of Reason, and of the Ethnic Faiths, and of the Christian Consciousness, and of the Church.

That all and each of these do give us revelations, do make disclosures to us concerning the Spiritual World, do bear evidence of knowledge divinely imparted to men, I would not for a moment hesitate to say,—I rejoice unspeakably to avow that they do, because such an avowal acknowledges our spiritual birthright. But in so declaring only part of the truth is told. Neither reason, nor nature, nor the heathen faiths, nor the Christian consciousness, nor the Christian Church gives us revelations in any degree comparable to the revelations of Scripture.

Nature, it is true, gives us some slight knowledge of God and of man, and of their relations; but who would say that the knowledge it gives of the Spiritual World is in any way comparable to that of the Bible? Both

Nature and the Bible are mediate revelations, but as such they are of very different grades. The revelations of Nature are general and fixed ; the revelations of Scripture are unique and progressive, attaining a very high degree of advance indeed, as we have seen.

And can the revelations of God in reason, or even the revelations of God in that highest form of reason which we call conscience, compare for a moment with the revelations of the Bible? A similar answer may again be given. Comparison shows the superiority of the Biblical revelations. The Biblical revelations supplement and clarify and complete the revelations of reason and conscience.

Besides, the reason and conscience are a sinful, and therefore beclouded, reason and conscience ; and the whole history of philosophy declares that it is to a very obscure knowledge of God that man can attain by reason and conscience. No philosophy as such has as yet succeeded in attaining impregnable results. Where in the utterances of reason as such can you parallel, I will not say the New Testament idea of the Fatherhood of God, but even the Old Testament revelation : " And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth, keeping mercy for a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty ; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon

the fourth generation"? Where in philosophy can this utterance be matched, with its assertion, at once so full and so concise, that God is, that God is one, that God transcends time and space, that God is merciful, that God is gracious, that God is long-suffering, that God is true, that God is just, that God is good, that God is holy, that God is holy, just, and good despite of, nay because of, His unsparing visitation of wrong-doing with penalty, and that through generations?

Further, the revelations of reason and conscience are general, and not, like those of Scripture, unique.

That there are occasional revelations to be found even in some heathen systems of religion, and that God has not left Himself there without a witness, may surely be readily conceded. But that the revelations in the ethnic systems render the revelations of God in the Bible superfluous is an objection rarely heard to-day, although it was not uncommon some years ago, when the heathen religions were rather talked about than studied. Under further research the objection has died out. Besides, these heathen faiths seem to require the Biblical revelation, in order to exhibit clearly what few grains of religious truth they may contain in their vast masses of intellectual and moral inanity and error. As Professor Christlieb so well says: "The revelations of heathen gods invariably have reference to something isolated, external, and fortuitous, and even when they impart moral precepts these have no

real internal connection. In the Bible, on the other hand, revelation is one grand *systematic*, progressive *organism*, which from its very commencement goes on expanding, and so as to exhibit its smallest details in loving connection with the whole and its one great end, the moral and religious good of men." In the religion of Mahomet, assuredly the highest of the ethnic faiths, there is nothing comparable to the series of unique and progressive revelations, made throughout thousands of years, such as the Bible presents, and what there is of truth is largely borrowed from the Old Testament and the New.

As for the revelations of the Christian consciousness and of the Christian Church, so far from superseding the revelations of Scripture, they are actually and confessedly based thereon. Their sole attempt is to duly assimilate and appreciate the contents of the Bible revelations. A tree might live as readily without its sap as the Christian consciousness or the Christian Churches without the Bible. At least until the Christian consciousness, in its individual or collective forms, has given us a superior Bible, there need be little fear for the present Scriptures.

The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are just now passing through the fires of a keen criticism. Often this criticism, we may dare to think, is unwarranted and extravagant. But, even taken at its own estimate, it is concerned with the form and

not the contents of Scripture. There need be no fear for the supremacy of Scripture as a guide to the Spiritual World. So long as the revelations of Scripture occupy their exalted and unapproachable position as a unique and progressive series of revelations, from the first elementary truths concerning the Spiritual World to the eternal utterances of Christ concerning the Kingdom of God, the Bible will hold its supreme place in faith and morals.

“So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner-stone.”

LECTURE X

EXCEPTIONAL OUTPOURINGS FROM THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

A LITTLE over fifty years ago two members of the University of Oxford, brothers, highly cultivated, of great natural ability, who had both risen to eminence and to popular recognition, were slipping from their spiritual moorings, and drifting rapidly neither knew exactly whither. Both had turned approving eyes upon the Church of the early centuries ; and in the self-conquest of the ascetics of those primitive times, in the patience of the martyrs, in the joyous swing of Christian advance, as one of the brothers describes, they saw, as they believed, a healthy and invigorating contrast to the ecclesiastical world in which it was their lot to live. Their careers speedily diverged. Cardinal Newman, as the John Henry Newman of the past must now, alas ! be styled, found the only solution of his religious difficulties in the bosom of Rome. Professor Newman, his gifted brother, accepted as the solution of his doubts a rationalism which denies the historical accuracy of the Old Testament, asserts the moral

imperfection of Jesus, and speaks of the probability of a future life with hesitation.

Such life-histories are *signs of our times*. This present age has afforded an additional instance of the great law to which all Christian history bears witness—that if religion of a New Testament type be supplanted ever so little by human gospels, on-sidedness is the inevitable result. Onesidedness is a necessary consequent upon times of religious decadence, and onesidedness must take one of three forms : it must either betray itself as imitative Orthodoxy—the unreasoning acceptance of the religion of our fathers ; or as virtual Romanism—the unreasoning acceptance of external authority ; or as essential Rationalism—the reasoned acceptance of the natural faculties of man as the supreme arbiter in all questions, even of the highest and most momentous import. So it always has been, and so it still is. Christianity of a New Testament type affects the whole man, giving a glorious resurrection to mind and heart and will ; religions of a human kind emphasise the idiosyncrasy, whether mind, *or* heart, *or* will. At any rate such careers as those of the Newmans are instructive.

But as marked a sign of our times, to my mind, is the spirit of expectancy which is abroad.

I might have alluded to the larger-heartedness which characterises our days. There is a manifestly quickened desire to hear and to impart a simpler, clearer, more loving, and less argumentative proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus. I am inclined to

think that the day for apologists in our pulpits has well-nigh passed ; and that those only rightly read the signs of the actual present who, like the apostle, state, with that reality which has the accent of conviction, "what they have heard, what they have seen with their eyes, what they have looked upon, and their hands have handled, of the word of life." There is a large earnestness abroad. The Spirit of God is moving mightily around us, showing personal needs, demonstrating the stupendous necessities of others, forcing home the conviction of the true bliss of man, bringing Churches into practical co-operation, and arraying, so to speak, the separate battalions into one vast army. But all these spiritual manifestations seem to culminate in a sentiment of expectancy. Shall they end there?

This spirit of expectancy is becoming a tendency ; it is showing itself as clearly on the Continent as in our own dear land. Germany—which has been racked by the *Culturkampf* and by Rationalism, and almost as severely exhausted by blind guides who have desired to live in the seventeenth century rather than the nineteenth—is experiencing a revival of evangelical religion. Is the tendency to be nothing more ? Is it to be a hope doomed to disappointment ? or is it to be the dawn of a brighter day ? In the seventeenth century the rekindled fires of the Reformation were packed into the grates of theologians ; in the eighteenth century they were well-nigh choked by the unbelieving atmosphere ; the great practical

question is, Are these closing decades of the nineteenth century about to introduce another great epoch like the Reformation, or, better still, like the Age of the Apostles ?

It seems to me there is a great preliminary question to be settled before an answer can be given, and to this I address myself. The question is, Is there reason to believe in *exceptional outpourings of the Holy Spirit* ?

Two views of the universe are contending for general recognition—the Evolutional and the Christian. According to the evolutional view, the investigator into the universe, if he knew accurately the state of the world at any given moment, could tell accurately the state of the world at any succeeding moment. According to the Christian view, the investigator would sometimes be at fault, because the Christian scheme leaves room for what appears to us in our ignorance divine interference. According to the one view, the story of the intelligible universe is nothing but the story of the changes of physical forces: miracles are excluded; so is superhuman prophecy; even our Lord Jesus Christ is simply the product of the forces which preceded Him. According to the Christian view, the so-called laws of nature are over-hasty generalisations from the apparent regularity of things, and the true history of the universe is just the working out of the eternal divine purposes. What we in our limitation of knowledge call miracles are planned as surely and

as eternally as the rising and setting of the sun. Prophecy and prophets, Christianity and Christ, are part of the divine plan equally with what we call the course of nature, and are as natural to God. In short, the doctrine of evolution asserts that "no man hath seen God at any time; the ever-changing phases of the physical forces, they have revealed Him." Christianity says, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

That these two views can be reconciled is the fond delusion of careless thinkers. Only by interpreting evolution in a way which its advocates would not accept can such a reconciliation appear possible. Christianity knows a divine development; it does not know a physical evolution. A crucial test of the two views is to be found in Christ Himself. If He be the only-begotten Son of the Father, He cannot be the mere product of the mundane forces which preceded His advent; if He be the mere coalescence of physical forces, He cannot be co-equal with the Father. Another crucial test of the two views is the question before us. Does the baptism of the Holy Spirit simply express the truth that the whole life of the Church is a divine inspiration? or does it draw attention to a further truth, that, so far from the life of the Church being a steady evolution, ceaselessly advancing towards the perfect day, it has its extraordinary hours of special exuberance, because, besides the ordinary working of the Divine Spirit in

the Church, there are also exceptional outpourings of the Holy Ghost?

Let science speak where science can, but let it not spread itself into a upas tree, which paralyses Christian belief and effort, in its attempt to deal with truths which really belong to a supramundane sphere. For my part, I believe in the Holy Spirit working by, but not confined by, human instruments. I believe we have reason to put our trust in exceptional outpourings of the Holy Ghost.

Let me emphasise the point before us by contrast. I am not referring to the ordinary working of the Holy Spirit as the Divine Executive. The Holy Spirit has, according to Scripture, a considerable place in the works of nature, giving to blind matter intelligence, and to the animal creation habit and instinct: "Thou sendest out Thy Spirit, they are created; Thou takest away their breath, they die and return to the dust." The Spirit is also represented in the Bible as the immediate source of human life: "The Spirit of God hath made us," said Job. All intellectual life is described as emanating from the Spirit: "The inspiration of the Almighty giveth us understanding." Further, the Spirit is represented as the source of human gifts of various kinds, and the Bible attributes to the Spirit the skill of Bezaleel as a metal-worker, of Moses as a leader, of Joshua as a general, the tact of Gideon, and the strength of Samson. We are also reminded by Scripture that there is an ordinary and daily working of the Holy

Spirit in redemption, convincing of sin, revealing Christ, quickening penitence, bestowing faith and hope and love, imparting all the beauties and strengths of the new life. But is this all? or are there in addition exceptional displays of divine power? We have infinite cause to thank God that He has granted, through His Spirit, this beautiful world, this present life, these personal capacities; we have infinite cause for gratitude in the continuous gifts of grace through our Lord Jesus Christ: but a further question arises,—Is there, in addition to a steady and persistent and progressive action—I was going to say an action limited by the capacities of secondary agents—is there besides an exceptional influence which we may share? Does the Lord Jesus give His Spirit by measure?

Let me now briefly direct attention to a threefold illustration of the principle I wish to insist upon. The Bible, Christian experience, and Church history each throw some light upon the truth of exceptional outpourings of the Holy Spirit. The law in each case seems to be advanced by antithesis—by the contrast of light and dark, summer and winter, work and repose. The rule apparently in divine action is not a deistic *laissez-faire*, but occasional divine interference, as we say, which finds its point of contact in human faculties, although it is not confined thereby.

So far from the Scriptural evidence making for a steady progress in religious life, the spiritual relations of man seem to be governed by two great laws of a

different character. On the one hand, exceptional revelations are given at critical epochs which, once given, are subsequently permitted to grow by common processes into the popular consciousness. On the other hand, these exceptional revelations are given by the instrumentality of picked men, whose faculties form, as I have just said, points of contact for the divine revelations, which, however, transcend those faculties. We are accustomed to recognise an exceptional activity of the Spirit of God in Creation, when He reduced chaos to order. An exceptional outpouring of the Spirit may be equally seen in the time of Moses, in the two marked prophetic epochs, and in the age of Christ and His Apostles. First the extraordinary outpouring, then the ordinary development—such seems to be the Biblical law.

But possibly, not to delay, the cardinal New Testament instance will suffice by way of illustration. Forgive my reminding you that when the Lord was about to be crucified, He left behind Him a command that His disciples should tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. Surely this command was not a little remarkable. These disciples had their natural faculties, peculiarly adapted, we may assume, to the work to which they were called; they had all the ripe knowledge reaped from three years of close intercourse with Jesus: nevertheless, they needed, it would seem, something additional before their work could be effectually done. That something was given at Pentecost. Then,

amidst external portents, the disciples were filled with a new and unaccustomed force. Every faculty was stimulated to its highest; new faculties were imparted. They displayed a wisdom altogether foreign to their condition; their words partook of the highest qualities of eloquence, working persuasion and conviction. For a time they were partakers of the inexhaustible divine life. The entire spiritual nature of a number of men was affected by a divine stimulus, if the word may be allowed, which was profoundly more blessed and forcible than the highest gifts of genius. Power rained from the throne of the Almighty; men saw as with the eye of the Omniscient. If common life shows us man aroused to energy by contact with his fellow-men, Pentecost shows us man aroused to higher faculty by contact with the Spirit of God. At the breath of Deity the eye saw its horizon expanded, the will knew its capacity increased, the intellect felt its truth enlarged, and there seemed no motive power in the wide universe like the Gospel of Jesus.

It seems to me that history also suggests that there are exceptional seasons of divine outpouring. At critical epochs the great divine truths stand out in singular clearness before the eyes of the redeemed, and have a singular enthralment over the hearts of the unsaved. At such times Christians become intuitive, and the worldly become earnest.

From the apostolic times to the present there have been many exceptional seasons when the cry

for salvation has been general, and I do not delay to illustrate. I do pause a few moments to illustrate the exceptional grasp sometimes displayed by whole classes of men upon divine truth.

It is worth while asking, What differentiated the apostolic age from the ages immediately following in the matter of the apprehension of religious truth? I think I may put it in this way:—In common life we all know the difference between genius and talent, between the seer and the reasoner, between insight and research. The same distinctions seem to apply to epochs as well as to individual men. There are epochs when spiritual truth is seen intuitively rather than grasped intellectually. Thus the apostolic age was not the time of a doctrinal system; truth was felt rather than systematised. In the intense realisation of the salvation that was in Christ, deep emotion precluding exact science, men had no desire to express in logical form and with suitable limitations what stirred them so deeply. Religious truth was reached by experience rather than reasoning. In this practical apprehension, this intuitive grasp, of Gospel truths, the century of the Reformation, and some other times, may be likened to that of the Apostles. It was a renewed evangelical experience rather than a profounder intellectual system which simultaneously affected all the nations of Europe. Translate this intuitive apprehension into other terms, and it might be called an exceptional outpouring of the Holy Spirit, awakening, transforming, quieting, energising.

Even personal religious experience has its own peculiar testimony to bear to exceptional as well as ordinary divine influence upon the soul. Where conversion is pronounced, there is a conscious endeavour to live a holy life and to assimilate saving truth, and there is, side by side, a sense of conflict, a feeling of inability, a fearful restlessness, till, in His own time, the great Divine Strengtheners and Consoler speaks as He did not speak before. A similar experience recurs in Christian life again and again. Christian progress is very seldom in a straight line upwards. In the long-run there is advance, and very evident advance; but that advance accords with the Biblical law of revelation and assimilation, larger revelation and a further period of assimilation, and so on. As in the Church, so in the individual man, the religious life seems to go by starts, so to speak. There are days of open heaven, and nights of latent growth; times of supernatural power, and times of the transformation of power into thought and character. If a notable period in religious history is seldom followed by one that equals it in belief or practice, the same thing appears to be true in religious biography. There are hours when from above the clear light shineth, and there are hours when we must walk in the memory of that light. There are hours when a superhuman force works in us, and there are hours when our own limited powers shape our efforts, as it were, without any quickening from above. Our personal experience, as well as Scripture and history,

has some testimony to give concerning exceptional outpourings from the Spiritual World.

If this be so, two practical inferences suggest themselves. If belief in the fact of exceptional outpourings of the Holy Spirit prompts a strong desire for that divine gift, manifestly our one resource is prayer. For two reasons at least is this true. Prayer testifies to humiliation ; it shows us proof against that subtlest of temptations—to regard ourselves as specially the favourites of Heaven. Further, there are some things in the gift of God which we cannot receive without serious harm unless we are in a state of earnest expectation. Prayer, whatever else it may show or be, shows us in an expectant attitude. In that mental frame which we call prayer we are humble, desirous, expectant, self-emptied ; and it is when we are content to be nothing that God can become all. This was the attitude of the disciples prior to Pentecost. “They all . . . continued . . . in *prayer*.” “They all . . . *continued* . . . in prayer” : their prayer was persistent. “They *all* . . . continued . . . in prayer” : there was united petitioning. “They all *with one accord* continued . . . in prayer” : to external association they added internal union. “They all with one accord continued *steadfastly* in prayer” : difficulty and the absence of immediate response did not shake their resolution.

“It is most confounding to desire with all one’s heart the Holy Ghost,” it has been beautifully said, “and yet seem to be denied the priceless boon ; to pray for light, and to get instead deeper darkness ; for

faith, and to be tormented with doubts which shake cherished convictions to their foundations ; for sanctity, and to have the mud of corruption stirred up by temptation from the bottom of the well of eternal life in the heart. Yet all this is part of the discipline through which scholars in Christ's school have to pass ere the desire of their hearts be fulfilled."

But prayer means much more than is commonly recognised. Prayer of this high kind—availing prayer—must come from a highly consecrated life. It is the prayer of the righteous man which availeth much. I scarcely know how to put the thought ; but all Scripture shows that, whilst the gift of the Holy Spirit is not limited by the capacities of men, nevertheless that gift is only bestowed when there are points of contact in the life of man. Miracles were wrought by saints ; prophecy was given to the holy men of old ; availing prayer is the faculty of the righteous. *Bene orare est bene laborare* ("To pray well is to labour well"), said Luther ; to pray well is to live well, we might add. It is when we are doing our best that the Great Giver bestows of His best. It must be a very holy life which can give a man the daring to preface his entrance into the pulpit like Robert Bruce, by saying in wrestling prayer, "I protest I will not go unless Thou goest with me."

The Kingdom of God moves onwards through the agency of *groups of men*. "A few guiding spirits march first, and the multitude fall into line and follow after them," says a beautiful American writer,

almost unknown in England. It is the few who plan, toil, and pray. The Great Head of the Church has His twelve still. Let them be moved simultaneously by the Holy Spirit, and the mighty work marches rapidly on. Oh for lives more highly consecrated! Oh for prayers more full of faith and potent! Oh for larger delight in service, deeper joy in fellowship, stronger power in spiritual usefulness! Oh for an exceptional outpouring of the Holy Ghost! Oh for the fuller advent of the Kingdom of God, the Spiritual World!

LECTURE XI

CONCLUSION: THE REVIVAL OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

I N approaching this very vital subject, I feel it desirable to state at once that I have no jeremiad to utter against the degeneracy of the Churches of Christ or of our age. I do not believe in the pretended spiritual decline of the Church of Christ; and as for our age, I rather suspect that it is, for good or ill, very much what God thinks best on the whole. Whilst I sympathise most heartily with those who desire to see a great spiritual quickening in our day, I find myself altogether unable to agree with the reasons often assigned for the need of revival. The revival I desiderate is not a revival as from the dead. Spiritual forces of an exceptional kind are at work all around us, whatever men may say; great and splendid blessings are already being enjoyed by the grace of our God; it is our privilege to rejoice greatly in the life as it is in the Kingdom of God.

No, I have no jeremiad to utter. It is in no spirit of dissatisfaction or disappointment that I desire an increase of the spiritual life of the Churches of Christ. As a Christian man I have valid grounds, I think,

for taking a hopeful view of the spiritual life of our times.

The fact is—and the statement may make a fitting transition to the subject before us—I really see more reason for a hopeful view of the religious life of our days than for any other view. I cannot but thank God for the spiritual privileges we possess. I say deliberately that the Gospel of Jesus is more manifestly to-day than ever a Gospel for every man, a Gospel for all spheres and all circumstances. Indeed, some truths, I dare to believe, it has been given to this age to grasp with a firmer tenacity than ever before—truths, too, which are the very core and marrow of any Gospel of Redemption—such truths, for example, as the spiritual powerlessness of the natural man, the centrality of Jesus, the new life there is in Christ, and the solidarity of Christ and His people. Having no expectation that the religious life of the close of this century will simply repeat the religious life of the last, I can view gratefully and hopefully the spiritual signs of the times. Each age, I see increasingly, has its own work to do, its own experience to frame, its own thoughts to express. We, like God, should be hope as well as love. The world of thought cannot stand still; and the hour of clear vision must, in the limitation of man, always become the hour of renewed conflict with our mental darkness. Each age must bring out of its treasury things new and old. God save us from the narrowness which says that the old is the same as the effete, and God

save us equally from the narrowness which says that the new is synonymous with the frivolous! Virtue lies in the mean, in being at once wisely conservative and wisely liberal. *In medio tutissimus ibis.* For my part, I thank God for the spiritual life of to-day; I thank God for the firmer grasp that is visible upon catholic truth; I equally thank God for the laxer grasp we display upon truth which has not shown itself to be catholic. The pure gold of divine truth must always, in the nature of things, be presented by man with some admixture of error; but I thank God that the human alloy lessens, or, which is almost the same thing, becomes more manifest from century to century.

However, Hopeful as well as Much-afraid may desire a revival of spiritual life. "High life, the earnest of a higher"—that is my interpretation of the times. If I talk in paradox, I trust my meaning will become clearer presently. Because our life is so rich, I want it richer.

And the need of an increase of spiritual life is seen, not only in present privileges, but in another manifest fact. Present-day religion has not yet approved itself by enthusiastic evangelisation. Now, whatever may be the modern opinion upon some parts of the creed of the eighteenth century, that creed had a conspicuous power to move, to rescue, and to convert. If it be true that we possess a larger-hearted creed to-day—and I believe it is true—surely a more sympathetic creed should have a more

nearly universal success. Now, I very much doubt whether the Gospel as preached to-day has the same converting power, the same sanctifying power, as the Gospel of three and four generations ago. We have been passing through a time of transition—of transition, I trust, to clearer conviction, purer life, and more conspicuous self-denial; but inseparable, apparently, from all times of transition is a temporary paralysis. We only act energetically when we believe strongly, or, which is the same thing, when we have not to recast our belief: it is not in man to have a reserve of strength for action when old thoughts are busy with their own improvement. This is the sad side of all transitions—that enthusiasm is temporarily relaxed because faith for a time is loosened.

And yet I scarcely know why this should be. When a world is starving, surely it is irrational to spend all our time in sifting our flour: half a loaf is better than no bread; seconds bread is better than none at all. When there is the many-headed dragon to decapitate, it is surely better to use any sword that will cut rather than await the invention of an ideally perfect blade. It is a poor advantage to have better weapons and do less execution with them. Surely a purer faith should be able to show enlarged results. Has not the time come to show our faith by our works? The faith of our fathers was a splendidly working faith: it could save men by hundreds; it could inspire men by tens of thousands; it could show magnificent fruitage of self-denial and

deeds of brotherhood ; it founded colleges ; it formed the Bible Society ; it set on foot missionary societies one after another. Where and what is *our* record ? Who has the temerity to assert that it is as worthy ?

As yet it is not as worthy ; but it is going to be speedily. If the Gospel of Jesus shines more brightly than ever after passing through the furnace fires of the last fifty years, this finer gold of belief which we have been smelting and refining, not without pain and anxiety, will become the world's currency before long.

The time of transition will have passed into the new age, when the Churches of Christ have the faith in their newly-won Gospel which their fathers had in their Gospel. I do not fear to repeat my conviction that the early years of the coming century will eclipse in glory the early years of the century that is closing. The first sign of the coming day is seen in a growing sense of need of the divine baptism of power.

Do you ask what I mean by a baptism of power, by a revival of spiritual life ? I reply in a sentence. Such a revival would not change present instrumentalities, but it would increase their potency. What I mean by revival is increased spiritual vitality. If I understand the genesis of great spiritual movements at all, I see that the divine instruments are invariable,—those instruments being truth and men, revealed truth and inspired men. But a revival means—truth seen more clearly, because of an increase of spiritual perception and receptivity, and men moved more mightily from

the same inspiring causes. Pray and work as you will, if the truth of God be absent, there will be no quickening. Pray and work as you will, if the men who speak the truth be uninspired, you will have no baptism from above. God forbid that I should forget the miraculous element in every spiritual renovation—for in every spiritual change there is an express divine interference to help and to bless; but I venture to affirm that such miraculous intervention only follows upon the fulfilment of certain conditions—namely, divine truth presented, and human teachers inspired. When at one and the same time truth is our weapon and divine might is the force of our arm, then there follows the dividing asunder as of the bones and marrow.

The old faith which existed of necessity in our minds plus some admixture of human error, has come out of the fiery furnace of recent conflict as the old truth still with a little less of human alloy. So we trust and often assert. But the question again arises, If our weapon is of finer temper than before, how is it that it is not doing more splendid execution? Is there something wanting in the arm which wields? I believe there is, and therefore I pray for a fuller intercourse with the Spiritual World.

The recognition of two truths must ever underlie every increase of spiritual energy. On the one hand, the conviction must be intense that man cannot do effective spiritual work without divine co-operation. On the other hand, the conviction must be equally

profound that God will not give us spiritual power apart from human co-operation. Man cannot work without God ; God will not work without man. If spiritual labour is to be efficient, God must arm man, and man must ask God. All spiritual results are produced by the co-operation of God with man. In working any spiritual change or invigoration, God so respects human freedom that He will not work apart from human solicitation. Man must so respect divine sovereignty, that all work must be associated with prayer for divine assistance. Is it necessary for me to insist upon either truth? Need I stay to enforce either the place of God or the position of man in achieving any spiritual good? Are we not all agreed that God deigns to employ human aids in the accomplishment of all spiritual results? Are we not all agreed that the labours of the preacher will only scintillate supernatural power when the might of the Holy Spirit is given to us? Man preaches ; God energises. Man lays the material of the sacrifice ; God answers by fire. Where human energy ends, the divine energy begins. The Holy Ghost can alone endow human words with vitalisation. Upon such common truths are we not agreed? Are we not agreed that all new life is from above? Are we not agreed that if human weakness is to become divine power, it can only be by the co-operation of man and the Holy Spirit. If the Spiritual World is to become more evident and potent, man must operate and God co-operate.

Sacramentalism, do you say? Certainly, sacra-

mentalism of a true kind. My quarrel with Rome is its narrowness. God does make supernatural manifestations by the instrumentality of man. All human acts may be sacramental, charged with a spiritual might which is not their own. With a thrilling joy I believe in human priesthood, but a priesthood of every believer in Jesus, not a priesthood confined to a class. With a great elevation of soul I glory in the presence of the Risen Christ by His Spirit, but a presence at many times and in any place. Tell me that there are two sacraments, or seven, or tell me that there is a select priesthood, and my reply is that the Creed is narrower than Christianity ; Christianity makes every believing act a sacrament ; Christianity makes every believing agent a priest. Man has but to work in faith, and God will divinely co-work ; man has but to pray in faith, and God will bestow His divine energy ; man has but to speak in faith, and God will accredit human speech with a force supernatural. Great spiritual success implies two things : man's best energy freely given ; God's highest energy given as freely.

Do you not seize the point? Mechanism we have in plenty to-day, and of the most elaborate kind, all useful in its way, but powerless to produce other than mechanical results. Human energy we also have in plenty, and often of the most self-denying and enthusiastic kind, but powerless to produce other than human results. Spiritual results must be produced by the Spirit. Are we such channels of supernatural

power as we might be? Does the Holy Spirit work through us as He can? Are our faculties stimulated to their highest by the divine presence? Has power rained upon *us* from the throne of the Almighty? Do we see spiritual things as with the eye of the Omniscient? Has the breath of Deity passed upon our senses, expanding our horizon? Has it warmed our intellects, enlarging our apprehension? Has it inspired our wills, till the harder the work for Jesus the deeper the joy? If not, why not? Is God to blame, or are we?

Perhaps the main condition of spiritual power in a spiritual man is *prayer*.

We may be partakers of an inexhaustible divine energy, if we ask for it. Divine gifts more blessed and forcible than the loftiest gifts of genius may be ours, if we will humbly beseech the throne of the Heavenly Mercy. New life may be given to every faculty we possess, new life, *inspiration*, if, in humble recognition of the Source whence all inspiration comes, we crave our God and Father to supplement our natural power by His divine power. God cannot work through us, so highly does He prize our freedom, until we have voluntarily besought His assistance. We cannot work by God, until the sense of our need has become so strong that supplication of the divine aid has become a second nature.

Prayer preserves spiritual contact with the Source of power.

When a young man, I was anxious to possess an

induction coil, and knew that the only way for me to do so was to make one. Spare hours were given to the labour day after day, and after two years had passed I had wound some two miles of wire, all carefully insulated layer by layer, round my primary. At length the time came to prove my work. It is impossible to forget the sense of suspense in putting the machine to the test. As I attached my battery, imagine my joy when there leaped out from the terminals a bright spark half an inch in length. Substance after substance was put in the arc of flame to test its quality. Tin broke into beautiful starlike scintillations. Some iron nails gave quite a firework display. So my coil worked for a while! But, alas! after a few weeks the machine refused to act. The closest examination revealed no flaw. At length I ventured to take it to a well-known electrician. He was sufficiently interested to examine the home-made apparatus carefully. He too could find no flaw. At length, ceasing from his tests, he returned the machine to me, saying, "The mechanism seems all right; I do not understand the breakdown exactly; but there must be a failure of contact somewhere." A failure of contact! Yes; and does the divine energy cease to flow along our lives and words, because there is a failure of contact somewhere?

Prayer—is a spiritual meal, the renewing of our spiritual strength by feeding upon God, the satisfying of the craving of spiritual hunger by partaking of the divine bread.

Prayer—shows man in a dependent attitude. Prayer—shows man in a believing attitude. Prayer—shows man in an expectant attitude.

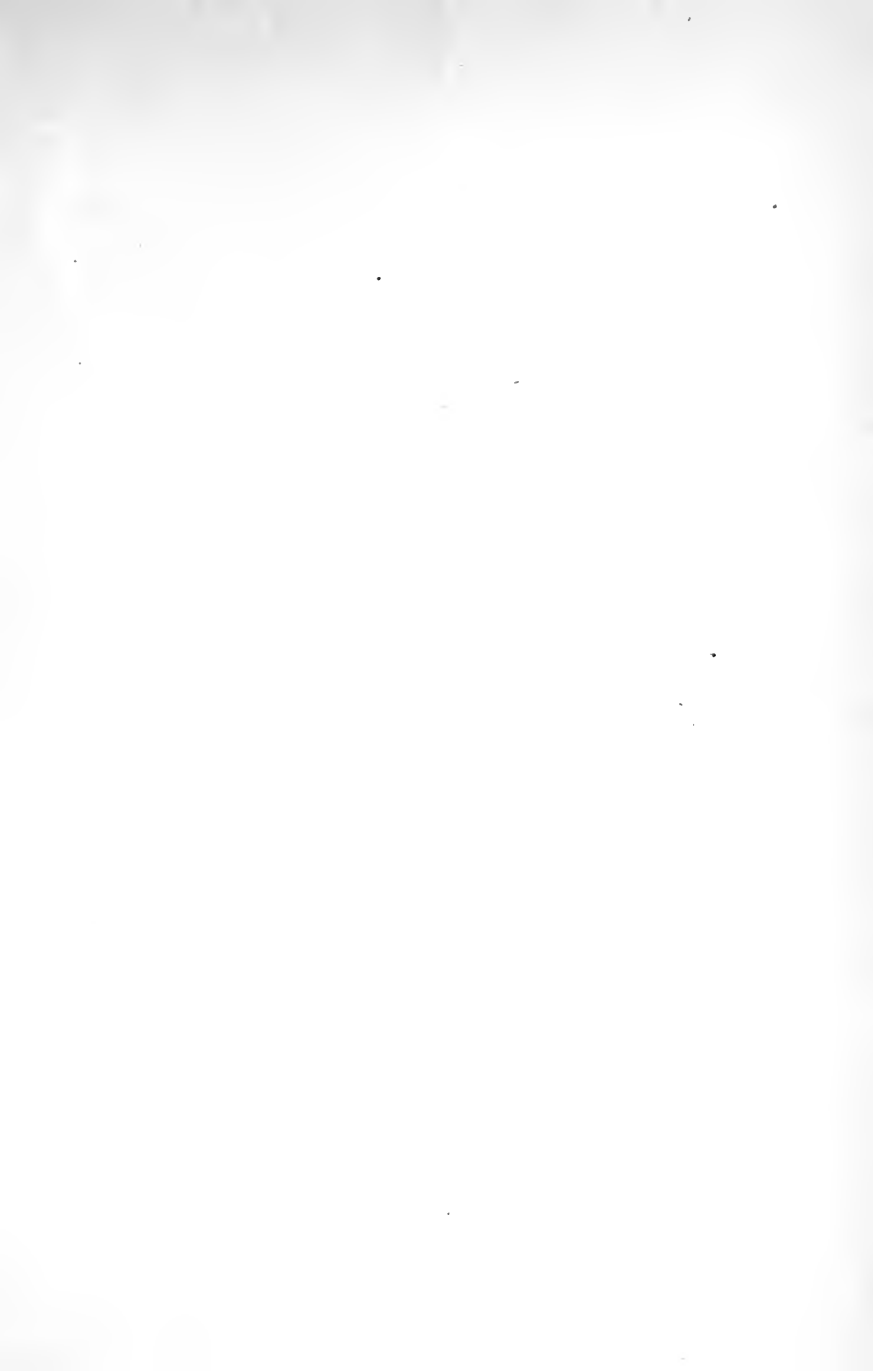
In a word, Prayer shows us in the attitude in which God can honour us because we have first honoured Him. Contact with the Source of all true strength and power is established by prayer, and God can use the prayerful man for His glory without harm to the man and with unspeakable good to the world.

There lies before our Christian Churches a vast and noble work yet. As we look beneath the surface of the modern world, how great a task has yet to be done before the world is won for Jesus! How horrible an Augean stable has to be cleansed by our Divine Hercules! From all lands there rises the wail of sinful and sorrowing humanity. There are terrible wrongs which men are enduring; there are great social tyrannies beneath which men are groaning; there are gigantic principles of evil as well as of good that are steadily working their almost irresistible way. We believe, do we not, that the hope of this sinful world lies in the Gospel of Jesus? The crucified but risen Christ is our panacea for the woes that flesh is heir to. Can we hold our tongues about this Jesus, the Gospel for the world?

But my point is that the inspired Gospel is only powerful when preached by inspired men. The secret of inspiration is, first, consecration. A holy life is the invariable prelude of great usefulness. Miracles are

wrought by *saints*. Prophecy was given by *holy* men of old. Availing prayer is the attribute of the *righteous* man. The secret of inspiration is, secondly, prayer, which arrays on our side the voluntary and effective forces of Omnipotence. The world will be won for Christ when the glorious Gospel of the blessed God is preached by those who by diligent use of all the means of grace, and especially by prayer, have become inspired men—"men full of the Holy Ghost and of power."

Yes! The World for Christ! This is to be the motto of the coming age. Verily the world needs a gospel. Verily Christ yearns for the world. But blessed be God, it is His will that His kingdom shall move onward by the agency of the few consecrated lives. It is the few who plan, and toil, and sacrifice, and pray, and preach, who are changing the face of the world. The Great Head of the Church, the Source of Forgiveness and of Power, works by the company of believers still. Let us glory in our high calling. Let us be diligent; let us be strong in belief and in faith; let us be prayerful. Let us pray. Oh for a firmer grasp of truth! Oh for more consecrated lives! Oh for prayers more full of faith and potent! Oh for an outpouring of the Holy Ghost! Oh for a fuller revelation of the Kingdom of God! Oh for vision of, and life in, the Spiritual World!





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