A

Doubter's Doubts

about Science and Religion

OR,

IN DEFENCE: A PLEA FOR THE FAITH

BY

Sir ROBERT ANDERSON

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THIRD EDITION

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PREFACE

SOME of the following chapters we printed in a volume a few years ago. It may be thought perhaps that the criticisms they contain are out of date, now that Spencerism is dead and Darwinism discredited. But though biological theories which reigned supreme a few years ago have been abandoned or modified by "men of light and leading," their influence still prevails with the general public; and in response to appeals from several quarters I have reproduced the chapters in question.

The fact that *A Doubter's Doubts* was published anonymously may indicate how little its author thought of it. But among many signal proofs that it was appreciated by others, the most important was Mr. Gladstone's notice

of it. And the circumstances in which the following letter was written lend to it a peculiar interest. The extracts from his diary, given in Mr. Morley's *Life of Mr. Gladstone*, record that December 18, 1889, was the occasion of Parnell's historic visit to Hawarden, and that the day was devoted to reviewing and reconsidering the whole Irish question, and discussing it with the Irish leader. And yet on that very day Mr. Gladstone found leisure to read my book, and to write to me about it. I should add that I had not sent it to him, nor was I aware that he possessed it.

HAWARDEN,

December 18, 1889.

DEAR SIR,

I do not know whom I have the honour of addressing, but I wish to thank you for your *Doubter's Doubts*, and to say that I have read it with a great deal of sympathy and concurrence in the main argument.

It implies no abatement of this declaration if I take upon me to offer a particular criticism. You strongly censure sacerdotalism, and so do I, in the

sense in which I understand it; for it takes the reins of government out of the hands of those whom God has made free and responsible for their freedom, and gives them to another, under the system which is called direction. But I question whether you have stated with your usual precision the constituent portions of it which you select for special condemnation. I apprehend that the best Roman Catholic Divines would not place the consecration of the elements in the Holy Eucharist within the category of miracles; and neither Roman nor Anglican doctrine claims for the clergy the exclusive power of valid Baptism. That power was more restricted in the views of the Puritans, and of foreign Protestants, than of their opponents.

I presume to hope that you will follow up the subjects of your volume with the same care, force, and exactitude which in it you have bestowed especially upon the treatment of the main argument, and

I remain, dear Sir,

Your faithful and obedient,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

The Author of

A Doubter's Doubts.

In my reply I acknowledged my error respecting baptism—an error which has now been corrected; but I urged that for the purpose of my argument I was entitled to insist that the change of the elements in transubstantiation was in the strictest sense a miracle. This brought me a further letter from Hawarden, from which the following is an extract:—

I agree with you about dilapidation in some quarters, and danger in more. I think that to counterwork the process, and try to build up his fellow-creatures in the faith, is the highest way a man has of serving them. I opine that you are not very far from this sentiment; and I heartily hope your book may be useful, and that you will pursue the paths of knowledge congenial to it.

So much for the earlier chapters of this volume. As a whole it is addressed to men of the world, and from the standpoint of scepticism—the true scepticism which tests everything, not the sham sort which credulously accepts anything that tends to discredit the

Bible. In an age that has seen not only a revival of some venerable superstitions but the rise of many new-fangled superstitions of various kinds, genuine scepticism is an ally to faith. And, writing from this standpoint, destructive criticism is in the main my method. To some the book will seem unsatisfactory on this account, and yet they must recognize the importance of thus refuting the claims which infidelity makes to superior enlightenment.

Others may think that in these pages the difficulties which perplex the Bible student are dismissed too lightly. Here I must either accept the criticism, or risk a charge of egotism if I appeal to my other books in proof that I neither ignore difficulties nor attempt to minimize them.

R. A.

PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION

THE sale of two Editions of this work justify the statement of the Author and the comments of the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone as given in former pages.

The denials of to-day, although slightly different in phraseology and altered in tone, are denials all the same, and are met by the same "pleas for the Faith" as in days gone by.

It has been thought well in this new edition to revert to the original and more descriptive title—*A Doubter's Doubts about Science and Religion.*

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CHAPTER I

HOW DID LIFE BEGIN?

THERE is one fact which not even the dreamiest of egoists can doubt, and that is, his own existence. Here at least knowledge is absolute. That I exist is certain; but how did I come to exist? I live; but how did life begin? The question is one to which every man is bound to find a reasonable answer. To say I am descended through generations numbered or innumerable from a first man, is merely to put the difficulty back. Where did the first man come from? Religion answers in one word—Creation. But this is to cut the knot, as it were, without even an attempt to untie it. It must not be taken for granted that man is incapable of reasoning out the problem of his own existence.

Between the higher organisms and the lowest there is a gulf which might well be regarded as impassable. But closer observation and fuller knowledge will disclose the fact that

between these extremes there are unnumbered gradations of development, and that the distance between the several steps in the series is such as, in theory at least, might be passed by the operation of known laws. The problem, therefore, which religion would solve by the one word "creation," science answers by the one word "evolution." And science claims priority of audience.

But here let us take the place of sceptics. There are no sceptics in the old scholastic sense. The most ardent Pyrrhonist, if robbed of his purse, or struck over the head by a burglar, promptly forgets his theories, and gives proof of his belief in the certainty of objective knowledge. Philosophic scepticism, so called, is merely a conceit of sham philosophers; it never invades the sphere in which a man's interests require that he should believe and know. And, as Kant has aptly said, it is "not a permanent resting-place for human reason." But scepticism is not necessarily Pyrrhonism. Pyrrho did not invent the word; he only perverted and degraded it. The σκεπτικός considers, reflects, hesitates, doubts. An admirable habit, surely, if kept within due limits, but proof of moral deterioration if abnormally developed.

Let us not forget then, as we proceed, to

reflect, hesitate, doubt; and, above all, let us cast away prejudice. Let us take the place of free thinkers and *real* sceptics, not shams. Many people reserve their scepticism for the sphere in which religion is the teacher, while in the presence of science they are as innocent and simple in their receptivity as the infant class in a Sunday-school. We shall only deceive ourselves if we begin by over-stating the evidence on which the doctrine of evolution rests. It must be conceded that its foundation largely depends on the researches of the Paleontologist. And here we demand some direct proof that the fossil remains belong to the same economy or system as the living organisms we compare them with. But there is no such proof, and it is a question whether the presumption be not the other way.

Let that pass, however, for a more serious question claims attention. It may be admitted that the development of plants and animals from their simplest to their most complicated forms may be explained by natural causes. But this is only theory. What direct evidence is there that the phenomena have, in fact, been thus produced? The horse may have been developed from a pig-like animal, and man may be "descended from a hairy quadruped

furnished with a tail and pointed ears."[1] But what direct proof is there that either the horse or the man was, in fact, developed or evolved in this way? The answer must be, Absolutely none. It is a matter of inference only.[2]

The prisoner in the dock may have committed the murder we are investigating. The theory of his guilt will account for all the facts. Therefore let him be convicted and hanged. This sort of argument would not pass at the Old Bailey. Men are sceptics there, and free thinkers. Proof that the prisoner may have committed the crime is worthless, unless we go on to prove that it could not have been committed by any one else. But with that further proof the case is clear, and the accused goes to the gallows. And so here. If the facts of biology can in no other way be accounted for, evolution holds the field.

But are we not forgetting the nature of the problem to be solved? The first and greatest question relates, not to the phenomena of life, but to its origin. How did life begin? That was the question we set out with. And here

[1] *Descent of Man*, pt. ii. chap. xxi.

[2] Marvellous results are produced by culture, but they are subject to the seemingly inexorable laws of degeneracy and the sterility of hybrids.

evolution affords no answer, and must stand aside. Let the existence of life be taken for granted, and evolution may explain the rest. But the sceptic takes nothing for granted. How did life begin? Science answers——! In presence of a question which lies across the threshold of knowledge, science, the very personification of knowledge, turns agnostic and is dumb. "Creation" is the answer religion gives. The rejoinder which science ought to make is that life first sprang out of death, out of nothing; in a word, abiogenesis.

And this is, in fact, the answer which science would formerly have given. But the experiments which at one time seemed to establish the principle of spontaneous generation, have proved worthless when subjected to severer tests. Huxley admits that "the present state of knowledge furnishes us with no link between the living and the not living." With still greater candour, Tyndall declares that "every attempt made in our day to generate life independently of antecedent life has utterly broken down." Or, if we turn to a teacher, happily still with us, whose *dictum* will carry still greater weight, Lord Kelvin will tell us that "inanimate matter cannot become living except under the influence

of matter already living. This is a fact in science which seems to me," he declares, " as well ascertained as the law of gravitation." And he goes on to say, " I am ready to accept as an article of faith in science, valid for all time and in all space, that life is produced by life, and only by life." [1]

Abiogenesis is merely a philosophic theory, unsupported by even the faintest shadow of evidence. But more than this, it is practically incapable of proof, for the problem implies the proof of a negative in circumstances which render the difficulties of such proof overwhelming. To establish the fact of spontaneous generation in a world teeming with life, would be as hopeless as the attempt to prove that the displacement of a table in a dark room crowded with people was caused without interference on their part.[2]

But, we are told, the fact that we know absolutely nothing of the origin of life, and that there is not a shadow of direct evidence that

[1] Brit. Assoc., Edinburgh, 1871.

[2] And if the proof were given, it would be more reasonable, more philosophical, to assume the presence of some unseen agency—*i.e.*, to fall back upon spiritualism —than to suppose the furniture capable of spontaneous motion.

abiogenesis has ever taken place, does not interfere with the conclusion "that at some time or other abiogenesis *must* have taken place. If the hypothesis of evolution be true, living matter must have arisen from not-living matter."[1] Therefore life did originate thus, and the truth of evolution is established. Thus argue the professors and scientists. But the man who considers, reflects, hesitates, doubts, will call for the evidence; and, finding there is none, he will reject the conclusion, and also, if necessary, the dependent hypothesis.

We set out to solve the mystery of life. Science claimed to possess the clew, and offered to be our guide. And now, having been led back to the identical point from which we started, we are told we must shut our eyes and take a leap in the dark. It is a bad case of the "confidence trick."

"Besides being absolutely without evidence to give it external support, this hypothesis cannot support itself internally—cannot be framed into a coherent thought. It is one of those illegitimate symbolic conceptions so continually mistaken for legitimate symbolic conceptions, because they remain untested. Immediately an attempt is made to elaborate the

[1] Professor Huxley, *Encyc. Brit.*, "Biology."

idea into anything like a definite shape, it proves to be a pseud-idea, admitting of no definite shape." It "implies the establishment of a relation in thought between nothing and something— a relation of which one term is absent— an impossible relation." "The case is one of those where men do not really believe, but rather *believe* they believe. For belief, properly so called, implies a mental representation of the thing believed; and no such mental representation is here possible." [1]

Evolution assumes the existence of life; postulates it, as the scientists would say. No more is needed than one solitary germ of living matter. Indeed, to seek for more would be unphilosophical.[2] But this primeval germ must be taken for granted. The sceptic will refuse to assign to it an origin which contradicts all our experience and surpasses our knowledge. The

[1] The words are Herbert Spencer's (*Principles of Biology*, § 112); the application of them is entirely my own.

[2] "If all living beings have been evolved from pre-existing forms of life, it is enough that a single particle of living protoplasm should have once appeared on the globe, as the result of no matter what agency. In the eyes of a consistent evolutionist any further independent formation of protoplasm would be sheer waste."— Professor Huxley, *Encyc. Brit.*, "Biology."

only hypothesis he can accept is that life has existed without any limitation of time; that the original life-germ was eternal and practically self-existent.

And of course nothing could be evolved from it which was not inherent. It must have been pregnant with all the forms and developments of life with which the world is full. Moreover it is only ignorant conceit to maintain that evolution has reached its limits. If man has sprung from such an origin, we must suppose that, in the far-distant future, beings will be developed as superior to mankind as we ourselves are superior to the insects crawling on the earth. According to this hypothesis the latent capacities of the first life-germ were infinite. "Capacities," remember, not tendencies. Unknowable force may account for tendencies, but it cannot create capacities.

Not that this distinction will save us from the pillory. The philosopher will condemn the statement as unphilosophical—"a shaping of ignorance into the semblance of knowledge" and I know not what besides.[1] But these brave

[1] *Principles of Biology*, § 144. I have no wish to shelter myself behind Professor Huxley, but I claim his companionship and sympathy in the pillory. He says, "Of the causes which have led to the origination of living

words can be tested at once by assuming the contrary to what is here asserted. Let us take it, then, that the primordial germ had no latent capacities whatever. And yet we are to accept it as the origin of all the amazing forms and phenomena of life in the world. If we may not suppose such an aptitude naturally possessed by organisms, we must assume an *in*aptitude; and the question is no longer whether the cause be adequate to the effects, but whether effects are to be ascribed to what is no cause at all. May we not retort that this is indeed "a cause unrepresentable in thought"—one of those illegitimate symbolic conceptions which cannot by any mental process be elaborated into a real conception?[1] In the spirit of a true philosopher, Charles Darwin declared that "the birth both of the species and of the individual are equally

matter, then, it may be said that we know absolutely nothing. But postulating the existence of living matter endowed with that power of hereditary transmission and with that tendency to vary which is found in all such matter, Mr. Darwin has shown good reasons for believing," &c. (*Encyc. Brit.*, "Biology"). The primordial germ, mark, is "endowed" with a "power" and a "tendency." What had Mr. Spencer to say to this? All that I assert here is the "power"; to predicate the "tendency" is unnecessary and therefore unphilosophical.

[1] *Principles of Biology*, § 144.

parts of that grand sequence of events which our minds refuse to accept as the result of blind chance." [1]

By what word, then, shall this "particle of living protoplasm" be called; this great First Cause; this Life-germ, eternal, self-existent, infinite in essential capacities? There is but one word known to human language adequate to designate it, and that word is GOD.

Evolution—that is, Science—thus leads us to a point at which either we must blindly and with boundless credulity accept as fact something which is not only destitute of proof, but which is positively disproved by every test we are at present able to apply to it; or else we must recognise an existence which, disguise it as we may, means nothing less than God.

There is no escape from this dilemma. Our choice lies between these alternatives. The sceptic will at once reject the first; his acceptance of the second is, therefore, a necessity. Men whose minds are enslaved by a preconceived determination to refuse belief in God must be content here to stand like fools, owning their impotency to solve the elementary problem of existence, and, as humble disciples in the school of one Topsy, a negro slave-girl, dismiss-

[1] *Descent of Man*, pt. ii. chap. xxi.

ing the matter by the profound and sapient formula "I 'spect I grow'd"! But the free thinker, unblinded by prejudice, will reject an alternative belief which is sheer credulity, and, unmoved by the sneers of pseudo-scientists and sham-philosophers, will honestly and fearlessly accept the goal to which his reason points, and there set up an altar to an unknown God.

CHAPTER II

THE DARWINIAN THEORY

"IT'S lovely to live on a raft. We had the sky up there all speckled with stars, and we used to lay on our backs and look up at them and discuss about whether they were made, or only just happened. Jim he allowed they was made, but I allowed they happened; I judged it would have took too long to make so many. Jim said the moon could 'a *laid* them; well, that looked kind of reasonable, so I didn't say nothing against it, because I've seen a frog lay most as many, so of course it could be done. We used to watch the stars that fell, too, and see them struck down. Jim allowed they'd got spoiled and was hove out of the nest."

In this charming piece of fooling, Mark Twain states the problem admirably. The question is whether things were made, or "only just happened." But Jim, being a philosopher, suggested evolution as a compromise, and Huck

Finn's deism was not intelligent enough or vigorous enough to resist it.

"Only just happened"—that supreme folly of nineteenth-century philosophy, is as really a positive creed as the Mosaic cosmogony. And surely a venerable faith of any sort is preferable to a new-fangled superstition which has no rational sanction and is devoid even of that kind of respectability which antiquity can sometimes impart.

In our search after the origin of life reason guides us in a path which leads direct to God. Nor let any one here object that this is but a veiled appeal to revelation. Unless reason points to the existence of a God, the question of a revelation cannot even arise. And if any one should raise the difficulty which robbed Professor Tyndall of his sleep in childhood, "Who made God?"[1] the solution is to be found, not in attempting to answer the question, but in exposing its absurdity. "Science," Lord Kelvin declares, "positively affirms crea-

[1] "Athwart all play and amusement a thread of seriousness ran through my character; and many a sleepless night of my childhood has been passed fretted by the question, 'Who made God?'"—*Professor Virchow and Evolution.* Was the elder Mill the author of this absurd problem? See J. S. Mill's *Autobiography*, p. 43.

tive power."[1] And it is because science leads us back to an existence which never had a beginning that, for want of any other term by which to designate it, we call it God.

But here we must turn back upon the ground already traversed. We have been dealing hitherto with evolution, not as an hypothesis to account for the origin of species, but merely as a pretended explanation of the origin of life; and we have found that, thus regarded, it is but a blind lane which leads nowhere. The inquiry suggests itself, therefore, whether the conception of God be a true one which we have thus reached by escape from a wrong path. The question whether there be a God is no longer open. What concerns us now is merely to decide what kind of God we shall acknowledge. Shall we be content with the mystic Pantheism which a false system of biology would offer us, or shall we adore an intelligent Ruler of the universe?

The man who can give no account of his own existence is a fool; and he who denies a God can give no account of his existence. In the old

[1] *Christian Apologetics* (Murray), p. 25. The book is a republication of lectures delivered in University College in 1903, at one of which Lord Kelvin was present and spoke.

time men whispered their folly within their own hearts; nowadays they proclaim it on the housetops, or, to translate the Oriental figure into its Western correlative, they publish it in printed books. But philosophy is not folly, and folly has no right to call itself wisdom. There is a God—that is certain: what then can reason tell us of Him?

As heathen poets wrote two thousand years ago, "We are also His offspring." [1] It behoves us, therefore, to ascribe to Him the highest qualities which His creatures are endowed with. To admit, under pressure of facts which we can neither deny nor ignore, the conception of a God, and then to minimise that conception so that it becomes inadequate to account for the facts—this is neither reason nor philosophy, but crass folly. Since reason shuts us up to belief in God, let us have the courage of free thought, and instead of taking refuge in a vague theism, let us acknowledge a real God—not the great "primordial germ," but the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

Regarded as a theory to account for life, evolution is the wildest folly; but as an hypothesis to account for the varied forms of life,

[1] τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν (Aratus, *Phæn.*); and Kleanthes writes, ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ γένος ἐσμέν.

it claims a hearing on its merits. And viewed in this light, no one need denounce it as necessarily irreligious. As the apostle of evolution with fairness urges, he who thus denounces it " is bound to show why it is more irreligious to explain the origin of man as a distinct species by descent from some lower form, through the laws of variation and natural selection, than to explain the birth of the individual through laws of ordinary reproduction. The birth both of the species and of the individual are equally parts of that grand sequence of events which our minds refuse to accept as the result of blind chance. The understanding revolts at such a conclusion." [1]

Darwin might, indeed, have stated the matter much more strongly. To call into existence a lowly organised form of life, endowed with latent capacities so wonderful, and so exquisitely adjusted that only when a certain stage of development is reached, the moral qualities spring into exercise, immortality is attained,and there arises in the mind " the idea of a universal and beneficent Creator of the universe " [2]—this is a far more amazing act of creative power than the Mosaic account of the genesis of man

[1] *The Descent of Man*, pt. ii. chap. xxi.
[2] Ibid.

supposes. But, on the other hand, this very admission suggests a question the importance of which none but the superficial and the ignorant will doubt, Is not the Mosaic account, for that very reason, the more philosophical hypothesis?

It is obvious that if we acknowledge "a beneficent Creator of the universe," the existence of man is explained by the necessary admission that he is a creature; and no theory of development from a lower form of life would be tenable for a moment, were it not for reasons which lie hidden, and do not appear upon the surface. Of that very character, however, are the grounds upon which the hypothesis of evolution rests. These may be summarised in a single sentence, as "the close similarity between man and the lower animals in embryonic development, as well as in innumerable points of structure and constitution, both of high and of the most trifling importance—the rudiments which he retains, and the abnormal reversions to which he is occasionally liable." [1]

But these facts, indisputable and striking though they be, may one and all be accounted for by an hypothesis of an exactly opposite character. Instead of assuming that the pro-

[1] *The Descent of Man.*

toplastic organism was of the humblest form, but endowed with capacities of development, why should we not suppose that man himself was the primordial creature, and that he came from the Creator's hand stamped with characteristics "in innumerable points of structure and constitution," to warn him that he was made liable to a law of degeneration and decay, and that the neglect or perversion of his noble powers would degrade him indefinitely in the scale of life? It is certain that this hypothesis is more in accordance with the traditional beliefs of the heathen world than that of evolution, and it would be easy to maintain that it is more philosophical.[1]

We shall gain nothing by misrepresenting facts, and no fair person will pretend that experience warrants the hypothesis that any race of men, that any individual even, ever advanced in the scale of life save under the constant pressure of favouring circumstances.

[1] Paleontology will here be appealed to in opposition to my suggestion, but the answer is obvious. From an age when the earth was thinly populated, and extreme respect was shown to the dead, we could not expect to find fossil human remains unless we suppose that the geological strata in which the fossils are found were formed in sudden convulsions of nature, and this supposition would put Paleontology out of court altogether.

But while culture alone will, so far as our experience teaches us, account for an advance, the tendency to degenerate seems universal. "In the Australian bush," for example, "and in the backwoods of America, the Anglo-Saxon race, in which civilisation has developed the higher feelings to a considerable degree, rapidly lapses into comparative barbarism, adopting the moral code, and sometimes the habits, of savages." [1]

And evolution, while, in theory at least, accounting for the physical facts it appeals to, makes no reasonable attempt to explain the moral phenomena which claim our attention, though these are far more significant and important. We know what it is to meet with people over whose origin or career some mystery evidently hangs. A *bar sinister* has crossed their pedigree, or their life is darkened by some strange secret. And is there not something akin to this in the history of our race? Can any intelligent observer look back upon the history of the world, or honestly face the dismal facts of life around us—"the turbid ebb and flow of human misery"—and fail to find traces of some mysterious disaster in primeval times, which still disturbs the moral sphere?

[1] *Principles of Biology*, § 67.

According to the evolutionist, man is but an upstart, a biological *parvenu*, ever in danger of betraying his humble origin, and occasionally showing a tendency to revert to his former state. But surely it is only a base materialism which would assign to the phenomena on which this theory rests the same importance as that which we ascribe to the mysteries of man's inner being. The presence in embryo of organs properly belonging to the brute, or such " reversions " as " the occasional appearance of canine teeth "—what are these in comparison with the fact that life from the cradle to the grave is marked by baffled aspirations after an unattainable ideal, and unsatisfied cravings for the infinite? Are we to believe that these cravings and aspirations are derived from the " hairy quadruped with a tail and pointed ears "?

" As soon as man grew distinct from the animal he became religious." A sense of humour would have saved Renan from offering a suggestion so grotesque as this. We might admit for the sake of argument that the descendant of an ape might become philosophical and mathematical and musical; but how and why should he become religious? " To call the spiritual nature of man a ' by-product ' is

a jest too big for this little world." [1] "Man," the evolutionist declares, "still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin." [2] His inner being, we may with greater truth reply, gives unmistakable proof that his origin was a high and noble one. Evolution, remember, is not fact, but only theory. The facts are the pearls; evolution is but the string on which we are asked to hang them. And we shall seek in vain for a single shred of direct evidence in support of it.[3]

It is significant that naturalists who suppose new species to be originated by evolution "habitually suppose the origination to occur in some region remote from human observation." [4] These results are supposed to have been produced during "those immeasurable epochs,"

[1] These words are attributed to Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace.

[2] These are the closing words of *The Descent of Man.*

[3] I am aware that Herbert Spencer asserts that the hypothesis "has the support of direct evidence" (*Principles of Biology*, § 121). But this extraordinary statement can be accounted for only by supposing that he uses words in a loose and popular way which cannot be permitted here.

[4] The language, but not the application of it, is Herbert Spencer's (*Principles of Biology*, § 112).

"untold millions of years" before "beings endowed with capacity for wide thought" existed on the earth.[1] To which the sceptic will make answer: First, that there is no proof that this earth has so long existed in a habitable state; it is a mere inference based upon a certain geological theory which is wholly unproved and by no means universally accepted. And, secondly, that as neither the course of nature within known periods, nor the skill of man, has ever produced a species, we may be merely stultifying our minds by dismissing the difficulty to a mythical past about which we may conjecture and romance, but concerning which we know absolutely nothing.

But let us for a moment assume these "untold millions of years," these "immeasurable epochs" of an "abysmal past," during which the evolutionary process has been developing. Further, let us concede that the supposed process is so slow that no appreciable change may be looked for within the period of historic time. In fact, let us, for the sake of argument, admit everything assumed by the evolutionist, excepting only the hypothesis of evolution itself, and we can at once subject

[1] *Principles of Biology*, §§ 114, 120.

that hypothesis to a practical test of the simplest kind, which will either establish its truth or demonstrate its falseness.

Suppose our world were visited by a being of intelligence, able to converse with men, but wholly ignorant of an existence like ours, marked by development and decay. Brought face to face with puling infancy, vigorous manhood, and the senile decrepitude of extreme old age, such a being might express incredulous wonder on hearing that these were successive stages in human life. And he might answer fairly and with shrewdness, "If such a statement be true, then there must be individuals in the world of every possible age, from a minute to a hundred years, and manifesting every imaginable degree of growth and decline." To which the unequivocal reply we should of course be able to offer would put an end to his scepticism.

But suppose we were to make some such answer as this: "True it is that never a moment passes but that some new life enters the world, and some blighted or withered life disappears from it; the processes of generation and growth and decay are all unceasing and constant; but yet we cannot satisfy the test you put to us. We can show you large children and small

adults, smooth-faced boys and full-bearded men, types of failing manhood and of hale old age, but there are 'missing links' which we cannot supply. Of some of these we have 'archeological evidence,' there are fossil specimens in our museums; and the learned tell us that others no doubt exist and will yet be found; but of living specimens there are none, though all the resources of nature and of science have been appealed to in the effort to produce them." With such an answer our ephemeral visitor might well return to his celestial home perplexed with grave misgivings respecting our honesty or our intelligence.

And so here. The cases are entirely parallel. If the processes of evolution have been in operation during infinite æons of time, and be still at work, "missing links" are out of the question. The naturalist will, of course, be able to point to types of every imaginable stage of development, from the simplest and humblest to the most exquisitely complex and perfect. But the naturalist can do no such thing. There are almost innumerable gaps in the chain, which could only be accounted for by the supposition that evolution has again and again been interrupted during intervals so prolonged, that in comparison with them the entire period of

historic time is but as a tick of the clock. Therefore it is that at every step the naturalist has to appeal to the Paleontologist. As Huxley will tell us, " The only perfectly safe foundation for the doctrine of evolution lies in the historical, or rather archeological evidence, that particular organisms have arisen by the gradual modification of their predecessors, which is furnished by fossil remains."

The evolutionist professes to account for the origin of species, but, finding as he proceeds that, under his hypothesis, the problem remains inexplicable, he strives to conceal its real character. Whence the distinctions which he thus classifies? How can he account for species itself? He struggles to escape from the difficulty by representing all such distinctions as being purely arbitrary. But such a piece of " special pleading " only betrays the weakness of his position. The lines which separate one species from another are clearly marked, as is evidenced by the undoubted fact that the effects of both culture and neglect are strictly limited by them. The reality of the difficulty, moreover, the evolutionist himself acknowledges by the recognition of missing links, and by his appeal to the fossils to supply them. The necessity for the admission and the appeal

are a conclusive proof that his hypothesis is untenable.

Let us then keep clearly in view, first, that evolution is merely a philosophic theory; second, that it is unproved; third, that it is inadequate; and fourth, that (as will appear more plainly in the sequel) it is unnecessary, except of course with those scientists who cling to any plank that will save them from having to acknowledge God. And, it may be added, there is a fashion in science as well as in dress, and the fashion changes almost as rapidly in the one sphere as in the other. And so, as Karl von Hartmann wrote:

"In the sixties of the past century the opposition of the older group of savants to the Darwinian hypothesis was still supreme. In the seventies the new idea began to gain ground rapidly in all cultured countries. In the eighties Darwin's influence was at its height, and exercised an almost absolute control over technical research. In the nineties, for the first time, a few timid expressions of doubt and opposition were heard; and these gradually swelled into a great chorus of voices, aiming at the overthrow of the Darwinian theory. In the first decade of the twentieth century it has

become apparent that the days of Darwinism are numbered." [1]

[1] Taken from a translation given in *The Pall Mall Magazine* for September, 1904. As a commentary upon it I may add the following extract from an article entitled "The Riddle of Evolution," which appeared in *The Times Literary Supplement* of June 9, 1905:

"No one possessed of a sense of humour can contemplate without amusement the battle of evolution, encrimsoned (dialectically speaking) with the gore of innumerable combatants, encumbered with the corpses of the (dialectically) slain, and resounding with the cries of the living, as they hustle together in the fray. [Here follows a lengthy list of the various schools and sects of Evolutionists.] Never was seen such a *mêlée*. The humour of it is that they all claim to represent 'Science,' the serene, the majestic, the absolutely sure, the undivided and immutable, the one and only vicegerent of Truth, her other self. Not theirs the weakness of the theologians or the metaphysicians, who stumble about in uncertainty, obscurity, and ignorance, with their baseless assumptions, flimsy hypotheses, logical fallacies, interminable dissensions, and all the other marks of inferiority on which the votaries of Science pour ceaseless scorn. Yet it would puzzle them to point to a theological battlefield exhibiting more uncertainty, obscurity, dissension, assumption, and fallacy than their own. For the plain truth is that, though some agree in this or that, there is not a single point in which all agree; battling for evolution they have torn it to pieces; nothing is left, nothing at all on their own showing, save a few fragments strewn about the arena. . . ."

CHAPTER III

HERBERT SPENCER'S SCHEME

THE hypothesis of degeneration has been here suggested as a rival to that of evolution. It equally accounts for the facts, and is less beset with difficulties. Are we then to accept it? By no means. Both alike are mere theories, wholly unsupported by direct evidence; and therefore the sceptic will reject both, unless they be alternatives, and he is thus compelled to make choice between them. But they are not alternatives. The facts submitted to our notice by the naturalist would be still more fully accounted for by the assumption that every kind of creature sprang from the same Creator's hand.

And this is, in fact, the only alternative which the evolutionist admits. "We have to choose between two hypotheses," he tells us—"the hypothesis of special creations, and the hypothesis of evolution." The necessity for this

admission, be it observed, is by implication a conclusive proof that evolution is unproved.[1]

Let us, then, consider the suggested alternative. Herbert Spencer will tell us that, "however regarded, the hypothesis of special creations turns out to be worthless—worthless by its derivation; worthless in its intrinsic incoherence; worthless as absolutely without evidence; worthless as not supplying an intellectual need; worthless as not satisfying a moral want. We must, therefore," he concludes, "consider it as counting for nothing in opposition to any other hypothesis respecting the origin of organic beings." [2]

Upon the legal mind the effect of this sort of onslaught is merely to excite suspicion that some weak point in the case requires to be concealed. Such dogmatism of assertion must only serve to encourage us in our investigation of the argument.

First, then, we are told that the notion of a creation is a primitive one, and "early ideas are not usually true ideas." [3] But this is a very transparent *petitio principii*; for unless we

[1] It is only where there is no direct proof that a result has been caused in one way that we need to show it could not have occurred in any other way (see p. 3 *ante*).

[2] *Principles of Biology*, § 115. [3] Ibid., 110.

assume that evolution is true, which is precisely what has to be proved, the statement is of no force whatever.

Herbert Spencer proceeds to urge that a belief in creation is discredited by "association with a special class of mistaken beliefs."[1] Now this, of course, is a reference to the Mosaic account of the creation,[2] and it is sufficiently answered by the fact that that account is accepted by many men of competent attainments and of the highest intellectual capacity.[3]

Again, we are told that not only is this hypothesis "not countenanced by a single fact," but further, that it "cannot be framed into a coherent thought,"[4] and is "merely a formula for our ignorance."[5] "No one ever saw a

[1] *Principles of Biology*, § 111.

[2] For there is no other record of primitive beliefs in question here. Spencer, it is true, seeks to create a prejudice by bracketing it with "the cosmogony of the Indians or the Greeks." At the Bar this would be characterised as a *nisi prius* trick.

[3] They are careful, no doubt, to distinguish between what the Patriarch actually taught, and what, as they maintain, a crude misapprehension of his teaching attributes to him. But this does not affect my argument.

[4] *Principles of Biology*, § 112.

[5] Ibid., § 113.

special creation." [1] True; but a similar objection may be made to the hypothesis of evolution; and it has, in fact, been urged in these pages in the very words here used by Herbert Spencer. [2] It is admitted that no new species has ever been evolved within human experience, and the supposed origination is referred to "an abysmal past," which may, for aught we know, be purely fabulous. The objection, if of force at all, is equally valid against both hypotheses.

For let us keep clearly in view what our author studiously conceals, that at this point the real question is not the origin of species, but the origin of life. Until he can give us some reasonable account of the existence of life, we shall continue to believe in "a beneficent Creator of the universe"; and though Herbert Spencer will deplore our "ignorance" and despise our "pseud-ideas," we shall console ourselves by the companionship of a long line of illustrious men, whose names perchance will be increasingly venerated in the world of philosophy and letters when some new generation of scientists shall have arisen to regard with patronising pity the popular theories of to-day.

[1] *Principles of Biology*, § 112.

[2] See p. *22 ante*.

" No one ever saw a special creation," and the hypothesis " cannot be framed into a coherent thought." This implies, first, an admission that if we were permitted to see a special creation we could frame the coherent thought ; and, secondly, an assertion that our ability to frame ideas is limited by our experience. The admission is fatal, and the assertion is obviously false.

Herbert Spencer's remaining objections to special creations are an enumeration of certain theological difficulties, in which those who espouse the hypothesis are supposed to entangle themselves.[1] These might be dismissed with the remark that a mere *ad hominem* argument is of no importance here. If valid, it could only serve to discredit theology, without strengthening the author's position. But let us examine it.

The objections are briefly these. Theology is supposed to teach that special creations were designed to demonstrate to mankind the power of the Creator : " would it not have been still better demonstrated by the separate creation of each individual ? " It is quite unnecessary to discuss this, for there is not a suggestion in the Bible from cover to cover that creation had any

[1] *Principles of Biology*, § 114.

such purpose.[1] What evolution assumes,[2] the Bible asserts, namely, that man did not appear in the world until after every other organised form was already in existence.

But the next and final difficulty appears at first sight to be more serious. "Omitting the human race, for whose defects and miseries the current theology professes to account, and limiting ourselves to the lower creation, what must we think of the countless different pain-inflicting appliances and instincts with which animals are endowed?"[3] "Whoever contends that each kind of animal was specially designed, must assert either that there was a deliberate intention on the part of the Creator to produce these results, or that there was an inability to prevent them." This difficulty, moreover, is greatly intensified by the fact that "of the animal kingdom as a whole, more than half the species are parasites, and thus we are brought to the contemplation of innumerable cases in

[1] When a writer speaks of theology in general terms, without indicating any particular author or school, it must be assumed that he refers to the Bible, which is, of course, the only religious book that all educated readers are supposed to be familiar with.

[2] I do not assert that all evolutionists admit this, but I maintain that it is implied in the hypothesis of evolution.

[3] *Principles of Biology*, § 114.

which the suffering inflicted brings no compensating benefit."

Now, in the first place, these objections are applicable as really, though, possibly, not to the same extent, to the hypothesis of creation in general. And that hypothesis is no longer in question; for, as we have seen, "scientific thought is compelled to accept the idea of creative power." [1] And, in the second place, we must remember that these difficulties are purely theological. They have no force save against those of us who believe the Bible. Such people, according to the argument, must abandon either the Biblical account of creation or the Biblical representation of God. They must assert either that the Creator intended to produce the results here under observation, or that there was an inability to prevent them. In other words, God is deficient either in goodness or in power.

This introduces a question which hitherto has been avoided in these pages. Nor shall it here receive more than the briefest notice; for even a conventional acquaintance with the Biblical scheme will enable us to find the solution of Herbert Spencer's difficulties. The validity of his dilemma depends upon ignoring one of the

[1] See p. 14 *ante*.

fundamental dogmas of theology. The teaching of the Bible is unmistakable, that Adam in his fall dragged down with him the entire creation of which he was the federal head ; that the suffering under which the creature groans is not the result of design, but of a tremendous catastrophe which has brought ruin and misery in its train ; that not only is the Creator not wanting in power to restore creation to its pristine perfectness, but that He has pledged Himself to accomplish this very result, and that the restoration will be so complete that even the destructive propensities of the brute will cease.

Such is the teaching of the Bible, unfolded not merely in the poetry of the Hebrew prophets, but in the dogmatic prose of the Apostle of the Gentiles. The question here is not whether it be reasonable, whether it be true. All that concerns us is the fact that it forms an essential part of the Biblical scheme, and thus affords a complete refutation of an *ad hominem* argument which depends for its validity upon misrepresenting or ignoring it.

Herbert Spencer's indictment against belief in special creations thus begins and ends by disingenuous attempts to prejudice the issue. And in asserting that the hypothesis is incapable of being " framed into a coherent thought," he

urges an objection which from its very nature admits of no other answer than that which has been already given to it. If we call for a poll upon the question, we shall find on one side a crowd of illustrious men of unquestionable fame, and of the very highest rank as philosophers and thinkers; and on the other, Herbert Spencer and a few more besides, all of whom must await the verdict of posterity before they can be permanently assigned the place which some of their contemporaries claim for them. An assertion which thus brands the entire bead-roll of philosophers, from Bacon to Charles Darwin, as the dupes of a "pseud-idea," a "formula for ignorance," is worthless save as affording matter for a psychological study of a most interesting kind.

The alleged absence of evidence of a special creation has been already met by pointing out that the objection equally applies to the hypothesis of evolution. But perhaps it deserves a fuller notice. "No one ever saw a special creation," we are told. The author might have added that if the entire Royal Society in council were permitted to "see a special creation," the sceptic would reject their testimony unless there were indirect evidence to confirm it. He would

maintain that in the sphere of the miraculous, direct evidence, unless thus confirmed, is of no value at second hand. His language would be, "Produce for our inspection the organism alleged to have been created, and satisfy us, first, that it had no existence prior to the moment assigned for its creation, and, secondly, that it could not have originated in some way known to our experience, and then, indeed, we shall give up our scepticism and accept the testimony offered us."

But Herbert Spencer goes on to aver that "no one ever found proof of an indirect kind that no special creation had taken place." This is a choice example of the *nisi prius* artifice at which our author is such an adept. The existence of a world teeming with life has been accepted by the greatest and wisest men of every age as a conclusive proof that a special creation has taken place. But this is boldly met by sheer weight of unsupported denial.

If we approach the subject, not as special pleaders or partisans, but in a philosophic spirit, we shall state the argument thus:—The admitted facts give proof that species originated either by special creations or by evolution. If either hypothesis can be established by indepen-

dent evidence, the other is thereby discredited. But, in the one case as in the other, positive proof is wholly wanting. We must, therefore, rely upon general considerations. On the evolution theory, proof is confessedly wanting that the alleged cause is adequate to account for the admitted facts.[1] Not so on the creation hypothesis, for as we admit that *life* originated by creation,[2] there can be no difficulty in assigning a similar origin to species. In a word, as we side with Darwin in believing in "a beneficent Creator of the universe,"[3] the evolution hypothesis is unnecessary and therefore unphilosophical.

But further, the concealed consequences of the argument under review must not be overlooked. If it be valid for any purpose at all, it disproves not only the fact of a creation, but the existence of a Creator. "No one ever saw a special creation": neither did any one ever see the Deity. If, as alleged, we have no

[1] I do not say there is no *evidence*. But all admit that that evidence does not amount to proof, unless, indeed, the alternative hypothesis can be disproved; and to disprove it is the whole point and purpose of Herbert Spencer's chapter on the subject.

[2] See pp. 15, 16 *ante*.

[3] But see p. 81 *post* (footnote).

evidence of His handiwork, neither have we proof of His existence. At a single plunge we have thus reached the level of blank atheism, which is the extreme depth of moral and intellectual degradation. "The birth both of the species and the individual" must equally be ascribed to "blind chance," "coercion" being appealed to, I suppose, to quell the inevitable "revolt of the understanding." [1] And the strange religious propensities common to the race, whether civilised or savage, must also be suppressed; or, at all events, our *Penates* must be strictly limited to an effigy of our hairy quadrumanous ancestor with pointed ears, supplemented possibly by some "symbolic conception" of the primordial life-germ wrapped in cloud, and a copy of Herbert Spencer's *System of Philosophy* to guide and regulate the cult.

[1] See p. 17 *ante.*

CHAPTER IV

HAVE WE A REVELATION?

SCEPTICISM is "not a permanent resting-place for human reason." The knowledge that there is bad money in circulation does not make us fling our purse into the gutter, or refuse to replenish it when empty. The sceptic tries a coin before accepting it, but when once he puts it in his pocket, his appreciation of it is, for that very reason, all the more intelligent and full. A convinced doubter makes the best believer.

As Lord Kelvin declares, "Scientific thought is compelled to accept the idea of creative power." With an open mind, therefore, and unwavering confidence the true sceptic acknowledges "the beneficent Creator of the universe." And in no grudging spirit, but honestly and fully, he will own the obligations and relationships which this involves. Religion is implied in the acknowledgment of God. And further, this acknowledgment removes every *a priori* objection to the idea of a revelation. It creates

indeed a positive presumption in its favour. For if we are the offspring of a "beneficent Creator," it is improbable that, in a world so darkened by sorrow and doubt, He would leave us without guidance, and without light as to our destiny.

At all events, our belief in God makes it incumbent on us to examine any alleged revelation which is presented to us with reasonable credentials. If some one brings me what purports to be a message or letter from my brother, I may dispose of the matter by answering, "I have no brother"; but if I possess an unknown lost brother, I cannot refuse to receive the communication and to test its claims on my attention.

But here we must keep our heads. There is no sphere in which the functions of the constable are more needed. The existence of a lost brother is no reason for sheltering impostors. Our belief in God is no reason for abandoning ourselves to superstition, or submitting to be duped by foolish or designing men.

Yet another caution is needed here. We have now reached ground where the judgment of men of science is of no special value whatever. So long as it is a question of investigating and describing the facts and phenomena of nature,

we sit at their feet with unfeigned admiration of their genius and industry ; but when it becomes a question of adjudicating upon the evidence with which they furnish us, they must give way to those whose training and habits of mind make them better fitted for the task. We place the very highest value upon their testimony as experts in all matters within their own province, but we cannot consent to their passing from the witness-box to the judicial bench ; least of all can we consent to their occupying such a position where the subject-matter is one of which they have no special cognizance.[1] In such a case a dozen city merchants, with a trained lawyer to guide their deliberations, would make a better tribunal than the Royal Society could supply.

The extreme point to which reason leads us is the recognition of an unknown God. What now concerns us is the inquiry whether He has revealed Himself to men. Have we a revelation? A discussion of this question on *a priori* lines

[1] The childlike faith of those who so recently bowed before that false god *Bathybius Haeckeli*, puts to blush the sweet simplicity of the Sunday-school. It may seem ungenerous to remind "philosophers" of their folly, but we cannot ignore it when considering their claims to guide our judgment.

would have many advantages. But, on the whole, the practical view of it is the best. And it would be mere pedantry to ignore the peculiar claims which Christianity has upon our notice. In fact, the question narrows itself at once to this plain issue, Is Christianity a Divine revelation? If this question be answered in the negative, it is really useless to discuss the merits of Islam; and as for Buddha, his popularity in certain quarters in England as a rival to Christ is proof only of the depth of Saxon silliness. There is a sense, of course, in which all enthusiasm is inspiration, but for our present purpose this is a mere fencing with words. The question is perfectly definite and clear to every one who wishes to understand it, Is Christianity a revelation from God? Let us examine the witnesses.

If we ask in what form this alleged revelation comes to us, all Christians are agreed in placing in our hands a Book; in a word, they point us to the Bible. But here, at the very threshold, their unanimity ceases. While some would insist that this is the only revelation, the majority of Christendom would point us also to a certain class of men so supernaturally gifted and accredited that they are themselves a revelation. This system, which is popu-

larly associated with Rome, deserves priority of consideration because of the prestige it enjoys by reason of the antiquity of its origin, and the influence and number of its disciples. Moreover, if its claims be accepted, the truth of Christianity is established; and if on examination they be rejected, the ground is cleared for the consideration of the main question on its merits.

The founders of Christianity, we are told, in addition to their ability to work miracles such as the senses could take notice of, possessed also supernatural powers of a mystic kind. By certain mystic rites, for instance, they were able to work such a transformation in common bread and ordinary wine, that, although no available test could detect the change, the bread really became flesh, and the wine blood. Further still, we are assured that these powers have been transmitted from generation to generation, and are now possessed by the successors of the men who first received them direct from Heaven. And more than this, we are asked to believe that these miracles are actually performed in our own day, not in isolated and remote places far removed from observation, but in our midst and everywhere; and that, too, in the most public and open manner.

If this be true, it is obvious that not only the miracles which are thus wrought in our presence, but the very men themselves who cause them, are a Divine revelation. We are no longer left to reach out toward the Supreme Being by the light of reason ; we are thus brought face to face with God.

Indifference is impossible in the presence of such demands on our faith. If these men in fact possess such powers, it is difficult to set a limit to the respect and veneration due to them. But if their pretensions be false, it is monstrous that they should be permitted to trade upon the credulity of mankind. Suppose we admit for the sake of argument that the apostles possessed these powers, the question remains, Are these same powers in fact possessed by the men who now claim to exercise them ?

It is not easy to decide what amount of evidence ought to be deemed sufficient in such a case. But is there any evidence at all ? These powers are not supposed to be conferred immediately from Heaven, but mediately through other men, who in turn had received them from their predecessors, and so on in an unbroken line extending back to the days of the Apostles. No man who is satisfied with

the evidence upon which evolution rests can fairly dispute the proofs of an apostolic succession. Let us, therefore, go so far in our admissions as even to accept this also; and that, too, without stopping to investigate the lives of those through whom the "succession" flowed. Some of them were famous for their piety, others were infamous for their crimes. But passing all this by, let us get face to face with the living men who make these amazing demands upon our faith.

Some of these men were our playmates in childhood, and our class-fellows and companions in school and college days. We recall their friendly rivalry in our studies and our sports, and their share in many a debauch that now we no longer speak of when we meet. Some of them are the firm and valued friends of our manhood. We respect them for their learning, and still more for their piety and their self-denying efforts for the good of their fellow-men. Others, again, have fallen from our acquaintance. Although, *ex hypothesi*, equally endowed with supernatural gifts which should make us value their presence at our deathbed, they are exceptionally addicted to natural vices which lead us to shun them in our lifetime.

And this disposes of one ground on which

possibly a *prima facie* case might be set up. If all those who are supposed to possess these extraordinary powers were distinguished from their fellow-men by high and noble qualities, their pretensions would at least deserve our respect. But we fail to find any special marks of character or conduct, which even the most partial judge could point to for such a purpose.

On what other ground, then, can these claims be maintained? It is idle to beat about the bush. The fact is clear as light that there is not a shadow of evidence of any description whatsoever to support them. This being so, we must at once recall one of the admissions already made, lest these men should take refuge in an appeal to the New Testament as establishing their position. The enlightened Christianity of the Reformation emphatically denies that even the Apostles themselves possessed such powers, or that the Bible gives any countenance whatever to the assumption of them. In a word, Christians who are the very *élite* of Christendom maintain that such pretensions have no Scriptural foundation whatever.

If Christianity be true, we need not hesitate to believe that certain men are divinely called and qualified as religious teachers. But this position is separated by an impassable gulf from

the mystic pretensions of priestcraft. In truth, sacerdotalism presents extraordinary problems for the consideration of the thoughtful. If it prevailed only among the ignorant and degraded, it would deserve no attention. But the fact is beyond question that its champions and votaries include men of the highest intellectual eminence and moral worth. The integrity of such men is irreproachable. They are not accomplices in a wilful fraud upon their fellows; they are true and honest in their convictions. How, then, are we to account for the fact that many who hold such high rank as scholars and thinkers are thus the dupes of such a delusion? How is it to be explained that here in England, while we boast of increasing enlightenment, this delusion is regaining its hold upon the religious life of the nation? The national Church, which half a century ago was comparatively free from the evil, is now hopelessly leavened with it. The more this matter is studied the more inexplicable it seems, unless we are prepared to believe in the existence of spiritual influences of a sinister kind, by which in the religious sphere the minds even of men of intellect and culture are liable to be warped and blinded.[1]

[1] To discuss the legality of such views and practices in the Church of England would be foreign to my argument,

and outside the scope of my book; and moreover, having regard to Articles XXVIII. and XXXI., I cannot see that the question is open. Here is one clause of Article XXVIII. :—

"Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord cannot be proved by holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions."

It may be interesting to notice here that this vetoes the superstitious meaning which almost universally attaches to the word "sacrament." It is the equivalent of the Greek *μυστήριον*, which is used by the LXX in Daniel ii. 18, 19, 27, 28, 29, 30, 47, and iv. 9, and is always rendered *secret* in our English version. This moreover is its ordinary meaning in the New Testament. But the word was even then acquiring the meaning usually given to it in the Greek Fathers, viz., a *symbol* or *secret sign*. See, *e.g.*, Rev. i. 20, and xvii. 5, 7. And this is the significance of the English word "sacrament." It connotes something which represents something else; and so we find that in old writers Noah's rainbow, the brazen serpent, &c., are called "sacraments." And in this sense it is that the bread and wine in the "Eucharist" are a "sacrament"; they *represent* the body and blood of Christ. Therefore to hold that they are in fact His body and blood is to "overthrow the nature of a sacrament."

Our practice of kissing the book in taking a judicial oath is in this sense a "sacrament." And there can be no doubt that it was owing to some symbolic act of this kind that the Latin word *sacramentum* came to mean a soldier's oath.

CHAPTER V

IS CHRISTIANITY DIVINE?

Is Christianity a Divine revelation? This question must not be settled by the result of the preliminary inquiry here proposed. In rejecting sacerdotalism, we merely clear the ground for a discussion of the main question upon its merits. "The Reformation," says Mr. Goldwin Smith, "was a tremendous earthquake" which "shook down the fabric of mediæval religion." "But," he goes on to say, "it left the authority of the Bible unshaken, and men might feel that the destructive process had its limit, and that adamant was still beneath their feet."

To the Bible, then, we turn. But how is such an inquiry to be conducted? The unfairness of entrusting the defence of Christianity to any who are themselves the rejecters of Christianity will be palpable to every one. Here the right of audience is only to the Christian. But, in making this concession,

the sceptic may fairly insist in maintaining the place of critic, if not of censor. Until convinced, he will continue to consider, reflect, hesitate, doubt.

And it is a suspicious circumstance that so many who claim to be leaders of religious thought, and who are professional exponents of the Christian faith, seem eager not only to eliminate from Christianity everything that is distinctive, but also to divorce it from much with which, in its origin, it was inseparably associated. They are strangely anxious to separate it from the Judaism which it succeeded, and upon which it is so indisputably founded. As a corollary upon this, they struggle to separate the New Testament from the Old, treating the Hebrew Scriptures, and especially the Pentateuch, as persons who have risen in the world are prone to treat the *quondam* acquaintances of humbler days. As a further step, they betray unmistakable uneasiness when confronted with the miraculous in the Bible; and "the old evangelical doctrine" of inspiration they regard with undisguised dislike, if not contempt.

No well-informed person will dispute that this is a fair statement of the position assumed by a school of religious thought which is in its

own sphere both influential and popular. But it needs no more than a conventional knowledge of the New Testament to enable us to assert that the Christianity of Christ and His apostles was not a new religion, but rather an unfolding and fulfilment of the Judaism which preceded it. The Christ of Christendom was a crucified Jew—crucified because He declared Himself to be the Jew's Messiah; and His claims upon our homage and our faith are inseparably connected with that Messiahship.

And what were the credentials of His Messiahship? To some extent the miracles which He wrought, but mainly the Hebrew Scriptures. And in His appeal to those Scriptures He implicitly asserted that they were in the strictest sense inspired. Ten times are those Scriptures quoted in the first four chapters of the New Testament as being the *ipsissima verba* of the Deity,[1] and three of these quotations are from the Book of Deuteronomy, the very book which these theologians are most decided in rejecting.

The language of the "Sermon on the Mount" is, if possible, more emphatic still. To under-

[1] The Revised Version emphasises the force of διά in such passages as Matt. 1. 22: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken *by* the Lord *through* the prophet."

stand its full significance we must bear in mind what Josephus asserts, that by all Jews the Scriptures "were justly believed to be Divine, so that, rather than speak against them, they were ready to suffer torture or even death."[1] It was to a people saturated with this belief that such words as the following were spoken: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." "The 'jot' (we are told) is the Greek *iota*, the Hebrew *yod*, the smallest of all the letters of the alphabet. The 'tittle' was one of the smallest strokes or twists of other letters." What language, then, could possibly assert more plainly that, so far from coming to set up a new religion, as these Christian teachers would tell us, the Nazarene declared His mission to be the recognition and fulfilment of the old Hebrew Scriptures in every part, even to the minutest detail?

And much that is distinctly miraculous in those Scriptures was specially adopted in His teaching; as, for example, Noah's deluge; the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; Jonah

[1] Josephus, *Contra Apion*, i. 8.

and the fish; Moses and the burning bush; the heaven-sent manna in the wilderness; Elijah and his mission to the widow of Sarepta; Elisha and the cure of Naaman's leprosy by bathing in the Jordan.

But, we are told, though Christ was essentially Divine, He laid aside His Divinity with a view to His mediatorial work. And His ministry was marked by the imperfections of human knowledge. In proof of this, appeal is made to the Apostolic statement that He "emptied Himself." Strange it is that men who hold "verbal inspiration" in such contempt should lay such stress upon the words of Scripture! But let that pass. The subject will come up again: suffice it here to say that the Apostle's language will not support the heresy that is based upon it. True it is that no stronger term could be found to describe the great Renunciation by which the Son of God stripped Himself of all the insignia of Deity. But this involved no change of personality. When King Alfred became a drudge in the swineherd's cottage, he divested himself of all the externals of royalty, but he did not cease to be King Alfred. And the story of the burnt cakes loses its significance and charm if we forget that it was with full consciousness of who

and what he was that he bore the peasant's reprimands. And the words of Christ give overwhelming proof that throughout His earthly ministry He bore His sufferings with full knowledge of His origin and glory, and that His teaching was not characterised by human ignorance, but by Divine authority.

If this be forgotten, moreover, the Apostolic exhortation loses all its meaning. For it is based on this, that with full knowledge of His riches the Son of God came down to poverty; that with the fullest consciousness of His Deity "He emptied Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." [1]

The dilemma in which this places the Christian is inexorable. If Christ was Divine, the truth of everything adopted and accredited by His teaching is placed beyond question. To plead that, with a view to advance His Messianic claims, He pandered to Jewish ignorance

[1] Phil. ii. 5–8; *cf.* 2 Cor. viii. 9. I cannot turn aside here to discuss further the *Kenosis* theory of the Critics (see Chap. XII. *post*). Every free and fearless thinker will recognise that if it be valid, it destroys the Christian revelation. I have dealt with the subject in other books —*Pseudo-criticism, or the Higher Criticism and its Counterfeit; The Bible and Modern Criticism*, &c.

and prejudice, is not only to admit that He was merely human, but to endanger our respect for Him even as a Rabbi. And yet Christian teachers have the temerity to suggest such an explanation of His words. Such a position is utterly untenable. The Christian is, to borrow a legal term, *estopped* from questioning the inspiration of the Old Testament, or the reality of the miracles recorded in it; and when teachers who profess to be Christians question both, they cannot be surprised if they are charged with being either dishonest or credulous.

"But," it may be urged, "it is not the teaching of Christ which is disparaged, but only the record of that teaching. It is here that allowance must be made for Jewish ignorance and prejudice. That the Jews believed their Scriptures to be inspired is admitted, and therefore it was that those who chronicled the words of Christ gave that colour to His doctrine. The New Testament is marked by the same imperfections as the Old. It is of priceless value as the record of Divine facts, but it is upon those facts themselves, and not upon the record of them, that Christianity is founded."

This answer is plausible, but upon examination it will prove to be absolutely fatal. When

we turn to the Gospels, we find that of necessity the whole fabric of Christianity stands or falls with our acceptance or rejection of their claims to be, in the strictest and fullest sense, authentic. Most true it is that the system rests on facts, and not on writings merely; and this it is, indeed, which distinguishes it from all other religions. But such is the character of the facts on which it is based, that if the record of them be disparaged, belief in these facts is sheer credulity. The public facts of the ministry and death of Christ are as well authenticated as any other events of ancient history. No one questions them. But the entire significance of those facts depends upon their relation to other facts behind them—facts of a transcendental character, and such as no amount of discredited or doubtful testimony would warrant our accepting.

"But," it may perhaps be answered, "though the record was human, the Person of whom it speaks was more than human; the whole argument depends upon ignoring the great fundamental fact of Christianity, that Christ was Himself Divine." But what is the basis of our belief in the Deity of Christ? The founder of Rome was said to be the divinely begotten child of a vestal virgin. And in the old Babylonian

mysteries a similar parentage was ascribed to the martyred son of Semiramis, gazetted Queen of Heaven. What grounds have we then for distinguishing the miraculous birth at Bethlehem from these and other kindred legends of the ancient world?

At this point we are face to face with that to which, I repeat, no consensus of untrustworthy testimony could lend even an *a priori* probability. If, therefore, the Gospels be not authentic and authoritative records of the mission and teaching of Christ, we must admit that Christianity is founded on a Galilæan legend. And if we accept the New Testament, we are excluded from rejecting the earlier Scriptures which were so unequivocally accredited by Christ Himself. If His authority as a teacher be rejected, or the authenticity of the records of His ministry be denied, there is no longer any foothold for faith, for the foundations of Christianity are thus destroyed. And while the superstitious may cling to an edifice built upon the sand, clear-headed and thoughtful men will take refuge in natural religion.

Whatever may be said, therefore, of the theological school here under review, their religion is not Christianity, and their testimony must

be rejected as of less value even than that of the sacerdotalists. Nor can any one justly take exception to the fairness of this argument. If we be urged to embark in a gold-mine, we naturally ask whether those who commend it to our confidence have themselves put their money in it. Nor will this avail to satisfy us if we find that they have also invested in other undertakings which we know to be worthless. And so here: we are entitled to put men upon proof, not only of the sincerity and consistency of their faith, but also of its reasonableness. And we find that the faith of Christians of the one school includes tenets the belief in which implies the degradation of reason, and that the unfaith of Christians of the other school undermines Christianity altogether. The one school believes too much, the other believes too little. With the one, faith degenerates into superstition; with the other, it merges in a scepticism which is as real, though not as rational or consistent, as is that of many who are commonly branded as infidels.

CHAPTER VI

MR. A. J. BALFOUR'S SCHEME

"WE are without any rational ground for believing in science"; "We are without any rational ground for determining the logical relation which ought to subsist between science and religion." Such are among the startling theses maintained by the author of *A Defence of Philosophic Doubt*. And one of the main results of his argument is stated thus: "In the absence, then, of reason to the contrary, I am content to regard the two great creeds by which we attempt to regulate our lives as resting in the main upon separate bases." A protest this against "the existence of a whole class of 'apologists' the end of whose labours appears to be to explain, or to explain away, every appearance of contradiction between the two."

But here Mr. Balfour fails of his usual precision. A definition of religion is wanting. He seems sometimes to use the word in its first and

widest sense, and at other times as equivalent to a particular system of belief, and, by implication, to Christianity. A consciousness of our own existence is the foundation of all knowledge. And that elementary fact is the first stepping-stone toward an apprehension of the existence of God. It might be fairly argued that our knowledge of the existence of God rests upon a surer basis than our knowledge of the external world, and therefore that religion in that sense takes precedence of science. But such a plea is unnecessary, because our knowledge of the external world is, for the practical purposes of life, absolute and unquestioned. We may be content, therefore, to assert that the two creeds stand upon a perfect equality.[1]

And, speaking generally, belief in both is universal. There are exceptions, doubtless—as, for example, "street arabs and advanced thinkers";[2] but this does not affect the argument. Science depends on our belief in the external world; religion on our belief in God.

[1] "My complaint rather is that of the two creeds which, from a philosophical point of view, stand, so far as I can judge, upon a perfect equality, one should be set up as a standard to which the other must necessarily conform."—*A Defence of Philosophic Doubt*, p. 303.

[2] *A Defence of Philosophic Doubt*, p. 319.

Religious feeling springs from the felt relation in which we stand to a supreme Power; and, as Tyndall justly says, "religious feeling is as much a verity as any other part of human consciousness, and against it, on its subjective side, the waves of science beat in vain." [1]

But this relates to what is called natural religion, and it is not until we pass into the sphere of revealed religion that the seeming conflict with science arises. The difficulties of practical men, moreover, are of a wholly different order from those which perplex the philosophers. Take, for example, the argument against miracles. An intelligent schoolboy can see that the solution of the problem depends on the answer we make to the question whether there be a God. Even John Stuart Mill admits this. To acknowledge the existence of a God possessed of power infinitely greater than that of man, and yet to insist that He must necessarily be a cipher in the world—this may pass for philosophy, but a different sort of word would describe it better.

And as with the so-called "laws" of science, so also is it with its theories. Excepting only the evolution hypothesis, which enjoys a certain amount of popularity, common men

[1] *Virchow and Evolution.*

care nothing for them. What weighs with earnest thinkers who are real truth-lovers is that ascertained facts appear to disprove the truth of what has been received as a Divine revelation.

But treatises such as those of which *A Defence of Philosophic Doubt* is a most striking example, are further defective in that they defend religion upon a ground which leaves the apologist equally free to fall back upon superstition, as to vindicate the claims of the Bible to be a revelation. And as a result of this, in discussing the foundations of belief they ignore the doctrine of transcendental faith, which is characteristic of Christianity.

The theological argument from miracles has, at least in its common form, no scientific or Biblical sanction. The fact of a miracle is a proof merely of the presence of some power greater than man's. That such a power is necessarily Divine is an inference which reason refuses to accept, and Christianity very emphatically denies.[1]

[1] I have dealt with this subject in discussing Paley's argument in *The Silence of God.* Scripture is explicit that miracles have been, and may be, the result of demoniacal or Satanic agency. The Jews accounted thus for the miracles of Christ, and His answer was an appeal to the moral character of His works.

Every one who believes in a God must be prepared to admit that there may be creatures in the universe far superior to man in intelligence and power; and even an atheistic evolutionist would as freely admit this, if he were honest and fearless in his philosophy.[1] It is entirely a question of evidence.

But this we need not discuss. As regards the theologian the matter stands thus. He tells us that evil beings exist, endowed with powers adequate to the accomplishment of miracles on earth, and at the same time he maintains that the fact of a miracle is a proof of Divine intervention. But in the New Testament the miracles are never appealed to as an "evidence," save in connection with the preceding revelation to which they are referred. They accredited the Nazarene as being the promised Messiah. And "the fact is allowed," not, as Bishop Butler avers," that Christianity was professed to be received into the world upon the belief of miracles," but that the claimant to Messiahship was rejected as a profane deceiver by the very people in whose midst the miracles were wrought.

And it is a further fact that no one of the

[1] The atheist, of course, would substitute "organism" or some kindred word for "creature."

writers of the New Testament accounts thus for his own faith, or for the faith of his converts. That their faith was an inference from their observation of miracles—that it was due to natural causes at all—is negatived in the plainest terms, and its supernatural origin and character are explicitly asserted. So long as the testimony was to the Jew, miracles abounded; but if the Apostle Paul's ministry at Corinth and Thessalonica may be accepted as typical of his work among Gentiles, his Epistles to the Corinthians and Thessalonians emphatically disprove the idea that miracles were made the basis of his preaching.

A single quotation from each will suffice. "The Jews require a sign" (he says; that is, they claimed that the preaching should be accredited by miracles), "and the Greeks seek after wisdom" (that is, they posed as rationalists and philosophers): "but" (he declares, in contrast with both) "we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God." And to the Thessalonians he writes, "When ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the

word of men, but as it is in truth the Word of God."

Now, no one who will examine these statements fairly can fail to recognise their force and meaning. They do not indicate a belief resulting from the examination of miracles performed by the Apostles, but a faith of an altogether different character. We need no protest against the folly and dishonesty of adapting the teaching of Christ and His apostles to modern views, and calling the name of Christian over the hybrid system thus formed. Such a system may be admirable, but it is not *Christianity*. For the Christian is supposed to have a faith which is produced and sustained by his being brought into immediate relations with God. No one, of course, will deny that the God whose creatures we are can so speak to us that His Word shall carry with it the conviction that it is Divine. And if it be demanded why it is that all do not accept it, the Christian will answer that man's spiritual depravity renders a special intervention of the Divine Spirit necessary.

No one, again, will deny that formerly this part of the Christian system was generally accepted by professed Christians. But it has been given up, of course, by all who have ceased

to regard the Bible as a Divine revelation. Naturally so, for the one part of the system depends on the other. None but the superstitious suppose that God speaks to us save through the Scriptures, and once we give up the old belief of Christendom, that the Scriptures are what they claim to be, the Christian theory of faith becomes untenable.

Christianity stands or falls according to the conclusion we arrive at here.[1] Hence the special difficulty which embarrasses the consideration of the question. In litigation, a case can never come before a jury until some definite propositions are ascertained, which the one side maintains and the other side denies. But in this controversy "the issues" are never settled. The lines of attack

[1] It will not avail to urge the undoubted fact that some of the strongest and most cultured and most subtle intellects of our own age and of preceding ages have accepted the Bible as being strictly and altogether God-breathed. The fact is a sufficient proof that there is nothing intrinsically *absurd* in such a belief, or in the Christian system which depends upon it. But if its truth could be thus established, we must be prepared to accept also whatever is believed by men of equal calibre and fame. But some such believe in transubstantiation, some in evolution, some even in atheism—for atheism is as much a positive faith as theism.

and defence never meet. The assailant ignores the strength of the Christian position; and the Christian, entrenched in that position, is wholly unreached by the objections and difficulties of the assailant.

A Defence of Philosophic Doubt—to revert to that treatise again for a moment—is an attempt to arbitrate between the two without joining hands with either. Its author is liable to be challenged thus: "If your treatise be intended as a defence of natural religion, it is unnecessary; for there is clearly no conflict between science and natural religion. But if it be a defence of revealed religion, that is, of Christianity, it is inadequate; for you must fall back upon the Bible, and if you do so we will undermine your whole position by proving that essential parts of it are inconsistent with"—"the doctrines of science," the scientist is sure to say, thus destroying his entire argument, and leaving himself helplessly at the mercy of Mr. Balfour's pitiless logic. But if he were not misled through mistaking his hobby for a real horse, he would say, "inconsistent with *ascertained facts*"; and this position, if proved, would refute Christianity.

For example: the miraculous destruction of the cities of the plain is one of the seemingly

incredible things in Scripture. The scientist rejects the narrative as being opposed to science, just as, on the same ground, the African rejected the statement that water became so solid that men could walk upon it. But if the scientist could fix the site of Sodom and Gomorrah, and point to the condition of the soil as proof that no such phenomenon as is detailed in Genesis could have occurred there, the fact would be fatal not only to the authority of the Pentateuch, but to the Messianic claims of the Nazarene, who identified himself with it. But the scientist can do nothing of the kind. On the contrary, the admitted facts confirm the truth of the Mosaic narrative, and those who regard that narrative as a legend would urge that an ignorant and superstitious age sought thus to account for the extraordinary phenomena of the Dead Sea and the district surrounding it.

The narrative of the Jewish captivity in Babylon, again, was formerly a favourite battle-ground in this way; and in view of the deciphered cuneiform inscriptions, and other discoveries of recent years, it is an interesting question whether the Christians or the sceptics displayed the greatest unwisdom in the controversy.

The fight at this moment wages chiefly round the Mosaic account of the creation. And here it must be admitted that while in theological circles no one need hesitate to declare his doubts upon this subject, a man must indeed have the courage of his opinions to own himself a believer in Moses when among the Professors. Intolerance of this kind savours of persecution, and persecution generally secures a temporary success. It is only the few who ever set themselves to make headway against the prevailing current. If the shout, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" be kept up "by the space of two hours," even staid municipal officials will yield to it; and a two hours' séance of the Professors will silence the doubts of ordinary folk as to the infallible wisdom of science.

Upon any one in whom polemical instincts are strong, the effect is wholly different, and in all seriousness it may be averred that if Moses had written as a heathen philosopher, his cosmogony would now be held up to the admiration of mankind, and his name would be venerated in all the learned societies of the world. But his writings claim to be a Divine revelation: hence the contempt which they excite in the minds of the baser sort of men, who regard everything which savours of religion

as a fraud, and the impatience shown, even by "men of light and leading," toward any one who wishes to keep an open mind upon the subject.

The Mosaic cosmogony has been called "the proem to Genesis." But more than this, it is an integral part of the proem to the Bible as a whole. And having regard to the importance of the subject, and to the interest which it excites, a chapter shall be devoted to the consideration of it.

CHAPTER VII

THE COSMOGONY OF GENESIS

I AVOW myself a believer in the Scriptures, and if a personal reference may be pardoned, I would say that my faith is not to be accounted for either by want of thought, or by ignorance of the objections and difficulties which have been urged by scientists and sceptics. But just as the studies which charm the naturalist are an unknown world to those who are ignorant of the book of nature, so also the elements which make the Bible a fascinating volume to the believer do not exist for those who fail to possess the clew to its mysteries. "Truth brings out the hidden harmony, where unbelief can only with a dull dogmatism deny."

These words are Pusey's. And in the same connection he says in effect that the Bible is its own defence, the part of the apologist being merely to beat off attacks.

And it is in the spirit of these words that I would deal with the present question. Nor

will it be difficult to show that while among scientists generally the cosmogony of Genesis is "a principal subject of ridicule," their laughter may not, after all, be the outcome of superior wisdom.

It would be interesting and instructive to recapitulate the controversy on this subject, and to mark the various positions which have been successively occupied or abandoned by the disputants, as one or another of the fluctuating theories of science has gained prominence, or newly found fossils have added to "the testimony of the rocks." But I will content myself with recalling the main incidents of the last great tournament upon "the proem to Genesis." I allude to the discussion between Mr. Gladstone and Professor Huxley in the pages of the *Nineteenth Century* some twenty years ago.

In *The Dawn of Creation and Worship* Mr. Gladstone sought to establish the claims of the Book of Genesis to be a Divine revelation, by showing that the order of creation as there recorded has been "so affirmed in our time by natural science that it may be taken as a demonstrated conclusion and established fact." Mr. Huxley's main assault upon this position was apparently successful. His *main* assault,

I say, because his collateral arguments were not always worthy of him. His contention, for example, that the creation of the "air population" was contemporaneous with that of the "water population" depends upon the quibble that both took place within four and twenty hours.

Mr. Gladstone proclaimed that science and Genesis were perfectly in accord as regards the order in which life appeared upon our globe. To which Mr. Huxley replied as follows:

"It is agreed on all hands that terrestrial lizards and other reptiles allied to lizards occur in the Permian strata. It is further agreed that the Triassic strata were deposited after these. Moreover, it is well known that, even if certain footprints are to be taken as unquestionable evidence of the existence of birds, they are not known to occur in rocks earlier than the Trias, while indubitable remains of birds are to be met with only much later. Hence it follows that natural science does not 'affirm' the statement that birds were made on the fifth day, and 'everything that creepeth on the ground' on the sixth, on which Mr. Gladstone rests his order; for, as is shown by Leviticus, the 'Mosaic writer' includes lizards among his 'creeping things.'"

The following is the quotation from Leviticus above referred to :—

" And these are they which are unclean unto you among the creeping things that creep upon the earth ; the weasel, and the mouse, and the great lizard after its kind, and the gecko, and the land-crocodile, and the lizard, and the sand-lizard, and the chameleon. These are they which are unclean unto you among all that creep." [1]

" The merest Sunday-school exegesis, therefore " (Mr. Huxley urged) " suffices to prove that when the Mosaic writer in Gen. i. 24 speaks of creeping things he means to include lizards among them."

A charming specimen this certainly is of " the merest Sunday-school exegesis." The argument, which so completely satisfied its author and embarrassed his opponent is nothing but an *ad captandum* appeal to the chance rendering of our English Bible. If the disputants had referred the question to some more erudite authority than the Sunday-school, they would have discovered that the word translated " creeping thing " in the eleventh chapter of Leviticus has no affinity whatever with the word so rendered in the twenty-fourth verse of the first

[1] Lev. xi. 29–31, R.V.

chapter of Genesis, whereas it is the identical word which our translators have rendered "moving creature" in the twentieth verse which records the first appearance of animal life.[1]

Science proclaims the seniority of land reptiles in the genesis of life on earth, and the despised Book of Genesis records that "creeping things," which, as Huxley insisted, must include land reptiles, were the first "moving creatures" which the Creator's *fiat* called into existence.

"Hoist with his own petard" may therefore tersely describe the result of Huxley's attack.

With his old-world courtesy Mr. Gladstone proposed a reference to a distinguished American scientist. "There is no one," Mr. Huxley replied, "to whose authority I am more readily disposed to bow than that of my eminent friend Professor Dana." And Professor Dana's decision, in the following words, was published in the *Nineteenth*

[1] The word in ver. 24 is *rehmes*; but in ver. 20 it is *shehretz*, which occurs ten times in Lev. xi.

It was left to me to bring this to light, and I received Mr. Gladstone's cordial acknowledgments for calling his attention to it.

Century for August, 1886: "I agree in all essential points with Mr. Gladstone, and I believe that the first chapter of Genesis and science are in accord." [1]

But this is not all. Six years later I challenged Mr. Huxley on this subject in the columns of the *Times* newspaper. He sought to evade the issue by pleading that the real question involved was that of the supernatural *versus* evolution. This evoked a powerful letter from the late Duke of Argyll, denouncing the reference to the supernatural as savouring of "bad science and worse philosophy," and warning Mr. Huxley that in the new position in which he sought to take refuge "he would not have the support of the most eminent men of science in the United Kingdom." In a final letter I restated the question, and again challenged Mr. Huxley either to establish or to abandon his contention that Genesis and science were in antagonism. His only reply was a letter suggesting, in his grandest style, that the public were tired of the

[1] The Gladstone and Huxley articles appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* in the later months of 1885 and in January and February, 1886. And Mr. Gladstone's articles were in part reproduced in his *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture.*

controversy. But it was not the public that were tired of it.[1]

The fact remains that Mr. Gladstone's position stands unshaken. The fact remains that one who has had no equal in this age as a scientific controversialist entered the lists to attack it, and retired discomfited and discredited. Mr. Gladstone's thesis, therefore, holds the field. "The order of creation as recorded in Genesis has been so affirmed in our time by natural science that it may be taken as a demonstrated conclusion and established fact." Are we then to conclude that when Genesis was written biological science was as enlightened and as far advanced as it is to-day? Or shall we adopt the more reasonable alternative, that "the Mosaic narrative" is a Divine revelation?[2]

[1] The correspondence above referred to will be found in the *Times* of January 23 and 26 and February 1, 3, 4, 8, and 11 (1892).

I cannot refrain from adding the following extract from a letter I received from Mr. Gladstone after the *Times* correspondence closed :—

"As to the chapter itself" (Gen. i.), "I do not regard it merely as a defensible point in a circle of fortifications, but as a grand foundation of the entire fabric of the Holy Scriptures."

[2] The "mere coincidence" theory is unworthy of notice,

All this of course will weigh nothing with men who have prejudged the question. First, there are the religious teachers of that school whose *rôle* it appears to be to import the raw material of German rationalism and to retail it with a veneer of British piety to suit the British market. And, secondly, there are the scientists of the materialistic school, to whom the very name of God is intolerable.

A few years since, Lord Kelvin's dictum, already quoted,[1] gave these men an opportunity of "glorying in their shame"; and they eagerly availed themselves of it. His assertion that "scientific thought" compelled belief in God set the whole pack in full cry. The acknowledgment even of "a directive force," they declared, "in effect wipes out the whole position won for us by Darwin."

This clearly indicates that the only value they put upon their hypothesis is that it enables them to get rid of God; and if it

for the mathematician will tell us that the order of any seven events may be given in more than five thousand ways.

[1] See p. 14 *ante*. The *Times* report of Lord Kelvin's words led to his repeating them in a letter to that journal (May 4, 1903), and this gave rise to the correspondence above referred to. There was a "leading article" upon it on May 13th.

fails of this it is, in their estimation, worthless. What must be the moral, or indeed the intellectual condition of men who regard the negation of God as "a position won for them"![1]

But, it may be asked, what about evolution? The materialistic evolution of Herbert Spencer is as dead as its author. And even Darwin's more enlightened biological scheme is now discredited. For it is recognised that something more than Darwinism offers is needed to account for the phenomena of life. The evolution hypothesis is thoroughly philosophical; and that is all that can be said for it, for it

[1] This is a libel upon Darwin. And in saying this I do not forget his letter of March 29, 1863, to Sir Joseph Hooker. But if that letter bears the meaning these men put upon it his words quoted on pp. 21 and 22 *ante*, prove that he is wholly unworthy of respect. My lingering belief in human nature leads me to account for that letter as I would wish to account for Lord Tennyson's avowal of infidelity (*Nineteenth Century*, June, 1903, p. 1070). Great men are very human, and when in bad company they sometimes behave like schoolboys and are tempted to say things which in their better moments they would deplore.

I may add that a friend of mine who was much with Darwin during his last illness assures me that he expressed the greatest reverence for the Scriptures and bore testimony to their value.

is unproved and seemingly incapable of proof. That "creative power" may have worked in this way may be conceded. But if so, the process must have been divinely controlled and strictly limited. This much is made clear both by the facts of Nature and the statements of Scripture; but beyond this we cannot go.

"Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion, during which the matter passes from an indefinite incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity, and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation." If this cacophonous sentence be translated into English, it will be found to contain some element of truth. Herbert Spencer does not here pretend, as the careless reader of his philosophy might suppose, that matter itself is capable of producing any such results. Every change is due to motion, and behind motion is the power which causes it. What and where that power is, Herbert Spencer cannot tell. He calls it Force, but he might just as well term it Jupiter or Baal. Were he to assert that it is unknown, no one could object, however much he differed from him. But with the aggressive insolence of unbelief he declares it to be

"unknowable," thus shutting the door for ever against all religion.

The Christian recognises the force, and the effects it has produced, and he refers all to God. He allows a pristine condition of matter described by the philosopher as "an indefinite incoherent homogeneity"; but as an alternative formula for expressing this he confidently offers both to the simple and the learned the well-known words, "The earth was waste and void." As he goes on to consider the "integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion," "And God said" is his method of accounting for the phenomena. The philosopher admits that not even the slightest change can have taken place save as a result of some new impulse imparted by Inscrutable Force. The Christian, in a spirit of still higher philosophy, accounts for every change by Divine intervention. It is thus that he explains the "coherent heterogeneity" —or, to translate these words into the vernacular, the exquisite order and variety of nature.

Here I turn to the narrative. The earth existed, but it was "desolate and empty," a mere waste of waters, wrapped in impenetrable darkness. The changes recorded are, first, the

dawn of light, and then the formation of an atmosphere, followed by the retreat of the waters to their ocean bed; then "the dry land" became clothed with verdure, and sun and moon and stars appeared. The laughter formerly excited by the idea of light apart from the sun has died away with increasing knowledge; and, in our ignorance of the characteristics of that primeval light, it is idle to discuss the third-day vegetation. It may possibly have been the "rank and luxuriant herbage" of which our coal-beds have been formed; for one statement in the narrative seems strongly to favour the suggestion that our present vegetation dates only from the fifth or sixth day.[1]

But this brings up the question, What was the creation *day?* No problem connected with the cosmogony has greater interest and importance; none is beset with greater difficulties. The passage itself seems clearly to indicate that the word is used in a symbolic sense. When dealing with a period before man existed to mark the shadow on the dial, and before the sun could have cast that shadow, it is not easy to appreciate the reason, or indeed the meaning, of such a division of time as our natural day.

[1] Gen. ii. 5, R.V.

"Days and years and seasons" seem plainly to belong to our present solar system, and this is the express teaching of the fourteenth verse.[1]

The problem may be stated thus: As man is to God, so his day of four and twenty hours is to the Divine day of creation. Possibly indeed the "evening and morning" represent the interval of cessation from work, which succeeds and completes the day. The words are, "And there was evening, and there was morning, one day." The symbolism is maintained throughout. As man's working day is brought to a close by evening, which ushers in a period of repose, lasting till morning calls him back to his daily toil, so the great Artificer is represented as turning aside from His work at the end of each "day" of creation and again resuming it when another morning dawned.

Is not this entirely in keeping with the mode in which Scripture speaks of God? It tells us of his mouth and eyes and nostrils, His hand and arm. It speaks of His sitting in the heavens, and bowing Himself to hear the

[1] That the earth is older than the sun may at one time have appeared impossible, if not ridiculous. But it seems to be involved in the meteoric hypothesis.

prayer ascending from the earth. It talks of His repenting and being angry. And if any one cavils at this he may fairly be asked, In what other language could God speak to men?

Nor let any one fall back on the figment that a Divine day is a period of a thousand years. With God, we are told, a day is *as* a thousand years, and a thousand years *as* one day. In a word, the seeming paradox of the transcendental philosophy is endorsed by the express teaching of Scripture that time is a law of human thought. When, therefore, God speaks of working for six days and resting on the seventh, we must understand the words in the same symbolic sense as when He declares that His hand has made all these things.[1]

But the mention of the creation sabbath is the crowning proof of the symbolic character of the creation "day." God "rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made." Are we, then, to suppose that He resumed the work when four and twenty hours had passed? Here, at least, revelation and science are at one: the creation sabbath has continued during all the ages of historic time.

[1] Isa. lxvi. 2.

God is active in His universe, *pace* the atheist and the infidel, but the CREATOR rests. Having regard then to the admitted fact that the creation sabbath is a vast period of time, surely the working days of creation must be estimated on the same system.

My object here, however, is not to frame a system of interpretation, but rather to enter a protest against confounding the express teaching of Scripture with any system of interpretation whatever. Nor am I attempting to prove the inspiration, or even the truth of Scripture. My aim is merely to "beat off attacks." I hold myself clear of the sin of Uzzah. I am not putting my hand upon the ark: as Dante pleaded, I am dealing with the oxen that are shaking the ark—unintelligent creatures who have no sense of its sanctity, or even of its worth.

And here I am reminded of Huxley's words, "that it is vain to discuss a supposed coincidence between Genesis and science unless we have first settled, on the one hand, what Genesis says and, on the other, what science says." This is admirable. Let us distinguish, therefore, between "what Genesis says" and what men say about Genesis. And let us not be

either misled or alarmed by attacks upon the Mosaic cosmogony, based on "the merest Sunday-school exegesis" on the one hand, or on the *theories* of science on the other. The *facts* of science in no way clash with Scripture. And as the prince of living scientists declares—I quote Lord Kelvin's words again—"scientific thought is compelled to accept the idea of creative power."

Of the origin of our world the first chapter of Genesis tells us nothing save that "in the beginning," whenever that was, God "created" it. It may be, as Tyndall said in his Belfast address, that "for æons embracing untold millions of years, this earth has been the theatre of life and death." But as to this the "Mosaic narrative" is silent. It deals merely with the renewing and refurnishing of our planet as a home for man. And this, moreover, to prepare the foundation for the supreme revelation of redemption. Let the authority of Scripture be undermined, and the whole fabric of the Christian system is destroyed. But in these easy-going days the majority of "those who profess and call themselves Christians," being wholly destitute of the enthusiasm of faith, are helpless when confronted by the dogmatism of unbelief. It is a day of opinions,

not of faith, and widespread apostasy is the natural result.[1]

[1] While correcting the proofs of these pages I have received a newspaper report of a sermon preached by the Bishop of Manchester in his Cathedral, in which he justifies the rejection of Gen. i., because "it seems to be an intellectual impossibility that God should reveal to man an exact account of the creation of the universe." But there is not a word in Gen. i. about "the creation of the universe," save in the opening sentence. The word "create" is not used again till we come to the work of the fifth and sixth "days" (verses 21 and 27). And when it is said that God "made" the two great lights and the stars, the word is the same as that used elsewhere of "making" a feast. And when it is said that He "set" them in the heavens, it is the same word as is used of "appointing" cities of refuge. (See Appendix, Note I.)

The inference to be drawn from this I cannot discuss here. But it shows that Huxley was right: "What Genesis says" is but little understood.

CHAPTER VIII

"AN AGNOSTIC'S APOLOGY"

"THE natural attitude of a thinking mind toward the supernatural is that of scepticism." Scepticism, not agnosticism. The sceptic halts at the cross-roads to take his bearings; but at sight of a cross-road the agnostic gives up his journey altogether. True scepticism connotes intellectual caution, but agnosticism is intellectual suicide.

Not so, it will be said, for agnosticism merely betokens the prudence that refuses to proceed if no plain signpost marks the way. But in this life it is not by plain signposts that we have to direct our steps. The meaning of a word moreover must be settled by use, and not by etymology; and this word was coined to express something quite different from scepticism. It is the watchword of a special school. And no one will dispute that the late Sir Leslie Stephen may be accepted as an authoritative exponent of the teaching of that school. Let us

then turn to his treatise entitled *An Agnostic's Apology*.

A book about dress would not offend us by ridiculing and denouncing our conventional clothing as uncomfortable, unhealthy, and inartistic. But if the writer went on to urge that we should discard all covering, and go about in our native nakedness, his lucubrations would only excite amusement or disgust. And no one who sympathises with the main argument of the preceding chapters would find much fault with Leslie Stephen's treatise if it were merely an exposure of the superstitions and errors and follies that have corrupted "the Christian religion" and discredited theological controversy. But when he goes on to preach agnosticism as a positive "faith," and to formulate it as an ideal "creed," he stands upon the same level as the preacher of nakedness.

His *Apology* opens with a definition of agnosticism. "That there are limits to the sphere of human intelligence," no one of course denies. But the agnostic further asserts "that those limits are such as to exclude at least what Lewes called 'metempirical' knowledge," and "that theology lies within this forbidden sphere." And the meaning of this is emphasised by his statement of the alternative position—a position

which he rejects with scorn—" that our reason can in some sense transcend the narrow limits of experience."

Now there is a grotesquely transparent fallacy in this; and I will illustrate it by a grotesquely childish parable. As regards what is happening next door at this moment my condition is that of bland agnosticism. My reason can tell me nothing, and happily the partition wall is thick enough to prevent my senses from enlightening me. But if my neighbour comes in to see me, my ignorance may be at once dispelled, and my reason "transcends the narrow limits of my experience." And so here. Everybody admits that in the spiritual sphere reason can tell us nothing. Therefore, our author insists, we are of necessity agnostics. Not so, the Christian replies, for God has given us a revelation.

The agnostic's rejoinder will be to reject my implied definition of "experience," and to deny the possibility of a revelation. And if he were an atheist his denial would be reasonable and consistent. But Leslie Stephen's repudiation of atheism undermines his whole position. To acknowledge the existence of a God whose creatures we are, and at the same time to deny on *a priori* grounds that He

can reveal Himself to men—this savours of neither logic nor philosophy.

If some one came to my house purporting to be the bearer of a letter from my brother, the fact of my having no brother would be a sufficient reason for refusing to receive him. But if I had a brother I should be bound to admit the visitor and read the letter. My having a brother would not prove the genuineness of the letter, but it would make it incumbent on me to examine it. And while the fact that there is a God does not establish the truth of Christianity, it creates an obligation to investigate its truth. But the agnostic shuts the door against all inquiry. His agnosticism is positive and dogmatic. It is based on a deliberate refusal to consider the matter at all.

This being so his *Apology* is merely a pæan in praise of ignorance, and a sustained appeal to prejudice. And he makes free use of the well-known *nisi prius* trick of diverting attention from the real issue by heaping ridicule upon his opponents. His dialectical juggling about the free-will controversy is a notable instance of this. For as he does not pretend to deny that will is free, his fire-

works, effective though they be, all end in smoke. A like remark applies to his discussion about virtue and vice. And his reference to Cardinal Newman is a still more flagrant example of his method. For if Newman is responsible for the statement that "the Catholic Church affords the only refuge from the alternatives of atheism or agnosticism," it merely exemplifies the fact that very great men say very foolish things. In view of the faith of the Jew, and the facts of Judaism, such a dictum is quite as silly as it is false.

But even if, for the sake of argument, we should admit everything by which this apostle of agnosticism attempts to establish his opening theses, the great problem which he ignores would remain, like some giant tree round which a brushwood fire has spent itself. For the real question at issue is not whether, as he seems to think, theologians are fools, nor even whether Christianity is true, but whether a Divine revelation is possible. And by his refusal on *a priori* grounds to accord to Christianity a hearing, he puts himself out of court altogether. His position is not that of enlightened and honest scepticism; it is the blind and stupid infidelity of Hume. It is the expression, not of an intelligent doubt whether "God hath

spoken unto us by his Son," but of an unintelligent denial that God could speak to men in any way. It is a deliberate and systematic refusal to know anything beyond what unaided reason and the senses can discover. His agnosticism is—to adopt his own description of it—a "creed"; and were we to emulate his method, it might be contemptuously designated a creed of mathematics and mud.

As a philippic against Christianity, *An Agnostic's Apology* is all the more effective because its profanities, like its fallacies, are skilfully veiled. And yet the tone of it is deplorable. In England at least, cultured infidels are used to speak of Christianity with respect, remembering that it is the faith of the apostles and the martyrs—the faith, moreover, professed to-day by the great majority of men who hold the highest rank in the aristocracy of learning. But a very different spirit marks this treatise. In the writer's estimation the great doctrines of that faith are but "old husks," and the profession of them is only "bluster." And he challenges the Christian to "point to some [Christian] truth, however trifling," that "will stand the test of discussion and verification."

That challenge the Christian can accept

without misgiving or reserve. And the doctrine on which he will stake the issue is not a "trifling" one, but the great foundation truth of the Resurrection.

In writing to the Christians of Corinth, the Apostle restates the Gospel which had won them from Paganism. And the burden of it is the Saviour's death and resurrection. "That Christ died for our sins" is a truth which, in the nature of things, admits of no appeal to human testimony. But though the Resurrection is equally the subject of positive revelation, the Apostle goes on to enumerate witnesses of it, whose evidence would be accepted as valid by any fair tribunal in the world. Once and again all the Apostles saw their Lord alive on earth after His crucifixion. And on one occasion He was seen by a company of more than five hundred disciples, most of whom were still living when the Apostle wrote.

The Rationalists suggest that belief in the Resurrection was the growth of time, "when a haze of sentiment and mysticism had gathered around the traditions of Calvary." But this figment is exploded by the simple fact that the interval was measured by days and not by years. The disciples, moreover, were quite as

sceptical as even these "superior persons" would themselves have been. One of the eleven Apostles, indeed, refused to believe the united testimony of his brethren, and for a whole week adhered to the theory that they had seen a ghost. But the Lord's appearances were not like fleeting visions of an "astral body" in a darkened room. He met the disciples just as He had been used to do in the past. He walked with them on the public ways. He sat down to eat with them. And more than all this, He resumed His ministry among them, renewing in detail His teaching about Holy Scripture, and confirming their faith by a fuller and clearer exegesis than they had till then been able to receive.

Such was their explicit testimony. And in view of it the Rationalist gloss is utterly absurd. It is sheer nonsense to talk of a haze of sentiment, or of Oriental superstition, or of overstrained nerves. If the Resurrection was not a reality, the Apostles, one and all, were guilty of a base conspiracy of fraud and falsehood. Credulous fools they certainly were not, but profane impostors and champion liars—no terms of reprobation and contempt would be too strong to heap on them. And this is what unbelief

implies, for in no other way can their testimony to the Resurrection be evaded.

And in addition to this direct evidence, there is abundant evidence of another kind. At the betrayal all the disciples were scattered and went into hiding. But at Pentecost these same men came forward boldly, and preached to the Jews assembled in Jerusalem for the festival. And Peter, who had not only forsaken Him, but repeatedly denied with oaths that he ever knew Him, was foremost in denouncing the denial of Him by the nation. Something must have happened to account for a transformation so extraordinary. And what was it? Only one answer is possible—*The Resurrection.*

But further. While the three years' ministry of Christ and His Apostles produced only about a hundred and twenty disciples in the city of Jerusalem,[1] this Pentecostal testimony brought in three thousand converts.[2] Nor was this the mere flash of a transient success. Soon afterwards the company of the disciples was more than trebled.[2] For we read "the number of *the men* came to be about five thousand,"[3] and we may assume that the women converts were at least as numerous. A little later again, we

[1] Acts i. 15. [2] Ibid. ii. 41. [3] Ibid. iv. 4.

are told, they were further joined by "*multitudes* both of men and women."[1] And later still, the narrative records, "the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and *a great company of the priests* were obedient to the faith."[2] All this, moreover, occurred at a time when the opposition of the Sanhedrim and the priests was fiercer and more organised even than before the crucifixion. How then can it be explained? Only one answer is possible—*The Resurrection.*

But even this is not all. We have other indirect evidence, still more striking and conclusive. To suppose that the Christianity of the Pentecostal Church was "a new religion" is an ignorant blunder. The disciples preached to none but Jews; all the converts without exception were Jews;[3] and by the religious leaders of the nation they were regarded as an heretical Jewish sect. When the Apostle Paul was put on his defence before Felix, the charge against him was not apostasy but heresy. He was a "leader of the sect of the Nazarenes." And what was his answer to that charge? "According to the Way (which they call a sect) so worship I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the

[1] Acts v. 14. [2] Ibid. vi. 7. [3] Ibid. viii. 1, *cf.* xi. 19.

prophets." [1] His position, he thus maintained in the most explicit terms, was that of the orthodox Jew.

Now there was no ordinance to which the Jews adhered more rigidly than that of the Sabbath. How was it then that with one consent they began to observe the first day of the week? The sceptic may hint at parallels for their success in proselytising, but here is a fact that cannot be thus dismissed. Something of an extraordinary kind must have happened to account for it. What was it then? Only one answer is possible—*The Resurrection.*

I am not ignorant of the methods by which infidelity has sought to account for the empty tomb. The lie of the Jewish priests—that the disciples stole the body—is too gross for modern rationalism; and as an alternative explanation, we are told that Christ had not really died! And Dr. Harnack, the greatest of living rationalists, disposes of the matter by treating the Resurrection as a mere "belief." "It is not our business," he says, "to defend either the view which was taken of the death, or the idea that He had risen again." And he adds: "Whatever may have happened at the grave and in the matter of the appearances, one thing

[1] Acts xxiv. 5, 14.

is certain: this grave was the birthplace of the indestructible belief that death is vanquished, that there is a life eternal." And again: "The conviction that obtained in the apostolic age that the Lord had really appeared after His death on the cross may be regarded as a coefficient." It is not that the *fact* of the appearances was "a coefficient," but merely the belief that there were appearances. For his meaning is made clear by his going on to refer to the "coefficient" of a mistaken expectation of Christ's return.[1] There are no *facts* of any kind in this scheme, but merely "beliefs" and "views" and "ideas." And this being so it involves the absolute rejection of the Gospel narrative, and therefore it destroys the only ground on which discussion is possible.

Here then is our answer to the agnostic's challenge. There are circumstances in which it is idle to speak of spiritual truth; but the resurrection of Christ is a public fact accredited by evidence which will "stand the test of discussion and verification." And when the agnostic denies that Christianity can supply an answer to as much as one of "the hideous doubts that oppress us," [2] the Christian points to that

[1] *What is Christianity?* Saunders's translation, pp. 155, 162, 173. [2] *Apology*, p. 41.

Resurrection as dispelling the most grievous of all the doubts that darken life on earth. For the resurrection of Christ is the earnest and pledge of the resurrection of His people. Such then is the Christian's hope. "A sure and certain hope" he rightly calls it; nor will he be deterred by the agnostic's denunciation of the words as "a cutting piece of satire." [1]

Notwithstanding petulant disavowals of atheism, the real issue here involved is not the fact of a revelation, but the existence of God—a *real* God, not "the primordial germ," nor even the Director-General of evolutionary processes, but "the living and true God." From all who acknowledge such a God we are entitled to demand an answer to the Apostle's challenge when he stood before Agrippa: "Why should it be thought incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" [2]

And this suggests a closing word. Leslie Stephen avers with truth that the "enormous majority of the race has been plunged in superstitions of various kinds." But the philoso-

[1] *Apology*, p. 4.

[2] Acts xxvi. 8. The παρ' ὑμῖν is emphatic. It is not clear whether in this he was addressing the Jews, or appealing from *their* unbelief to the intelligence of his Roman judges.

phers always omit to tell us how this universal craving for a religion can be accounted for. And while they are vainly seeking for the solution of the enigma in the monkey house of the Zoological Gardens, sane and sensible folk who make no pretensions to be philosophers will continue to find it in the Genesis story of the Creation and Fall.[1]

[1] No one surely will suppose that the foregoing is a full statement of the evidence for the Resurrection. To compress such a statement into such a compass would be a feat unparalleled in Apologetics. But even this partial and most inadequate statement is amply sufficient as an answer to Leslie Stephen's challenge.

What has here been urged in proof of the Resurrection is proof that it was neither a delusion nor a fraud. For the moral and spiritual elements involved are more significant even than the physiological. I might further appeal to the baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the visible proofs of which are vouched for by the men who experienced it. And I might appeal to the Ascension and, in connection with it, to the Transfiguration, which, I may remark, the Apostle Peter records as matter of *evidence* (2 Peter i. 15–19).

CHAPTER IX

THE IRRATIONALISM OF INFIDELITY

"CHRIST is still left" is the solace Mill would offer us as we survey the wreck which rationalism makes of Faith. To that life he appeals as supplying a "standard of excellence and a model for imitation." "Who among His disciples," he demands, "was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the character revealed in the Gospels?" Do not such words as these suggest that if Christianity would waive its transcendental claims and make terms with unbelief, the record of that life might afford the basis for a universal religion, a really "Catholic" faith?

But who and what was this "Jesus" of the Rationalist, whose life is to be our model? The answer to this simple question will expose the fallacy of the whole position. The Christ of the Gospels was the Son of God, who worked miracles without number, and who claimed with the utmost definiteness and solemnity that His

words were in the strictest sense a Divine revelation. But as regards His miracles, the Rationalist tells us that His biographers were deceived; and as for His teaching they misunderstood and perverted it. But if they blundered thus in matters as to which ordinary intelligence and care would have made error or mistake impossible, how can we repose any trust whatever in their records? What materials have we from which to construct a life of Christ at all?

And if we decide that these Scriptures are not authentic, and that Christ was merely human, the Sermon on the Mount sinks to the level of a homily which Matthew framed on the traditions of his Master's words. And as for the Fourth Gospel, having regard to the time when it was written, and to the fact that the Synoptics know nothing of its distinctive teaching, we must acknowledge that for such chapters as those which purport to record "the most sacred of all sacred words," spoken on the eve of the Crucifixion, we are mainly indebted to the piety and genius of "the beloved disciple." The modern Jew, moreover, cannot be far astray when he insists that Paul was the real founder of the Christian system. His was "the boldest

enterprise" as Dr. Harnack declares, for he ventured on it "without being able to appeal to a single word of his Master's." If men would but use their brains, they would see that once we drift away from the anchorage of the old beliefs, nothing can save us from being drawn into the rapids which end in sheer agnosticism. This does not prove the truth of Christianity, but it exposes the untenableness of the infidel position.

These infidel books habitually assume that, if we refuse their nostrums, superstition is our only refuge. This is quite in keeping with the amazing conceit which characterises them. Wisdom was born with the Agnostics! They have monopolised the meagre stock of intelligence which the evolutionary process has as yet produced for the guidance of the race! But there are Christians in the world who have quite as much sense as they have, who detest superstition as much as they do, and who have far more experience in detecting fallacies and exposing frauds. And if such men are Christians it is not because they are too stupid to become infidels.

For faith is not superstition; and in presence of a Divine revelation unbelief betokens mental obliquity, if not moral degradation. Thought-

less people are betrayed into supposing that there is something very clever in "not believing." But in this life the formula "I don't believe" more often betokens dull-wittedness than shrewdness. It is the refrain of the stupidest man upon the jury. A mere negation of belief, moreover, is seldom possible; it generally implies belief in the alternative to what we reject. The sceptic may hesitate, in order to examine the credentials of a revelation. But no one who has a settled creed ever hesitates at all. And the Atheist has such a creed; he believes that there is no God. If we do not believe a man to be honest, we usually believe him to be a fraud. If we refuse the testimony of witnesses about matters that are too plain and simple to allow of mere misapprehension or honest mistake, we must hold them to be impostors and rogues. And nothing less than this is implied in the position held by men like Herbert Spencer and Leslie Stephen.

But the infidel will deny that he impugns the integrity of the Apostles and Evangelists; he only questions their intelligence. He asks us to believe that they were so weak and credulous that their testimony to the miracles, for example, must be rejected. But the

miracles were not rare incidences of dark-room séances; they were public events which occurred day by day, and usually in the presence of hostile critics. No person of ordinary intelligence, therefore, could have been mistaken as to the facts. What then do we know of the men on whose evidence we accept them? Their writings have been translated into every known language. They hold a unique place in the classic literature of the world, and the sublime morality and piety which pervade them command universal admiration. Certain it is therefore that if the New Testament is to be accounted for on natural principles, its authors must have been marvellously gifted, both intellectually and morally. And yet these are the men whose testimony is to be flung aside with contempt when they give a detailed description of events which happened in open day before their eyes. To talk of offering them a fool's pardon is absurd. If their narratives be false, we must give up all confidence in human nature, and write them down as an abnormally clever gang of abnormally profane impostors and hypocrites. But this alternative is more untenable than the other. It is absolutely certain that the men of the

New Testament were neither scoundrels nor fools.

And no more than this is needed to undermine the infidel position. It is not necessary to prove that the Gospels are a Divine revelation; it will suffice to show that they are credible records; and this much is guaranteed to us by the character of the men who wrote them. As a test case let us take the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, recorded in all the four Gospels. I begin with the First. And I will not speak of the writer as "Saint" Matthew, the Apostle of Christ, but of Matthew the ex-tax-collector. Such a man, we may be sure, was at least as shrewd and as suspicious as any of the infidels who with amazing conceit dispose of his testimony. He records that on a certain day, in a "desert place," he assisted in distributing bread and fish to a vast multitude that gathered to hear the Lord's teaching—there were five thousand men "besides women and children"; that the supply was five loaves and two fishes; that "they did all eat and were filled, and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full." And this is confirmed by the writer of the Fourth Gospel, who also took part in the distribution of the

food, and who gives details which prove the accuracy with which he remembered what occurred. If we assume that the other Evangelists were not present, their narratives become incidentally important as showing that the miracle was matter of common knowledge and discussion among the disciples.

Miracles of another kind the infidel gets rid of to his own satisfaction by taking each in detail and appealing to what we know of the infirmity of human testimony, or the effects of hysteria and the power of mind or will over the body. But this miracle is one of many that cannot possibly be accounted for on natural principles. And mistake or illusion was no less impossible. That the "narrative arose out of a parable" is the nonsense of sham sceptics and real fools.[1] For the witnesses were admittedly neither idiots nor rogues, but men of the highest intelligence and probity. And this being so the facts are established, and the only question open is, What explanation can be given of them? What explanation is possible save that Divine power was in operation? [2]

The infidel therefore, so far from being the

[1] *Encyc. Biblica*, article "Gospels," § 142.

[2] The Atheist, while admitting that the evidence is adequate and trustworthy, refuses to accept the miracle,

philosopher he pretends to be, is the blind dupe of prejudice. And this is in effect the defence pleaded for Voltaire by his latest English apologist. To him we are told, *l'infâme*, "if it meant Christianity at all, meant that which was taught in Rome in the eighteenth century, and not by the Sea of Galilee in the first"; "it meant the religion which lit the fires of Smithfield and prompted the tortures of the Inquisition."[1] In a word, Voltaire was ignorant of the distinction between Christianity and what is called "the Christian religion." Not strange, perhaps, in the case of an eighteenth century Frenchman, but inexcusable in the case of cultured Englishmen of our own times. For the distinction is clear upon the open page of Scripture and of history. How indeed can it be missed by any one who has read the story of the martyrs?[2] For the martyrs were the repre-

because he holds on *a priori* grounds that miracles are impossible! Thus it was that Hume got rid of certain miracles the evidence for which he admitted to be satisfactory and complete.

[1] Miss Tallantyre's *Life of Voltaire*.

[2] What sort of God have those who believe that He could ever forgive those hideous crimes of "the Professing Church"? His grace toward the individual sinner is infinite, but a *corporation* God never forgives. But the fulfilment of Rev. xviii. 4–8 belongs to a time still future. And see p. 114 *post*.

sentatives and champions of Christianity: "the Christian religion" it was that tortured and murdered them. But this is a digression.

While the aggressive infidel has no special claim to consideration, the honest-minded sceptic is entitled to respect and sympathy. And never was the path of the truth-seeker more beset with difficulties. For the development of the rival apostasies of the last days, so plainly revealed in Scripture, goes on apace. On the one side there is a national lapse toward the errors and superstitions from which we supposed the Reformation had for ever delivered us, and on the other there is an abandonment of the great truths to which the Reformation owed its power.

These apostasies moreover are well organised under zealous and able leaders. And while their discordant cries are ever in our ears, "truth is fallen in the street." In the National Church the great Evangelical party has effaced itself, and fallen into line behind the champions of the pagan superstitions of "the Christian religion."[1]

[1] Bishop Lightfoot of Durham and Dr. Salmon of Dublin would, I suppose, be regarded by all Evangelicals as among the greatest theologians of our time; and their writings might serve to check the present apostasy of the Church of England. Lightfoot's treatise on the

And though in the " Free " churches, as in the Establishment, there are great numbers of true and earnest men who refuse to bow the knee to any Baal, the only corporate testimony ever heard is " the gospel of humanity," which, as Scripture warns us, will lead at last to the worship of the Antichrist. We are pestered by the nostrums of " feather-headed enthusiasts who take the first will-o'-the-wisp for a safe guide, and patch up a new religion out of scraps and tatters of half-understood science," or of quasi-Christian ministers who are busy " framing systems of morality apart from the ancient creeds " and " trying to evolve a satisfactory creed out of theosophical moonshine." [1]

In the past, superstition and rationalism were the open enemies of the faith, but now they are entrenched within the citadel, and half the churches and chapels in the land are places to be shunned. Organised Christianity is becoming an organised apostasy, and the time seems drawing near when

Ministry, for example, (Epistle to the Philippians), supplies a crushing answer to the priestly pretensions now in the ascendant. But to-day these great men and their writings are contemptuously ignored.

[1] These words were not penned with reference to Sir Oliver Lodge's *Catechism* or "the New Theology" : they are taken from Sir Leslie Stephen's *Apology* (pp. 339, 354).

practical expression must be given to the cry, "To your tents, O Israel!" "The very Church of God which ought to be the appeaser of God is the provoker of God." These words seem as apt to-day as when they were written fifteen centuries ago.

I will here avail myself of the language of a great commentator and divine, Dean Alford of Canterbury. After speaking of the apostasy of "the Jewish Church" beginning with the worship of "the golden calf," he proceeds as follows:—

"Strikingly parallel with this runs the history of the Christian Church. Not long after the Apostolic times, the golden calves of idolatry were set up by the Church of Rome. What the effect of the captivity was to the Jews, that of the Reformation has been to Christendom. The first evil spirit has been cast out. But by the growth of hypocrisy, secularity, and rationalism the house has become empty, swept and garnished: swept and garnished by the decencies of civilisation and the discoveries of secular knowledge, but empty of living and earnest faith. And he must read prophecy but ill who does not see under all these seeming improvements the preparation for the final development of the man of sin,

the great repossession, when idolatry and the seven [other more wicked spirits] shall bring the outward frame of so-called Christendom to a fearful end." [1]

[1] *Greek Test. Com.*, Matt. xii. 43-45. Alford is not speaking here of the Spiritual Church, the Body of Christ, of which Christ Himself is at once the Builder and the Head (Matt. xvi. 18; Eph. i. 22, 23), but of the Professing Church on earth, the administration of which was entrusted to men. The one ends in glory, the other in apostasy and judgment. The religion of Christendom confounds the one with the other; and it also confounds the Church with "the kingdom of heaven," the "keys" of which were committed to the Apostle of the Circumcision.

The following weighty words relating to the Church on earth are quoted from Canon T. D. Bernard's *Progress of Doctrine* (The Bampton Lecture, 1864):—

"How fair was the morning of the Church! how swift its progress! what expectations it would have been natural to form of the future history which had begun so well! Doubtless they were formed in many a sanguine heart: but they were clouded soon. . . .

"While the Apostles wrote, the actual state and the visible tendencies of things showed too plainly what Church history would be; and at the same time, prophetic intimations made the prospect still more dark. . . .

"I know not how any man, in closing the Epistles, could expect to find the subsequent history of the Church essentially different from what it is. In those writings we seem, as it were, not to witness some passing storms which clear the air, but to feel the whole atmos-

phere charged with the elements of future tempest and death. . . .

"The fact which I observe is not merely that these indications of the future are in the Epistles, but that they increase as we approach the close, and after the doctrines of the Gospel have been fully wrought out, and the fulness of personal salvation and the ideal character of the Church have been placed in the clearest light, the shadows gather and deepen on the external history. The last words of St. Paul in the Second Epistle to Timothy, and those of St. Peter in his Second Epistle, with the Epistles of St. John and St. Jude, breathe the language of a time in which the tendencies of that history had distinctly shown themselves; and in this respect these writings form a prelude and a passage to the Apocalypse."

CHAPTER X

A SCEPTIC'S PLEA FOR FAITH

ONE who is himself a sceptic both by temperament and by training can appreciate the difficulties of the honest truth-seeker. And to such I would offer the assurance of respectful sympathy, and such counsel as my own experience may enable me to give.

And first, I would say with emphasis, Ignore the atheistical section of the scientists. To quote the words of "that prince of scientists" Lord Kelvin, "If you think strongly enough you will be forced by science to the belief in God." [1] And I would add, quoting Lord Kelvin again, "Do not be afraid of being free thinkers." For the free thinker will refuse to be either prejudiced or discouraged by the confusion and error which abound on every side, and which have always marked the history of the professing Church.

Fifteen centuries ago the great Chrysostom

[1] *Christian Apologetics*, see p. 14 *ante*.

deplored that even in those early days, every Christian ordinance was parodied, and every Christian truth corrupted. And if it be demanded, Where can we look for guidance amid the din of the discordant cries which beat upon our ears to-day? his words may best supply the answer:—

"There can be no proof of true Christianity," he says, "nor any other refuge for Christians wishing to know the true faith, but the Divine Scriptures. . . . Therefore the Lord, knowing that such a confusion of things would take place in the last days, commands on that account that Christians should betake themselves to nothing else but the Scriptures" (Matthew, Hom. XLIII.).

"The Scriptures!" some one may exclaim, "but what about Moses and Jonah and Daniel?" Some people will believe nothing, unless they can believe everything. But men who make fortunes in commerce are content with small beginnings, enough for the necessaries of life. The "Catholic Church," it is true, would hand us over to "the secular arm" for failing, not only to accept the whole Bible, but to swallow all its own superstitions. And to fit us for this achievement, Pascal's advice would be to take to "reli-

gion." For, he said, "that will make you stupid, and enable you to believe." [1]

But a very different spirit marks the Divine dealings with sinful men. "He that cometh unto God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." "That He is": for not a few of the difficulties which men find in the Bible are practically atheistical. And if even in the natural sphere it is the "diligent seeker" who succeeds, no one need wonder if in the spiritual sphere it is the "diligent seeker" who secures the treasure.

Here then is my advice to any who are troubled with sceptical doubts: Be in earnest; and begin at the beginning. God does not require of us that before we come to Him we shall believe in Daniel and Jonah and Moses. But, to render the words with slavish literalness, "It is necessary for the comer unto God to believe that He exists, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek Him out." Men do not find pearls upon the open beach, or nuggets of gold upon the public road. Even in this world the principle of "the narrow way" prevails. And it is only the few who find it. Even in the

[1] Quoted from the Preface to Matthew Arnold's *God and the Bible.*

mundane sphere, success is not for the trifler or the faddist. But while in this world the diligent seeker is often thwarted, and sometimes crushed, it is never so with God: He never says, "Seek ye Me in vain."

I repeat then, "Do not be afraid of being free thinkers." In peace-time a war-ship may carry top-hamper without endangering her safety; but in presence of an enemy the first order is to clear the decks. And in these days, when it is necessary to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered," we cannot be too fearless or too ruthless in jettisoning all error and superstition. The schoolboy's definition of "faith" is not the right one: he described it as "believing what we know to be untrue." The God of revelation is the God of nature; and in the spiritual, as in the natural sphere, there are difficulties which perplex and distress us. But though the Word of God, like the works of God, may be full of mystery, it is wholly free from falsehood and folly.

Some one may object that the truth here urged is quite too elementary to be vital. But elementary truths are often the deepest, and always the most important. And it is a significant fact that, in view of the completed revelation of Christianity, the last of the doctrinal

books of the New Testament closes by reiterating this most elementary of all truths: "We know that the Son of God is come and has given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true. . . . This is the true God." Faith begins by giving up belief in the Deity as a mere abstraction, like "the Monarchy" or "the State," and learning to believe in "the living God" who is "the Rewarder of them that seek Him." This is the alpha of the alphabet of faith. We reach the omega when, giving up "the historic Jesus," we come to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, "the Son of God." Just as "all the law and the prophets" are included in love to God and our neighbour, so, in the same sense, the whole revelation of Christianity is an unfolding of this truth. Not, as the rationalist has it, "that a man of the name of Jesus Christ once stood in our midst," but that "the Son of God is come," He who was in the beginning with God, and who was God, and by whom all things were made"—that He once stood in our midst. "God hath spoken to us in His Son."

"But," it may be said, "there is a fallacy here. Belief in God belongs to the sphere of

natural religion, but belief in Christ depends upon revelation; and this raises the question of the inspiration of Scripture." I challenge that statement. The question of inspiration is of vital importance in its own place, but this is not its place. Here and now we are concerned with facts—the public facts of the ministry of Christ, including His miracles and His resurrection from the dead. For the genuineness of the records is admitted, and, as we have seen their authenticity is guaranteed by the character of the men who wrote them. And I need not repeat the argument that the denial of their inspiration compels us to form a still higher estimate of their personal competence.[1]

In order to evade the force of their testimony the infidel points to the lapse of time since these events occurred, and he tries to raise a cloud of prejudice by ringing the changes on the apostasy of the Christian Church. But this is only *nisi prius* claptrap. The significance of facts such as those we have here in view cannot be impaired either by the lapse of centuries or by any amount of human failure and folly. I put this question therefore to all fair and earnest thinkers. Suppose the ministry of

[1] See p. 108 *ante.*

Christ belonged to the nineteenth century, instead of the first, what effect would it have upon you? How would you account for it? Is not the only reasonable explanation of it this, "that the Son of God is come"?

The New Testament records but one apostolic sermon addressed to a heathen audience. Jews could be referred to the Hebrew Scriptures in proof "that Jesus was the Christ." But when preaching to the Areopagites of Athens the Apostle appealed to their own religion, the writings of their poets, and the phenomena of nature, to prove the existence of an intelligent, personal, and beneficent God; and he pointed to the resurrection of Christ in proof that God had declared Himself to men. The times of ignorance which God could overlook were past. "He now commandeth all men everywhere to repent"; for agnosticism has become a sin that shuts men up to judgment, "whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead." [1]

There is not a word here about the inspiration either of writings or of men. That is a question for "the household of faith," the home circle of the family of God. But here we have to do with what concerns "all men everywhere."

[1] Acts xvii. 22–31.

And, I repeat, the fact that "the Son of God is come," and the solemn warning that judgment is assuredly to follow, are wholly unaffected by accidents of time or place. I am not fencing with professional sceptics, but appealing to real truth-seekers, and upon such I again press the question, What bearing has this upon you?

No one who will read these pages is more sceptical than the writer of them, none who feels a stronger antipathy to superstition and error and nonsense. But the falsehoods and follies of "the Christian religion" in its many phases, whether venerable or newfangled, must not be allowed to obscure the issue here involved. "The Son of God is come." And in view of that supreme fact God commands repentance, "for He has appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He has ordained."

And in that day no one will be condemned because he did not belong to this Church or that, or because he failed to accept the inspiration of one book or another. The judgment will turn on this, "that God sent His Son into the world." Here are His own words—the words of Him who is Himself to be the Judge: "This is the condemnation, that light is come

into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil."

A blind and unreasoning infidelity denies the resurrection. But to aver that God could not raise Christ from the dead is practical atheism: to aver that He would not raise Him from the dead is mere nonsense; and to assert that He did not raise Him from the dead is to deny a public fact, "the certainty of which can be invalidated only by destroying the foundations of all human testimony."

And by the resurrection He was "declared to be the Son of God."[1] How else can the resurrection be explained? What other significance can possibly be assigned to it? That Christ Himself claimed to be the Son of God is not a matter of inspiration but of evidence. His crucifixion by the Jews establishes it. The Jews were not savages who murdered their Rabbis. They honoured them. But, we read, when he said, "Before Abraham was, I am, then took they up stones to cast at Him." And when He said, "I and My Father are one, then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him." And in answer to His remonstrance they exclaimed, "Thou being a man makest thyself God."[2] If He was not

[1] Rom. i. 4. [2] John viii. 58, 59; x. 30–33.

Divine He was a blasphemer, and by their law deserved to die. But the resurrection proved Him to be Divine.

And can the appalling fact that the Son of God has thus died at the hands of men be dismissed as a mere incident in history, or as a commonplace of religious controversy! "As He laid aside His glory, He now restrained His power, and yielded Himself to their guilty will. In return for pity He earned but scorn. Sowing kindnesses and benefits with a lavish hand, He reaped but cruelty and outrage. Manifesting grace, He was given up to impious law without show of mercy or pretence of justice. Unfolding the boundless love of the heart of God, He gained no response but bitterest hate from the hearts of men." The fate of the heathen who have never heard of Him rests with God; but to us the Cross must of necessity bring either blessing or judgment. In presence of it we must take sides. And he who takes sides with God is safe.

And now, having reached this stage, can we not advance another step? "Scientific thought compels belief in God." And here "Agnosticism assumes a double incompetence, the incompetence not only of man to know

God, but of God to make Himself known. But the denial of competence is the negation of Deity. For the God who could not speak would not be rational, and the God who would not speak would not be moral. The idea of a written revelation, therefore, may be said to be logically involved in the notion of a living God." And with overwhelming force this applies to the matter here at issue. If "the Son of God is come," is it credible, is it possible, that God has not provided for us an authentic record of His mission and ministry? Even the credulity of unbelief might well give way under the strain of such a supposition. Whether you describe it as "inspiration" or "providence"—call it by what term you please—must not the existence of such a record be assumed? If men are doubters here, it must be because they doubt either that "God is," or that "the Son of God is come." But "*we know* that the Son of God is come." With certainty, therefore, we accept the record. And here are His words:—

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only

begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

And if this be Divine truth, who will dare to cavil at the words which follow: "He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." [1]

It is not death that decides our destiny, but our acceptance or rejection of the Gospel of Christ. For the consequences of receiving or rejecting Him are immediate and eternal.

[1] John iii. 14–18.

CHAPTER XI

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

THE preceding chapter opened by quoting words spoken by the most eminent of living scientists: this chapter shall be prefaced by quoting a man of the highest eminence in another sphere — the greatest philologist of our time. The following is an extract from a letter written in one of the later years of his life by Prof. Max Müller of Oxford:—

"How shall I describe to you what I found in the New Testament! I had not read it for many years and was prejudiced against it. The light which struck Paul with blindness on his way to Damascus was not more strange than that which fell on me when I suddenly discovered the fulfilment of all hopes. . . . If this is not Divine I understand nothing at all. In all my studies of the ancient times I have always felt the want of something, and it was

not until I knew our Lord that all was clear to me." [1]

Testimonies of this kind—and they might be multiplied indefinitely — have no effect upon the aggressive infidel. But they cannot fail to influence honest and earnest men who are willing to deal fairly with the Scriptures.

And here another testimony of a wholly different kind will be opportune. Among the many learned and brilliant assailants of the Bible whom Germany has produced, no name ranks higher than that of Ferdinand Christian Baur, the leader of the "Tübingen School" of critics, by whom the New Testament was rejected "as a tissue of deceptions and forgeries." Among living exponents of the so-called "Higher Criticism" Germany possesses no greater authority than the Principal of Berlin University. But the result of Baur's labours Dr. Harnack dismisses as "an episode" which had better be forgotten; and as the outcome of his own investigations, he declares, "The oldest literature of the Church, in all main points and in most details, from the point of view

[1] This letter was published in the *Standard* newspaper of May 20, 1905.

of literary criticism, is genuine and trustworthy." [1]

The importance of this testimony can scarcely be exaggerated. For Dr. Harnack is as uncompromising a rationalist as was Baur himself. And when this great scholar and critic, reviewing Baur's conclusions, vouches for the genuineness and trustworthiness of the New Testament writings, the most sceptical of men may rest assured that we possess reliable records of the ministry of Christ and His Apostles.

And now may we not appeal to any who are really honest doubters to face this matter with an open mind? To such we would say, begin your Bible study, not with Genesis or Jonah, but with the historical books of the New Testament. Max Müller's study of them, in spite of his avowed prejudice, convinced him that Christianity was Divine, and you may expect to reach the same conclusion.

And when you come upon difficulties and

[1] *The Chronology of the Oldest Christian Literature.* He adds: "In the whole New Testament there is in all probability only a single writing that can be looked upon as pseudonymous in the strictest sense of the word—*i.e.* 2 Peter." I infer, however, from his book, ***What is Christianity?*** that the exigencies of his rationalistic scheme, as unfolded in that work, compelled him to place the Fourth Gospel in the same category.

seeming contradictions, pass them by. They will possibly appear to you in a different light when you come back to them afterwards with a more educated mind. It is always so in the study of Nature, and it is not strange that it should be so in the sphere of revelation. And as you read the Gospel narratives keep in view the purpose with which "these things were written," namely "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through His name." [1] They deal, therefore, with issues the most important and solemn that can possibly occupy the thoughts of men. For they reveal the secret of peace, and even of joy, in a world that is full of doubt and sadness and sorrow and pain and sin and death. That evil is a mere fantasy, and sin but a defect of character or purpose—this is the dream of fools. These things are terribly real. And if it be not true that "the Son of God is come"—if Christianity be a delusion or a fraud—we must resign ourselves to the "deepening gloom" of life in this world unrelieved by any hope beyond it.

And what is the alternative? What if Christianity be true? The answer shall be given by one whose testimony will command

[1] John xx. 31.

universal respect and confidence, the late Earl Cairns, three times Lord High Chancellor of England, and the greatest Chancellor perhaps of modern times. The following words were spoken by him to a company of working men, that included agnostics and infidels who deprecated any reference to "religion" on the occasion :—

"As I am a stranger among you I do not know that I have any right to intrude my opinions. All I can do is to tell you how this question affects me personally. If I could take you to my home you would think it a luxurious one, and the food on my table is abundant. You would say with all this I ought to be a happy man. I am indeed a happy man, but I do not think my furniture and food have much to do with it. Every day I rise with a sweet consciousness that God loves me and cares for me. He has pardoned all my sins for Christ's sake, and I look forward to the future with no dread. And His Spirit reveals to me that all this peace is only the beginning of joy which is to last throughout eternity. Suppose it were possible for someone to convince me that this happiness was altogether a delusion on my part, my home would give me little repose, and food would often remain upon the table untasted. I should wake in the morning with the feeling

that it was scarcely worth while to get up, so little would there be to live for; all would be so dark to me."

"What is it about?" is a legitimate question to ask when a book is placed in our hands. And an intelligent answer to that question, as we open the Bible, will save us from many a prejudice and many an error. It is strange that any one can be deceived by the figment that the Old Testament is the history of the human race. Except for a brief preface of eleven chapters, its burden is unmistakably the history of that people "of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came." It has, indeed, an esoteric meaning, for its hidden purpose is to foretell, and lead up to, that supreme event. But this shall be dealt with in the sequel.

This clew to the true character and vital unity of the Bible will guard us against another popular error. "To us there is but one God," the Apostle writes; but most people have two—the God of Nature and providence, and the God of revelation. And a great many Christians have three; for with them the God of the Old Testament is not the God of the New. This error is largely due to a false conception of the

place held by the Jew in the previous dispensation; and as the result of it the semi-infidel "Christian literature" of the day uses language about Israel's Jehovah which I will not pollute the page by reproducing here. It represents Him as callously devoting the mass of men to destruction, and having no care or thought save for one specially favoured race. This betrays extraordinary ignorance of Scripture.

The Bible begins by recording the Creation and the Fall, the apostasy of the sinful race, and world judgment of the Flood, and the post-diluvial apostasy of Babylon. And then follows the call of Abraham. The religion of Babylon was a systematised perversion of Divine truth. Its "Bible" travestied both the primeval revelation of which the opening chapters of Genesis contain the authentic record and the sacrificial cult by which God sought to teach mankind that death was the penalty of sin. The earlier apostasy had been wiped out by the Flood, but God had in mercy promised that that judgment would never be repeated.[1] And the truth and value of that promise were displayed in the call of Abraham and the segregation of the

[1] Gen. viii. 21, 22.

covenant people. The Divine purpose was thus to guard the truth from corruption, and to establish a centre from which it might enlighten the world.

Among the many advantages enjoyed by the favoured people, the greatest was "that unto them were committed the oracles of God." [1] When the owner of some famous vineyard establishes an agency in London or New York, his object in doing so is not to hinder the public from procuring his wines, but to ensure that what is sold as his shall be genuine and pure. And *agency*, as distinguished from monopoly, illustrates the position which in the old dispensation was Divinely accorded to the Jew.

In days before books were within reach of all, the knowledge of literature and the arts was kept alive in certain great seats of learning, and in like manner it was intended that the light of Divine truth should be kept burning in Jerusalem, and that the Temple of Zion should be "a house of prayer for all nations." [2] But

[1] Rom. iii. 1, 2.

[2] Mark xi. 17 (R.V.); Isa. lvi. 7. This appears in the plainest way in the great dedication service of the Temple (see 2 Chron. vi. 32, 33, about "the stranger who is not of Thy people Israel, but is come from a far country . . . if

just as the Christian Church of this dispensation has failed, so the "Jewish Church" was false to its trust. And as the result the God of the New Testament is blasphemed by infidels, and the Jehovah of the Old Testament is blasphemed by Christian Professors of theology.

Errors of another kind prevail, which we need to guard against. Here is a typical one. Israel was a theocracy, and therefore the Divine code included, not merely "the moral law," but enactments of various kinds relating to social and commercial life, sanitation, and crime. If all Scripture be "God-breathed," we may be assured that all is "profitable"; [1] but yet we must use it with intelligent discrimination. "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be rejected." But we do not on that account feed our babies on beef and potatoes. Some people do so, indeed; and they are not more

they come and pray in this house, then hear Thou . . . that all people of the earth may know Thy name and fear Thee"). In this connection reference may be made also to the precepts of the law for hospitality and kindness in the treatment of foreigners. They have no parallel in the code of any Christian country.

[1] In writing on crime I have given grounds for believing that if the two main features of the Mosaic code were accepted in our criminal law the reform would lead to a substantial and immediate decrease of crime.

unintelligent than the Christians who ply their children with these ordinances of the Mosaic code, when they ought to be giving them "the sincere *milk* of the Word."

A somewhat similar abuse of Scripture is denounced in the Sermon on the Mount. People imagine that love is the abrogation of law, but Scripture teaches that it is the "fulfilling" of it. Therefore it was that to "the Beatitudes" the Lord immediately added words to guard against the error, which half of Christendom has adopted, of supposing that His purpose was to set aside, or in some way to disparage, the law. But the law had two aspects. Christianity itself knows no higher standard of duty than love to God and one's neighbour; and this was expressly declared to be the esoteric teaching of the Mosaic law. In this aspect of it the law proclaimed what a man *ought to be:* in its lower aspect it prohibited what men *ought not to do.* But in this its lower form "the law was not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient." And yet "the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees" consisted in non-violation of the "Thou shalt not's" of the penal code of the theocracy. But that was not the righteousness of those who desired to be sons of the

Father in heaven, nor would it give entrance into the Kingdom. Theirs was a far different standard of life than mere discharge of their responsibilities as citizens of the Commonwealth.[1]

Error is altogether human and may be detected by the use of our natural faculties. Hence our Lord's indignant rebuke addressed to the Pharisees, "How is it that even of yourselves ye do not judge what is right?" Lord Kelvin's dictum therefore is apt and useful: "Do not be afraid of being free thinkers." But a caution is needed here. While common sense may save us from much of the error and nonsense by which the language of the Bible is perverted or obscured, our natural faculties will not

[1] Compare the 20th with the 45th verse of Matt. v. Immediately preceding verse 20 is the express statement that "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law." Immediately following it are the instances above referred to, beginning "Ye have heard that it was said to [not *by*] them of old time, Thou shalt not kill," etc. As a citizen a Jew committed no crime in being angry with his brother; but as a child of his Father in heaven (verse 45) he was guilty of sin. The formula "Ye have heard," etc., repeated in verses 21, 27, 33, 38, 43, clearly indicates that the Lord was referring to the teaching of their instructors, and probably to some "catechism" in common use. For it was not in this fashion that He was used to quote Holy Scripture.

avail to reveal to us its deeper teaching. For Divine truth is spiritually discerned, and therefore spiritual intelligence is needed for the apprehension of it. And there are difficulties in the Bible which even spiritual intelligence will fail to solve, difficulties which seem nearly as insoluble and distressing as are God's providential dealings with His people in their life on earth.[1]

But such difficulties cannot shake the faith of those who have learned to trace the golden threads of type and promise and prophecy, which are spread through all the sacred writings, giving proof of their unity and testifying to their Divine authorship. "These are they which testify of Me" was the Lord's description of the Hebrew Scriptures. And in His post-resurrection ministry, we are told, "beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." On this Dean Alford writes: "I take the [words] to mean something very different from mere prophetical passages. *The whole Scriptures are a testi-*

[1] It is a most significant fact that the greatest difficulties in Scripture are of this character. If the ways of God in providence so often try our faith, it is not strange that this should be true also of the words of God in revelation.

mony to Him: the whole history of the chosen people, with its types, and its law, and its prophecies, is a showing forth of Him: and it was here *the whole* that He laid before them." [1]

And these golden threads unite the later with the earlier Scriptures. Indeed, the Gospels belong as much to the Old Testament as to the New. For the Christ of the Gospels is "the son of David, the son of Abraham." And the ministry there recorded is that of the Jews' Messiah. It is not till we come to the Epistles that we are confronted by the new and startling fact that Divine Scriptures are addressed to Gentiles. And the Acts of the Apostles explains the change. Because they rejected the Messiah, the covenant people are themselves rejected. Their position as the Divine agents upon earth is determined, and the Gospel now goes out unfettered to the world.

The unbelief of infidels is seldom as unintelligent as that of professing Christians.

[1] This is too commonly ignored; and as the result very many present-day expositors betray ignorance of the language in which the New Testament is written—not Greek (for that is merely the outward shell) but the types and prophecies of the earlier Scriptures.

" Back to Christ " is the shibboleth of a school that seeks to set one part of Scripture against another, and to disparage the ministry of Paul. But unless Christ was to come back in person, the new and special revelation consequent upon the great dispensational change involved in setting aside the earthly people must needs have been made the ministry of human lips and pen ; and Divine sovereignty made choice of the Apostle of the Gentiles. And to disparage the Apostle Paul, or the revelation entrusted to him, is not to get back to Christ, but to put ourselves back into the position which the Gentiles occupied in the days of His earthly ministry.

The intelligent student of Scripture will find ever-increasing proofs of what Pusey aptly calls its " hidden harmony." " Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose " is the poet's vindication of " divine philosophy " ; and with still fuller meaning and deeper truth may these words be used of the Divine Book.

CHAPTER XII

THE "HIGHER CRITICISM"

BIBLE students nowadays seem to be haunted by the grim spectre of the "Higher Criticism." But if instead of running away from ghosts we face them boldly, our fears generally give place to feelings of contempt or indignation. And this is the experience of many who have fearlessly examined what are called "the assured results of modern criticism." The fact that these attacks upon the Bible originated with German rationalism formerly barred their acceptance by Christians of the English-speaking world. But in our day they have been accredited by distinguished scholars on both sides of the Atlantic, whose reputation for piety and reverence for things Divine is deemed a guarantee that they are legitimate and harmless.

I am not referring to that admirable and useful system of Bible study to which the title

of Higher Criticism properly belongs,[1] but to "the Higher Criticism" in inverted commas —a German rationalistic crusade against the Scriptures. The New Testament was at one time its chief objective; and we have seen with what results.[2] The much vaunted conclusions of the Tübingen School of critics are now relegated to the same limbo as the *Bathybius* of the scientists.[3] And it may be predicted with confidence that a generation hence the present-day attacks upon the Old Testament will be equally discredited. Meanwhile, however, they must be reckoned with.

But while these attacks cannot be ignored, no one surely will suppose that they can be fully discussed in a brief concluding chapter. My aim here is limited to destructive criticism of the critics. I do not pretend, for example, to establish the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch—that would need a treatise of some magnitude—but the reader will here find proof that "the critical hypothesis of its origin is untenable."

It is commonly assumed that these "assured

[1] It has for its aim to settle the human authorship of the sacred books, and the circumstances in which they were written.

[2] See p. 130 *ante*.

[3] See p. 43 *ante*.

results of modern criticism" are the outcome of an honest and impartial examination of the text by Hebrew scholars, whereas in fact the critics began with the "results," and all their labours have been directed to the task of finding facts and arguments to justify them.

Rationalism gained such as ascendency in the latter part of the eighteenth century that it well-nigh swamped the Christianity of Germany. And Eichhorn, "the founder of Old Testament criticism," took up the task of "winning back the educated classes to religion."[1] To accomplish this it was necessary to bring the Bible down to the level of a purely human book, and therefore every feature savouring of what is called "the supernatural" had to be eliminated. All miracles had, of course, to be got rid of. But the only element of real Higher Criticism in the business was Astruc's discovery, made in the year of Eichhorn's birth, that the early chapters of Genesis are possibly "mosaic" in the secondary sense of that term, and that they incorporated documents of an earlier era.

Astruc's theory, however, has no bearing upon the issue here involved. For it seems incredible that there was no written revelation

[1] Prof. Cheyne's *Founders of Old Testament Criticism.*

before the epoch of the Exodus; and if such a revelation existed, we should naturally expect to find traces of it in Genesis.[1]

How then was the Pentateuch to be discredited? One scheme after another was broached, as succeeding generations of critics faced the problem; and that which at last gained acceptance was that the books were literary forgeries of the Exilic Era. But let it be kept clearly in view that these various theories were not the outcome of honest inquiry. One and all, they were devised to sustain the foregone conclusion which rendered them necessary. And that conclusion rests on no better foundation than a few isolated and perverted texts. Chief among these is the statement that in Josiah's reign "the book of the law" was found in the Temple—not a very strange discovery, seeing that the law itself ordered it to be kept there![2]

But, it will be said, this implies that our

[1] Chap. VII. *ante*, deals with the cosmogony of Moses.

[2] 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14, *cf.* Deut. xxxi. 26. It was not "*a* book of the law," as in A.V., but *the* book: the known record of "the law of the Lord given by Moses," but neglected and forgotten during the apostasy of Manasseh's long and evil reign.

Christian scholars have lent themselves to what is on the face of it a fraud? By no means. The whole business is German from first to last. Our own scholars have not contributed one iota to the "Higher Criticism." The only "independent work" done by them has been to check and verify the labours of the Germans, and this they have done, of course, with skill and care. And as the result they assure us that in their judgment the case has been established against the Mosaic Books.[1]

"But," some one will exclaim, "is not this an end of controversy in the matter?" One might have supposed that the egregious fallacy here involved would be apparent to all thoughtful people. For it assumes that anything supported by a clear and complete case must be true. But no one who is brought before a court of justice, either in a civil action or on a criminal charge, is ever required to open his lips in his defence unless a clear and complete case is established against him—such a case as must, if unanswered, lead to a hostile verdict. And the object of a trial is to sift that case and to hear what is to be said upon the other side. "Critic" is Greek for *judge*, but the "Higher

[1] See Prof. Driver's *Introduction*, p. xiv.

Critics," like the Dreyfus tribunal, took the place of prosecutors; and beginning with a hostile verdict, they then set to work to justify it. This is not rhetoric but fact. It was essential to their purpose to prove that the Bible is purely human. And therefore, as no one would believe in miracles if unsupported by contemporary evidence, the Pentateuch was assigned to the era of the Captivity.

The main ground on which this scheme found acceptance with Christian scholars is now discarded as a blunder. It was deemed to be impossible that such a literature could have originated in an age which was supposed to be barbarous. And until recent years the question was solemnly discussed whether the art of writing prevailed in the Mosaic age. But to-day it is matter of common knowledge that long before the time of Moses literature flourished; and archæological discovery tells us that "in the century before the Exodus Palestine was a land of books and schools." [1]

But further. The idea was scouted that such a code of laws could have been framed at such an early period. Recently, however, the spade of the explorer unearthed the now famous code

[1] Prof. Sayce in *Lex Mosaica* (p. 9).

of Hammurabi, who ruled in Babylon four centuries before the Exodus. And this discovery undermined the very foundations of "the critical hypothesis." But instead of repenting of their error and folly, the critics turned round, and with amazing effrontery declared that the Mosaic code was borrowed from Babylon. This is a most reasonable conclusion on the part of those who regard the Mosaic law as a purely human code. But here the critic is "hoist with his own petard." For if the Mosaic law were based on the Hammurabi code, it could not have been framed in the days of Josiah long ages after Hammurabi had been forgotten. This Hammurabi discovery is one of many that led Professor Sayce to declare that "the answer of archæology to the theories of modern 'criticism' is complete: the Law preceded the Prophets, and did not follow them."

But even this is not all. It is a canon of "criticism" with these men that no Biblical statement is ever to be accepted unless confirmed by some pagan authority; Genesis xiv. was therefore dismissed as fable on account of its naming Amraphel as a King of Babylon. But Amraphel is only another form of the

[1] *Mon. Facts and H. C. Fancies*, p. 83.

name of Hammurabi, who now stands out as one of the great historical characters of the past.[1]

"His nonsense suited their nonsense," was the explanation Charles II. offered of the popularity of a certain preacher with his flock. And the claptrap by which the minor prophets of this cult commend it to the ignorant multitude may be dismissed in similar fashion. To trade on prejudice, however, is not my method. The case against the Pentateuch shall be stated in the words of a scholar and teacher whose name and fame stand high in the Universities of Christendom—I refer to Professor Driver of Oxford. Here is his summary of the critics' case against the Mosaic books, as formulated in his great work *The Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*:—

"We can only argue upon grounds of probability derived from our view of the progress of the art of writing, or of literary composition, or of the rise and growth of the prophetic tone and feeling in ancient Israel, or of the period at which the traditions contained in the narratives might have taken shape, or of the prob-

[1] "'Ammurapi ilu' is letter for letter the 'Amraphel' of Genesis." *Mon. Facts and H. C. Fancies*, p. 60.

ability that they would have been written down before the impetus given to culture by the monarchy had taken effect, and similar considerations, for estimating most of which, though plausible arguments on one side or the other may be advanced, a standard on which we can confidently rely scarcely admits of being fixed" (sixth ed., p. 123).

"Plausible arguments" and "grounds of probability": such are the foundations on which rest "the assured results of modern criticism"! But even if the critics' position were as strong as it is feeble, we could call a witness whose unaided testimony would suffice to destroy it. I refer to the Samaritan Bible. And here again their case shall be stated by one of themselves, a writer whom they hold in the highest honour, the late Professor Robertson Smith. In the judgment of the Samaritans he tells us, "Not only the temple of Zion, but the earlier temple of Shiloh and the priesthood of Eli, were schismatical." And yet, he adds, "their religion was built on the Pentateuch alone." Where then, and when, did they get the Pentateuch? Here is the critics' account of it:—

"They [the Samaritans] regard themselves as Israelites, descendants of the ten tribes,

and claim to possess the orthodox religion of Moses. . . . The priestly law, which is throughout based on the practice of the priests in Jerusalem before the Captivity, was reduced to form after the Exile, and was published by Ezra as the law of the rebuilt temple of Zion. The Samaritans must therefore have derived their Pentateuch from the Jews after Ezra's reforms."

Now mark what this implies. We know the bitterness of racial and religious quarrels. And both these elements combined to alienate the Samaritans from the Jews. But this was not all. At the very time when they are said to have "derived their Pentateuch from the Jews" these antipathies had deepened into hatred—"abhorrence" is Robertson Smith's word—on account of the contempt and sternness with which the Jews spurned their proffered help in the work of reconstruction at Jerusalem. And yet we are asked to believe that in such circumstances, and at that time, when their feelings toward the Jews were such as nowadays Orangemen bear to "Papists," they accepted these Jewish books as their "Bible," to the exclusion of the writings, not only of their own Israelite seers, but also of those sacred and venerated

historical books known as "the former prophets."

In the whole range of controversy, religious or secular, was there ever propounded a theory more utterly incredible and preposterous! What have the critics to say for it? Here is the defence they offer in the new volume of the accredited handbook of their heresies—Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*:—

"There is at least one valid ground for the conclusion that the Pentateuch was first accepted by the Samaritans after the Exile. Why was their request to be allowed to take part in the building of the second temple refused by the heads of the Jerusalem community? Very probably because the Jews were aware that the Samaritans did not as yet possess the Law-book. It is hard to suppose that otherwise they would have met with this refusal. Further, any one who, like the present writer, regards the modern criticism of the Pentateuch as essentially correct, has a second decisive reason for adopting the above view." (Prof. König's article, "Samaritan Pentateuch," p. 68.)

The question is, When and how did the Samaritans get the Pentateuch? A "*valid ground*" for the critical theory, we are told, is

that "*very probably*" the reason why the Jews under Ezra refused their help was because they had not then got the forged books, and it is "*hard to suppose*" anything else! But the "*decisive reason*" for accepting the critical hypothesis is that critical hypothesis is "essentially correct"! Men of common sense will "very probably" conclude that if "the modern criticism of the Pentateuch" can be supported only by such drivel as this, it may be dismissed as unworthy of discussion.

The fetich of "modern criticism" seems to have a sinister influence even on scholars of eminence. The Samaritan Bible is conclusive proof that the "critical hypothesis" of the origin of the Pentateuch is absolutely untenable. And its acceptance by the Higher Critics is proof of their utter incapacity for dealing with evidence.

And this leads me to say with emphasis that the grounds on which these men claim the "Higher Criticism" as their own peculiar province are as futile as are their arguments in its support. The language of the incriminated books has very little bearing on the issues involved; and in the case of the Pentateuch its testimony is against the critics. The problems of the controversy fall within the

sphere, not of philology, but of *evidence*. And this being so, a Professor of Theology or of Hebrew, *as such*, has no special fitness for dealing with them. "As such" I say, for of course a knowledge of languages and of Biblical literature is not a disqualification. But experience abundantly proves that the pursuit of studies of that character creates no fitness for handling problems of evidence; and these should be left to men who by training and practical experience are qualified for the task.

Proofs of this, both numerous and striking, might be culled from the controversy respecting the genuineness of the Book of Daniel. But I have published so much on that subject elsewhere, that I will not introduce it here.[1] And other books, moreover, will furnish further illustrations of my statement. Take the "two Isaiahs" figment, for example. There is no element of profanity in this hypothesis, and we can afford to examine it on its merits. What does it involve?

Having regard to the scathing denunciations of the national religion which abound in the earlier portions of the Book of Isaiah, it would not be strange if their author's name had been deliberately effaced from the national

[1] But see Appendix, Note II.

annals. But the later chapters, attributed by the critics to Isaiah II., are not only marked by extraordinary brilliancy, but they abound in words of cheer and hope and joy, unparalleled in all the Hebrew Scriptures. A prophet raised up in the dark days of the exilic period to deliver such messages of comfort and gladness would have become immortal. His name would have been enshrined with those of Moses and Samuel and David and Ezra, and his fame would have been blazoned on many a page of apocryphal literature. But the critics ask us to stultify ourselves by believing that he appeared and vanished like a summer mist, without leaving even the vaguest tradition of his personality or career. There is no limit to the credulity of sham scepticism!

The aim of the "Higher Criticism" is, as we have seen, to banish God from the Bible. The Rationalists, therefore, invented a sham Isaiah in order to oust the element of Divine prophecy from the writings of the real Isaiah. But the invention of a sham Jonah would not have got rid of the whale, so the Book of Jonah had to be torn out of the Bible altogether. A serious matter this; for "Christ was raised from the dead the third day, *according to the Scriptures*," and the Book of Jonah was the only

Scripture to which the Lord Himself appealed in this connection. He placed it in the foreground of His testimony, using it again and again with the greatest emphasis and solemnity. In the day of judgment, He declared, the men of Nineveh would rise up to condemn the Jews for their rejection of Him, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah when the prophet came to them accredited by the "sign" of his deliverance from death.[1]

Some of the critics dismiss this reference to Jonah by attributing it to the Lord's deplorable ignorance of the Scriptures which it was His Divine mission to fulfil; others, by representing it as merely a rhetorical illustration. This latter view is not so profane as the other; but it is wholly inadequate, and moreover it is inconsistent with the plain statements of the Gospel narrative.[2]

The rationalist denies the Jonah miracle,

[1] Matt. xii. 39–41.

[2] The Bible must not be held responsible for the unwise things written in its defence. The statement, *ex. gr.*, that "God *prepared* a great fish" does not mean that He extemporised a sea monster. It is the word used in Dan. i. 5, when Nebuchadnezzar *appointed* a daily provision for Daniel. I have dealt with the subject in *The Bible and Modern Criticism*, chap. xi.

because he holds miracles to be impossible. But why should a Christian reject it? Why should we refuse to believe that God delivered His prophet from death? To say He *could not* deliver him is atheism: to say He *would not* is nonsense; and to say He *did not* is to pour contempt on the words of our Divine Lord, and to repudiate His authority as a teacher. And this, and nothing less than this, the critics demand of us.

Men who plan elaborate crimes are apt to give themselves away by some glaring oversight or blunder; and so is it with these critics who would commit the supreme crime of filching the Bible from us. They admit, for it cannot be disputed, that the Lord accredited the Hebrew Scriptures in the most unequivocal and solemn terms. But they dare to aver that in the ministry of His humiliation He was so entirely subject to the limitations of human knowledge, that words which He declared to be not His own, but the Father's who sent Him, expressed in fact "the current Jewish notions" of the time. But such is the blindness or obliquity with which they read the Scriptures, that they have entirely overlooked His post-resurrection ministry. *Kenosis* theories are but dust thrown up to

obscure the issue. They have no relevancy here. "I have a baptism to be baptized with," the Lord exclaimed, "and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" But now, that baptism is past. All limitations are for ever at an end. And speaking as the Son of God, to whom all power in heaven and earth has been given, He adopts and confirms all His previous teaching about the Hebrew Scriptures. Referring to that very teaching, He addresses words like these to His disciples: "These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me."

And the record adds, "Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures." Professor Driver tells us that "He accepted as the basis of His teaching the opinions respecting the Old Testament current around Him." Or, as his *Bible Dictionary* coarsely phrases it, "He held the current Jewish notions" of His time. Could any words be more utterly opposed to fact? "Current Jewish notions"! All His teaching was in direct opposition to the deep, strong current of prevailing ignorance

and error respecting the character and scope of these very Scriptures. Therefore it was that the Jews rejected Him. Therefore it was that even His own disciples failed to understand Him. But now "He opened their understanding." And it was this post-resurrection teaching which guided and inspired all their after-ministry. The New Testament writings are the unfolding of it. And yet, according to the "Higher Critics," this was all a blunder, if not a fraud.

The Christian is consistent in his faith and the rationalist in his unbelief. Both are entitled to respect, for either position is intellectually unassailable. But what shall be said of men who cling to an edifice the foundations of which they have themselves destroyed? What of the superstition which holds that though Christ and His Apostles were deceived and in error, the Church which they founded is infallible, and that its teaching affords a sure resting-place for faith? What of the folly which deludes itself by claptrap about the inspiration of writings which are declared to be a mosaic of myth and legend and forgery and falsehood?[1] The

[1] These words are not aimed at the rationalists, represented by Professor Harnack of Berlin, or Professor Cheyne of Oxford and his colleagues of the *Encyclopædia*

devout may well be shocked by the profanity of such a scheme. But all sensible men will appreciate the folly of attempting to reconcile it with belief in Christianity.

To the rationalist it is a matter of indifference whether the books of the Bible were written at one time or at another; but it is essential to his position to destroy their claim to be Divine. And even this is but an outwork: his main objective is the citadel of the Christian faith—the Deity of Christ. For if the Scriptures be discredited, the foundations of the Lord's ministry "are swept away, so that Christ came to fulfil nothing, and becomes only a teacher or a martyr." [1] And how can we trust Him even as a teacher if His teaching be unreliable in the only sphere in which we are competent to test it? For no amount of sophistry can get rid of the fact that He accredited the Hebrew Scriptures, and unreservedly identified Himself with them. It is not a question, therefore,

Biblica. Nor do they apply to the Church of Rome, whose claim to be the infallible exponent of an infallible Bible is at least intelligent and consistent. But they accurately describe the position of Professor Driver and his following, whose "confession of unfaith" is the *Bible Dictionary*. Still more definitely do they apply to the Bishop of Birmingham and his *Lux Mundi* school.

[1] Alford on Matt. v. 18. See Appendix, Note III. *post*.

of superstitious reverence for a book—*that* we may leave to Professor Driver and his school—but of intelligent faith in our Divine Lord and Saviour.

"Criticism in the hands of Christian scholars," Professor Driver tells us, "presupposes the inspiration of the Old Testament." But criticism in the hands of honest men presupposes nothing. It enters on its task without prejudice, and accepts its results without fear, whatever they be. And the legitimate results of this sort of criticism of Scripture are to be found in the writings of great thinkers like Dr. Harnack, and not in the books of men whose minds are warped or blinded by the superstitions of religion.

In the "New Theology" of the day, which is but a crude and popular phase of Dr. Harnack's Neo-Christianity, the "Higher Criticism" has produced the results intended by its authors. Christianity has been dragged down to the rationalistic level. And at what a cost! Instead of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whose words were God-given and eternal, we have a "Jesus" whose teaching was marred by ignorance and error, albeit he demanded acceptance of it as Divine. Infidelity has thus achieved its triumph. In

disparaging the Bible, they deny the Christ of whom the Bible speaks.

"The Christ of ages past
Is now the Christ no more!
Altar and fire are gone,
The Victim but a dream!"

"If these conclusions be demanded by irrefutable fact, let them be made and accepted—but not light-heartedly, and as if we were the freer for them, and could talk glibly about them in the best modern style. Let us make them with a groan, and take care to carve no more the unauthentic promise on the tombs of our beloved."[1] Or, to express these thoughts in still plainer terms, if the rationalists have proved their case, let us be done with all cant and superstition, and frankly and honestly give up belief in the Deity of Christ.

Here we stand at the parting of the ways. Honest and clear-headed men of the world, to whom these pages are addressed, will refuse all by-paths of superstition, and fearlessly make choice between a firmer faith and a bolder unbelief. And my main purpose will be satisfied if they here find proof that those who

[1] The Bishop of Durham, in his Preface to *The Bible and Modern Criticism.*

attack the Bible, whether from the standpoint of a false science or of a false criticism, can be met and refuted on their own ground. But while destructive criticism has thus been my aim and method, I would fain hope that some at least who may read this "Plea for the Faith" will be led to study the Scriptures for themselves with minds unbiassed by infidel prejudice or religious superstition, and that the study may lead them to believe in the Son of God, and in believing to receive life through His name.

APPENDIX

NOTE I

(Chap. VII. p. 88 *ante*)

The Creation.

As already noticed, if the first chapter of Genesis speaks of "the Creation of the Universe" at all it is in the first verse. The very word "create" is not used again save in verses 21 and 27, which relate to the work of the fifth and sixth "days." And if the truth of evolution could be scientifically established, the evolutionist might appeal to the language of verses 11, 20, and 24 as affording proof that it has biblical sanction. And the word rendered "create" has as wide a range of meaning as its English equivalent. Neither in Hebrew nor in English does the word necessarily connote a making out of nothing. Just as counters may represent different values at different times, so is it with words; for words are only counters. And we need to keep this in view as

we read Gen. i. and ii. For instance, we are told that God created man, and yet that He made him out of the dust of the earth.

Gen. i. 1 is almost always read as though "created" were the emphatic word in the verse. But in the Hebrew the structure of the sentence throws the emphasis on GOD; and the Massorah intensifies this by inserting the Athnah, or pause mark, after the Divine name. The burden of the first verse is that GOD was the Creator. The second verse tells that at the time of which the narrative speaks the earth existed in a condition of desolation and emptiness. But Isa. xlv. 18 declares that this was not its condition according to the design of its maker. Of its earlier history we know nothing, save what geology may teach us: but the sequel describes the refitting and refurnishing of the planet as a home for the Adam race.

Our English version suggests that the heavenly bodies came into existence on the fourth day; and this, combined with the figment that they are mere satellites, has been seized on by infidels to discredit Scripture. But we must insist that the same canon by which all other writings are construed shall prevail in scriptural exegesis, viz., that when words bear different meanings, that meaning is to be accepted which is consistent with the context and with known facts. And, as we have seen, Gen. i.

14–18 may be the description of phenomena. My purpose here, however, is not to expound the Scripture, but merely to enter a protest against confounding what Genesis says with what men say about it.

NOTE II

(Chap. XII. p. 149 *ante*)

The Book of Daniel.

Professor Driver's *Book of Daniel* ("Cambridge Bible" series), which is an expansion of the "Daniel" section of his *Introduction*, reproduces the farrago of "errors" and arguments which were formulated by Bertholdt just a century ago, and have been the stock-in-trade of the rationalists ever since. Archæological discoveries have disposed of most of them, but still they serve their purpose. I have dealt with them elsewhere fully and in detail.[1] And even if they were all as weighty as most of them are frivolous, the Christian would brush them aside in view of the fulfilled prophecy of "the Seventy Weeks," and the fact that the book has been accredited by Christ.

The presence of Greek words in Daniel, we are told, "demands" a date for the book after Alex-

[1] *The Coming Prince* (5th and later editions); and *Daniel in the Critics' Den* (2nd edition).

ander's conquests. In Bertholdt's day the presence of Greek words in Daniel did seem to "demand" a late date for the book; for it was then supposed that there were *ten* such words, and that there was no intercourse between ancient Babylon and Greece. But in view of the discoveries of the last century, and the now admitted fact that the Greek words in Daniel are not ten, but only *two*, and these the names of musical instruments, the rejection of the book on philological grounds is in part an anachronism and in part a puerility.

A like remark applies to his list of "historical errors." When I last reissued my *Daniel in the Critics' Den*, Darius the Mede was the only "historical difficulty" which seemed to remain unsolved. But there appears to be no longer any doubt that this Darius was Gobryas, Governor of Kurdistan, the General who commanded the army of Cyrus that captured Babylon. Gobryas was the son of Cyaxeres (Ahasuerus in the Hebrew) and the brother and heir-apparent of Astyages, the last King of the Medes. (Xenophon calls him his son, in error, for Herodotus states that Astyages had no son.) In his youth he would have known Cyrus, who attended the Median Court; and this, combined with the fact of his kingly rank, may well have led Cyrus to trust and honour him. "Darius" was doubtless a "throne name" (like "Artaxerxes." Josephus mentions that he had

another name among the Greeks). A most striking confirmation of this is supplied by a statement in Ezra vi. 1, 2. The decree issued by Cyrus for the building of the temple, which could not be found either in the Chaldean or the Persian capital, was at last discovered in the capital of Kurdistan. How, then, could it have got to Ecbatana? The obvious solution of this enigma is that, for some reason or other, Gobryas was sent back to his own province, and that he carried with him the archives of his rule in Babylon. The language of Daniel ix. 1 clearly indicates that he was a vassal king (he "*was made king* over the realm").

The most important item in "the errors of Daniel" is the opening statement of the book, that in the third year of Jehoiakim Nebuchadnezzar besieged and took Jerusalem. But the ground on which this is rejected as a blunder is itself a blunder so grotesque that it deserves more than a passing notice.

Josephus gives an extract from the lost history of Berosus, which states that while on this expedition Nebuchadnezzar received tidings of his father's death, and that "he hastened home across the desert." And blindly following his German guides, Professor Driver's gloss on this is that the news reached him at Carchemish, after the battle in which he defeated the Egyptians, and that he returned from there to Babylon and never invaded Judæa at all. But Carchemish is

on the Euphrates; and "to hasten home" from Carchemish to Babylon *across the desert* would be as extraordinary a feat as if Professor Driver hastened home from London to Oxford across the county of Kent or Hampshire! The fact that the desert lay between Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon is conclusive proof that in his homeward journey he set out from Palestine.

But this is only a part of the blunder. The extract from Berosus, which Professor Driver quotes, mentions expressly his Jewish prisoners. How could he have had Jewish prisoners if he had not invaded Judæa? The Jews were not a party to the Battle of Carchemish. That battle, moreover, was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and after Nebuchadnezzar's accession (Jer. xlvi. 2; *cf.* xxv. 1); whereas the expedition mentioned by Berosus and Daniel was in his third year, before his father's death. This, I may add, reconciles every chronological statement in the various books.

NOTE III

(Chap. XII. p. 161 *ante*)

The Old Testament and the Critics.

As I wish to be fair to my opponents, I give here *in extenso* the concluding passage of the Preface to Professor Driver's *Introduction*. He writes :—

It is objected, however, that some of the conclusions of critics respecting the Old Testament are incompatible with the authority of our blessed Lord, and that in loyalty to Him we are precluded from accepting them. That our Lord appealed to the Old Testament as the record of a revelation in the past, and as pointing forward to Himself, is undoubted ; but these aspects of the Old Testament are perfectly consistent with a critical view of its structure and growth. That our Lord in so appealing to it designed to pronounce a verdict on the authorship and age of its different parts, and to foreclose all future inquiry into these subjects, is an assumption for which no sufficient ground can be alleged. Had such been His aim, it would have been out of harmony with the entire method and tenor of His teaching. In no single instance (so far as we are aware) did He anticipate the results of scientific inquiry or historical research. The aim of His teaching was a religious one ; it was to set before men the pattern of a perfect life, to move them to imitate it, to bring them to

Himself. He accepted as the basis of His teaching the opinions respecting the Old Testament current around Him: He assumed, in His allusions to it, the premises which His opponents recognised, and which could not have been questioned (even had it been necessary to question them) without raising issues for which the time was not yet ripe, and which, had they been raised, would have interfered seriously with the paramount purpose of His life. There is no record of the question whether a particular portion of the Old Testament was written by Moses, or David, or Isaiah, having been ever submitted to Him; and had it been so submitted, we have no means of knowing what His answer would have been. The purposes for which our Lord appealed to the Old Testament; its prophetic significance, and the spiritual lessons deducible from it, are not, as has been already remarked above, affected by critical inquiries. Criticism in the hands of Christian scholars does not banish or destroy the inspiration of the Old Testament—it presupposes it; it seeks only to determine the conditions under which it operates, and the literary forms through which it manifests itself; and it thus helps us to frame truer conceptions of the methods which it pleased God to employ in revealing Himself to His ancient people of Israel, and in preparing the way for the fuller manifestation of Himself in Christ Jesus.

I appeal to all spiritual Christians whether it is not a thorough misrepresentation of the Lord's ministry to assert that "the aim of His teaching . . . was to set before men the pattern of a perfect life." He could not but be the Great Exemplar, but this was purely incidental. His supreme aim was to fulfil "all things which were written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms concerning Himself."

And I appeal to all honest men whether the words quoted are not a flagrant misrepresentation of the question here at issue; which is not as to the authorship and date of writings accepted as inspired Scriptures, but as to whether the Mosaic books be priestly forgeries of the later period of the Monarchy. The Book of Jeremiah enlightens us as to the character of the priests of that era. Against them it was that his prophecies were mainly directed (see, *e.g.*, i. 18; v. 31); and the "laity" had to intervene to prevent their murdering him (xxvi. 8, 16). Yet the "critical hypothesis" is that the books were concocted by these miscreants!

The great covenant name of God is deemed so sacred and held in such awe by the Jews that they never utter it even in public worship; and yet in Leviticus—the briefest book of the Pentateuch—it is used more than 300 times, and nearly 40 times we find the solemn formula, "Jehovah spake unto Moses." If this be not the authentic record of a Divine revelation, the wanton profanity of it is unspeakably infamous. It need not be said that Dr. Driver is incapable of either wilful misrepresentation or profanity; but it is evident that his mind is swayed by the superstitious belief that because "the Church" accredits the whole Bible as Divine it is immaterial whether its contents are the work of inspired prophets or of apostate priests. Certain it is that he and his

co-editors and writers of the *Bible Dictionary* are the dupes of "current *German* notions respecting the Divine authority and revelation of the Old Testament."

By thus acting as jackals to the German rationalists these men have lowered the standard of biblical scholarship on both sides of the Atlantic. But infinitely more deplorable is it that they have dethroned the Bible from the place it used to hold in every Christian home; and as the result "family worship" —to use the good old term—is fast dying out. For the practical common sense of the Britisher and the American cannot be deluded by pious claptrap about the inspiration of writings which, if the "Higher Criticism" has proved its case, ought to be relegated to the Apocrypha. We are charged, forsooth, with superstitiously clinging to discredited traditional beliefs! My answer is, first, that such a taunt comes ill from such a quarter. Both Christian and Rationalist stand clear of superstition; but superstition alone supports the attempted compromise between infidelity and faith, which even their ally, Professor Cheyne, deplores in this *Bible Dictionary* school of critics. And further, "the assured results of modern criticism" will not bear examination by any one who is competent to test them (see Chap. XII. *ante*). The sham "Higher Criticism" will live only so long as it remains the preserve of the preacher and the pundit.

I will quote in conclusion the following bold and honest words of Dean Alford :—

It is important to observe in these days how the Lord here includes the Old Testament and all its unfolding of the Divine purposes regarding Himself in His teaching of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven. I say this, because it is always in contempt and setting aside of the Old Testament that Rationalism has begun. First its historical truth, then its theocratic dispensation and the types and prophecies connected with it, are swept away; so that Christ came to fulfil nothing, and becomes only a teacher or a martyr; and thus the way is paved for a similar rejection of the New Testament—beginning with the narratives of the birth and infancy as theocratic myths—advancing to the denial of his miracles—then attacking the truthfulness of His own sayings, which are grounded on the Old Testament as a revelation from God—and so finally leaving us nothing in the Scriptures but, as a German writer of this school has expressed it, "a mythology not so attractive as that of Greece." That this is the course which unbelief has run in Germany should be a pregnant warning to the decriers of the Old Testament among ourselves. It should be a maxim for every expositor and every student that Scripture is a whole, and stands or falls together. (*Greek Testament*, Matt. v. 18.)