

STONES IN THE ROUGH

OR

CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS A STUDY OF THEOLOGY
APPROACHED FROM THE HEATHEN SIDE
OF THE FENCE

That gospel which I preach among the gentiles—Gal. ii : 2

PART II.

The Theology of Nature

WILLIAM ASHMORE

BL
2775
.A8
V. 2

PRICE . . . 50 CENTS

Book will be sent postpaid on receipt of price, by the publishers,
A. M. SKINNER & CO., 655 ATLANTIC AVENUE, BOSTON

Library of the Theological Seminary,

PRINCETON, N. J.

Presented by *President Patton*

Division

3L 2775 .A8 v.2

Ashmore, William, 1824-1901

Stones in the rough, or,
Contributions towards a

STONES IN THE ROUGH

OR

CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS A STUDY OF THEOLOGY
APPROACHED FROM THE HEATHEN SIDE
OF THE FENCE

That gospel which I preach among the gentiles—Gal. ii : 2

PART II.

WILLIAM ASHMORE

PUBLISHER'S CARD

WILL BE IN FOUR PARTS WHEN COMPLETED

I. THE METHOD OF STUDY, AND THE REASON THEREFOR	44	Pages
II. <u>THE THEOLOGY OF NATURE</u>	77	“
III. THE THEOLOGY OF REVELATION . Probably about	150	“
IV. RELATED SUBJECTS, ISSUES AND QUESTIONS “	80	“

Respectfully Dedicated

TO

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS

OF

THE AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSIONARY UNION

As Illustrative of the Gospel They Send Out Their Missionaries
to Preach, as Apprehended by One of Their Number

WILLIAM ASHMORE

THEOLOGY IS THE SCIENCE OF GOD

By a “science” we mean a classified presentation of all the facts we can ascertain about God; about him personally; the mode of his being; the nature of his attributes; the creations of his hand; the administration of his government; the relations he sustains to the universe he has made—and to the creatures that are in it; together with his plans and purposes so far as it is possible or proper for us to know them; and, as a consequential result, a classified statement of the attitudes, feelings and actions due to himself as God over all blessed forever more; towards spiritual beings, who, though we have nothing to do consciously with them, have much to do with us—and towards our fellow human creatures as being made of one blood with us to dwell on all the face of the earth.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE OF A THEOLOGY OF NATURE	12
NATURAL REASON	14
TEACHINGS OF THE NATURAL REASON ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF GOD, THE CREATOR	16
THE NATURAL CONSCIENCE	17
Teachings of the Natural Conscience on Obligations	18
These Two Obligations Form the "Law of Nature"	19
The Gospel of Nature	19
The Saving Value of this Inchoate Faith	20
An Objection Which Here Interposes Itself	22
The Three Elements Which Enter into the Theology of Nature	23
Application to the Men of Antediluvian Times	24
Grounds of the Condemnation of the Antediluvian World	25
The Gospel Among the Antediluvians	27
Why the Old World Perished	31
The Question of a Second Probation	31
What Constitutes a "Probation"	32
A Most Erroneous Conception	33
The First and Second Trials of Adam and Eve Compared	34
The Antediluvians Then Have Had Their Second Pro- bation	35
"Unto All and Upon All"	36
THE THEOLOGY OF NATURE AMONG POST DILUVIANS	37
The Stage of Another Rapid Religious and Moral De- generacy	39
Light They Had, but They Walked Not in It	40
Lingering Rays on the Mountain Tops	40
Confirmation in Remains of Primitive Literature	41
Post Diluvian Gospel	42
Universality and Value of Post Diluvian Gospel Gleams	44

THREE BOOKS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE TAKEN UP LARGELY WITH	
THE THEOLOGY OF NATURE	46
The Book of Job	47
The Book of Proverbs	48
The Book of Ecclesiastes	50
II. THE STAGE OF HEATHEN CONSTRUCTIVENESS	52
III. THE STAGE OF PHILOSOPHICAL SPECULATION AND INQUIRY	58
Why Primitive Philosophy Failed	60
The Torch of Philosophy in Transition	61
The Shortages of Philosophy	62
Is Sound Philosophy Inimical to God and Truth	63
IV. THE STAGE OF SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION AND ASCERTAIN-	
MENT	63
The Shortages of Science	66
Is True Science Antagonistic to Religion	67
FOUR GREAT SCHOOLS OF LEARNING	69
The School of Faith	70
Faith Our Greatest Source of Knowledge	71
The Method of Faith and the Method of Science	72
The Conclusion of the Whole Matter	74

PART SECOND.

THE THEOLOGY OF NATURE.

Entirely apart from the teachings of divine revelation, there is a vast amount to be learned about God, about his nature, about his attributes, about his administration of human affairs,—supporting the good and condemning the evil—and also about human beings in their relation to God and their relations to each other. This is usually called “The Light of Nature.” “Nature,” so-called, is then a divinely appointed teacher. “Doth not even nature itself teach you?”

The light of nature involves a large measure of moral responsibility. Its lessons are gathered partly by intuitional perception—as when the physical senses perceive material objects, and the moral sense perceives moral relations,—the objects of light and the sense of light being mutually fitted for each other. Men are required to see and to think and to feel, even in a state of nature. Failure or negligence in this on the one hand, or diligent compliance on the other, involves condemnation or justification. This condemnation or justification may have a far-reaching effect extending quite over into a morally different condition of affairs. It is quite manifest in the scriptures that in God’s plan there are provisional states preparatory to a final one. The provisional compliance or non-compliance under the law of nature may be accepted and negotiated under the law of grace when the fulness of time should come. Acts of faith in the early ages of the regime of faith, when men did not know much and could not believe as intelligently as they could at a later date with more light, as we understand the Old Testament teaching, were like what the financiers call convertible bonds, the value of which was to be determined by what Christ was to do at a later day when he should come as a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made to the fathers.

The Theology of Nature is a universal theology. It is coeval with human existence. It is a theology possessed by every nation, by every tribe, by every kindred, by every individual of the human family in less or more of clearness. It is a heritage alike of the civilized and of the uncivilized,—of the bond and the free; it antedates the Theology of Revelation, which began to be given at a later day. So far as the teachings and the sanctions of the two theologies go, their outcome is the same, though the teachings of the theology of nature are or have become confessedly inadequate to meet human needs. It is because they are or have become inadequate that they have had to be supplemented by the later theology of revelation.

It is a deplorable characteristic of much of the religious thought of this generation that many men are turning back from “the true light that now shineth,” and are taking up with a superficial glamour which they style scientific, but which is in reality a reversion to, in their case, and a going beyond the superseded light of nature. They drop emphasis on the personality of a divine Being, and talk about a universal and omnipotent “energy.” They cease to talk of creation, and expatiate on evolution. They talk about law, about fixed law, as they call it, but they no longer see the guidance and supremacy of a Law Giver.

On this account also and because nature worship is reasserting itself so much in this twentieth century, it is all the more important that the theology of nature itself should be examined, first of all, to know what it can teach and what it cannot teach—as a necessary prerequisite to the study of the theology of revelation.

SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE THEOLOGY OF NATURE.

I. *The Natural Reason.*—Or that group of faculties (including the bodily senses and the intellectual capabilities) by which we see and

note facts, principles, phenomena and all operations of cause and effect, in the created universe around us, alike in the realm of mind, and of matter. It compares, it contrasts; it speculates; it draws conclusions and applies them; making forecasts also into the future.

II. *The Natural Conscience.*—It discerns moral qualities, in actions, in principles and in conduct. It possesses not only a discerning power to discriminate between right and wrong, but also a judicial power to enforce its own conclusions by enjoining and forbidding—by commendation in case of compliance, and commendation in case of non-compliance. “The Moral Sense.”

III. *The Natural Reason and the Natural Conscience in Their Interaction With and Upon Each Other.*—Each one separately discovers to us many truths of prime importance which enter into our make-up of the theology of nature. In their interaction and complementary relationship they reveal to us some entirely new aspects of truth, and of moral relationship which cannot be gathered by simply adding together one and one which makes two, but still a third phase of truth comes in sight, which makes three, perceived at one glance from two data. This peculiarity is conformable to the scientific fact that when one object,—a globe for example, is seen through a binocular, properties of the globe become apparent which are not perceptible when a monocle is used. Our whole science of metaphysics is built up largely on the principle that from two discoveries we can deduce a third, and from three data we can deduce a fourth, a fifth, and a sixth, with an approximate degree of probability.

IV. *The Vast Aggregate of Experience of the Human Race Acquired by it in the Course of its Historical Development, All Bearing on the Problems of the Theology of Nature.*—This experience of mankind is of the nature of that decisive testing known in the divine economy as *Fruitage*. Its results summed up at the end of many generations shows what the theology of nature can do for the enlightenment and the uplift of mankind, and what is of even greater

importance, what it cannot do, and which therefore enforces the demand for a supplemental theology of revelation.

This human experience, with all its teachings and deductions of such transcendent importance in divine pedagogy, is contained:

I. In the literature of the non-biblical writers of all ages. Historians, philosophers, poets, moralists and expounders of all the heathen religions, Egyptian, Babylonian, Indian, Confucian and Buddhist, and all modern systems of naturalism. In this list is to be included their vast collection of aphorisms and proverbs and their maxims for the government of society and the conduct of individuals, and all such writers as Seneca, Cicero, Plato, Aristotle, Homer, Virgil and others.

II. In certain portions of Biblical literature, such as the Book of Job, the Book of Proverbs, the Book of Ecclesiastes, and selections from other places. Though these books are in the inspired Canon they are mostly taken up with an authoritative setting forth of the teachings and sanctions of the Theology of Nature, and derive their transcendent value from the fact that they form God's imprimatur on a correct estimate of what the Theology of Nature can be and can do.

NATURAL REASON.

By this designation we mean that faculty or group of faculties by which we discern all matters of design as distinguished from chance, all relations of cause and effect, of antecedent and consequent. It is the faculty by which we compare and contrast, by which we deduce consequences and conclusions, by which we discern harmonies and discord, by which we analyze and synthesize and classify—by which we determine adaptations and by which we derive inferences, and also formulate conjectures and reckon probabilities.

The possession by human beings of such a faculty or such a group of faculties presupposes the prior existence of an anterior world of

spirits in each of which are many and varied entities of being, arranged in grades and gradations. These entities of being in the three realms of matter, mind and spirit, have conformities and correspondences with each other, which make it possible to reason from one to the other. That is to say, the laws of action in the material world have some sort of counterpart in the laws of action in the still higher realm of the spiritual world. Were it not so it would be impossible to reason from one unto the other as we now continually have to do, and moreover it would be impossible for a person in a lower state of existence to rise to a higher state of existence, for what we call personality would be at an end at every transition. The experiences—the mutual acquisitions and the character attained in the lower state and which become inseparable acquisitions of the original soul substance would not be transmissible. Again, personality and individuality would be at an end. Immortality itself would become questionable and all the biblical suppositions based on the assumption of its truthfulness would have nothing to rest upon. If experiences and character are not transmissible, then what is, and what is the use of having anything transmissible? For practically it would mean that all has to be blotted out and a new beginning made. There is no Christian doctrine of immortality about that; it is the heathen doctrine of Nigban and absorption into some primal essence.

But as sentient beings are now constituted with their three-fold natures, their possibilities of adaptation to three separate kingdoms of nature, and their three sets of capabilities co-existent in one personality,—with all such beings the acquisition and experience of a lower state are not lost when a line of demarkation is crossed, but are thrown forward into the new state of existence and become the capital stock of attainment of that new nature as it enters on its higher career. The earthly material which forms the present housing of a living soul may go back to its original dust, but all the acquisition of the soul substance during its incarceration in its tenement of flesh and blood will inhere

in the soul substance itself, and not be cast off with the worn-out integument when its usefulness is at an end. Forms of life may change, and outside garments may be altered, but soul substance, being an impartation of the breath of a living God, is of the very nature imperishable and unchangeable.

TEACHINGS OF THE NATURAL REASON ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF GOD THE CREATOR.

The Natural Reason exercises itself on “the things that are made.” It studies adaptations; it notes evidences of intelligent purpose and of obvious design. It examines into relations; it investigates properties and capabilities, and notably it is bound to inquire into origins and beginnings and causal relations of all kinds, and finally it reaches and formulates conclusions.

Among the ascertainments and conclusions of the Natural Reason the most preponderant and stupendous of them all is that the universe has a Creator, that there is but one Creator, and not two, for the laws and the system of the universe are one and not two; that this Creator is a spiritual being who fills all time and all space—that he is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient and eternal. In other words, it demands as indispensable to an explanation of the phenomena it is made cognizant of, the eternal power and Godhead of a supreme Being.

A question has been raised in this day of philosophic incertitude as to whether “design proves a designer.” Paley’s argumentation has been impugned as inconclusive. But few rational thinkers are caught by the subtleties of these sophists. The universal experience and hard common sense of mankind refuses to surrender so self-evident a conclusion. If there is a design there must be a designer; if there is a building there must be an architect; if there be a boat there must be a

builder. If there is a bridge there must be a framer; if there is an effect there must be a cause. On this whole subject God's own teaching is explicit. He affirms that things created prove the existence of a Creator. Paul's declaration in Romans cannot be set aside by any human sophistry. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them"—not merely to them but *in* them, inwrought by God himself in the very fibre of their intellectual being; it is a necessity of their law of thought. "For God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." We accept this divine utterance as conclusive and final. Nor need any Christian teacher feel called upon to spend any time to confute a man who contradicts outright the teaching of an inspired apostle. Christ once gave some advice about the proper scattering of pearls.

THE NATURAL CONSCIENCE.

The natural conscience, or the Moral Sense, as we also term it, is that faculty or that group of faculties by which we perceive moral relations, and moral qualities, and by which also we feel the impulse of moral obligation. It has thus a double function—to perceive and to impel, and forms the basis of what we call moral accountability. It is proper to call it a "sense," like the sense of seeing, or the sense of hearing; its action is spontaneous, as soon as the object to be perceived and the perceiving agency are confronted with each other. It does not have to reason; it sees for itself.

It is by this faculty that we perceive moral qualities in God, moral qualities in angels, and moral qualities in men, and by which also, as soon as the quality or relation is perceived we at once feel the pressure of an obligation to correspond. The sense of "oughtness" arises instantaneously. "We perceive, therefore we ought." It is this faculty

also that discerns the moral quality of principles of action, of motives of conduct, and by it also we pass judgment on the concrete conscience of a community or of a state, as we do in the conscience of an individual, for conscience is always judged by its peers. Emphasis must be laid on the fact, already stated, that it has not only a judicial but also an executive function; it decides what is right and what is wrong, and then it executes its own decisions in accord therewith. It commends and it condemns; it accuses and it excuses.

The conscience faculty does not have to be imparted to any one by a process of education, though it needs to be guided by enlightened educators. It is born *with* every one and *in* every one, whether civilized men or savage men, which show the work of the Law written *in* their heart. Notice the word "in" in preference to the word "on." There is a difference between having a color stamped on an article, and having its colored threads woven *in* the article—like water-lined paper, as some would call it. "Their conscience also bearing them witness and their thoughts meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." The natural conscience then is an Instructor, a Witness, a Judge, an Executor, a Recorder, and a moral Representative of God in the soul.

TEACHINGS OF THE NATURAL CONSCIENCE ON OBLIGATIONS.

I. *Due from the Creature to the Creator.*—It teaches that homage, obedience, worship and service are due to God because he is God. It may be misled as to who is God, and may substitute a false God for the true God—but whoever is in the place of God will be considered as entitled to the homage, and will receive the homage until the conscience is better informed.

II. *Due from the Creature to the Creature.*—Because the fellow creature is an equal, therefore he is entitled to equal consideration, to the same rights, the same privileges, the same immunities; as all others are possessed of.

THESE TWO OBLIGATIONS FORM "THE LAW OF NATURE."

They are the equivalents of the commands given at a later day, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and all thy mind, and with all thy strength," and "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The first is the Religious Law of Nature, and the second is the Moral Law of Nature. They constitute man a religious being and a moral being. He is required to be religious towards God and moral towards man. Together in their combined character they form the law which every created being is required to obey; they form the law by which angels and men alike are judged, tried, condemned or exonerated as the case may be. These two laws are distinct and yet united—the law of obligation towards God and the law of obligation towards man. The first leads to the second; the second rests on the first for its foundation. The man who violates the one will be sure to violate the other. Men who do not fear God cannot be depended upon to regard man. No man on the face of the earth can escape responsibility and pretend ignorance of the law, for every man has in his own heart and mind a full copy for himself. Before proceeding to apply, we must take into account another factor.

THE GOSPEL OF NATURE.

The gospel of nature includes all those intimations, premonitions and initial acts of grace and mercy that are scattered up and down the word of God, and that are seen in innumerable mercies large and small along the pathway of human history, which show that God is willing to be gracious, forgiving and helpful to men even if they have sinned; that he has not cast them off entirely as they deserve, but will do something to help them, and which also inspire men to hope that all is not lost, but that God will have compassion on them in some way or other, though when and how they do not know. They hope and they hope, and they study signs and indications and add to their hope,

and there grows up within them a faith—ill-formed and inchoate to be sure, and yet which has in it the primal essence of all faith,—belief in God’s undeserved mercy,—a faith which may antedate faith in Christ. “Ye believe in God, believe also in me,”—and a faith which is saving in its day and generation as much as any other faith, at least provisionally so, until Christ should come and take up the counters which were held.

This Gospel of Nature is succinctly set forth in Paul’s sermon at Lystra, Acts 14, when in speaking of God’s providence he says, “Who in times suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness in that he did good and gave rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.” All this is gospel preaching, not law preaching. In Romans I: 18, is preached the condemnation that comes by the law of nature: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness.” But here at Lystra he preaches the great complementary truth that as wrath is revealed so goodness is revealed. We are led to infer, therefore, that one lies over against the other in the divine plan, that in every period of the world and among every people when there has been a law to condemn there has been a gospel to save. God has never left himself without a witness of his readiness to be merciful and to do good is a truth as complete as that his wrath is revealed; we can draw no other conclusion from the texts adduced.

THE SAVING VALUE OF THIS INCHOATE FAITH.

The question is often asked, Will not men (the heathen for example) be saved if they do as well as they know how? This is but another way of asking if men cannot be saved by their own works of merit. The answer is given in the negative once for all by the Apostle, when he says, “Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be

justified." Men cannot be saved by works, by merit, by character or by heredity. When Adam fell, that gateway to heaven became impassable to men who had become sinners, or who had become sinful in nature, for, in the category of a holy God, sin and sinfulness and a sinful nature, sin and the potency of sin, are classed as one and treated as one. The Lord Jesus is the only one who ever went through that gateway triumphant and a victor, which he did on behalf of his people, and won for them a success they never could win for themselves.

But if now the question be asked, "Can men be saved if they believe up to, or (what perhaps is better to say) believe according to the light or the evidence they have, the whole face of the issue is changed, and the subject is not to be set aside in a summary way. The mercy of God towards the ancient world which perished before Christ came lies in that direction wholly. A theory is advocated nowadays that all men must have an opportunity to learn about "The Historic Christ" as they call Jesus of Nazareth, or "Christ after the flesh," as Paul puts it. This way of stating it implies that Christ is not merely one, but more than one; he is two in their estimation. We accept that so far as it goes, for Paul knew a Christ after the flesh and a Christ who was not after the flesh, but a Christ enthroned and glorified. There is not only a Historic Christ, but there is a prehistoric Christ, and a post Historic Christ, which was Paul's other Christ, and there is a Prophetic Christ, and the Christ of Types and shadows. Faith in any one of these presentations of Christ is faith in Christ in the concrete—it is constructively and sequentially faith in every form, and contains the promise and potency of all faith. Salvation is by faith. It has always been by faith, and will never be by anything but faith. The "character" that men love to speak of is only an evidence of the existence of faith, but it is faith that does the saving.

When we come to study it, we find that faith exists in various forms and various degrees. Salvation is revealed from faith to faith;

from one degree of faith to another degree of faith; from one acquisition of faith to another acquisition of faith; from the faith of one generation to the more fully developed faith of another generation; it is aggregative and cumulative. Its different yields may vary in degree, but the end of them all is the same, "the salvation of your souls." Faith is accepted of a man according to the evidence which he has; it is not required of him according to evidence which another may have but which he himself has not. That is God's unchanging law of equity and his way of evening up in human affairs and human conditions. God will give to the poor, low-down groper after God, who believes in a halting and feeble way, according to the few dim rays of light from above that penetrate his darkness, the same as to you who believe according to the mighty blaze of sunlight and the accumulated weight of twenty centuries of evidence;—the eleventh hour men received the same as the first hour men, a penny apiece all around. Shall not God do as he pleases with his own? It is all grace from first to last,—not merit nor personal worth.

AN OBJECTION WHICH HERE INTERPOSES ITSELF.

But if the possibilities of a mere glimmering of faith are likely to be attended with so much acceptance before God, why not leave the heathen nations alone in the conditions they now are, backward though they may be? Two replies at once present themselves to such a conclusion. (1) The life-giving processes of the great Creator are never limited to the product of elementary forms. Elementary or inchoate faith is not the terminus *ad quem* in this department any more than in any other department of God's work. It is his purpose that men should have life and furthermore that they should have life more abundantly. It was for that purpose that Christ came, as he himself tells us. He would not have us content with any morning twilight, but would have us look forward to the powerful blaze of the noonday

sun. And we are commanded to act accordingly. The darkness is past and the true light now shineth. The people who sit in darkness shall see great light. We have that light and are commanded to "Arise" and let it shine. (2) From reasons which will appear as we proceed we think that numbers, probably large numbers, more or less large according to states of society, will be found who are among those that "hope in His mercy." Their conceptions are crude and their ascertainment are limited. Nevertheless they may be of the kind that God accepts, and we may reasonably hope to find a multitude of them, out of every tribe and people, that had not known His scripture name nor know how it was done, yet standing at the right hand of the Judge, justified by their inchoate faith, which the Holy Spirit knows how to translate into the terms of the sacrifice slain from the foundation of the world. But it is startlingly true that this faith receptivity seems to have diminished as the ages have gone on. Men have lost their capacity for it, or have ceased to exercise it, and it is absolutely needful that there be a new and fuller increment of a mightier grace of God that bringeth salvation.

THE THREE ELEMENTS WHICH ENTER INTO THE THEOLOGY OF NATURE.

And now we summarize together the three constituent elements which form the Theology of Nature. They are:

I. The first, or the Religious Law of Nature, corresponding to the first table of the law of God.

II. The second, or the Moral Law of Nature, corresponding to the second table of the law of God.

III. The Gospel Law of Nature, as seen in the works of God; the providences of God; and in various ways, the teachings of God, as discerned in human history and contained in human experience.

According to their regard or disregard of these three laws are the sons of men to be tried, to be judged, and to be condemned or exoner-

ated. Of these three the most awfully momentous is the third. The first two involve a sentence of death; the third one involves deliverance from the first two, or a confirmation of their sentence—a life eternal or a death eternal. Later we shall have to do with the marvellously greater gospel of the Son of God, but at present we are concerned only with the workings of the Gospel of Nature.

APPLICATION TO THE MEN OF ANTEDILUVIAN TIMES.

That the men of the antediluvian world were swept away by a flood brought upon the world of the ungodly by a long suffering and offended God, is a fact of sacred history. Old and young, children and infants, shared in a common destruction. Was this visitation an outburst of caprice on the part of God? Surely it was not. That which was a hundred and twenty years coming on was not of sudden caprice. It was very premeditated and deliberate and formally announced beforehand. Was it an infliction on men not conscious of their violation of moral law? It surely was not. Men cannot plead ignorance who have been warned for a hundred and twenty years. There was a law that had been broken, and we have no difficulty in finding it. Were they cut off without a single chance of escape, and without some sort of a respite to allow them time to think and act? Again, surely not. To say so or to imply such a thing would be an impeachment of God's justice and fair dealing, in the one case, and a denial of any tenderness and mercy in his nature in the other case. If the flood was an unwarranted severity, and a precipitate and unjustifiable harshness, the character of the Judge of all the earth is smirched at the very start. Were they tried without law, condemned without law, sentenced without law, and executed without law? Assuredly they were not. Everything was in accord with the strictest law and the highest equity, and then nothing was done until a wonderful and long continued opportunity was given to avert the judgment, but which was treated with neglect and contempt.

GROUNDS OF THE CONDEMNATION OF THE ANTEDILUVIAN WORLD.

I. *They were guilty of a total disregard of the first great requirement of the moral nature,—that they should fear, honor and obey the great Creator who had made them.*

That they knew about God is incontestible. They were as yet very near that early period when their great father Adam had been a personal companion and a personal pupil of God. That Adam was thus in familiar converse with the infinitely wise Creator, not merely for a few years, but in all probability for many years possibly, what would be a lifetime or more than a lifetime in our day, can hardly be questioned. The work alone of naming the animals made to pass before him would require years of study and observation of their natures and habits in order that the naming should have significance. Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years. His own knowledge of God must have been made known to multitudes of his descendants. Besides this they had their own double law of nature, which taught them their own duty towards God and towards men. That they were utterly regardless of that duty is manifest from the testimony of Enoch. He was the seventh from Adam. In his day defection from God had made fearful progress. And Enoch also the seventh from Adam prophesies of them, saying: "The Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment on all and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

The striking points in this terrible announcement were that they had a clear apprehension of God as a personal being—that they not only acted against him but complained of him and villified him personally in hard speeches. The frequency with which the word ungodly is used shows the nature of their defection. They were not Godly. God would judge them not only for what they are, and ought not to be, but for what they are not but ought to be. Furthermore

they were not *to be* under condemnation; they were already under condemnation. Ten thousand executioners were ready to execute judgment upon them. And this did not include all their wickedness. As yet there were the violations of the second tablet to come in. They were sentenced to death, for the one single and sufficient reason that they were not godly but were disobedient towards God and maligned him, and were contemptuous towards him, paying no attention to what he said.

II. *They were guilty of a total and contemptuous disregard of the second great requirement of their moral nature, that they should love their neighbors as themselves.*

Here again they needed not to go outside of themselves to find the law. It is written within, the same as the first law. Every man has a copy for himself. Some hundreds of years later than Enoch's day we are made acquainted with the facts of the second count in the indictment. Disloyalty to God precedes wrong-doing towards man; the latter is sure to follow the former. And it is always so in human history. There never can be any true and abiding love for man which is not based upon a previous love to God. "The earth also was corrupt before God (violation of the first table) and the earth was filled with violence (violation of the second table)." And now the time had come of which God had said: "My spirit shall not always strive with man! A world filled with wicked, God-hating men and with man-hating violent men, is the picture now given to us of the state of mankind. The law of brotherhood was trampled under foot, and now for a second reason it became necessary to destroy such a race. But there was still a third reason yet to come.

III. *They were guilty of despising the Gospel of Nature which meanwhile had been made known to them, partly by direct announcement and partly by providential manifestations.* As already stated (and we cannot emphasize the fact too strongly), sentence of death impends immediately as soon as the offence is committed. The of-

fender has no right to ask for a moment's clemency or respite. If, therefore, respite obtains we may know it is because some change of condition has taken place. Suspension of judgment is a matter of grace, not of right. In the divine purpose God had included a provision of mercy which antedated the fall—a promise not extended to the angelic host. "The end of all flesh is come before me"; that was the sentence of death. "Yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." That was the respite granted to allow him to avail himself of the gospel provision.

THE GOSPEL AMONG THE ANTEDILUVIANS.

They had: I. *The Gospel of Promise.*

It was a clearly stated and full rounded gospel preached to that ancient world. It was first announced by God himself. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Beyond this vague utterance that a deliverer should come and that he would be a child of the woman, there was nothing definite. Where, when and how was not revealed. It was a gospel of promise and a gospel not comprehended beyond the mere fact. But because it was a belief in what God had said it was of the very essence of saving faith. By it, so far as we know, Adam and Eve were saved. When her first child was born Eve supposed it was the promised deliverer and said, "I have gotten the man that is to be," or "I have gotten the coming one." This became a designation of the Messiah. "Behold he that cometh." "I am he that cometh," "Ho Erkommenos." The Coming One. Christ has been "the Coming One"—is now "the Coming One," and ever will be "the Coming One."

They had: II. *The Gospel of Sacrifice.*

This followed on the heels of the Promise. It was a tremendous stride in advance. When Adam and Eve saw their nakedness they

sewed fig leaves together and made them aprons. "But the Lord God made them coats of skins." Where did these skins come from? Life had to be taken in order to get them. God himself had to provide a covering. Thus the idea of substitution was taught them from the start, and also of an expiating sacrifice. God himself impressed on Cain the place of an expiation and the necessity of an expiation. That this expiating by offerings continued to be made during the entire antediluvian period is indisputable. Though neglected by the many they were regarded by the few (Abel among them), who were saved thereby.

The all-important place given to them in the theological conception of the time is apparent from the requisition on Noah to take clean animals into the ark by sevens, while other kinds went by twos. The distinction between clean and unclean, therefore, antedates Moses, and must have been highly elaborated among the devout of the Antediluvian period. This is further evidenced by the fact that at a certain stage of the history the growing defection from Jehovah was arrested and now they began to organize themselves into a religious association for the restoration of Jehovah worship,—the first association of the kind in human history.

Further emphasis is given to the significance and transcendent importance of the sacrificial system as an education in gospel truth by the fact that as soon as Noah came out of the ark he resumed sacrifice as an expiation. His sacrifices were accepted by God and a new assurance given that condemnation could be and would be set aside by means of applied sacrifice.

They had: III. *The Gospel preached to Cain.*

Adam's sin was a violation of the first law written on the heart—and was a sin against God. The sin of Cain was a sin against the second law written on the heart, and was a sin against man, and that man his own brother. As in Adam's case, the Gospel of Mercy was proclaimed even before the sentence of condemnation was pronounced

—so with Cain, his attention was called to the promise for mercy and acceptance before any violence occurred. If he did well would he not be accepted on that account, that is for his own sake? and if he did not well was there not a sin offering at the door to be availed of at once? Thus the gospel was preached to Cain before he became a murderer.

And then, after he became a murderer, it was preached afresh with wonderful accompaniments of grace. People would kill him, he said. So God put a mark upon Cain that people should not kill him as he deserved; a more significant intimation could not be given that God was ready to extend mercy to him. He should be punished, but the extreme penalty of broken law should not be visited upon him. And then, at the door, as long as he lived, the sin offering ever lay ready.

The mercy extended to Cain was appealed to several hundred years afterwards by Lamech. If Cain was to have mercy much more should Lamech have mercy. He reasoned logically; with God mercy to one meant mercy to another, indeed, mercy to all. And so we see the gospel was well promulgated several hundred years after the crime of Cain was committed. Even a man slayer had a gospel.

They had: IV. *The Gospel of the Ark.*

But the crowning manifestation of the antediluvian gospel and of its ability to save was given in connection with the Ark. God now made an appeal to the men of that generation based on their love of life—the most powerful that can be made to a human being. It was announced that God intended to destroy the world because of its wickedness. Nevertheless men might be saved if they would. Notice was given of how the deliverance could be effected. A flood would sweep the earth, but an ark could ride over the flood. Therefore their salvation was to come through an Ark. Noah believed the prediction because it came from God. He was moved by fear and immediately set about building an ark for himself. He was to have plenty of time for it, for God would keep the sentence suspended until all the ark room that would be called for could be provided.

But Noah was more than an ark builder to save his own house. He was a preacher of righteousness; that meant that he was a preacher of repentance to the whole world around him. God appointed him to preach and to warn men. *Salvation by an ark! Salvation by an ark!* This was his perpetual refrain, day in and day out, year in and year out for a hundred and twenty long years. We are told "the long suffering of God waited"—waited to see if anybody would repent, if anyone would believe,—if anybody else would go to building arks. Noah preached, and Noah sawed and Noah fitted timbers and Noah hammered away. His faith and his works wrought together. He had no monopoly of the timber of the forest nor ownership of all the tools of the shipyard. They could do it if he could, and the fact that God waited and waited and waited was proof positive that he would be just as good to any of them as he was to Noah, if they would exercise Noah's faith.

The points of Noah's preaching were that men have sinned,—that God has decreed his sentence of death,—but now he was gracious to men if they would only believe and go to work. The first probation under Adam was an awful failure, but now they were to have another one under grace. Therefore, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation," was the preaching of Noah, as it afterwards was the preaching of Peter. Salvation by the old law of *righteousness by works* was gone forever, but salvation by the new law of righteousness by faith was within every man's reach. This was the gospel of Noah and the Gospel of the Ark. What more and what better could any of them wish for than was preached by this mighty evangelist who led off in the number of those who had "the spirit of Christ which was in them?" That is plain speech. It was not simply Noah that spoke; it was "the spirit of Christ which was in them," the "prehistoric" Christ, which was preaching repentance and faith for a hundred and twenty years.

WHY THE OLD WORLD PERISHED.

It is plain enough. It is not because they had no gospel but because they did not believe what gospel they had. Perhaps they thought that such an undertaking was too big even for the Almighty; perhaps they had their ideas, as moderns have, about "fixed law"; and that "miracles were contrary to human experience,"—and they discarded the supernatural on that account. But whatever be the reason, they took no stock in Noah's prediction,—they kept on buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage, and rollicking away. When at last God shut in Noah and all the animals that were ready to go, and when the windows of heaven began to be open and the fountains of the great deep to be broken up, it was then too late to go to boat building, and so they all were lost. They perished not because of the broken law of the first table, for that could have been remedied; not because of the broken law of the second table, for that could have been remedied,—but because *they despised the gospel they had within their reach*, and which was sufficient for their salvation.

THE QUESTION OF A SECOND PROBATION.

It is contended, and to this contention all heartily agree, that while the sinner has no right in equity to ask a second probation other than the one he had in his father Adam, yet God, in his goodness and grace has promised and provided for all the children of Adam a second probation, one of the supreme wonders in the economy of salvation. Men may recover under grace what they lost under law. The sinner is allowed a new trial after the first one has failed. The relation between the old trial of man while yet in a sinless state, and the new trial granted after he had become a sinner, is also a supreme wonder. The real and decisive trial is not in the prior one but in the after one, and it may be correctly affirmed that the first trial is merely a stepping stone to the second one.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A "PROBATION?"

It is necessary in order to a correct apprehension of this whole subject that the question be stated and answered,—*What constitutes a probation?* Men who give their opinions in the matter often fall into the gravest mistakes. First of all the word "probation" as usually apprehended, is itself misleading. The word usually implies a process, longer or shorter, by which character is developed and tested as to its quality and its endurance. Starting out with this erroneous conception, to begin with, men proceed to determine times and seasons and continuances of the process which they think ought to take place. Many speak of Adam's probation, and think it may have continued many years, and that the real object of his probation was to work out a fixed and determinative character which should decide his future position. It is the first conception we have of "Salvation by character," but by no means the last one. "Salvation by character" is not salvation by faith, and it is not salvation by grace. It is salvation by merit.

In pursuance of this conception of a probation these same thinkers, some of them, have reasoned in this way:

They say it is true the first probation in Adam has failed, but that God in his grace and goodness has been pleased to grant man an opportunity to retrieve himself, which is done by a second probation, in Christ and not in Adam any longer.

Continuing, they say—that as the second probation is in and through Christ, therefore all men must have an opportunity to hear about what they call "*the historic Christ,*" that is, the Christ who lived and taught in Judea and who died on the cross at Jerusalem. Men, they say, must have as good an opportunity to hear all about the personality of this Jesus as the Jews had who lived in his day,—that if they do not have such an equal opportunity then they have not had a full and fair probation, and if they have not had it in this world they must have it in the next world. To their minds this process of

reasoning all seems legitimate and the conclusion unmistakable, but in reality it is unsound, full of flaws, and involving most incongruous, unscriptural and even absurd consequences.

A MOST ERRONEOUS CONCEPTION.

For if this conclusion be accepted, then nobody has had "a full and fair probation." Probation must follow probation after probation in the next world until God has actually exhausted himself in futile endeavors to get all sinners to come to terms—and there must be a regular stated ministry in the underworld at this time, for multitudes are continually coming in who know nothing about "the historic Christ." Even then in these Christian lands of ours are those who have heard albeit only a few thousand or a few hundred times, yet are nevertheless in gross ignorance,—their attention having been so taken up with a hundred other things. Why should not they also claim a probation under better circumstances than any that exist here. Furthermore if these views contain the true solution, it is difficult to see how God can escape the charge of being the author of a set of disjointed schemes liable to all sorts of contingencies, and furnishing further an opportunity for finical casuists among seminary professors to lay down for him the rules by which his administration of human affairs ought to be guided. Indeed, that sort of thing has become very common already. There are plenty of critics more ready to point at God's duty to the sinner than the sinner's duty to God. It is necessary to avoid confusion of thought, and in order thereto the first step is to *discard the word "probation" as commonly used.*

Instead thereof substitute some word signifying "test" or "trial," and we shall be nearer the purpose of God and to the divine idea of what we have been accustomed to call a "probation." God's purpose in the two trials of Adam was *not character making*—that is something which comes later—but for *the determination of choice* which leads to charac-

ter making. A "test" or a "trial" may be single or immediate, and then over with, or it may be repeated and long continued, but whether long or short, the purpose is *choice determining* and *not character making*. Abraham was tried—not to make character, but to determine the character that was in him; Joseph was tried in the same way; Job, also; and still more conspicuously the Lord Jesus when he was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested of the devil; and the saints are tried also prior to their receiving the blessing. In exactly the same manner Adam was tried as to his obedience of his will in the garden of Eden, and then he was again tried immediately afterwards as to his acceptance of the promise. One trial being over and lost, the other took its place without an interregnum and was won by Adam and Eve, as is manifest from the Scripture, and certainly by Abel and Seth and a long line that followed.

THE FIRST AND SECOND TRIALS OF ADAM AND EVE COMPARED.

In these two trials there were marked features of resemblance and marked features of difference.

(1) They were both of them essentially trials of faith; in the second trial that is plain enough, but it is equally so when one comes to look into the substructure of the first. We speak of it as a test of obedience to a positive command not to eat of a certain tree—but underlying that was a belief of what God had said about the peril of eating that fruit. The trial was indeed a test of obedience to command, but it was a test of faith back of that command; Paul, in his vocabulary of terms, speaks of the obedience of faith as the highest of all the obediences, active and passive. It follows that the test submitted to him before his fall and the test submitted to him after the fall are generically the same. God has not changed the ultimate form of his requirement—thus implying a sort of failure and disappointment—but he continues it under new conditions which render compliance more illustrious to himself.

(2) The new trials were especially adapted to the new conditions in which the offending parties had placed themselves, thus showing the immutability of the divine counsel even though Adam had sinned. The test in the first case was exactly suited to the circumstances of a person whose nature was holy and whose moral powers were in full strength. The test in the second case was exactly suited to the circumstances of a person whose nature had become unholy and his moral power weakened.

(3) The antediluvians who fell in Adam had some advantages in making a choice which the sinless Adam did not have; and all mankind since then have an accumulated incentive to a wise choice which even the antediluvians did not have. Adam had been told he should die, but he had seen no one in a death agony. He had no conception of what God meant in that terrible communication; nor did he have that kind of conviction which arises from seeing a thing verified before his eyes. But afterwards Adam did have that evidence. In his hundreds of years before the flood he must have seen many die and he knew what death meant. If it were now some great moral action required of him for which he had no longer the moral qualifications he would have been pitiably helpless, but it was nothing of the kind. Again it was simply choice! Choose for yourself! Choose whom you will believe! Choose whom you will serve. It may be added this ever has been and is now the test, and will be the test from generation to generation.

THE ANTEDILUVIANS THEN HAVE HAD THEIR SECOND PROBATION.

They had it in their own day and generation, here, in this world, and therefore it is not to be repeated in the next world. It began the moment the other one ended so disastrously. It was a probation (if we still wish to use that word) which God considered sufficient. He has not promised a third one to them or to anybody else. Then as

now, and now as then, men have the opportunity to *choose* for themselves—(every man for himself) whether they will admit or deny the justice of God's charges against themselves, and whether they will accept or reject such means of salvation as God has placed within their reach. The whole trial (or probation, to use the old term) is reducible to one answer—"yes" or "no" and can be settled without delay at once.

"UNTO ALL AND UPON ALL."

In this citation from Romans III: 22, is set forth a profound principle in the divine administration. It involves a parallel of tremendous scope and application.

The effects of Adam's sin were not limited to his personal self. They included and extended to all his posterity to the latest generation "unto all and upon all"—not only *to* them but *upon* them. It was like a wave of lava which comes first of all "*to*" and then "*upon*" completely covering up, and that, too, without the knowledge or consent of that posterity. Does this federal relation seem unjust? To the minds of men it often does. What they demand is this. They say "*Let us each stand for ourselves.*" If we have an equally independent opportunity and fail, then we admit our condemnation will be just.

Be it so. That is just what God has provided for; every man shall stand or fall by his own choice, and it is accomplished in this way.

If by one relation of federal headship a universal wave of destruction is made to flow "to and upon" all of our entire race—by another relation of federal headship another universal wave of mercy is made to flow "to and upon" all of that same race. If the first came without the knowledge or participation of the parties involved, so also does the second. The individual free will comes in in connection with the second. Man gets into sin without his knowledge or consent, but if he stays there it will have to be with his knowledge or consent. A complete deliverance from the consequences of Adam's sin is within his

reach. He refuses to avail himself of it—therefore he makes the sin his own. Adam was to blame for getting into a place he knew so little about. How much more his posterity are to blame for choosing to continue in when they know so much about it. Death comes “to and upon” all through Adam. Life comes to and upon all through Christ. But a positive acceptance is required of all who are capable of accepting. The charge against Adam is choosing sin; the charge against his posterity is choosing to remain in sin by rejecting the offer of mercy.

It is for this reason that we believe in the salvation of infants—of all the infants that ever lived. Salvation comes “to and upon” them through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus being applied by the Holy Spirit himself directly without their refusal, which means without their knowledge or consent at the time.

These facts are set forth by the Apostle in Romans V. One man sinned, and death came to and upon all. One man obeyed and life came to and upon all who do not reject or resist the Spirit as he works upon them, the striving of the spirit, as God himself put it in Noah’s day. “My spirit shall not always strive with man.”

Does this view of the case lend countenance to the doctrine of Universalism? Not the least whatever. A pardon may be granted, but until it is accepted it is no pardon. It must be accepted in God’s own appointed way. Negligence or non-compliance cancels a pardon always by the individual’s own choice.

THE THEOLOGY OF NATURE. AMONG POST DILUVIANS.

The new world started out with that capital stock of religious ascertainment and experience possessed by Noah, the entire stock of a previous world. Of itself that must have been great. His knowledge of God was great. His knowledge of beginnings was great. Such documentary records of the creative process as had come down from

Enoch would be in his hands. The man who built the Ark was a man of scholarly attainments; without them he could not have built the Ark. Noah therefore was an intrepid worshipper of Jehovah. His immediate posterity, too, must have been with him fully informed to begin with. And then they had written on their hearts the two great self-luminant sources of light and impulse, the primal "law of religion" and the secondary "law of morality"—continually replacing the wear and tear on their better natures;—laws which were self-acting and self-generating as already stated. To their religious and moral impulse a tremendous emphasis must have been given by the experience of the flood. Naturally they would tell it to the generations following, and naturally, even without an intimation from revelation and purely from the light of nature which included all the deductions of human reason and human experience, that generation ought to have been a God fearing generation.

From that time on and down to the present the religious and the moral history of mankind, taken apart from revealed religion, and considered solely as a product of the Theology of Nature, is divided into distinct stages, following and also overlapping each other.

I. The stage of another rapid religious and moral degeneracy—of fading light and gathering darkness, culminating in a fearful depravity which again brought down upon them the judgment of heaven.

II. The stage of Heathen Constructiveness. Having lost their knowledge of the true God they begin to construct religions of their own with gods of their own.

III. The stage of philosophical speculation and inquiry. The more thoughtful minds among men, not satisfied with the diction of heathenism, began their attempts to find the beginning of things and to solve "the riddle of the universe" thousands of years before Hæckel was born.

IV. The stage of scientific allegation and ascertainment. This

is almost wholly a modern phase, in which we have as yet but barely entered and in which men are still burning their bellows in the fire.

The history of these four stages of human thought and experience will compass the entire domain of the Theology of Nature taken apart from the Theology of Revelation.

But we have also, beginning far back in the remote antiquity, another kind of Theology called Revealed Theology, and developing along side of the Theology of Nature. To this revealed theology we come in close order of time and sequence, but at present we are to deal with the Theology of Nature alone.

I.

The stage of another rapid religious and moral degeneracy;—of fading light and gathering darkness, culminating in a fearful depravity, compelling a second visitation of judgment from heaven, the first judgment being of water, the second of fire and brimstone.

It might be supposed that the terrible lesson of the flood would have shaped the development of the new humanity, and that men would have recoiled from a repetition of the old sinfulness. But it was not to be so. Men were to have a fresh lesson in the deeply rooted nature of human weakness and corruption, and the manifestations were to multiply until God could no longer endure it, without a downpour of wrath.

Noah became drunk. But there is no reason to suppose that Noah was a drunkard. He seems to have been simply unintentionally careless and indiscreet. But his indiscretion furnished an opportunity for an exhibition of coarse and vulgar depravity on the part of Ham, which was in itself a revelation, and which boded ill for coming human nature which had already become leprous.

The Bible itself does not furnish us details of the spread of depravity in these first early ages after the flood. But it must have been rapid and fearful. Such a coarse nature as that of Ham tainted the tribes, kindreds and types that rose one after another. Such contemporary secular history as we have had transmitted to us, all confirms the sacred writ. Virtue waned rapidly and vice waxed rapidly. That much we are sure of.

After between four and five hundred years the Spirit of God drew aside the curtain just once, to let us see how inconceivably depraved the human race had become. Adapting himself to human methods and human phraseology, God represents himself as going down on a tour of inspection. "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah are great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it which is come unto me, and if not I will know." Of course the Omniscient knew, but he conforms himself to human administrative order in his mode of procedure. Then follows the awful revelation of Sodom, and then the overthrow of the cities when the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace. The curtain drops, but a presage and a precedent are entered on the books, indicative of what will take place in the far distant future.

LIGHT THEY HAD BUT THEY WALKED NOT IN IT.

Meanwhile during this same period, and extending far beyond it, are the multiplied evidences of the light sufficient to guide them in a pathway of peace if they had been disposed to desire it. But then, as at a later day, they loved darkness rather than light, and would not come to the light lest their deeds should be reproved.

LINGERING RAYS ON THE MOUNTAIN TOPS.

First of all the fading light of the knowledge of a living God

lingered in various quarters as the rays of the setting sun linger around a mountain top, while the shadows thicken below. These rays lingered long after the overthrow of Sodom as well as before. Pharoah, King of Egypt, recognized the personality and power of a living God in his day. Abimelech, king of Gerar, had messages direct from God and was guided thereby in his duty towards God and towards his fellow men. Balaam was clear visioned, and could tell about God with wondrous vigor. Off in that land of Moab where Balak dwelt the name of Jehovah was well known long before Moses roamed the Midian desert. In the land of Uz the knowledge of God and of the methods of his administration were surprisingly wonderful. Job and his friends were astute scholars in the Theology of Nature, as we shall have occasion presently to point out.

CONFIRMATION IN REMAINS OF PRIMITIVE LITERATURE.

Confirmation to all this comes to us in the secular literature of these primeval post diluvians, which has come down to us, and there is quite enough of it to answer our purpose. While the world was full of sin, and full of wickedness, and all manner of grossness and cruelty, yet the writers of those days were constrained always to magnify reverence for "the Gods" and to exalt fair dealing among men. In their historical annals and in their poetry this characteristic is conspicuous. That there were vile writings in abundance is no doubt true, but the religious law and the moral law within them did not allow them to transmit such things to future generations. They have handed down good writings and not vile ones. This shows how profoundly operative was that law which God had woven in their moral constitutions and which as a divine force unceasingly impelled them to virtue and repelled them from vice. So when they went astray they could not plead ignorance; nor could they palliate their evil conduct by saying they lived in an evil atmosphere. Their own literature will rise up in judgment

and condemn them. Their Horaces, their Senecas, their Ciceros, their Virgils, their Vedas, their Analects, will witness against them. They were not ignorant; they knew the better if they had chosen to follow the better.

In the laws and institutes made for the government of society and in the regulation of interhuman relations in the enforcement of the principals of justice, honesty, truthfulness, purity and the due order in the family and the state, they all indicate moral elevation of conception and purpose which has made men wonder where it all came from.

POST DILUVIAN GOSPEL.

Paul's declaration is positive that God has not left himself without witness of his readiness to be merciful. When Noah went forth from the ark, the first thing he did was to build an altar and offer sacrifices for the expiation of sin, such as God had taught Adam and Eve to offer. It was at once accepted in these words of superlative hope,—“And the Lord smelled a sweet savour, and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every living thing as I have done; while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest and cold and heat and summer and winter and day and night shall not cease.”

Thus the new world began with a gospel of wondrous breadth; no threatenings were included in it. It was free grace abounding, and that with a full recognition of man's tendency to perversity and of the certain workings of his unregenerate heart. Law and restriction, to be sure, came in due time, but gospel had precedence and the right of way.

We do not say that a positive promise such as Noah had is to be considered a part of the gospel of nature; but the evidences to support that promise were a part of every man's every day experience. Seed-

time and harvest never have ceased; day and night never have intermitted. No man is ever more than twelve hours from a sign post. All human experience of good, every act of goodness in the day's round prove the presence of the grace of God, and which in the logic of Providence form premises on which to reason out an expectation of more grace and of continued good,—all this *is* a part of the gospel of nature. When God provides premises, it is man's duty to reason on those premises, and his neglect to do so forms a part of his condemnation for rejecting the gospel. The new race started out then with a gospel and not a code of enactments, and so man was started off right. Noah, a preacher of righteousness before the flood, could be depended upon to preach with the same earnestness the gospel of God after the flood. There could have been only one sentiment among men about God. The air was not murky then as it is now, with all manner of quibblings and questionings which impair faith receptivity. There was no place for skeptics at that time. God's bestowments on the new race were wonderful; the fear of it should be on the whole animal creation. Every living thing and every green herb were given into its hands. Grace could do no more. Neither was there any code of laws and requirements such as became necessary at a later day to keep men within bounds. The preciousness of human life was to be safeguarded. There was to be a protection against a repetition of the violence of their antediluvian forefathers. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Beyond that there was no imposition, nor were they hampered in any way whatever. They were to be left to the guidance of that double law within their hearts, to the awfully solemn lessons of human experience in the past, to their appreciation of the Divine goodness, and to the sense of gratitude and love most powerfully appealed to when God made over to them the whole earth, and set his bow in the cloud as a pledge of his mercy. God started them off, not with whip and spur and snaffle; he beckoned them with fruits and flowers, and with a cheery commission he bade them go

ahead to replenish, to possess, and to manage the whole earth for themselves. Not before or since, except when Christ Himself came, has any man ever had such a free and generous gospel with such fullness of specification and such amplitude of resource. Adam and Eve were not sent forth so kindly. There was never a word of upbraiding, no twitting them with the sins of their fathers, though they had to be told of them later,—God loaded them down with gifts and promises. It would seem as if he meant to throw them on their own manhood, and their honor and gratitude, as well as their self-interest, and let them do right from voluntary choice, and not from compulsion. He anticipated the words of a later day: “Surely they are children that will not lie;” surely such transcendent goodness will lead them to persistent penitence and keep them loyal. Alas, for poor, degenerate human nature! God knew how it would be, but men did not. So it was necessary that they should have continuous lessons in their own frailty and unreliability. The tutelage of God was to be kept up from generation to generation yet before God would develop his own plan of deliverance.

UNIVERSALITY AND VALUE OF POST DILUVIAN GOSPEL GLEAMS.

We find them everywhere,—among all tribes and kindreds and tongue; in a Vedic hymn there is an utterance of a groaning spirit, voicing forth its expectation of a deliverer whom Heaven would surely send sometime or other, which reads like a quotation from Isaiah. Similar hopes are found in heathen literature; they are often shadowy, but again they are enough to take hold of. In the older China literature an expectancy of hope in the mercy of “High Heaven,” as they call it, is a conspicuous feature. We ourselves have often heard among the wronged and the suffering the conviction poured out from an anguished spirit toward heaven with a sigh: “But heaven is good; heaven is true; heaven is just, and heaven can see; heaven can hear;

heaven can remember; heaven will judge; indeed High Heaven, or Azure Heaven, or Supreme Heaven, has been and is to multitudes in China a great court of final appeal." Even Confucius himself appealed to it when wrongly judged by his fellowmen. Poor people and helpless widows have appealed to it against heartless exactors. Chinese patriots have appealed to it when marching to the execution ground where their blood was to be poured out by tyrannical rulers. The number of these appeals from a lower to a supreme tribunal it is impossible to enumerate, for no record is kept among men; but that does not say there is no record of them in heaven. There must be an enormous list on the docket up there,—the accumulation of generations of ages, and of mankind. But the court has plenty of time, and scales of unswerving justice, and the unredressed wrongs of earth will be rectified there; and so also will the unliquidated hopes of faith, however meagre, be fully honored there.

And all this because God is God and not man. With him there is no difference; he will render to every man according to his deeds; to every sort of men, to the Jew and also to the Gentile, to the Christian and also to the heathen; more than that he will deal with every man according to the light he has, and according to his faith in that light,—“According to thy faith be it unto thee,” to the Jew first and also to the Gentile, to the Christian and also to the heathen, for there is no respect of persons with God. Those that have sinned without law shall perish without law; those that have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law. Blessed are they who have seen and believed, but blessed also are they that have not seen and yet have believed. Blessed are they who have had the full gospel of the four evangelists and have believed; but blessed also are they who have only the gospel types and shadows, and have had only the blood of bulls and goats to trust in, and yet have believed. Blessed are they who lived before the days of Moses and Aaron and had only the gospel of Noah to inspire them, and yet have believed, and blessed are they who lived before the flood

and had only the dim adumbration of a gospel given to Adam and Eve, and yet have believed. God will honor all his own presages and premonitions,—large and small, without fail, according as they are accepted by those who have them. To him that hath shall be given; if they believe their littles they will get the benefit of much. If they do not use the little when they have it, why should they expect, or presume to ask for more? They will not get it. There will be taken from them even that they seem to have. Though God is lavish in the bestowal of grace, he never squanders grace, and Christ bids his disciple follow a similar rule, and cast not their pearls before swine who will trample them underfoot. The promise is handed down from age to age and from generation to generation, enlarging as it goes. “It is from faith to faith.” “The just shall live by faith,” is a universal law in the kingdom of grace; by such faith as they have the means of formulating in the day and generation in which they live. Paul spoke to the Athenians of a god whom some of them had ignorantly worshipped, and why not, presumably, with a saving sincerity? It is evident there were men and women in Athens not content with the popular mythology, and who concluded there must be something better. This was an inchoate faith, but it was faith, and though it was as yet without form and void, an Areopagite and certain women were ready to listen to Paul when he gave a name to the unnamed, and definiteness to the unknown God. There is an equation of faith; there is an equation of law; there is an equation of gospel, a provisional and a temporary gospel, and a substantial and real one which imparts efficacy to the whole. For is he the God of the Christian only who believes up to the light he has? Is he not also the God of the heathen who believes also up to the light he has?

THREE BOOKS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE TAKEN UP LARGELY WITH THE THEOLOGY OF NATURE.

These three books are Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes; they form

part of the sacred canon, and are there by the endorsement of the Holy Spirit. They form also a part of the literature of the theology of nature. The special value of them in this connection is that they have the *imprimatur* of the Holy Spirit as being correct representations of the thought of their times. This does not mean that the Holy Spirit endorses all that is said, as the reasoning of Job's three friends, for example, was repudiated by God himself. Nevertheless, it is a correct statement of the way they reasoned, and of the progress men had made in ethical discovery from the light of nature. The value of these books is not yet fully assessed, but they will be properly rated some day when the final summing up of human experience is consummated. These books are not only books of the past; they are also books of the future. The fixing of their place in the sum total of religious and moral ascertainments will be largely a work of the generations to come.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

In the book of Job we find that the comprehensive subject of discussion was the divine administration of human affairs. Under it the problems of good and evil, of God's methods in general, of divine providence in particular, and of his treatment of specific cases all come in for detailed consideration. The scope of the discussion was far-reaching, involving some principles that would reach back affecting angelic conditions in pre-Adamic ages, and reaching forward into coming eternity. The striking feature of the whole discussion is the fact that in the main the arguments of all the disputants were drawn from the light of nature. This shows that so late as Job's day, eight hundred years after the flood, there was a clear knowledge of Jehovah and of his chief attributes still existing. There are some faint references to direct revelation, but they did not quote from any sacred books, as they reasoned from premises to conclusions; they appealed to the natural conscience, to the lessons of history, to the teachings of

human experience, and to the transmitted light of earlier days. "For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers," all of which is an appeal to the light of nature.

The religious and moral lesson from the book of Job and which will enter into a final estimate of human responsibility in different ages of the world is the setting forth, both of the sufficiency and of the insufficiency of the theology of nature. It will sufficiently guide men in the right way if they wish to be guided; if they are not responsive, it is their own fault, and they are without excuse. It is insufficient because man's eyes are made for a more exceeding measure of light, and needs the fullest blaze in order to the highest development; and further, because man's normal perversity is so great, and so grows upon him age by age, that only an intense concentration of light and heat rays will suffice to affect him at the last. The spiritual demand of the latter ages of humanity exceed in scope and fullness the demands of the earlier age. The book of Job is a justifier of the ways of God with the men in primitive generations.

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

Here is a book of extended length in the very heart of the Scriptures; it does not seem to have any special adaptation to the great plan that is developed in Holy Writ, beginning with Genesis and ending with Revelations. Is it then an alien in the inspired procession? Far from it. Those proverbs were certainly not all of them written by inspired men, but the collection and incorporation of them in the Bible record is by a decree of inspiration. Proverbs are condensed summaries of popular wisdom, of common experience, and of general acceptances among men. It is this feature that gives them their value. Every nation and every tribe has its proverbs,—even savages have them. The more cultured and literary peoples have them by the thousands. The Indian peoples have them in multitudes; the Chinese

have them in number quite equal to those of Solomon, many of them covering the same ground and teaching the same lessons as do those of Solomon. These proverbs indicate the progress of the ages through milleniums of existence. Their applications are religious, moral, social, political, industrial and economic. Not only are they descriptive and declarative of character in the past, but they are also predictive and formative of character in the future.

A study of these proverbs discloses several things of weight; indeed they may be said to form a volume of practical ethics towards God and towards man. They present summaries of human experience and practical living; they reveal the blessing that is in well-doing, and the curse that is in evil-doing; they exalt truthfulness and honesty and industry and purity; they are witnesses on the side of religion, of morality, and of industrial thrift. As go its proverbs, so measurably heads the nation, though not always forcibly and successfully, for it is always falling off before the wind, as regards both religion and morality.

SO IT IS WITH THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON.

Three thousand of these proverbs are spoken of; they were not all composed by Solomon; he sought them out and set them in order, so they are not all Jewish proverbs, but were the proverbs of all the nations round about. They therefore represent the moral state of perhaps a score of nations. Of course as might be expected in the case of Solomon, they are pervaded with a theistic spirit and theistic conceptions throughout; but they are also of a much higher grade than are the proverbs of the idol-worshipping nations. Wisdom is exalted on a lofty pedestal, and is manifestly something higher than ordinary human wisdom. Notably, the traits of virtue-loving and correctly-walking members of the community are commended, whilst the traits of the vicious and the scornful are held up to universal reprobation.

Our interest in the proverbs of Solomon in this connection lies in

their religious and moral bearing. There is no explicit mention of Christ, as in Isaiah and the Prophets; but in the word Wisdom there is a manifest reference to some one who will be the impersonification of wisdom, and who can be none other than Christ. But the absence of such explicit reference is in exact accord with the plan and the purpose of the book, which is to be a text book in the possibilities of natural religion; as such, it stands out unique. Even if a man had no other book than these Proverbs, it would guide him in his treatment of his fellow men. Its reference to a Living supreme, mere starlight only though it might be, would be sufficient as a light in a dark place until the daybreak and the shadows flee away. God hath not left himself without witness.

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES.

A singularly unique place does this book occupy in the sacred canon. It is certainly a book of the remote past, and yet certainly a book of the remote future, for it is a prophecy of things yet to come. The writer of it was King in Jerusalem; he was possessed of all the appliances of wealth and luxury. With time on his hand, with resources at his command, with great mental capacity and of a restless inquiring spirit, he set out to put to the test the power of pleasure and enjoyment that could be supposed to lie in all these things. He began his round; he went from one thing to another. As one thing proved to be a disappointment, he dropped it and tried another thing; when that also failed him, he took up with something new again. So it went on, change after change, round after round, experience after experience, until he had completed the wearisome list of possibilities. Everything proved futile, until at last he had to sum up the totalities of his experiences. He then put it on record, and put it as the final conclusion of the whole matter: in order for any one to make a success of life, he must fear God and keep his commandments; this was the whole duty of man; outside of that any and all human endeavor to

be blessed would prove to be a bitter disappointment. "Vanity and vexation of spirit; vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

Viewed in this light, the book of Ecclesiastes, instead of being a pessimistic wail that some have taken it to be, having no proper place in record of a gospel of expectations, is one of the most impressive courses of Divine pedagogy that we have in all the whole range of religious literature.

But now what gives its transcendent value is its prefigurative and predicative character. It takes its place alongside of all those figurative institutes, incidents and observances which so abound in the Old Testament, in which a smaller round of occurrences is made an analogue of a larger round to come; thus we all accept the experience of a natural Israel in its journey to the Land of Promise as an analogue of spiritual Israel on the way to heaven. Solomon's individual experiences were an epitome of race experiences as a whole; that is, Solomon's experiences are an analogue of the experience of humanity. All that is in accord with the divine method of teaching in which a microcosm outlines a megacosm,—a thing present, a thing future,—a thing earthly, a thing heavenly. When humanity has reached its stent of history in the future, then will moralists re-write and re-read the character of its successive generations, and the book of Ecclesiastes will be found to be one of the most up-to-date books of the times. As Solomon found it, so have we found it; as God said he would do, so have we all found that he has done. "The Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say: Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity and things wherein there is no profit." The lesson of all human experience, and all nations of mankind is "fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."

II. THE STAGE OF HEATHEN CONSTRUCTIVENESS.

Having lost the knowledge of the true God and being still impelled by those laws planted within them and instinctive belief in invisible being, future existence and future rewards and punishments, men now began to construct religions of their own, and to devise other gods out of their own hearts.

The first chapter of *Romans* contains an inspired account of the genesis of heathenism, the development of heathenism, the sentence of heathenism, and the judgment on heathenism. In face of that chapter it is impossible to see how men can say, as do some professors of comparative religion, that heathenism is a stage in a movement towards God, and therefore has divine endorsement. This makes God do evil that good may come. Heathenism has never been a movement towards God, but a movement away from God.

The key to the whole defection is contained in the words: "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge." Having created a vacuum in their own minds and hearts, they must now fill it with substitutes. The materials they had for their various constructions of heathenism, were, as already intimated,—(1) natural belief in the existence of gods and spirits of some kind; (2) natural belief in rewards and punishments in a future state; (3) a constraining and a restraining conscience; (4) a sense of dependence on superior beings; (5) remains of early traditions and revelations; (6) environment; (7) manipulations,—to these must be added Satanic manipulations.

It will be noted that the different systems of ancient heathenism all took their rise about the same time, and that for the reason that they took their departure from God about the same time, and with a common impulse of their corrupt natures. Sabeism, Hinduism, Confucianism, the worship of ancestors and of deified heroes, are all of them most ancient forms of religion. It is to be further noted that

the further back we go the less gross and sensual we find to be the religious conceptions of men. Indeed, their first idolatries did not imply direct repudiation of Jehovah. The calf that Aaron made was more of an advance in their estimation than a supercedure, it was only giving to Jehovah a visible form: "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Jehovah was made to assume the form of a calf. The same thing is presumably true about other forms of primitive idolatry. Sun worship was at first monotheistic. The Egyptian's Sun was divided up into the morning sun, the mid-day sun, and the setting sun. To the men of that day, the one and the three were all representative of the Living God. It is not at all strange that to the men of old the Sun should be the chief emblem of deity. The life of nature apparently proceeded from it. But God utterly repudiated, and condemned to destruction all such attempts to materialize himself,—a spiritual being. Such worship is not accepted as a worship of Jehovah. The conception of Jehovah is lost in the transmission, and the things they sacrifice they sacrifice to devils.

We must not fail to note the steps in this down grade; the order is indicated by the apostle,—"Because that when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like too corruptible man, and to birds, and to four-footed beasts, and creeping things." It is a tremendous stride from lofty sun-worship down to the worship of slimy snakes; yet that is the course that heathenism has run. It certainly was not God who led them along that tortuous road leading to the mouth of the pit. Teachers of comparative religion, who want to establish a divine element in heathenism, may dislike to admit that Satan was in it. We positively affirm that it was not God who was in it.

To these statements the facts of human history all correspond.

The first stage was the dignified and refined worship of the host of heaven which occupied the human mind for some hundreds of years. The second stage followed when prominence was given to men of renown, to heroes, and to dead ancestors. The Greek and Roman pantheon with its Jupiters, its Saturns, its Mercuries and its Venuses who lived like mortals, reveled like mortals, intrigued like mortals, and fought and scratched and bit each other like mortals, mark the second part of the downward grade. In close succession followed the reptile and the groveling stage, when animals were adored, when monkeys were worshiped, and snakes were honored as gods. Then Satan's work of bestializing and devilizing mankind was complete.

And still there is another combination,—a combination which calls to mind the unnatural blending of a man and a fish, as was Dagon of the Philistines in order to make an object of worship. It is characteristic of such systems that they do not seek the dim shadow of heathen darkness for their development; they spring up in the blaze of Christian sunlight. Among them we must include Mormonism, Eddyism, Spiritism, and certain minor systems which are not yet fully developed, but which seem to be on the way. In all these, some arrogant and usurping human leadership guides the movement, while the Bible is appealed to to furnish phraseology and form of concept for what is only a new form of idolatry. All claim that they are in harmony with the Bible. What they want to contend for is that the Bible is in harmony with them; but they override the Bible and explain away its teachings when it conflicts with the teachings of their books. These systems are classified as semi-heathen, for such they are. They have little in common with the system of the Bible, save its stolen phraseology.

It is characteristic of organized heathenism that it tries to meet some of the essential needs of the human soul, or to say, what is probably nearer the truth, that imperative longings of the human soul have embodied themselves in formulas which afterward are incorporated

into their several systems, though they may have been added to or modified by subsequent teachers among themselves. Heathenism is not always the product of these leaders of thought; it is often an expression of the sentiment of their people, and is a slow growth during successive generations. Mythological and speculative monstrosities are added by their adventurous thinkers as might be expected. There are things in heathenism intended to satisfy the conscience, other things intended to satisfy the cravings of a solution for the profound mysteries of being; and other things again intended to explain the condition of things in the world around. These systems serve a purpose after their sort; they do not satisfy, but they do pre-occupy, and do hinder the entrance of genuine light, and they do administer soporifics which make it difficult to arouse the soul out of its stupor. A study of these heathen systems is a needful concomitant of missionary service; but it is too vast a subject to be entered into here, and with this remark it must be relegated to an appendix. Such books as Hardwick's, "Christ and Other Masters," Monier Williams' book on Hinduism, Rhys David and Spence Hardy on Buddahism, Dr. Legge on Confucianism, will furnish sufficiently adequate survey of the whole field to start with.

IS ANY PART OF HEATHENISM OF DIVINE ORIGIN?

Right here comes in an issue which requires immediate consideration. It is a favorite thesis to some students of Comparative Religion that heathenism, partially at least, is of divine origin as already stated. These students ask the question: "Is there not some good in heathen precepts, and if so, did not that part of it come from God?" "The Devil does not incorporate good in a system,"—so they say. But now that depends; of his own accord and for his own sake, Satan does not incorporate good, but if the admixture of some truth will enable him to give effect to a deal of deadly falsehood, we expect him to do it. We are not ignorant of his devices. The good that is in heathen

teaching came from the lingering light of revelation, or from a surviving tradition of better days, and notably from the law written on the table of the heart. We know where they got their ideas of sacrifice for sin; they came from the days of Noah before there was any heathen system of any kind. The ten commandments of Buddhism came from moral law written on the heart before there was any Buddhism, and so with all of their clear discernments of the rights of man found in the code of Hammurabi, the laws of Manu, the Analects of Confucius and still other heathen summaries of right and wrong between man and man. It is not necessary to come down to the days of Moses; they were older than Moses; they were older than Hammurabi; they were as old as the human heart on which they were written by the same divine finger that afterwards wrote them on the tables of stone. We do not think the spade has yet completed its work of digging up buried evidence. Men are now claiming that the use of an ark as a religious emblem is older than Moses, and that he was only a copyist. He was no copyist. We are told in Exodus where he got his whole series of designs; they came from God in the first place. Though as yet we have not the evidence that it was so, yet if it should turn out that an ark and its attended paraphernalia were used before Moses, we shall then be on the lookout for further evidence of what there was in the religious thought of that early time; there may have been an endeavor to perpetuate the memory of the ark as a means of salvation, just as afterward men wanted to perpetuate the brazen serpent for the same purpose. The Christian archaeologist has nothing to fear and everything to hope for from the diligent use of the spade. God has a deal of evidence yet hid away like the memorial of the prophet to be "found after many days."

One of the new speculations of this generation is that God has assigned to each one of a dozen nations some special moral problem to work out, and then all their results are twisted into a common cable to be used as a tow-line for Christianity. Mohammedanism, they say,

furnishes a strand; Hinduisim, a strand; Buddhism a strand; Confucianism a strand; and Judaism a strand, and so on all the way through. This conjecture is fanciful in the extreme; we know of not a word of Scripture to support it, nor is there anything in actual human experience to justify it. Instead of being helps to Christianity, these heathen religions are hindrances. In India when the question is put: "What is the greatest hindrance to the entrance of Christianity?"—the answer is, "Hinduism"; in Ceylon it is Buddhism; in China it is Confucianism, and in Turkey it is Mohammedanism. To say that God, in order to prepare the way for the Christianity of his Christ, preoccupied the ground with a false religion, which is found to be the greatest hindrance to his purpose, is to attribute to him a want of business capacity that would discredit an apprentice. As against all this, we deny that Christianity has borrowed any material, or any suggestions whatever from heathenism. Heathenism, on the contrary, has borrowed from Jehovah worship. Christianity has a full and a divinely given outfit of its own, clothed in symbols and words which the Holy Ghost teacheth. Its doctrines are its own; its usages are its own; its methods are its own; and its power is its own. A seeming exception to this is the "nomenclature of religion," but the exception is seeming only. That part of the religious phraseology which is really serviceable to us is that originating from the inner laws of religion and morality written in the heart; so heathenism is not entitled to the credit of any of it. Even such nomenclature as they have is like a flagon made to hold wine, but which has been used for bailing out tar; it is hard to get the taste of the tar scoured out. Besides, the working terminology of to-day which is doing effective work, is one which missionaries have gradually elaborated for themselves.

In old times certain leaders of human thought proposed to have an image of Christ set up in the pantheon. In our days the proposed enlargement is in the other direction; it is proposed to instal heathenism among the builders of God's revelation. A precedent for this has

come down to us from the days of Nehemiah. Eliashim prepared a lodging place for Tobiah in the courts of the house of God. Nehemiah says about it: "And it grieved me sore, therefore I cast forth all the household of Tobiah out of the chambers, then I commanded and they cleansed the chambers, and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of the Lord with the meat offering and the frankincense." If rejection and fumigation took place once, it may have to take place again,—“The thing that hath been is the thing that shall be,”—says Solomon.

III. THE STAGE OF PHILOSOPHICAL SPECULATION AND INQUIRY.

The constructions of the heathen mind with all their foolish cosmogonies did not satisfy the more thinking ones among them; so they began to seek a better explanation of the phenomena of existence, and thousands of years before Hæckel was born, they were agitating the subject and laboring at the riddle of the universe. Philosophy came in to supercede the blundering of priestcraft, which had held the human mind in thralldom for its hundreds of years already, but which had reached no result. The word Philosophy is our modern term for what in the ancient term was known as Wisdom. A philosopher is a man who claims to love wisdom for its own sake; pure, unadulterated wisdom, no matter where it is to be found, and no matter whither it may lead,—what they say they want is Truth, plain, simple, substantial, universal, eternal and divine Truth; and surely there could be nothing nobler under the sun for the men of intellect and candor than the dissipation of error and the ascertainment of truth. The fullness of the field, of philosophical inquiry, subsequently open to men, was not perceived at the outset. Its dimensions widened as progress was made, and this has been and ever will continue to be a perplexity to the philosophic thinker. While his scope of vision has widened immensely, he

thinks he can see pretty near to the end already; but his horizon recedes, and continues to recede, and keeps on receding forever, and that is the trouble. He is not alone in this. The man of Science, who is sounding the depths in his department, finds his plummet too short and has no means of lengthening it. His apparatus for investigation is scanty, and far more scanty than it need be if he would be willing to believe only some few of those things which have been told to him which came from God. He relies wholly on his own power of ratiocination; he knows how to work by means of the sylogism, how to compare, how to deduce, how to reason, and how to reach conclusions; but he lacks data. He can pry if he can only get a fulcrum. Hypothesis and speculation and tentative thought are largely his methods of approach to his theme; but this constitutes the most difficult method of human research, for in a reasoning process there are primary premises and primary conclusions, and then there are secondary premises and secondary conclusions, and there are tertiary premises and tertiary conclusions, and so on, we might say, forever. But the difficulty of drawing correct conclusions increases enormously as we advance to the third and fourth and fifth and sixth alignments of thought. The possibilities of mistakes and the certainty of sophistries and fallacies, and *non-sequiters*, can hardly be exaggerated. Yet here the philosopher is formulating a theory, working at it for a little while, then giving it up, to go through the same process with a new theory, and then suddenly finding out that his whole apparatus needs readjusting. There is something captivating to a human intellect in a man's throwing himself bravely into deep water, trusting to his native powers, and his ability to dive to the bottom and bring up some pearl of great price. The line of philosophers from the old Aryans, and from Thales the Greek, down to the German and Anglo-Saxons of modern time, contain a succession of the strongest, brightest and most acute intellects the world has ever seen. That such an array of heavy-weight thinkers has been allotted to them by a Providence careful in the utilization of its

resources need not excite surprise. If it were possible for philosophy to solve the great problems before it, and to know God by its own inherent sagacity, then what need of another revealer coming down from heaven. If philosophy did not have the very best opportunity, and the very best expounders that humanity affords, then it might be alleged that it had not yet had a chance to do its best. Therefore God has assigned them this great cavalcade of scholars to carry on their search for them. If such men cannot achieve success, then nobody can, for there is no indication that the acuteness of the world's intellect will ever surpass them. The verdict therefore remains for the "word which was made flesh and dwelt among us." The world by wisdom knew not God. The philosopher by searching could not find out God, at least he did not.

WHY PRIMITIVE PHILOSOPHY FAILED.

The reason for this failure lay largely in his defective method and in his unreliable verifying test. The old Aryan philosopher started out with his confused tradition of a Supreme Being. He said this being dwelt alone in solitude, supreme and unapproachable. "The Great Solitary One." He was discontented because he had no progeny and resolved to transmute himself into creation, into a universe full of life and activity, that should contrast with the previous eternal quietude. Hence came the sun, the moon and the stars, flowers and animals, fishes and insects, and all these are parts of God, and are God. He himself is the ineffable, the incomprehensible, sole-hypostasis of all that is, the absolute monistic substance of all being, the protoplasm of the universe. He is the undeveloped universe, while the universe, including all the imps and devils, is simply developed and organized deity.

This view soon failed to satisfy the demand of the more thoughtful intellects, even at that early day. Then followed the Sankya philosophy, the progenitor of all the schools of pure reason. It took a

more practical turn by seeking for a panacea for all ills by resolving all intellectual difficulties, and by revealing the real nature of all that is. Kapila might have been able to satisfy his own mind, though that is doubtful, but he could not answer anxious questions put to him about the Supreme Intelligence. When asked by whom the human soul had been made to emanate, or why the great primordial eternal was individualized in human bodies, he could only say it had always been so, and was a step in an inscrutable and eternal process.

A new school of Sankya followed and a foundation was laid for the philosophic religion of Buddha. But whatever the variation, the same speculative conjecture pervades them all. They reached nowhere and they settled nothing.

THE TORCH OF PHILOSOPHY IN TRANSITION.

It was then that the torch of philosophical inquiry passed over to the Greeks, as already pointed out. Whence, Why, How and Whither? The Physicists led off and the Mathematicians followed. What is the beginning of all things? "It is moisture," said Thales. "It is air," said Anaximenes, and the rattle of clubs and the battering of shields began, and has since continued without a let-up. For twenty-four hundred years has the tournament gone on. The Indians died and gave place to the Greeks; the Greeks died and gave place to the Germans; but they have formulated no conclusion yet. Hypothesis has been pitted against hypothesis, but the all-embracing unity has not been found. The brain energy expended has been enormous; the intellectual achievements are a monument of wonder. The mass of teachings fill volumes; the broken derricks are heaped up like cordwood; the burnt-out bellows litter the ground.

And now England and America are having their turn; but neither have their men of philosophy reached a terminus. Herbert Spencer, one of the greatest of modern philosophers, has elaborated his Synthetic Philosophy. With him as with others, the kinship of all knowl-

edge is indisputable. He sees that all the lines converge, as the spokes of the wheel converge to a common centre, and he has been trying to find the hub, but he has not found it. He had got to the point where he said that all the entities and phenomena of existence could be expressed in terms of Matter, Force, Emotion. Behind that he said he could not go. The truth is that back of that he did not want to go; for if he had taken another step he would have stood face to face with the fact of a living and personal God.

THE SHORTAGES OF PHILOSOPHY.

The current philosophy of the day has made a little progress in some quarters towards something ultimate and final. Philosophy in our day is driven to postulate a supreme potential energy of some kind; but in the main it is still in a bog of indefiniteness and uncertainty. It talks of evolution, and it talks of monism; it talks of physiology; it talks of psychology; it has a nomenclature of new and perplexing terms, which have to be revamped every little while. But the vast enigma remains unexplained. Whence came the universe? What is the purpose of the universe? What is to be the final destiny of the universe? and whence came moral evil? and how are we to get rid of it? What is behind Force? What is back of Motion? What is the substratum of Matter? Shall we be told the unknown and the unknowable? Then what have we gained since the days of the Aryans. They told us of perpetual ebb and flow. They set forth a rounded system of monism. They told us of evolution. They discoursed about an inexplicable energy. Israel of old started out from Kadesh Barnea, and after forty years' wandering brought up at Kadesh Barnea again. And like unto them the weary and footsore columns of philosophy will bring up where its leaders started thousands of years ago, that is, one portion of them will. The other portion will not, and that is the portion that disdains to accept a clew from the Almighty.

IS SOUND PHILOSOPHY INIMICAL TO GOD AND TRUTH?

And is philosophy then inimical to the truth of God? By no means. Philosophers themselves, some of them are inimical; but it is not philosophy that made them so; it is because their own hearts have been averse to disclosures concerning a holy God. It is holiness they dislike, and it is the distaste for the holy that warps their judgment and that limits their ascertainment. The objects of study to which philosophers have devoted themselves are all of them parts of God's creation. One line of God's truth is never at war with another line of his truth. Therefore philosophy if rightly studied will lead towards God. It will not discover all the truth about God that needs to be known, but it will discover a vast deal more than undevout philosophers have ever deemed possible. The true measure of sound philosophical ascertainment, and the uplifting impulse heavenward and Godward belong to the students of the future. When skeptically predisposed philosophers have done their utmost, and have exposed their inability, another class will arise to work over their materials, and fit them for a place in the temple of eternal truth. The philosophy builders of the past have wrought for a structure in which God was not. They handle many of his truths, but himself, the author of them, they ignore. The philosophy builders of the future will have God in all their thoughts. They will accept God as the starting point. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. They will recognize God in all their progress, and they will point their disciples to God as the end and consummation of all wisdom. Philosophy will then go hand in hand with theology and become its obedient handmaid, while theology in return will make the castoff slag of their furnaces even iridescent with glory.

IV. THE STAGE OF SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION AND ASCERTAINMENT.

This is a modren phase. We have but recently entered upon it,

and have as yet only begun to enumerate its discoveries and to draw conclusions. The years of the immediate future are to be full of the wonders of science. Its contributions to the sum total of human knowledge, and notably to theology, as will be found, is inestimable. philosophy discredited and superseded the pretensions of priestcraft in human thought, so in turn it is coming to pass that science begins to dispute the claims of philosophy to leadership. So many were the uncertainties of speculative thought, and so conflicting were the conclusions reached after hundreds of years of trial, that a new school of thinkers came to the fore. They declared philosophic theorizing to be wholly unreliable. They started a school for the study of facts, and to induction from established facts only. The result was the inauguration of the Inductive Philosophy, culminating in Inductive Science, And so Science forged ahead to the front, and there it is to-day leading the vanguard of thought in many intellectual circles.

Science applies itself to the study of phenomena and the laws of nature. It professes to exclude all theorizing from its apparatus, and it excludes also the credenda of the faith. What can be established by incontrovertible facts it accepts. What cannot be so established it regards with disfavor. As a consequence of its method its field of observation is self-circumscribed. The man who says he will accept nothing but what he has verified for himself is at once shut up to narrow confines. How much of all the arcana of knowledge which he professes to believe, and which he really does believe has he ever demonstrated or worked out for himself? Has he calculated for himself the distance of the sun—the size of the earth—the composition of water—of air—and of a hundred other things? Not at all. He takes them all on trust from somebody who has worked them out, or who does know. That is why the Christian believes what he does about the creation of the heavens and the earth. He takes the word of the person who was there, who made them, and who does know.

In the pursuance of their inductive method scientists come to be-

lieve that law is supreme. The tendency with them is to do away with any law-giver, and any superintending and administrative providence, and to confine themselves to the possibilities of their own scales and retorts, and crucibles, and measuring sticks. In the use of them great progress has been made, and much more will be made. But as already said, the same difficulties meet the scientists that has already met the philosopher. The field widens as he advances, and it widens into an interminable vista. He thought he was getting well along in his explorations, and was approaching some finality; but the finality is farther off than it was a hundred years ago. There is an infinity of vastness in one direction, and an infinity of littleness in another. And so the end is not reached in either direction. The power of the telescope gives out, and the power of the microscope gives out. There is a minimum of lens capacity and a maximum of lens in capacity. This maximum seems to be within reach already, when lo! new stellar systems are discernible in space, which cannot be resolved. And so in the way of minute analysis, the complexity increases, while the capability of the instrument decreases. Substances and elements that were supposed to be simple are found to be complex. Gases that are supposed to be primary are found to be combinations. More than once has a jubilant "Eureka!" gone up from the laboratory as if the primordial constituents of nature has at last been discovered. But after a little while a vague suspicion flashes in that further analysis is required, and yet the implements are not to be had. How far yet is it to infinity back, and infinity ahead; or from infinity above to infinity below? Where is the scientist that can speak with confidence? In one direction are yet sixty unresolved elements that at present defy the finest instruments, and in the disc area of our mightiest telescopes are tiny specks that refuse to be measured. What are they, and what is beyond them again? Science has pushed back the known, that is all; she has exhausted herself, but has not yet exhausted her problems, and never will.

Human language cannot exceed the eulogy due to science for the

benefits it has conferred upon humanity by its discoveries. But when it comes to answering the questions of ambitious and soaring intellects it is pitifully irresponsive, and when it comes to the still deeper questions that concern the welfare of every human being, why am I a sinner, and how shall I ever break the shackles that bind me?—it is sorrowfully dumb. What is science worth and what is philosophy worth, with all their blazing torches of learning, if when I come to step down into the dark valley they cannot furnish me a taper to light up the gloom. Of what use to me, then, is all the learned nonsense about the fortuitous concourse of atoms? Or the incessant round of change from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, and back again? Is that the best they can do in the way of a definition? If so, then a scientist who talks that way is found to be a man who professes to have explored the depths of science, and then sums up the work of his life in the utterance of a platitude. “A fortuitous concourse of atoms”—what does that amount to? A round of “change from the homogenous to the heterogenous and back again”; and how much does he know now? Verily the unsolved riddle of the universe is as much a riddle as ever. The man has got back to the old speculation of the ancients. It is an application to natural things of the old doctrine of metempsychosis among animated existences.

THE SHORTAGES OF SCIENCE.

As regards the fundamental question raised in the theology of nature, the religions and the moral law of nature, and the gospel of nature, science at present is a blank. All the law that it knows anything about is physical law, or natural law in the natural world, the law of weights and measures, the law of knives and scalpels, the law of cause and effect in the realm of matter, unless it be that mind is matter, a question not yet settled among them. As for any gospel in the ordinary sense of that word, there is none. There is “promise and potency” for this life. There is length of days, and scope of enjoy-

ment ahead when science has mastered the forces at work. But gospel in relation to the world to come forms no part of its elaboration. Explanation of the fact of sin there is none. Hope of delivery from sin there is none. Yet in a full rounded scheme of knowledge, how can these things be left out? It is unscientific to leave them out: it is horribly cruel to leave them out. The scientist says that the things of morality, and the things of a future world do not lie in the sphere of his researches. But why do they not? Do they not concern humanity as much as in the discovery of a new form of breakfast food, or the composition of a new pill for stomach-ache? But science prefers to be concerned only with things that can be proved by inductive process, or be worked out with algebraic formulas. But then there are other kinds of reasoning than algebraic, and there are other fields of research than the physical, and in them there is as much room for scientific skill as in the more materialistic domain.

IS TRUE SCIENCE ANTAGONISTIC TO RELIGION?

And is science then irreligious? By no means. The men of science, like the men of philosophy, themselves are too often irreligious; neither do they love to retain God in their thoughts, and that for the same reason that influences the undevout philosopher, they shun the paths which have finger boards pointing to the unknown God. They themselves are non-religious or irreligious, and therefore they make their science non-religious or irreligious like themselves. If we have a godless science it is because our expounders of science are godless men to start with.

Science itself is divine. All the data in its category are data come from God. They come from God and they revert to God. There is not a single branch of study in the whole curriculum which does not start men on the way to God, if they would cease to hold down the truth in unrighteousness. All the lines of true science lead upward and Godward. If they would let them but speak out instead of that utter

nescience of God that characterizes them, they would be crying out as their discoveries proceed, as did the seraphim of Isaiah, "holy, holy, holy is the lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory."

And as with the philosopher, so again with the scientist. When the latter was shown his inability to master the phenomena presented, the Lord will raise up devout scientists who will do what the other has failed to do. They will take up his facts; they will include the moral characteristics that attend them, but which the undevout scientist has cast aside as the slag of his furnace.

They will take them all up and construct a new science which will be truly and fully scientific. For the new science will have God for its beginning and God for its ending, God for its author and God for its finisher. The science of the future will be radiant with the thoughts of God and fragrant with the frequent repetitions of His name. Nothing is so striking in the science of to-day as the carefulness with which all reference to Him is avoided. Our text book on astronomy or botany or geology, and kindred sciences, of great value though they are, and composed some of them by Christian men, and filled with occasions to point out the evidence of design, and purposes of blessing, and to render luminous the existence of a personal God, are nevertheless as devoid of all allusion to Him as if composed by heathen who never heard of Him. Indeed, any recognition of God is considered out of place in a scientific treatise, or in a scientific classroom. That is why science is so often called atheistic. Science always talks of Nature, but never talks of Nature's God.

All that will pass away in the science of the future. Indeed, with a few men it has passed away already. More than fifty years ago the late General Mitchell, so distinguished as an astronomer, was accustomed to deliver courses of lectures on his favorite science. He would break forth into a rhapsody, as he said once: "Gentlemen, how ought we to regard a being who can do such things as these?" No wonder that even unconverted hearers, as one of them himself told me, involuntarily bowed the head in worship.

We know a little already of what the science of the future will be when the text-book and the classroom will begin to call on the name of the Lord. The Bible is replete with illustrations. In that majestic grand march of the creation, the Nineteenth Psalm, David does not end, but he begins his astronomical survey by saying: "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge." There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard; at present it may be said that with but few exceptions there is no speech nor language, nor text-book nor classroom where it is heard. David always connected the name of God and the hand of God with the ordinary meteorological events of the day. "Thou visiteth the earth and watereth it; thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly; thou makest it soft with showers." In another place he calls on all creation to unite in a grand diapason of praise. "Praise him sun and moon and stars, praise him all ye stars of light; praise ye the Lord; ye dragons, and all deeps; fire and hail. snow and vapor, stormy wind fulfilling his word, mountain and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars, beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl, kings of the earth and all people, princes and all judges of the earth, both young men and maidens, old men and children, let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is excellent, his glory is above earth and heaven." This is a prediction of the way in which science will be taught in the millenium, when everything will be made to show forth his power, his wisdom, and his goodness. Praise ye the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary! Praise him in the firmament of his power! Praise him for his mighty acts! Praise him for his excellent greatness.

FOUR GREAT SCHOOLS OF LEARNING.

It is fitting that this brief reference to the school of Philosophy and the school of Science should be supplemented by a glance at the

teaching of quite another school,—the School of Faith. There is also the School of Experience with which men have had much to do already, and with which they will have more to do when the footing up time comes in the millenium. All these make their contributions to the theology of nature and add their full measure of confirmation to the theology of revelation when mankind takes its post graduate course, and the great round-up of the nations is called in the program of Providence. Philosophy is preeminently deductive in its method; science is inductive; faith is receptive, and experience is ratifying and confirmatory. There was a time when there was no school of philosophy; there was a time again when there was no school of Science; there never was a time when there was no School of Faith, and no School of Experience.

THE SCHOOL OF FAITH.

Modern thinkers, fond of metaphysical formulas, abound in intricate definitions of faith. It is spoken of as a special sense which has a certain metaphysical insight into certain hidden qualities. To common people, faith does not seem to be so hard of explanation. In the final analysis, Faith is simply believing. According to the Scriptures, a man may believe with the head only, or he may believe with the heart only, or he may believe with both combined. It is the heart element that gives to faith its moral character. If it is a mere matter of intellectual perception, it has no moral character. It is the attitude of the heart towards a truth that determines the quality of the faith. Two persons may believe the same thing, but may feel very differently in regard to it. The devils believe there is one God; they believe it because the evidence is indisputable, but they hate it nevertheless. The Christian believes there is one God; he is glad of it and loves to have it so, and tries to add to his conviction. Faith in the one case is a manifestation of wickedness; in the other it is a manifestation of goodness; in every

case, it is the heart. Take another illustration: exactly the same kind of evidence is presented against a boy engaged in some malicious trickery; a neighbor who dislikes the boy, and is glad to believe anything to his detriment, quickly accepts the whole story; his mother, who loves the boy and who is not willing to accept anything to his discredit, will not believe a word of it. Both are evidently sincere, and again it is the heart that makes the difference. And so the Bible insists on men believing with the heart,—“If thou believest in thine heart.” The reason why myriads of men do not believe the testimony that God has given is because they don't want to. The heart dominates the intellect.

FAITH OUR GREATEST SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE.

But the point now to be made is that faith is our greatest school of learning. More of our knowledge comes in that way than from all other sources combined. “By faith we understand,” is the scientific statement of Paul, the philosopher. We learn from books; we learn from our parents; we learn from our teachers a thousand things we should never know if we had to demonstrate them for ourselves. This point has already been adverted to above. The knowledge we gain through faith is thoroughly philosophic and thoroughly scientific; nothing can be more so. It is also thoroughly judicial to take the testimony of a credible and competent witness, or of an expert, or of the deviser and manager of any system of causations. Not only is faith our greatest source of knowledge as to quantity, but it is our most reliable source of knowledge as to quality. When, as a philosopher, or as a scientist, we investigate and speculate and reason about the things of God, we are liable to continue in mistakes. Our data may be wrong; our premises may be wrong, and our inferences may be wrong, and we may be years groping our way back. But if we take anything on the word of the Omniscient, that is the end of it. We drop no stitches; we have no loose ends to take up, and we have no aberrations

to correct. In the schools of Philosophy and Science, we have to lean on ourselves; in the school of Experience, we have to wait until the experiences are all in and counted; but in the School of Faith, one sentence from the Living God disposes of the whole matter.

THE METHOD OF FAITH AND THE METHOD OF SCIENCE.

In the school of Faith, the learner takes God's word for it; in the school of Science, the learner prefers to find out for himself. Which is the better way? The difference between the two is that one is *apriori*, and the other is *apostori*. One begins at the top and goes down; the other begins at the bottom and goes up. Thus if it were a question of the rise, the course and the outlet of the Mississippi River, for example, the *apriori* student begins at Turtle Lake; with chart in hand on which it is all marked out, he goes down the river; he finds every city and town just as marked on the map; he lands at the Gulf of Mexico where he was told at the start he would land. The *aposteriori* student starts at the Gulf of Mexico and works his way up without any chart, but he is not sure of any of his conclusions until he gets to the end. When he gets there, then both students have the same information, but they have gotten it in different ways. The attitude of the Faith student and of the Science student may be illustrated in another way. An Atlantic cable is laid from Queenstown to Halifax. One man learns all about it from the shipmaster who laid the cable and who assures him that one end is at Queenstown and the other end at Halifax. Another man says he will take no hearsay about it; he will find out for himself. Being possessed of vast wealth, he charts a vessel, and with steam up, a mighty grapnel at the bow, he goes fishing up the cable every few miles across the Atlantic, and finally comes out at Queenstown. He triumphantly makes known his discovery to the world, and he says,—“the great Atlantic cable has one end at Halifax and one end at Queenstown.” It is announced as a wonderful scientific discovery! But now with all his toil, all his labor, all his time and all his

expense, what does he know more than the other man knew from the start without the sacrifice of labor, or time, or money.

Apply this reasoning to the world of matter around us. The Christian starts out with the dicta contained in the Bible; he believes in a creator; he believes that God's hand made all these things; he believes that for his own glory, and that includes the blessedness of his creatures, they are and were created. The scientist has not got there; for all these many years since his science became inductive, he has been experimenting and feeling his way. He was not willing to admit a personal Creator; he believes in law, as he calls it,—fixed and unalterable law; he talks of energy,—of omnipotent energy. But little by little has he been forced to drift towards the conclusion with which the faith student started out. He, too, is beginning to admit that there is and there must be a Living God who has not only created but sustains all things by word of his power. The great problems so continually coming to the front in their studies, Whence, How, Why and Whither, are no stumbling block to the student in the school of Faith. In the word of God, which is his supreme guide, he sees his pathway clear and marked out; he follows the predictions they contain, and is ever moving towards his portal of rest. The dictum put forward so frequently in our day, that if theology would gain acceptance for itself, it must be put on a scientific basis, that is, must be established by a scientific formula. To this reply is made already: That faith is eminently philosophic and scientific as well as theologic; but it is more than that; it transcends them all and holds sway in a domain which none of them ever can reach except by the help of faith itself. Fundamental and distinctive articles of the credenda of the faith are beyond the power of philosophy to handle or even to touch. Among these fundamental articles of belief are,—that Christ is coming to judge the quick and dead; that He will give a crown of rejoicing to all who long and look for his appearing; that He will take and present us to His Father with exceeding joy; that we shall sit down

with Him on his throne, and a score of other things concerning which Science cannot say yes, and it cannot say no. How can Science affirm or deny that Christ is going to come in the clouds of Heaven; how can it affirm or deny that He will present us to His Father; how can it affirm or deny that we shall sit on his throne? It cannot. To attempt any such scientific application of its scientific method would only turn rotaries into a scientific laughing stock. We who are Christians believe these things, not on scientific ground, but on the warrant of testimony. We take Christ's word for it; he said he will come, and we believe it; he said he will give us a crown, and we believe it; he said we will sit with Him on his throne, and we believe it, and we are glad of it, and rejoice in hope of the Glory of God, and that is the end of the whole matter. That is faith of the head and faith of the heart, and it is faith in Christ and faith in God.

LET US HEAR THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER.

We take the privilege of repeating a little and of summing up the points which are made in this discussion:

I. It is as proper to speak of the theology of Nature as of the theology of Revelation; the two are distinct, and yet coordinate.

II. There is religious and a moral law of nature, written on the table of every man's heart, which accuses or excuses every man the same as does a judge. One law has to do with man's relation to God, and the other law with his relations to his fellow men.

III. There is also and always has been since time began, a Gospel of Nature,—a due regard for which is of the nature of faith, even though very rudimentary in form, and which owes its value to the relation it bears in the promise and plan of God to Christ the Lamb of God, who redeems and takes up all the pledges, promises and portents that God ever made. In all matters of application of the gospel of nature, God alone and never man is the exclusive judge and dispenser. How many persons in all the ages may be saved by this gospel of nature

we have no means of knowing; but that there are some, we confidently believe; that there may be many,—a greater multitude perhaps than we dare dream of, we devoutly hope. The gospel of nature seems to be set over against the law of nature as Gerizim was sent over against Ebal. This appears to be entirely reasonable and we think not unscriptural. It would be the height of presumption to dogmatize here, but if it be so, a sort of seeming one-sidedness of God's judicial treatment of men is taken away, and the Divine administration is rendered illustrious in its equability. In these views there is nothing to cut the nerve of missions. Christ came that men might have life, and might have it more abundantly; having got it ourselves, we are bound by every consideration of love and loyalty to impart it to others. If we allow others to abide in darkness, by withholding the torch which God has put into our hands for them, we are robbers, and ourselves will have the darkness gather upon us. In our own land even now there are callous souls in which colorific and calorific rays have ceased to penetrate, and are stumbling upon the dark mountains. It was a gracious and yet a fearful sentence which Christ spake:—"For judgment am I come into this world that they which see not might see, and they which see might be made blind." Christ is the Son of Righteousness; his rays light up the mountain tops before he himself appears, and also many a dark valley out of the path of his orbit. For the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth,—the true light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world. Refracted rays, reflected rays and twilight rays are all of theme sunlight rays.

IV. The river that went out of Eden to water the garden parted into four streams. When the four great schools of learning are to unite, the order will be reversed; they will unite before they enter Eden. When the union does come, the faith stream will give its name to the waters of the whole. For faith is supreme and must be supreme; for its credenda are a dicta of omniscience, and therefore faith is ever sure of itself. The supreme and ultimate questions of the eter-

nal world can only be answered by God himself. There will be no antagonism there, though men create antagonisms here. A true philosophy, a true science, a fully rounded human experience, and a true theology will all be found coming in at the same time, at the same terminal, and bearing the same testimony,—all having reached the same conclusion. Philosophy and Science, footsore and weary with their wanderings in the desert, will frankly admit their inability to find out the Almighty to perfection, and the necessity of their falling back to take a post-graduate course in the School of Faith. A great volume can be filled with the things they have found out; but a much greater volume will be required for the things they don't know and cannot find out until God tells them. They cannot now exhaust the mysteries there is in a blade of grass; the secret of life eludes them; go which way they will, they are always butting against the unknown. Human experience, having completed its round from Gilgal to Gilgal and from Eden to Eden, will add its confirmatory testimony, "Like as the Lord said he would do unto us, so hath he done." From the ends of the earth have we come, confessing that our Father's have inherited vanity and lies and things wherein there is no profit. Henceforth let us go up to the mountain of the house of the Lord; He will teach us of his ways, and henceforth we will walk in his paths.

This harmony will continue to exist in the next world as well as at the close of this world, for there too must there be philosophic conception of the plans of God, scientific study of the works of God sought out of all them that have pleasure therein, living experience of the ways of God and theological surveys of all the infinities of the universe, and above all of the infinity of God himself. And then not philosophy, not science will be in the ascendant, but faith. Faith will be primate forever. A scientist of the world's type who discards the data of faith and who wants to find out everything for himself, and professes to deal only with phenomena, will be an exotic, an ignoramus and a nuisance, even to the end. As things now are, let science go

on and collect her facts; when she gets them she will need a philosophy to unite them into a system, and both philosophy and science will need a theology of faith to coordinate them and fix their place in THE SCIENCE OF GOD.

Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries



1 1012 01251 6037

