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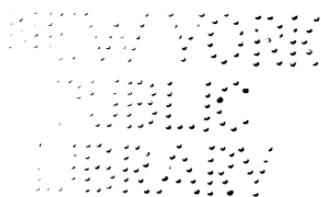
THE COSMOS AND THE CREEDS

*ELEMENTARY NOTES ON THE ALLEGED FINALITY OF
THE CHRISTIAN FAITH*

William BY
CAPTAIN W. USBORNE MOORE (ROYAL NAVY)

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PREFACE

In the following pages the author has attempted to consider the evidence for and against the finality of the Christian faith, a dogma repeatedly insisted upon by the priests of all branches of the Catholic Church ; noting specially the testimony for the Fall of Adam, and the Divinity and Ascension of Jesus Christ ; incidentally, that for the Virgin Birth and Resurrection ; and generally, that for the infallibility of the Bible and the alleged importance of Man. Judging by the daily journals, there would seem to be some difference of opinion in England, Germany, and France as to how much Christian dogma, if any, should be forced upon the minds of the young. The new life given to sectarian teaching by the Education Bills of 1902 and 1903, which saved the Church schools from extinction, and struck a mortal blow at an essential feature in the School Board system ; and the legislation in an opposite direction in France ; have caused the subject to become one of the greatest interest to all who believe in the gradual progress of the human race as a whole, and the Western nations in particular.

It must be apparent to those who have given thought to the subject that the progress of physical discovery has profoundly altered the mental attitude of the majority of intelligent Christians of the Reformed Church to the religion which they profess ; and that, judging by the

analogy of the past, this attitude will, as time rolls on, change to such a degree as to be unrecognisable from that adopted by their forefathers of even the middle of last century. It has been the self-imposed task of many thoughtful lay minds to attempt to arrest the progress of this change by endeavouring to reconcile the teachings of science with the records of Jewish history and of Christianity. The late Mr. Gladstone, Professor Henry Drummond, and others, have given addresses and written treatises which have proved to their own satisfaction that Spiritual Law and Natural Law are akin, and that there is nothing in the Jewish Canon, nor in the Gospels and the Epistles, which cannot be accepted together with the latest acquired knowledge of the earth and the universe.

On the other hand, Professors Huxley, Goldwin Smith, and other able writers, have not hesitated to express scepticism as to the accuracy of the alleged sacred writings; to draw attention to their unscientific earmarks; and to declare, in unmistakable terms, disagreement with the popular view as to their inspired or supernatural character.

In the front page of a certain well-known Sunday journal there is the following motto, "What should they know of England who only England know?" This is a very pertinent inquiry; for nothing is more sure than this—that if we compare two people equally well-read and as like in general ability as it is possible for two human beings to be, one of whom has travelled outside his own country, and the other who has all his life remained at home, we shall find the traveller has the better judgment of the two; and this truth is not confined in its scope to judgment about simply earthly matters, nor to mere physical peregrinations of the globe. The soundest theologians are not those who

have spent the best part of their lives within the four walls of their libraries. The inquiry might also be made with advantage, "What do they know of religion who have not studied the constitution of the universe, and journeyed in imagination through the infinite realms of glorious light around this puny earth?"

The following elementary notes have been collected by a seaman whose duties have taken him to many parts of the world, who has watched the worship of other nations beside his own, who has been forced to acquaint himself in outline with the principal features of the starry host, and who has come to consider the various creeds of the Christian nations, with a view of forming an opinion as to how far they are in harmony with the admitted facts of the Cosmos.

He was brought up in the strictest evangelical school, and his bias has always been towards the faith of his childhood. Where he has parted from this faith it has been with no little reluctance, and only because he became slowly convinced that the beliefs and creeds of primitive Christians were not in accord—indeed, in many respects were wholly at variance—with our more extended knowledge of the present day. It is possible that his notes may be of use to others who hesitate to subscribe to creeds which their education renders it impossible for them to entirely believe. No new fact will be found in the following pages; but it is hoped that the arrangement of known facts side by side with the Articles of the Christian faith may assist in some small measure to clear the ground for profitable discussion in the future, when these problems so vitally important to our race will doubtless be treated by others who have some pretensions to literary skill.

The author wishes to record his thanks to Miss Agnes Clerke, F.R.A.S.; Professor G. H. Darwin, F.R.S.; Professor H. H. Turner, F.R.S.; Dr. Isaac Roberts, F.R.S.; Dr. W. W. Ireland, and Dr. Beattie Crozier, for kind permission to quote freely from their writings; and to Mr. F. E. Colenso for permission to quote from the works of the late distinguished Bishop of Natal.

Amongst many works consulted, he has found it advisable to make brief extracts from the following. Permission to do so has been courteously accorded to him by the editors and publishers named:—

- The Times*; Mivart-Vaughan correspondence, etc.:—The Editor.
Encyclopædia Britannica:—A. & C. Black.
- *Luz Mundi*; *The Stars* (Newcomb):—John Murray.
Nineteenth Century Magazine:—The Editor.
Fortnightly Review:—The Editor.
The Record:—The Editor.
- *Ants, Bees, and Wasps* (Lubbock); *Origin of Human Reason* (Mivart); *A Sketch of Jewish History* (Clodd):—Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co.
- *Ecce Homo* (Seeley); *Guesses at the Riddle of Existence* (Goldwin Smith); *Bible in the Church* (Westcott); *Science and Hebrew Tradition and Science and Christian Tradition* (Huxley):—Macmillan & Co.
- *Judæa and Her Rulers* (Bramston):—Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.
- *The Wonderful Century* (Wallace):—Swan Sonnenschein & Co.
International Library of Famous Literature (Vol. VII., Farrar):—The Grolier Society.
- *The Blot upon the Brain* (Ireland):—Bell & Bradfute.
The Atonement (Magee):—Cassell & Co.
The Riddle of the Universe (Haeckel):—Watts & Co., for Rationalist Press Association.
- *Leisure Hour* (account of Krakatoa):—The Editor.
- *The Unknown* (Camille Flammarion), copyright 1900; *The Story of Nineteenth-Century Science* (Henry Smith Williams), copyright 1901:—Harper Brothers, New York.

Acknowledgment should also be made to Messrs.

Longmans, Green, & Co. for permission to quote from *The Foundations of Belief* (Right Hon. A. J. Balfour), *Other Worlds than Ours* (Proctor), *The Story of Creation* (Clodd), and *The Divinity of our Lord* (Liddon).

8, Western Parade, Southsea.

December, 1908.

CORRIGENDUM

Page 280, line 23. For "but a mysterious verse is added," read
"and the mysterious verse is also to be found."

CHAPTER I.

THE UNIVERSE

The Sun—Its size, mass, and volume—Apparent waste of energy—The solar system—Dr. Wallace's graphical description—The Earth and the other planets—The Asteroids—Eros—The Comets—The orbit of Neptune—If filled with the sun's light, how it would appear from the nearest known fixed star—The Stars—The Nebulæ—Their number in the visible universe—Rank of the Sun among the stars—Its comparative insignificance—Canopus and Arcturus—Distances of the stars—Nearest known star—Translation of the Solar system through space—Speed of the stars—Other Universes probable—Clusters of stars—Double stars—Probable minimum number of planets in the visible universe—The Milky Way—Variable stars—Temporary stars—Nova Persei—Dark Nebulæ—Professor H. H. Turner's deductions—Professor Pickering's Class II. of Variables—Mira Ceti— η Argus—Variables, Classes III., IV., V.—Algol—Remarkable star β Lyræ—Our ignorance of dead or dying stars—Birth of Star systems—Nebula theory of Laplace—Sir Norman Lockyer's view—Nebula in Andromeda—Mr. Isaac Roberts's photographs and observations—Globular clusters of stars— ω Centauri—Father Secchi's five classes of stars—The Sun one of Type II.—The most perfect sun known is Vega—Matter changes its form, but there is no known limit to the amount—No bounds to Time or to Space—Infinite littleness of the Earth—Insignificance of Man.

Our small system is governed by the Sun, which is a burning sphere of metal 852,900 miles in diameter. Its photosphere or luminous shell is probably composed of gases in a firm state of compression, and its chromosphere or atmosphere, of glowing gases, principally hydrogen, from which leap forth gigantic flames impelled from below by electric agency to a height sometimes of a quarter of a million of miles.

About 40 of the metals detected in an examination of the sun are also to be found on the earth. The energy of the sun is chiefly due to his slow contraction, but he is probably largely fed by the numerous meteorites which collide in their numerous intersecting orbits, and fall upon his surface. The spots which appear with fairly regular periodicity on the face of the sun, and which are probably caused by electric storms in its interior, enable the time of revolution on its axis to be determined at about 27 days. The spots are sometimes very numerous, over twenty having been seen on the face of the sun at one time. They are often of great size. One has been recorded (according to Miss Agnes Clerke, F.R.A.S.) as having an area of 2,500 millions of square miles; and another has been observed which had a diameter of $148\frac{1}{2}$ thousand miles.

The Zodiacal light and the Corona are, in all probability, primarily due to infinite swarms of meteorites approaching or receding from their perihelion, and reduced to the incandescent state.

Some idea of the size of the sun may be gained by realising that, if all the planets were absorbed in it, they would cause no perceptible addition to its size: if the earth were so situated that its centre corresponded with the centre of the sun, the moon would then be inside and only a little more than half-way towards its surface: if a railway train could be run round the sun at the rate of 30 miles an hour, 9 years would be occupied in the journey. Its volume exceeds that of the earth $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions of times, and that of all its attendant planets 600 times: its mass is 765 times greater than that of all the planets combined, and is 816,000 times greater than that of the earth.

The surface temperature of the sun is over 8,000° C., 2,000 times more than that of red-hot iron. All but a small fraction of the solar energy is radiated into space. The whole of the planets and their satellites together do not intercept more than about the 200-millionth part, and the earth does not receive more than about the 2,000-millionth part, of his rays. This apparent waste is one of the most remarkable facts in the universe, and is of itself suggestive of the possibility of an unseen world. ✕

Eight planets and a very large number of smaller bodies revolve round the sun in elliptical orbits during various periods of time; the nearest planet occupying 88 days in its round, and the furthest yet known 165 years. The nearest is Mercury, which has a mean distance from the sun of 35 millions of miles: the farthest yet discovered is Neptune, whose mean distance is 2,746 millions of miles. Light takes 3 days 12 hours in travelling from one end of Neptune's orbit to the other. ✕

In addition to the planets, their satellites and the asteroids, there are many comets which obey the gravitation of the sun and return to perihelion at certain stated times, with orbits of various descriptions. Some have been sensibly influenced by Jupiter and Saturn, so as to materially shorten their distance at aphelion. Others speed away into space, and do not return for 75 years or more. There is good reason to believe that the space occupied by the Solar system is full of groups of meteorites also maintaining orbits more or less regular, more densely packed between the earth and the sun than in the region occupied by the four largest planets.

Dr. A. R. Wallace, the distinguished naturalist, in

his work, *The Wonderful Century* (p. 101, edition 1898), thus described the vast distances which separate the planets :—

“The eight major planets are so remote from each other that, if we represent the solar system as an open plain $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles in diameter, our earth will in due proportion be shown by a pea, Mars by a large pin’s head, Jupiter by an orange, and Neptune on the extreme outer edge by a largish plum. From any one of them the nearest would be invisible to us unless brilliantly illuminated; and, however smooth and open was the plain, we might walk across it again and again in every direction, and, with the exception of the two-foot ball in the centre representing the sun, we should probably declare it to be absolutely empty.....

“But the study of the long-despised and misunderstood meteorites and falling stars has entirely changed our conceptions of that portion of the universe of which our sun is the centre. We are now led to regard it as more nearly approaching a plenum than a vacuum. We know that it is everywhere full of what may be termed planetary and meteoric life—full of solid moving bodies forming systems of various sizes and complexities from the vast mass of Jupiter with its five moons to some of the minor planets a few miles in diameter, and just large enough to become visible by reflected light; and again downward, of all lesser dimensions to the mere dust-grains which only become visible when the friction on entering our atmosphere with the great velocities due to their planetary motion round the sun ignites and sometimes, perhaps, dissipates them.”

If we continue on the scale, here laid down by

Dr. Wallace, of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles for the length of the solar system, we must place the nearest known fixed star at a distance of 12,000 miles (half of the earth's circumference), from which enormous proportionate distance the solar system would sink to the insignificant size of a mere point.

The earth describes its orbit round the sun at a mean distance of 93 millions of miles; it revolves on its axis at the rate of 1,000 miles an hour, and travels in its orbit $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions of miles each day. There is another movement of its poles, exceedingly slow, but one which has materially affected its past history, as it will its distant future. The poles describe a small circle (or more probably an ellipse) in the heavens in the long period of 25,868 years; causing the precession of the equinoxes, and gradually changing the comparative climates of the northern and southern hemispheres. It is this movement of the poles which causes the northern winter to occur now at perihelion, and which over 12,000 years ago caused it to occur in aphelion and helped to produce the glacial epoch, which has been the theme of so much discussion among astronomers and geologists.

Our earth has a density $5\frac{1}{2}$ times greater than water. It is therefore heavier than stone, but not so heavy as iron, its weight being about 6,000 trillions of tons. Its diameter is 7,926 miles, and it is slightly flattened at the poles.

The moon is distant from the earth 238,818 miles, and is 2,160 miles in diameter, a little over two-thirds that of the planet Mercury. Its volume is one forty-ninth, its density is more than one-half, but its mass only one-eightieth that of the earth: the density

nearly equals that of Mars. Professor G. H. Darwin
○ has shown (*The Tides*, p. 254) that it was once a part of our planet, and was thrown off in fragments, which afterwards consolidated. About one-half of our satellite has never been seen by human eyes: that portion which is visible exhibits a rugged waterless surface covered by some large basins, many high mountains, and extinct craters of great depth. It has no atmosphere, and is a sterile picture constantly before us as an object-lesson of what our earth may some day become.

The earth is exceeded in size by four of the planets—viz., Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune—all of which are probably in a more or less incandescent stage, for they give out more light than is possible by mere reflection from the sun. They are probably
▷ developing into worlds; and in countless ages to come will be the abode of life.

The largest planet is Jupiter. It surpasses the rest so greatly that the combined mass of all together would barely exceed two-fifths of its mass: it exceeds the earth alone, in mass, 300 times; and in volume, 1,298 times. Jupiter is 85,000 miles in diameter—a measurement over ten times greater than that of the earth, and about one-tenth that of the diameter of the sun. It is much flattened at the poles, the diameter between them being 6,000 miles less than the equatorial diameter.

From such observations as have been made, it seems probable that the condition of Jupiter is more like that of the sun than that of the earth. Its density is much the same as that of the sun, and only one-fourth that of the earth. Its surface is covered with belts of varying number, breadth, and uniformity;

and a remarkable spot has frequently been seen near its equator which somewhat resembles the spots seen on the face of the sun. Its equator is inclined to its orbit a little over 9° , so there can be no appreciable seasonal changes. The revolution on its axis occupies 9 hours 56 minutes; its mean distance from the sun is $475\frac{1}{2}$ millions of miles: and it makes one complete orbital revolution in about twelve years.

Jupiter is attended by five satellites, three of which are larger than our moon, and the fourth nearly as large.

The most beautiful object in the solar system, indeed in the heavens as we see them with a telescope of moderate power, is the planet Saturn, which is 78,000 miles in diameter at its equator and girdled by a magnificent series of concentric rings. The rings appear to be separated into three distinct divisions. Counting from the equator, first comes the dark ring; then the broad bright ring; then a gap known as "Cassini's division"; finally the outer and narrow bright ring. The plane of the rings is coincident with the plane of the equator, and they are probably not more than 300 miles deep. The interior diameter of the dark ring, which is 10,000 miles from the planet, is 98,000 miles; that of the bright rings 111,000 miles; and the exterior diameter of the bright rings is 169,000 miles. The space taken up by the whole planet and rings is, therefore, double as much as the giant Jupiter. The rings are composed of an indefinite number of unconnected particles, probably meteoric stones, revolving round the planet with different velocities, according to their respective distances: the inner (dark) ring is transparent (see *The Tides*, by Professor G. H. Darwin, F.R.S.).

Saturn is as light as cork. Though its volume is 697 times more than that of our earth, it only weighs 91 times as much. It rotates on its axis in $10\frac{1}{2}$ hours; its mean distance from the sun is 872 millions of miles; and its orbital revolution is accomplished in $29\frac{1}{2}$ years. Its equator is inclined 27 degrees from its orbit.

Saturn is attended by eight satellites. One of these has a diameter of 3,800 miles, and is therefore greater than the planet Mercury: one is nearly as large as the moon, and two of the others have a diameter of over 1,000 miles.

Of Uranus and Neptune very little is known. Their density is but little more than that of Saturn.

Uranus is over 33,000 miles in diameter; its volume is 74 times that of the earth, but its mass only $12\frac{1}{2}$ times; and it revolves upon its axis in $9\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Its mean distance from the sun is 1,754 millions of miles; and it completes one orbital revolution in 82 years.

Uranus is attended by four satellites, which are distinguished from all others in the solar system by the great inclination of their orbits to the ecliptic, amounting to almost 80 degrees.

Neptune is chiefly an object of interest on account of the remarkable way it was discovered. Owing to the simultaneous mathematical calculations of Adams and Leverrier, the planet was found by Dr. Galle, of Berlin, on September 23rd, 1846. Its mean distance from the sun is 2,746 millions of miles, and its orbital revolution occupies nearly 165 years. It is attended, so far as is known, by one satellite.

The planet Mars is the one of which most is known, and which bears the closest analogy to our earth. It is 4,363 miles in diameter, not much more than half

of the earth; its volume is about one-sixth, density seven-tenths, and mass only one-tenth, that of the earth. Its mean distance from the sun is 139 millions of miles; its mean distance from the earth is 48 millions of miles; but its least distance 34 millions of miles. It revolves on its axis in 24 hours 37 minutes; its equator is inclined to its orbit $28\frac{1}{2}$ degrees, and its orbital revolution occupies nearly two years.

Mars is of a ruddy colour. Close observations during its opposition have revealed various distinct permanent markings on its surface; and also white caps at the poles, which increase and decrease according to the seasons in its northern and southern hemispheres. There appears, to some observers, to be also a network of canals of a uniform breadth of about 60 miles, in duplicate, the distance between any two being between 200 and 400 miles. At the junctions of the canals are large circular lakes.

The atmosphere is much thinner than our own. It would be impossible for an inhabitant of Mars to distinguish features on the earth such as we are able to see on Mars. It enjoys a very mild climate, as is proved by the rapid disappearance of ice and snow at the poles during the summer, and by the absence of ice and snow in other parts of the planet. Theoretically, its mean temperature should be far below freezing point. The reason for this extraordinary phenomenon is unknown; but the fact warns us not to be rash in assuming that even Neptune may not some day be inhabited by beings like ourselves. The climate of our neighbours is a staggering contradiction to theories formed solely from the analogous conditions upon our earth.

Mars is attended by two tiny satellites, "Deimos"

and "Phobos," whose diameters are seven miles and eight miles. Deimos makes his revolution in 30 hours 18 minutes, at a distance of 12,500 miles; Phobos, in 7 hours 39 minutes, at a distance of 3,760 miles. The latter is the only known instance of a satellite circulating faster round its primary than that primary rotates on its axis. Phobos often rises and sets three times in one day.

Between Mars and Jupiter there is a group, widely extended, of over 500 small bodies, known as the "Asteroids," the largest of which is probably not more than 350 miles in diameter. The zone in which these bodies travel is about three times as wide as the interval separating the earth from the sun. They are most densely congregated about the place where a single planet would be expected to revolve, and this fact gives rise to the supposition that what are seen are a few of the portions of a globe which, either from an internal explosion or owing to a collision, has burst into pieces. The whole of the asteroids as at present known do not amount in volume to one three-thousandth part of the volume of our globe.

In addition to these asteroids, whose orbits lie between those of Mars and Jupiter, there is a small body lately discovered, and called "Eros," which is supposed to be less than 80 miles in diameter, and whose orbit is very eccentric and passes at perihelion inside the orbit of Mars. As the science of astronomy advances, it seems probable that many more small bodies will be discovered within the solar system.

Venus, our nearest neighbour, is the most beautiful object in the heavens seen by the unaided eye without

help from the telescope. Its mean distance is 66 millions of miles from the sun, and it occasionally approaches the earth within 20 millions of miles. Its diameter is 7,510 miles, nearly the same as that of the earth; its volume is $8\frac{1}{2}$ -tenths, and, its density being somewhat greater than that of the earth, its mass is nearly nine-tenths. The revolution on its axis occupies $28\frac{1}{3}$ hours; the inclination of its equator to its orbit is considerable—over 40 degrees; and its orbital revolution is accomplished in 225 days. It has a dense atmosphere, similar to that of the earth.

Mercury has a mean distance of only $35\frac{1}{2}$ millions of miles from the sun, which it sometimes approaches to within 29 millions of miles. It is so small, and so comparatively close to the sun, that the time occupied in its revolution on its axis has not been accurately determined; but it is supposed to be about 24 hours. It is 3,058 miles in diameter, less than that of one of Jupiter's satellites; its volume, about one-seventeenth that of the earth, and its density, being a little more than that of the earth, its mass is about one-fifteenth. This planet also has a dense atmosphere. Its orbital revolution is completed in 88 days.

As was before remarked, there are sound reasons for believing that a great portion of the area comprised by the solar system is crowded with small bodies in groups or belts, describing orbits around the sun, but occasionally deflected by attraction of the various planets which they approach in their journey.

The condition of those mysterious inmates and visitors—the Comets—is intimately associated with that of the meteorites. The matter composing the tails of comets, and in some cases the heads, is of extreme tenuity. It is said that hundreds of thousands

of miles of the tail of a comet could be compressed into an ordinary travelling trunk. They are entirely transparent. Stars of small magnitude can be seen through them. The earth passed through the tail of a comet twice in the nineteenth century without any person being physically aware of the fact, and without a single magnetical or other delicate instrument being in the slightest degree affected.

Probably the most magnificent comet which was seen in Great Britain during the last half of the nineteenth century was that first discovered by Donati on June 2nd, 1858. Its tail developed into a length of 54 millions of miles, and at one time extended over an arc of 70° . Its path proved to be an immensely elongated ellipse lying in a plane far apart from that of the planetary movements, carrying it at perihelion considerably within the orbit of Venus, and at aphelion out into space 15,103 millions of miles, the entire circuit occupying over 2,000 years. It will not return till about 4000 A.D.

Comets and meteorites, as far as is yet known, have the same cosmical origin, both being composed of nebulous dust; the tails of the comets being the result of the repulsive electrical force of the sun. How matter of such immense volume, but microscopically small density, taking such erratic and remote journeys into space, can be retained captive by the sun, which itself is travelling at great speed through space, is at present a mystery, and likely to remain one. Miss Agnes Clerke says (*History of Astronomy during the Nineteenth Century*, p. 449): "We conclude, then, that the 'cosmical current' which bears the solar system towards its unknown goal, carries also with it nebulous masses of undefined extent, and at an

undefined remoteness, fragments detached from which, continually entering the sphere of the sun's attraction, flit across our skies under the form of comets."

The solar system, of which the foregoing is necessarily but a brief and sketchy outline, is therefore from end to end, as we know of it, about 5,492 millions of miles long. Recent investigations have shown that the whole of it is travelling at the rate of about 12 miles a second, or 1,000,000 miles a day, towards the star α Lyræ (Vega).

Large as the diameter of the solar system may appear to mortal eyes, it really has no finite size in the universe. If we can imagine its whole area to be filled with the light of the sun so that the system was in view from the nearest fixed star, it would appear from that star as a bright object about the size of Venus at her maximum brilliancy.

The solar system is surrounded by over 100 millions of stars. Not more than 2,000 are visible together to the unaided eye; and if the atmosphere were wholly withdrawn, not more than 2,500 would probably be seen without a telescope. Each star is a sun, shining by its own intrinsic brilliancy. Not one has any visible diameter in the most powerful telescopes. Their size can only be inferred from the nature and quantity of light emitted, together with their remoteness. They are but specks of intense light.

In addition to the stars which surround the solar system, there are over 8,000 known nebulae, only one or two of which are visible to the naked eye. It is believed that several hundred thousand are in sight.

Each of these nebulae is a potential cluster of stars in process of development.

The telescope has long ago been found insufficient to enable us to count, or even to realise to any extent, the host of suns in this universe. Photography associated with the telescope is the means now adopted for obtaining knowledge of the heavens. In a great number of Government and private observatories the camera in an equatorial telescope is night by night adding to our knowledge, by mapping the stars. Long exposures are required and the most delicate adjustments are brought into work, to maintain the plate in the same relative position to the stars as the earth revolves on its axis. Sometimes the same plate has to be exposed on two or even three nights before the requisite time has been obtained. Beautifully clear results have been printed, notably in this country by Mr. Isaac Roberts, F.R.S., from his observatory on the summit of the hill at Crowborough in Sussex. In the course of a few years, it is expected, no part of the heavens will remain uncharted; every star down to the seventeenth magnitude will have impressed itself on the plates.

Our sun, if transferred to the mean distance of first magnitude stars, would appear as magnitude 6.5. Millions of suns in this universe are larger. Although there is no direct means of ascertaining the diameter of any sun but our own, it is not impossible to learn something about their comparative size and their constitution, through their relative brilliancy and the revelations of the spectroscope. It is known, for instance, that the Pole star is equal in brilliancy to 158 suns; Alcyone, the king of the Pleiades, to 1,000; Electra, to 480; Maia, to 400; Canopus, to over 4,000

suns; and the great Arcturus, "the most gigantic sun," as Miss Clerke, writing in 1890, before the negative parallax of Canopus was obtained, says, "in our imperfect cognisance," has a brilliancy equal to 1,300 suns. The spectrum of this last star shows that its beams are not absorbed by its chromosphere to the same extent as those of our sun are by its envelope; its brilliancy, therefore, is not to be taken as an exact comparative measure of its size; but there can be little doubt that it is 47,500 times larger in volume, and also more massive, than the sun. Its light cannot reach us for 136 years (*Problems in Astrophysics*, p. 205). The diameter of Arcturus cannot be less than 30 millions of miles. Miss Clerke, in her last work, *Problems in Astrophysics* (chapter v., page 203), says that Procyon is one of our nearest neighbours in space, and, as it has a faint companion, it has been possible to learn something of the mass of the system, which is 2.7 times that of the sun. A similar spectrum is shown by the splendid Canopus, the light from which does not reach us for 296 years (minimum distance); and the distinguished authoress goes on to say: "Admitting, for the sake of illustration, that it is in fact at this distance, which is 30 times that of Procyon, we obtain the astonishing result that it gives no less than 3,600 times its radiance. And, since the spectra of the two stars agree nearly line for line, this figure must represent approximately the ratio of their photospheric areas, that of their cubical contents being 216,000 to one. In other words, 216,000 bodies of Procyon's size would go to make up one such globe as the star of prehistoric Egypt."

As will be seen by this extract, there is little doubt that Canopus is over 300,000 times the volume of our

sun, and that it is over, possibly considerably over, 60 millions of miles in diameter. In fact, if its centre coincided with the centre of the sun, its circumference would nearly, and possibly quite, reach the planet Mercury.

All the stars are situated at enormous distances from our system—so great, indeed, that terrestrial units do not convey any tangible idea of the space between. The usual method now adopted is to signify the distance of the stars in "light years," the unit being the number of miles light travels in one year. In round numbers, this is six billions of miles. Light spends eight minutes in travelling from the sun to the earth, and 1 day 16 hours in travelling from the sun to the planet Neptune. The nearest fixed star at present known is α Centauri, which is about 26 billions of miles from our system; and this is represented by $4\frac{1}{2}$ light years. So far as is at present ascertained, this star is 10 billions of miles, or $1\frac{1}{2}$ light years, nearer to us than any other. Millions of stars, whose faint speck of light has been found printed on the photographic plate, are so remote that the rays which performed this service left their source before the Christian era; and there are some of the most distant stars which are estimated as over 30,000 light years distant from our system.

Our sun, with its system, is travelling through space at the rate of twelve miles a second, or $\frac{1}{4}$ radii of the earth's orbit in a year; but this is a slow speed compared with many of the stars. Arcturus, that great orb which must be over thirty millions of miles in diameter, is flying through this universe at the speed of 372 miles a second. This star, known to Homer and the chronicler of Job, was, even in those early

days, an object of wonder in the heavens ; and then it was six billions of miles further from us than it is now.

A star, which appears on the catalogue as 1830 Groombridge, is passing through this known universe at a speed of which only one factor (that across the line of light from the earth) is known : that factor is 200 miles a second. With reference to this star Miss Clerke says (*The System of the Stars*, p. 844) : " A speed " (*i.e.*, 200 miles a second, square to the line of sight) " uncontrollable, according to Professor Newcomb, by the combined attractive power of the entire sidereal universe. For his calculations show that the maximum velocity attainable by a body falling from infinity towards and through a system composed of 100,000,000 orbs, each five times as massive as our sun, and distributed over a disc-like space 30,000 light years in extent, would be twenty-five miles a second. But 1830 Groombridge possesses fully eight times this speed ; and because velocity varies with the square root of the attracting mass, a world of stars of more than sixty-four-fold the potency of that assumed as probable would be required to set this object moving as it does unquestionably move ! "

Miss Clerke mentions μ Cassiopeiæ as having a velocity slightly inferior to that of Arcturus, and also ζ Toucani as a flying star with velocity of 101 miles a second, as well as four southern stars which progress at above 60 miles per second.

It appears to be undeniable that the centre of curvature of certain flying stars is infinitely remote, and their speed such as is uncontrollable by the whole universe as we know it. This fact, and the poverty of stars of low magnitude at great distances in any

given area of the heavens, has given rise to the speculation that this universe is but one in the infinite realms. Mr. Proctor says (*Other Worlds than Ours*, p. 299) : " We know that space must be infinite. If the region amid which stars and nebulae are scattered in inconceivable profusion be limited, if beyond lies on all sides a vast void, or if, instead, there be material bounds enclosing the universe of worlds on every hand, yet where are the limits of void or bound ? Infinity of space, occupied or unoccupied, there must undoubtedly be. Of this infinity it has been finely said that its centre is everywhere, its boundary nowhere. Now, whether within this infinity of space there be an infinity of matter is a question which we cannot so certainly answer. Only, if we were to accept this as certain, that the proportion which unoccupied bears to occupied space cannot be infinitely great—a view which at least seems reasonable and probable—then it would follow that matter as well as space must be infinite, since any finite proportion of infinity must itself also be infinite."

Mr. Isaac Roberts, in his wonderful volume of *Photographs of Stars, Star Clusters and Nebulae* (vol. ii., p. 20), propounds the question : " Are the millions of stars and the numerous nebulosities, which are known to exist, limited in number and extent ; and do they consequently indicate that the universe of which the solar system constitutes a part is only one member of a greater stellar universe ?"

In answer to this question, Mr. Roberts produces evidence that the very sensitive plates which he used for his recent photographs show no more stars than the less sensitive plates that he used many years ago. He therefore assumes that, in recent pictures, we have

come to the end of our knowledge of the stars in this universe, and he thus sums up :—

“ Here, then, is evidence founded upon photographs of objects at different altitudes and positions in the sky, all obtained under favourable conditions with an instrument of considerable power and on films of a high degree of sensitiveness, which I think may be accepted as demonstrations of the accuracy of the surmises of astronomers in the past that the part of the starry universe visible from the earth is limited in extent ; and that, notwithstanding the enormous assistance afforded by the photographic method, we are again brought to a check because of the inadequacy of the powers we possess to enable us to peer beyond that part of space in the midst of which we are placed ; and, though we know that it extends over countless millions of miles, we seem to be no nearer than our predecessors were in desecring a boundary. Space appears to us to be infinite and beyond the grasp of our mental capacity.

“ Whilst drawing these inferences we must endeavour to realise, in however small a degree, the bewildering extent of that part of the stellar universe which is within our range when we avail ourselves of the highest optical, chemical, and other powers that we can call to our aid.”

There is another consideration. The stars of each magnitude increase in numbers in some sort of proportion according to the number of their magnitude, because it is the magnitude which indicates, in a general way, their distance from us ; and the longer the radius, the greater the profusion of stars in any given portion of the heavens. Thus, take a square of 10^0 : the number of stars within that square at a distance

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1

of, say, ten light-years is very small compared to the number within the square at a distance of 100 light-years. Again, the number at 1,000 light-years distance is quite ten times as many as those distant only 100 light-years. Proceeding in this way till we reach the region of stars of the seventeenth magnitude, which may be presumed to be at least 10,000 light-years distant, and is probably much more, it is found that each star in the pictures is separated from the next one by a definite black space. The background of every star picture is black. This would not be the case if there were no limit to the stars of this universe. An indefinite radiance would fill the sky caused by the light of countless millions of stars behind, which are too far away to be seen as actual specks of light. It would, in fact, be impossible to obtain a clear photograph of the lower magnitude stars on account of the accumulated light from stars comparatively a little more distant. Darkness in space there would be none.

But it does not follow, of course, that this universe is the only one. Bounds to space, as Mr. Proctor points out, are inconceivable. Probably this universe, which we shall appreciate feebly in a few years through the coming triumphs of photography, is but one out of universes innumerable.

The stars appear, on examination, to be formed into clusters, the members of each cluster being more or less dependent upon each other. Mr. Roberts, in his vol. ii. of *Photographs*, p. 22, thus alludes to the segregation of the stars: "The appearances to which I now wish to draw special attention in the examination of these photographs are the numerous curves and lines of stars that are associated together in separate groups. The stars are of nearly equal

magnitude; of approximately equal distances apart in each group, and the groups are independent of each other and of the surrounding stars. These appearances are so numerous and persistent among the stars that their attribution to chance coincidences cannot be entertained, and we are irresistibly driven to accept as the cause that the stars in each group respectively are closely related to one another and have been formed of similar material at a relatively co-equal epoch of time."

The most brilliant of the clusters is the Pleiades, known and watched by the ancients 3,000 years and more before telescopes were thought of. This grand system is distant at least 1,200 billions of miles or 200 light-years from the earth. It is associated with immense aggregations of nebulous matter, and contains quite 1,000 stars, over 50 of which exceed our sun in brilliancy and size. Reference has already been made to Alcyone, whose brilliancy is equal to 1,000 suns. It probably is not less than 10 times the volume of the sun, and may be much more. Miss Clerke says (*The System of the Stars*, p. 227): "The bodies situated close to its surface (that is, the periphery of the Pleiades group) are 71 times nearer to their central luminary than their central luminary is to us. If they revolve round it, it is at the stupendous interval of (at least) 21 billion miles, costing light $8\frac{1}{2}$ years to cross; and the period of their circulation may well be reckoned by millions of years..... An assemblage like the Pleiades distributed round our sun would extend compactly three-quarters of the way to α Centauri, its feeders and appendages indefinitely farther."

Recent investigations have revealed the existence of

at least 12,000 double stars, about 600 or 700 of which are visibly revolving round each other. No doubt hundreds of thousands remain to be discovered, though hosts will ever remain undiscovered, because optical power will be insufficient to cause the separation of the two bodies to become apparent. It is unusual to find a pair of stars thus dependent which have an equal degree of brilliancy. In the northern heavens the finest specimen yet known is Castor, the revolution of whose binary occupies 1,000 years or more. Sirius has a brilliancy equal to 21 suns, and its mass is $2\frac{1}{2}$ times that of the sun; its binary is rather more ponderous than our sun, but its lustre is 86,000 times less than that of Sirius. "In a Centauri" (says Miss Clerke) "are combined two stars so brilliant that the lesser, though emitting only one-third as much light as its neighbour, is still fully entitled to rank as of the first magnitude..... Since 1709 these stars have completed two revolutions and entered upon a third."

Professor Newcomb says in *The Stars: A Study of the Universe*, p. 163: "The system of α Centauri is interesting from the shortness of the period, the brightness of the stars, and the fact that it is the nearest star to us, so far as is known..... The period of revolution found by Dr. See is 81 years. The major axis of the apparent orbit is $32''$; the minor axis $6''$."

Since our luminary is not one of the large stars, indeed is likely to prove smaller than quite half the stars in this universe, it is probable that its system is altogether on a smaller scale, and that it bears a feeble proportion to the size of one of these binary systems. It may be assumed that, in the number of planets and

their size, our solar system is inferior. But taking into consideration larger and smaller systems, and assuming that two only of the planets in this solar system are inhabited, it is fair to presume that there are at least two inhabited planets describing orbits round each of the 100 million suns which are to be seen around us; and that, among the hundreds or thousands of millions of dark bodies moving in the space covered by the visible universe, there are quite 200 millions of worlds now teeming with life, among which this pigmy earth of ours holds very subordinate rank. The stars which are to be seen on the negatives are but a small number in proportion to the spheres which have not sufficient light to make themselves known. Space is full of dark bodies, stars decaying, and planets, satellites, and meteorites. The great zone of stars known as the "Milky Way," which encircles the earth for two-thirds of its circumference, is composed of many millions of suns. Our system is in the same plane, and our sun a member of this host. Most of the stars in the galactic belt are equal to the sun in lustre.

A great many variable stars have been observed amongst the host around us. These variables are divided into several classes according to the periodicity of their illumination. The most remarkable and irregular are those in Professor Pickering's Class I., called "Temporary Stars," which flash out for a brief period of a few days or weeks, and afterwards either disappear, or dwindle into the comparative insignificance of a fifteenth or sixteenth magnitude star. Miss Clerke states that the brightest sidereal object known from authentic description in the past was the "stranger star" in Cassiopeia, observed by Tycho Brahe,

November 11th, 1572. It is said to have risen to the brilliancy of Venus, and could be seen at mid-day. It remained very bright for three weeks, then began to fade; and finally disappeared in March, 1574. In the nineteenth century, perhaps Nova Cygni, seen first on November 24th, 1876, and Nova Andromeda, which first appeared on August 16th, 1885, are the most notable. The latter flashed out in the centre of the great nebula, and did not disappear until March, 1886. It reached the magnitude of a seventh magnitude star. There does not seem to be any doubt that it was a part of this large nebula; considering the distance from the earth, the conflagration seen must have been enormous.

On February 22nd, 1901, at 2.40 a.m., a new star was discovered by Dr. T. D. Anderson, of Edinburgh, in the constellation Perseus, and estimated at magnitude 2.7. On the same day, at 6.58 p.m., Dr. Copeland estimated it at a magnitude 0.3 brighter than α Tauri, and at 8.10 p.m. he considered it equal in brilliancy to Procyon. On the 23rd and 24th it ranked among the brightest stars in the heavens, being a little brighter than Capella. It then commenced to dwindle. On March 19th it was magnitude 5; rose again on 23rd of that month to magnitude 3.6; fell by April 26th to magnitude 5.8; flashed for a few hours to 4.2; and then gradually subsided, though it was still in telescopic vision in June, 1902. Two remarkable photographs are given by Miss Clerke in *Problems in Astrophysics*, p. 388, taken at Harvard College on February 19th and 26th, 1901. In the first there is no trace of the Nova; in the second, it appears as a bright star of nearly the first magnitude.

It is practically certain that a dark star plunged into a nebula hitherto invisible, and caused this conflagration, which is supposed to have occurred during the earlier years of the reign of James I.

In the course of an article in the *Fortnightly Review* for April, 1903, p. 602, Professor H. H. Turner, F.R.S., makes some observations on this outburst which show us the incidental value of the appearance of Nova Persei: "In the autumn of the same year (that is, 1901) photographs were taken of the region surrounding the star (Nova Persei) at the Yerkes and Lick observatories, which showed wisps of a vast nebula; and which showed further, or seemed to show, that this nebula was expanding in all directions outwards from the star. But it was not found possible to reconcile other observed facts with an actual movement of *matter* of the kind indicated; and the accepted view is that the nebula was already there, and is comparatively stationary, and that the *illumination* from the flash of the original outburst travels from one portion to another. The whole phenomenon is of extraordinary interest; but what immediately concerns us is the fact that we seem to have positive evidence of the previously unsuspected existence of a *vast nebula, not self-luminous, but capable of reflecting light, and therefore of partially obstructing it*.....With a vastly extended body like a nebula we might have eclipses lasting so long as to be practically permanent.

"The discovery affects the case for a finite universe in two ways. In the first place, there are the 'dark rifts' in the Milky Way, the most notable of which is called the 'Coal-sack.' Are these really tunnels through the visible universe into an outer space void

of stars?" Professor Turner then proceeds to point out that the apparent gaps may be caused by dark nebulae hiding from us the stars beyond; and that they may also be the cause of what appears to be a limitation of the universe, by screening from our view that indefinite radiance which would fill the sky if the number of stars was infinite. The condition of the Pleiades, where the proportion of small stars is less than average, seems to be one instance in support of the Professor's view.

Sir Norman Lockyer is of opinion that temporary stars, or novæ, are formed from collisions taking place between small meteoric masses, and that Nova Persei was created by a dark body plunging into a cloud of meteoric matter.

Professor Pickering's Class II. of Variable Stars (Miss Clerke's *System of the Stars*, p. 96) comprise objects like Mira Ceti, which change their brilliancy and colour at long periods.

Mira Ceti every eleven months mounts up in about 110 days from below the ninth often to the second magnitude, or even higher; then, after a pause of two or three weeks, drops again to its former low level in twice the time, on an average, that it took to rise from it. The brightest maximum on record was observed by Sir William Herschel, November 6th, 1779, when Mira was little inferior in brilliancy to Aldebaran; the faintest minimum, that of 1783, is said to have carried it below the tenth magnitude (*System of the Stars*, p. 110). At times Mira Ceti gives 1,500 times as much light as at others: each maximum is a genuine conflagration, and the conflagrations recur yearly, with approximate regularity, and after three centuries of notified activity give no signs of relaxation.

Another extraordinary star, out of many, is η Argus. Miss Clerke states (*System of the Stars*, pp. 116–117) : “ The first observation of η Argus was made by Halley at St. Helena in 1677, when it was of the fourth magnitude ; the next by Père Noel, a Jesuit missionary, in China, about ten years later. The second rank was assigned to it both by him and by Lacaille in 1751 ; yet the discrepancy with Halley’s appraisal remained unnoticed.....the traveller Burchell, familiar with the star as of the fourth magnitude in 1811–15, was surprised one night, at St. Paolo in Brazil, to see it temporarily raised to a level with the finest brilliants of the sky. Another, and a still more vigorous outburst, was witnessed by Sir John Herschel at the Cape, December 16th, 1837. Without previous note of warning, the star all at once tripled its light, and before the end of the year fully matched α Centauri.....Still of the first magnitude in 1856, it fell to the second in 1858, and to the third in 1859, and ceased to be visible to the naked eye early in 1868.....Eta Argus stands now at about the seventh magnitude.”

Pickering’s third class of Variable Stars are those showing slight and irregular fluctuations ; his fourth class variables with periods of a few days, and but a slight range of difference in magnitude. The fifth class is composed of those stars which lose and regain their maximum brilliance in the course of a few hours. The most striking example of this latter class is the star Algol, which, as before stated, has a dark companion about the size of our sun. Its variability appears to be caused by the eclipses of its massive satellite, which is only distant from it $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions of miles, and travels in its orbit nearly twice as fast as its primary.

The variable β Lyræ is an instance of a system of double stars, different to Algol inasmuch as both bodies are brilliant and gaseous, but similar so far that the variability of light is caused by the eclipse of one by the other at certain intervals. It is thus described by Professor Newcomb in *The Stars*, p. 107: "Beta Lyræ consists of two bodies, gaseous in their nature, which revolve round each other, so near together as to be almost in contact. They are of unequal size. Both are self-luminous. By their mutual attraction they are drawn out into ellipsoids. The smaller body is much brighter than the other. When we see the two bodies laterally they are at their brightest. As they revolve, however, we see them more and more end on, and thus the light diminishes. At a certain point one begins to cover the other and hide its light. Thus the combined light continues to diminish until the two bodies move across our line of sight. Then we have a minimum. At one minimum, however, the smaller and brighter of the two bodies is projected upon the larger one, and thus increases its apparent brilliancy. At the other minimum it is hiding behind the other, and therefore we see the larger one alone."

These conclusions are taken from Professor G. W. Myers, who summarises the magnitudes as follows:—

"The larger body is about 0.4 as bright as the smaller.

"The flattening of the ellipsoidal masses is about 0.17.

"The distance of centres is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ the semi-major axis of the larger star, or about 50,000,000 kilometres (say, 30,000,000 miles).

"The mass of the larger body is about twice

that of the smaller, and $9\frac{1}{2}$ times the mass of the sun.

“The mean density of the system is a little less than that of air.”

Professor Newcomb adds : “ It should be remarked that these numbers rest on spectroscopic results which need further confirmation. They are therefore liable to be changed by subsequent investigation. What is most remarkable is that we have to deal with a case to which we have no analogy in our solar system, and which we should never have suspected had it not been for observations of this star.”

Ignorant as we are of what has taken place in the eternal past, and of what will take place in the eternal future, it is a fact that the sciences of photography and spectroscopy have placed within our reach the means of forming some idea of the operations by which our own and other solar systems have been created, have lived to maturity, and have died. Spectrum analysis enables the astronomer to determine the nature and constitution of the stars submitted to his scrutiny ; and photographs such as those published by Sir William and Lady Huggins, Mr. Isaac Roberts, the late Dr. Common, and others who work in the same field in America, which are veritable triumphs of art, show in great detail the results and the various stages in the progress of the evolution of Stellar systems.

But, although pictures of the early childhood of the systems of the stars are obtained for our inspection and the different stages of their growth are laid before us, little is known of their decay and final extinction. When the brilliancy of the heavenly body has diminished to such an extent as to defy the searches of the spectroscope, the record closes. Nothing is

known of the stars in their dying condition. It is probable that there are many millions, within the range of those which we can see in their prime, which do not emit enough light to make themselves known through the most powerful telescope; and millions more which are so far advanced towards their old age that the spectroscope is powerless to proclaim their condition. Variables of short periodicity are no doubt attended by dark companions. The great satellite of Algol is only the prototype of others which are dead, and apparently of no further use as suns. It is known to our observers, owing to the accidental circumstances of its orbit and that of its primary being in line with the direction of view from the earth. Such a coincidence might not occur once in a thousand cases of binaries: the number of dead suns is probably immense.

The birth of star systems is exhibited to us quite plainly in the nebulæ, those little cloud-like patches, which were at one time imagined to be galaxies of stars in the infinite distance beyond this universe. Eight thousand nebulæ have been discovered, but very few carefully examined. The Nebula theory of Laplace, now generally accepted, is thus described by Professor Darwin in *The Tides*: "Laplace supposed that the matter now forming the solar system once existed in the form of a lens-shaped nebula of highly rarified gas, that it rotated slowly about an axis perpendicular to the present orbits of the planets, and that the nebula extended beyond the present orbit of the furthest planet. The gas was at first expanded by heat, and, as the surface cooled, the central portion condensed and its temperature rose. The speed of rotation increased in consequence of

the contraction, according to a well-known law of mechanics called the 'conservation of moment of momentum'; the edges of the lenticular mass of gas then ceased to be continuous with the more central portion, and a ring of matter was detached..... Further cooling led to further contraction, and consequently to increased rotation, until a second ring was shed, and so on successively. The rings then ruptured and aggregated themselves into planets, while the central nucleus formed the sun."

The view of Sir Norman Lockyer is not the same as this. He is of opinion "that both the solar system and the Stellar universe have arisen from the aggregation of widely diffused solid particles, molecules, or atoms, whose coming together under the influence of gravitation produces heat, incandescence, and sometimes elemental vapourisation, rather than from a primitive cosmic vapour from which solid masses have been formed by cooling and contraction."

The only nebula which can be easily seen without telescopic aid is that in Andromeda. It is of great remoteness and of vast dimensions. So magnificent an object is it that not very many years ago it was conjectured that it was a separate galaxy of stars beyond this universe. This idea was, however, for good reasons, abandoned. The Nova, which flashed out in its centre in August, 1885, and which was clearly associated with it, and not simply in the line of sight, if referred to such a distance as the theory implied, must have been equal in brilliancy to 50 millions of our sun, and this proportion is totally inconceivable.

The photographs of Mr. Isaac Roberts have led to a closer knowledge of the structure of the Andromeda

nebula. It is thus described in his notes attached to the picture in vol. ii. :—

“That the nebula is a left-hand spiral, and not annular as I at first suspected, cannot now be questioned; for the convolutions can be traced up to the nucleus which resembles a small bright star at the centre of the dense surrounding nebulosity; but, notwithstanding its density, the divisions between the convolutions are plainly visible on negatives which have had a proper degree of exposure.

“If we could view the nebula from a point perpendicular to its plane, it would appear like some of the other spiral nebulæ.....and its diameter would subtend an angle of about two and one-third degrees; but, as we can only view it at an acute angle, it has the appearance of an ellipse.”

It is not made
 There is every reason to suppose that this grand mass of gaseous or meteoric matter, which is probably only made visible to us through electrical excitation, is the very first stage of a great star system similar to, though larger than, the Pleiades. In passing from one end of it to the other light spends no less than six years. Its length, therefore, is nearly one-third again as much as the distance from the earth to the nearest fixed star α Centauri; and its distance from the earth is probably not less than 65 light-years.

Intimately connected with the large nebulæ, and, indeed, arising from them, are the globular star clusters, of which between 100 and 200 are at present known. The condensation of the nebula has apparently been completed, and in some cases the agglomeration of stars is so compact that the whole mass appears to the naked eye as one star. Owing

probably to frequent eclipses by each other and by dark bodies, there are a great number of variable stars in these clusters. Professor Newcomb, writing on this subject in *The Stars*, p. 173, says: "The cluster which, according to Pickering, may be called the finest in the sky, is 'Omega Centauri.' It lies just within the border of the Milky Way in right ascension 13h. 20.8m., and declination $46^{\circ} 47'$. There are no bright stars near. To the naked eye it appears as a hazy star of the fourth magnitude. Its actual extreme diameter is about $40'$. The brightest individual stars within this region are between the eighth and ninth magnitudes. Over 6,000 have been counted on one of the photographs, and the whole number is much greater."

The various developments of stars between the nebula and the complete, full-grown sun are divided by Miss Agnes Clerke, the authoress of *The System of the Stars*, on the authority of Father Secchi, into five classes: (v.) Gaseous stars; (iv., iii.) Stars with banded spectra; (ii.) Solar stars; (i.) Sirian stars. Miss Clerke is careful to state that there is no strict dividing line between each class: one merges into the other, as would be expected in examples of different steps in development.

First, in process of development from the nebula, is the "gaseous star," which is hardly distinguishable from a body in a stella nebula. The finest specimen is γ Argus, the spectrum of which was described by Dr. Copeland when he saw it at Puno, in the Andes, on April 24th, 1888, as "incomparably the most brilliant and most striking in the whole heavens." Fifty-one stars, nearly all situated in the Milky Way, had (in 1890) been proved by spectroscopical examination to

belong to the family of "gaseous stars." More are probably being discovered now.

Stars of type iv., as at present known, are somewhat scarce. Miss Clerke states that they might be called "carbon stars." "They bear, as their discoverer, Father Secchi, perceived, the unmistakable signature of that protean substance which more than any other deserves to be called the material basis of life. The best authorities agree that the signature is that of pure carbon, though there is no practical way of obtaining it except through the medium of a hydrogen compound."

In 1890 about 120 were known, all small. Their apparent scarcity is probably due to their faintness, which is caused by the extraordinarily powerful atmospheric absorption; the vapours closing in upon them leave only an aperture here and there for their rays to escape through.

The next type upwards towards condensation is Father Secchi's type iii., which includes such stars as Betelgeux (α Orionis), Antares (α Scorpii), γ Crucis, α Herculis, β Pegasi, α Ceti, and the variable Mira Ceti. Miss Clerke says: "One star in 400 may be roughly estimated to belong to this type. About 800 of them are at present known.....These stars are invariably of a reddish or orange colour.....The flaming appurtenances of these bodies must be on a prodigious scale.....Coronas, in fact, hundreds of millions of miles in extent, 'are on such occasions made manifest.'"

The spectra of most of the stars in type iii. give no sign of hydrogen.

Passing on from the stars with "banded spectra," we come to the higher developments towards the

perfect sun—viz., types ii. and i., the Solar and Sirian stars. Of type ii. our sun is, of course, the most instructive example. Capella, α Ursa Majoris, α Cassiopeia, α Arietis, ϵ Argus, α Serpentis, Aldebaran, and Arcturus, belong to the same class. The spectrum of these stars shows that hydrogen is the prevalent visible constituent of their atmosphere, thus indicating that they have become so consolidated as to attract by the force of gravity the heavier gases below the chromosphere, and liberate the lightest gas to assume the principal part in the function of illumination. It is, however, tempered by the other gaseous metals in the photosphere, and the light received is in consequence subdued in intensity by absorption. Miss Clerke says: "But the sun, if its vaporous envelope could be suddenly exchanged for that of Vega, would probably leap up to three or four times its present lustre. Its rays, no longer subdued into benignity, would have a keen edge to them, and would dazzle like lightning with their violet gleams."

The last class, the finished sun, the type i. of Father Secchi, is the Sirian star. Stars of this class are of a brilliantly white colour, sometimes inclining towards a steely blue. Sirius is the example of the class. Miss Clerke says: "At least every alternate star in the sky is of analogous constitution." Among the most brilliant may be mentioned: Vega (α Lyræ), Algol (β Persei), Canopus, α Crucis, β Argus, Spica (α Virginis), Regulus (α Leonis), Castor (α Geminorum), β , γ , δ , ϵ Ursæ Majoris. The light of these objects is not materially encroached upon by absorption. The interior of a Sirian star is in a high state of consolidation. The heavier gases are withdrawn by gravity within the photosphere, and in some cases hydrogen

only appears to our view to be emitted from the chromosphere; in others, there are gases of the heavier metals mixed with hydrogen, but only in small proportion. The most perfect sun known is Vega; and there are various gradations of absorption of the rays of the gases of the heavier metals down to the modified emission of light of a solar star. Midway between the two types are the "Pole star," Procyon, α Aquilæ, and probably the southern binary α Centauri.

Our sun has probably not yet reached the highest type. It seems reasonable to suppose that, if gravitation is responsible for the great absorption of the non-hydrogen rays (their disappearance almost in the case of Vega), a decaying sun would steadily lose its illumination from the white Sirian stage; and, as consolidation increased, would slowly become dark. It would appear as if we were doomed to remain in entire ignorance of the decay of suns. The improvement of telescopes—their greater magnifying power—brings with it accentuated difficulties with the atmosphere.

So much, however, has been done by the genius of the nineteenth century, it would be the height of rashness to prophesy failure for the twentieth in any branch of science: that the human brain has not reached its full development may be quite confidently asserted.

It may be safely inferred, from what little we already know, that all the universe is of the same constituents; that nebulæ have been forming, and have been developing into star systems; that the stars in such systems have been slowly condensing from an incandescent stage into perfect white suns; that they

have decayed in brilliancy—and eventually, after billions of years, become dark—throughout the ages of the infinite past; and that the same processes will continue throughout the ages of the infinite future. It may also be safely inferred that our solar system is but a very small type of many millions of others in this universe.

Infinite matter, connected by the imponderable ether, spread over infinite space, existing from an infinite past, and destined to exist throughout an infinite future, is the condition of this and other universes. Systems of matter will pass away, but others will arise upon their ruins. The most reasonable view to take of Space, Time, and Matter is that they neither have, nor ever had, limits of any kind; and that only one—Matter—contains the element of change.

If only compared with the matter which occupies the known universe, it may be asserted with mathematical accuracy that our earth is infinitely small. Man and his puny works are of infinitely little account in the Everlasting Scheme.

CHAPTER II.

THE EARTH AND SOME ASPECTS OF EVOLUTION

Interior of the earth—The outburst in the Straits of Sunda—Crust of the earth—History contained in the stratified rocks—Highest mountains, and the greatest depth of the ocean—Age of the earth as a solid body—Origin of life—Variation—Wholesale destruction of animals and of man—Rigid necessity for checking the increase of population—Consanguinity of the people of true English descent—Anglo-Saxons—The term inapplicable to the people of the United States—Proofs of the lowly ancestry of man—Evolution of mind—Animals possess reason—Cases from personal knowledge—Ants—Limited capacity of man—The missing link—Advance of intellect in man—Gaps in his knowledge of æthereal vibrations—His inability to truly realise the greatness of the universe, or the smallness of a gamete—M. Flammarion—His researches in telepathy—Second sight—Examples in the highlands of Scotland—The prophecy of a gipsy—An instance of telepathy—Fakirs of India—Deaths of four officers foretold—Magnetism at present but feebly understood—Magnetic focus off Western Australia—The tides not utilised—No use made at present of the force of the eagre or bore—Improvements in means of communication, and optical appliances—Ignorance in the first half of the nineteenth century of hygiene and sanitation—Discoveries in the nineteenth century in anatomy, physiology, and medicine—Unsatisfactory increase of the population in England compared with that of Germany—Methods of education improving—Great intellectual advance probable during the twentieth century—Existing man only a step to a more perfect being.

As stated in the last chapter, the earth has a diameter of 7,926 miles, and is of nearly spherical shape, being slightly flattened at the poles and bulged towards the equator. Three-fourths of its crust is covered with water; and it is surrounded by an

atmosphere composed principally of hydrogen and nitrogen, and extending to a height of at least 120 miles. Its mean distance from the sun is nearly 98 millions of miles, and its average density about $5\frac{1}{2}$ times that of pure water. Of every 100 parts of its crust 99 are made up of about 16 out of 70 elementary substances; and of these 16 the larger number exist in small proportion (*The Story of Creation*, by Edward Clodd).

What the inside of the earth is like we do not know. Possibly it is solid throughout, the denser materials being at the centre. That it is in a state of intense heat at no very great depth is manifest in volcanic outbursts and allied phenomena. The recent eruptions in Martinique and St. Vincent were notable calamities; but no volcanic phenomenon in modern times has been so remarkable in its violence or so destructive in its effects as the explosion in the Straits of Sunda from the ancient crater of Krakatoa, which occurred in 1883.

The Dutch East India Islands are as conspicuous for the great height, number, and activity of their volcanoes as they are for their universal beauty. In Java alone there are no less than 49 great volcanoes, some of which are over 12,000 feet high. Off the lovely island of Ternate 12 active volcanoes can be seen from the same spot. A voyage through the Archipelago is a pleasure never to be forgotten. No one who has sailed, for instance, through the Lombok Strait on a clear day can ever forget the scene: volcanic mountains over 10,000 feet are on either hand, clothed with verdure to the summit. So common an event is an eruption in this region that alarm was not felt on account of a revival of activity

in the Straits of Sunda in May, 1883. No one had the smallest anticipation of the catastrophe which was impending.

Comparatively small outbursts of steam and pumice began in May, and continued spasmodically till August. They caused no particular damage, and were not heard at a greater distance than Singapore, which is 522 English miles from Krakatoa. The first serious intimation of what was to come occurred early in the afternoon of August 26th, when a black mass like smoke was seen to rise from Krakatoa to a height of 17 miles, where it spread itself out laterally in a huge black cloud from which a rain of dust fell over a large radius of the surrounding country. After this detonations were frequently heard and darkness overspread the sky, causing alarm even at Batavia, 94 miles distant from the volcano. When the first explosion took place, the sea rushed in to the gaping cavity formed in the crust of the earth, and temporarily checked the ejection of the volcanic matter, only, however, to eventuate in a series of terrific explosions between five o'clock and ten o'clock on the morning of Monday, August 27th. The most violent was the last, at ten o'clock, when, by one great final effort, a column of steam, pumice, scorix, and dust was shot into the air to an elevation of 35 miles: the quantity of matter ejected is supposed to have measured over one cubic mile.

The heavier particles descended gradually upon the islands and sea throughout a radius of some hundreds of miles; the finer dust remained in a condition of extreme tenuity at an altitude of between 20 and 12 miles, where it was carried along to the westward in the upper regions of the atmosphere at a

speed of 70 miles an hour, engirdling the earth several times and spreading to the north and south, giving rise sporadically during $2\frac{1}{2}$ years to exhibitions of extraordinary colours of the sun and moon, and to deeply tinged glorious sunsets, which were the wonder of all beholders.

Several huge waves were created at the scene of the outburst, which rushed on to the coasts of the Straits of Sunda, and, attaining a height in places of 100 feet, swept over the shore, and for a distance of two or three miles inland, destroying whole towns and causing the destruction of 40,000 people. Blocks of coral weighing over 20 tons were torn from the foreshore and carried a mile inshore. A solidly built lighthouse was washed away, and a house at Merak, situated 100 feet above the sea, was razed to the ground. The towns of Merak and Anjer were entirely swept away. So complete was their destruction that people who escaped death, when they returned to the spot, were unable to point out the locality where their houses had once stood ; not a trace of road remained where the water had been.

A Dutch pilot of Anjer gave the following account to the Rev. Philip Neale, who wrote in *The Leisure Hour*, 1885, a graphic account of the disaster :—

“Although Krakatoa was 25 miles away, the concussion and vibration from the constantly repeated shocks were most terrifying. Many of the houses shook so much that we feared every minute would bring them down. There was little sleep for any of us that dreadful night. Before daybreak on Monday, on going out of doors, I found the shower of ashes had commenced, and this gradually increased in force until at length large pieces of pumice kept falling

around. About 6 a.m. I was walking along the beach. There was no sign of the sun, as usual, and the sky had a dull, depressing look. Some of the darkness of the previous day had cleared off, but it was not very light even then. Looking out to sea, I noticed a dark object through the gloom, travelling towards the shore.

“At first sight it seemed like a low range of hills rising out of the water, but I knew there was nothing of the kind in that part of the Sunda Strait. A second glance—and a very hurried one it was—convinced me that it was a lofty ridge of water many feet high, and, worse still, that it would soon break upon the coast near the town. There was not time to give any warning, and so I turned and ran for my life. My running days have long gone by, but you may be sure that I did my best. In a few minutes I heard the water, with a loud roar, break upon the shore. Everything was engulfed. Another glance around showed the houses being swept away and the trees thrown down on every side. Breathless and exhausted, I still pressed on. As I heard the rushing waters behind me I knew that it was a race for life. Struggling on, a few yards more brought me to some rising ground, and here the torrent of water overtook me. I gave up for lost, as I saw with dismay how high the wave still was. I was soon taken off my feet and borne inland by the force of the resistless mass. I remember nothing more until a violent blow aroused me. Some firm, hard substance seemed within my reach, and, clutching it, I found I had gained a place of safety. The waters swept past, and I found myself clinging to a cocoanut palm tree. Most of the trees near the town were uprooted and thrown down for miles, but this one fortunately had escaped, and myself with it.

“The huge wave rolled on, gradually decreasing in height and strength until the mountain slopes at the back of Anjer were reached ; and then, its fury spent, the waters gradually receded and flowed back into the sea. The sight of those receding waters haunts me still. As I clung to the palm tree, wet and exhausted, there floated past the dead bodies of many a friend and neighbour. Only a mere handful of the population escaped. Houses and streets were completely destroyed, and scarcely a trace remains of where the once busy, thriving, town originally stood. Unless you go yourself to see the ruin, you will never believe how completely the place has been swept away. Dead bodies, fallen trees, wrecked houses, an immense muddy morass, and great pools of water, are all that is left of the town where my life has been spent.”

The pall of darkness which fell on the Straits of Sunda between noon on August 26th and noon on the 27th is described by the survivors to have been at times “blacker than the blackest night.” It was relieved occasionally by a bright red glow from the volcano and by flashes of vivid lightning. Two or three vessels were in the neighbourhood, one, the “Charles Bal,” within twenty miles of the crater during nearly the whole of the time. Except in those cases where they were close to the shore, vessels were not, apparently, affected by the seismic waves ; but the wind is said to have blown in heavy squalls from all points of the compass : pumice (described by some as in pieces the size of a pumpkin), mud, and dust rained upon the decks, and the air was heavy with sulphurous fumes. They were, however, saved from the full effects of the concussions on the 27th, as the sound was deadened by the curtain of steam and

ashes which shrouded the islands and spread overhead.

The outbursts of the morning of August 27th made themselves known at once over nearly one-thirteenth of the surface of the earth by a series of detonations compared, by those who heard them, to guns fired by ships in distress. At Rodrigues Island, nearly 3,000 miles distant from Krakatoa, though a fiery south-east trade wind was blowing at the time, the sound of the explosions was distinctly heard; the sea was much agitated, and rose and fell on the coasts of the island as much as five feet, a strong current setting along the shore. At Diego Garcia, upwards of 2,250 English miles, the sounds were also plain, as they were all over Borneo, more than half Australia, Ceylon, and India. At Singapore, the telephonic line across the Strait to Ishore became useless for a time. On raising the tubes to the ear a perfect roar as of a waterfall was heard; conversation was impossible. At Batavia, the noise was deafening. Lamps were thrown down, walls cracked, windows burst in; and one of the larger air waves caused the gasometer to leap from its bed, when the gas escaped, and the city was plunged into total darkness.

There was no earthquake; but the waves caused by the outbursts of the morning of the 27th were felt at Cape Horn, Bombay, the coasts of South Africa, and, to the extent of a few inches, at the entrance of the English Channel. Seven atmospheric waves passed over the entire globe. The barometrical and magnetical instruments were affected at every station.

Pumice covered the Indian Ocean for a very large area for two years after the eruption. In the Straits of Sunda it was so thick for months that steam vessels

experienced difficulty in forcing their way through. Not the least extraordinary feature of the eruption was the quantity of dust which fell at great distances from the scene. It was found on the decks of ships over 8,000 miles from Krakatoa. The amount of dust ejected during the months of greatest activity has been estimated at $8\frac{1}{2}$ cubic miles.

Subsequent examination by Dutch surveying ships revealed alteration in the depths of the sea over a space of 140 square miles. The peak of Krakatoa was found to be split in two, leaving a precipitous cliff on the north side 2,600 feet in height, exhibiting to view a splendid section of the island by means of which the composition of the volcano could be clearly discerned. (From Royal Society's *Report on the Eruption of Krakatoa.*)

The crust of the earth was probably never uniformly smooth, because the contraction of the interior mass as it cooled would bring about a state of tension, causing shrinkage of the surface, producing intense heat. Hence the beginnings of these wrinkled, cracked, and crumpled features which other agencies would score more deeply in the face of the globe (Clodd). Our knowledge of the crust only extends to about 25 miles, or the 160th part of the earth's semi-diameter. The material composing the crust is divided into two classes of rocks—stratified and unstratified. It is from the former that we obtain our knowledge of the age of the earth, and the processes which have been going on since cooling began. It is unknown to what depths the unstratified rocks extend.

Earthquakes are usually the result of a further

process of cooling in the interior of the earth, causing shrinkage beneath the crust, and consequent displacement above in waves and tremors.

The stratified rocks are divided for convenience into five epochs, though there is no line of demarcation separating each. The following table from Mr. Edward Clodd's *The Story of Creation* gives a rough summary of the epochs and typical remains of plant and animal associated with each :—

Epoch.	Thickness of Strata.	Plant.	Animal.
	Feet.		
Archæolithic or Eozoic (dawn life), chiefly metamorphic	70,000	Algae Chiefly	Monera. marine.
Primary or Palæozoic (ancient life)	42,000	Ferns.	Fishes.
Secondary or Mesozoic (middle life)	15,000	Pine Forests.	Reptiles.
Tertiary or Cainozoic (recent life)	8,000	Leaf-bearing forests.	Mammals.
Quaternary or Post Tertiary	600	Existing species.	

The highest mountain on the earth is a little less in distance from the mean sea-level than that level is above the greatest depression in the earth's crust. Soundings of over 30,000 feet have been recently obtained.

Much discussion has taken place among geologists and physicists with reference to the age of the world as a solid body capable of sustaining life. Lord Kelvin is prepared to admit between 20 and 40 millions of years; but the weight of opinion is in

favour of according to the earth far greater antiquity, some scientific men assessing it at 20 times that amount. Professor Geikie would be satisfied with 100 millions of years. His words, when addressing the British Association in 1899, were as follows: "So far as I have been able to form an opinion, 100 millions of years would suffice for that portion of the history which is registered in the stratified rocks of the crusts. But if the palæontologists find such a period too narrow for their requirements, I can see no reason on the geological side why they should not be at liberty to enlarge it as far as they may find it to be needful for the evolution of organised existence on the globe."

The origin of life on the earth is the most obscure problem. Living beings are mainly composed of carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, and nitrogen, materials derived directly or indirectly from earth, air, and water (Clodd). Under the conditions which have existed since the first man appeared, it is generally admitted that spontaneous generation has been an impossibility. Tyndall affirmed "that no shred of trustworthy experimental testimony exists to prove that life in our day has ever appeared independently of antecedent life." But there is no proof that the conditions which govern life at present have always existed; indeed, there is every reason to believe that the contrary is the case. Mr. Clodd quotes Cope: "The transition between the organic and the inorganic energies may be possibly found in the electric groupthe primordial temperature of the globe was 14,000 times hotter than boiling water." Under the influence of heat and electricity we know not what may have occurred. The law of continuity, so emphatically asserted in every aspect of the physical

world, warns us to beware of rashly asserting that any phenomenon took place to give rise to the first forms of life.

That man is but the highest of the animals, and that he has been developed through æons of time from the very lowest type of life, is a fact now considered so well established as to need no discussion. Evolution is accepted so far as concerns the physical nature; no educated person will dispute that man appeared—or that the ape became erect—at least 20,000 years ago. Through the agency of natural selection, and the struggle for existence, the human type has improved and varied. Take five children born of the same parents. They cannot possibly be precisely the same as either father or mother. Each child will be a blend of the two authors of its being, more like a composite photograph of the parents than anything in nature, one leaning more towards the disposition and appearance of one parent, a second to the other parent, and so on. Probably the five will not all survive; only those who have inherited the stoutest and most enduring qualities of the pair, and who are most nearly in correspondence with their own environment. The grandparents and great-grandparents have a small share in the matter; and also education. Those which survive and propagate the species will be the hardiest and healthiest and the best favoured in physical and mental capacity. Professor Adam Sedgwick, F.R.S., at the Dover meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, put the case for variation as follows: "In sexual reproduction, then, in addition to the real reproductive act, which is the division by fission of the parent into two unequal parts, the one of which continues to be called

the parent, while the other is the gamete, there is the subsequent conjugation process. It is to this conjugation process that that important concomitant of sexual reproduction must be attributed—namely, genetic variation. We have thus traced genetic variation to its lair. We have seen that it is due to the formation of a new individuality by the fusion of two distinct individualities. We have also seen that in the higher animals it is always associated with the reproductive act.”

Where the actual means of subsistence are in question the competition is brought to a speedy issue. “Wholesale destruction,” says Mr. Clodd, “is a necessary condition of life on the earth. If it did not occur, no life could exist for long. Every organic being increases at so high a rate that, if not destroyed, the earth would soon be covered by the progeny of a single pair. Even slow-breeding man has doubled in 25 years, and in 1,000 years there would not be standing-room for his progeny. If all the offspring of the elephant—the slowest breeder known—survived, there would be in 750 years nearly 19 million elephants alive, descended from the first pair. If the eight or nine million eggs which the roe of a cod is said to contain developed into adult codfishes, the sea would quickly become a solid mass of them. So prolific is its progeny after progeny that the common house-fly is computed to produce 21 millions in a season; while so enormous is the laying-power of the aphid, or plant louse, that the tenth brood of one parent, without adding the products of all the generations which precede the tenth, would contain more ponderable matter than all the population of China, estimating this at 500 millions.”

"Are God and Nature, then, at strife,
 That Nature lends such evil dreams?
 So careful of the type she seems,
 So careless of the single life."

The descendants of one pair of human beings who were alive in this country at the time of the Norman invasion—supposing they had two children, who lived to have two children each, and so on for each succeeding generation—would now amount to over 134 millions of living people, if none of the descendants of the pair happened to marry their cousins; and if we can imagine all the inhabitants of England at the time of the Conquest having descendants which all remained in the country and multiplied at the moderate rate of two to a family, the population of this kingdom would now be over 100 billions. It is a fortunate circumstance that the Chinese have not studied the art of preserving life, for, if they had done so, they would now be able to overrun the whole world. Allowing that the Celestial Empire contained 400 millions of people 360 years ago, if only two in a family were calculated for each generation of 30 years since that time, the population would at the present time be nearly half a billion. The earth is said to contain over 1,400 millions. At the same moderate rate of two in a family for each generation of 30 years, in 12 generations, or 360 years, there would be over two billions of people in the world, almost as much as it will ever be able to comfortably support.

Wars, famines, floods, pestilence, seismic catastrophes, hurricanes, and preventable accidents, carry off millions of human beings in every decade. If it were not so, there would soon be neither room nor food for the population of the earth. Every catastrophe which helps to check the increase of population is a blessing

in disguise—except war, which, in so far as it destroys the sturdiest and best of the men, in most cases before they have propagated their species, is an unmitigated curse to any nation or race. Famine, pestilence, and floods, will probably carry off the weakest and least fit to live. It is difficult to conceive, for instance, what would be the condition of India if it were not for the periodical and destructive famines which have weeded the population for the last two or three thousand years. Whatever may be considered to be the advantages of war, they are of a wholly indirect character, affecting the moral improvement of a race, perhaps, in a small degree, by fostering bravery, self-denial, resource, self-reliance, and so forth. From a physical standpoint, there are no advantages at all.

Although it is not strictly germane to the subject of checks to the population, it may be of interest to note here that every inhabitant of this country would have had over 200 million ancestors living at the time of the Conquest if none of his or her forbears married their cousins. And, allowing that 30 people own the same grandparents (a very large average), this would make the population of England at that time at least 200 billion people. But, as a matter of fact, it was below three million, possibly nearer two. How closely, then, must everybody of true English descent be related! Needless to say, it is impossible that any individual can assert that, during the last 800 years, none of his ancestors have married their cousins. Inter-marriage among blood relations must have been exceedingly common, to produce the results we see to-day. Among the English race, of the sovereign and his family only can it be said with surety, that they are certain not to pass a fourth,

fifth, or sixth cousin any day without knowing it. In every town, blood relations are constantly passing and meeting without being in the least aware of their consanguinity.

It is, of course, this constant interbreeding which gives a nation its special characteristics. We have left out migration in the above notes, because it does not affect the considerations mentioned to a large degree in this country, though it does in the United States. It is the habit to talk rather loosely of the Anglo-Saxon race, and to apply the term to Americans. Whatever may have been the case sixty years back, the definition is now delusive. The rapid increase in the population is not due to the multiplication of the descendants of the first colonists, nor to emigration from England, but to immigration from all the countries of Europe, and to cross-marriages. During the year which ended on June 30th, 1903, no less than 921,315 aliens arrived in the United States. Of these 230,622 came from Italy; 206,011 from Austria-Hungary; 135,093 from Russia and Finland; 46,028 from Sweden; 40,086 from Germany; 35,310 from Ireland; 24,461 from Norway; and only 26,219 from England. Japan also sent 19,968; Turkey in Asia 7,118; and 8,170 went from the West Indies. We may talk as much as we please about blood being thicker than water, but we must not suppose that the aphorism is applicable to the relations between England and the States. The vigour of the people of the latter great nation, and their dominance in the affairs of the world, is due to the mixture of the most enterprising elements of several hardy races. When times are bad, it is the energetic man who packs up his traps and starts off with his family to begin life

afresh ; the weak and indolent remain behind, to be eventually blotted out of existence. Fortunately for us, the language of the States is our own. This circumstance leads to an erroneous idea of kinship. As a matter of fact, in another hundred years, the average American will be as different from an Englishman as he will be from a Spaniard.

If any proof were necessary at this stage of the world's knowledge to show the lowly ancestry of man and his immediate connection with other living forms, it is to be found in the similarity of his embryo to that of beasts, birds, reptiles, and fishes. The embryo of man has a tail, and is indistinguishable from that of a dog, a fish, a tortoise, and many other living forms. It is not till weeks have elapsed that the foetus can be named with certainty. Before he is born man passes through all stages of evolution ; and his generation is a concise history of the Origin of Species. Again, the human body contains rudiments of organs which are of no use whatever to man, but which, in their more perfect state, were indispensable to the beast from which he sprung. The most notable example is the "appendix," a long sack of very small diameter, at the junction of the small and large intestine, which originally contained a secretion of gall to assist in the digestion of food. So far from this sack being of any benefit to the human being, it is a positive danger to his existence, as any hard substance such as a seed or the pip of an orange lodging in it, causes inflammation, which not unfrequently results in perforation of the bowels, and consequently death. The operation of the removal of the appendix is becoming uncomfortably common ;

and, even if this drastic measure is not absolutely necessary to preserve life, a long illness is often the result of the inflammation—now known as appendicitis—and other complications occur. Fifty years ago deaths by “peritonitis” were frequently heard of. There is too much reason to believe that this generic term covered deaths which were in many cases entirely due to inflammation of the appendix.

Mr. Charles Darwin considered (*Descent of Man*, p. 18) that the sense of smell, which is very enfeebled in the human race, is a direct legacy from the animals from whom we spring, and who undoubtedly possessed it in far greater development; for it was extremely useful to them in tracking their prey and sampling their food.

It is apparently repugnant to certain minds, to admit that human reason has shared in the general development through natural selection; and some philosophers, such as Dr. A. R. Wallace and the late Professor St. George Mivart, deny a place to mind in the scheme of evolution. It is the last entrenchment for science to capture, and there is little doubt of the ultimate result. There is no decided dividing line between the brain of the lowest man and that of certain apes. Professor Haeckel claims that the owner of a particular (fossil) skull found in Java in 1894 by Dr. Eugene Dubois, and which he designates “*pithecanthropus erectus*,” was the actual connecting link in the chain of development. Whether he is correct or not, it is certain that the difference in structure between the brain of the lowest man and the most advanced ape is slight compared to the difference between the structure of the brains of apes at either end of the ascending scale. That some

animals possess instinct of a very high order is not denied by the opponents of the Darwinian theory in this connection, or that they possess certain acuteness of senses, such as smell, which is not granted to human beings; but they deny to all animals the power of reasoning, and of performing actions which are the result of thought and self-consciousness. Unfortunately, good observations and notes of the actions of animals are not numerous. The evidence is in favour of the assumption that brain and mind develop simultaneously. When the brain is diseased, the mind is for ever lost; but when there is pressure on the brain and no actual disease, though the patient may be deranged for ten years, if the pressure is removed the mind returns with its original vigour. Instances of this occur in thousands in this country every year. We know that the brains of the cave-dwellers in the Stone Age were of the lowest type, and as far removed from the brains of a Newton or a Darwin as they were from their ape-like ancestors. It is reasonable to infer that the mental powers of such beings were of an inferior type; and the argument is permissible that the great advance in the intellect of man during, say, the last 20,000 years is only a continuation of the slow progress which had been going on before. If it were possible to trace back 20,000 years before the cave-dwellers, it cannot be doubted that we should find a being not superior to an ape.

There are good reasons for supposing that the erect position of man has been achieved too hastily. Some medical men are of opinion that the heart of man is not resting upon its proper organ, that the pressure of the contents of the abdomen downwards in the direction

of the pelvis instead of forwards leads to troubles, especially among women; and that the abdomen is very inadequately protected in the present posture. The really correct posture which would properly satisfy the requirements of the internal organs is, it is said by some, the attitude adopted by the scorcher on his bicycle.

The late Professor Mivart appeared to have too degraded an idea of the intellect of animals, if such a word may be used. It is, of course, not safe to accept all narratives one reads or hears of the actions of animals, but it is permitted to everyone interested in the subject to draw conclusions from facts within their own personal knowledge. The following came under the writer's observation:—

In the year 1896, when H.M.S. "Research" was surveying the East Coast of Shapinsay, in the Orkney Islands, an infant seal, about a week old, was found by one of the boats, to the south of the extreme north-east point of the island. It had evidently been swept close round the point by the flood tide, which is here very strong; and, being unable to regain its mother, was paddling about in the eddy. As there was great doubt if it could be kept alive on board, the writer ordered it to be put on the rocks; but when this was being done it showed great reluctance to leave the boat, and directly the boat began to return the seal took to the water and swam after it, barking. Seeing this, the officer in the boat had it lifted in and brought it on board again. It was then decided to attempt to rear it, and a home was made for it on the fore-castle, where it soon became a great pet with the men. A few days later it spontaneously waddled aft along the upper deck to the gangway, a distance of

120 feet, raised itself on the foot-board, which is three or four inches above the deck, and peered about to the right and left, looking at the water below. After a minute or two of this survey, having apparently satisfied itself that the coast was clear, it rolled itself overboard, fell with a splash into the sea (a distance of five feet), and swam away. In a few hours it returned, giving notice of its arrival by barking alongside, when one of the crew went down the side, picked it up, and returned it to the forecabin. This occurred several days, the seal, apparently in search of food, leaving the ship of its own accord, remaining away for some hours, and then asking to be taken back. On one occasion, however, the vessel was moored between Gairsay and Mainland. The tidal current in this strait runs over two miles an hour. About 9 a.m. the little seal waddled aft as usual, rolled itself overboard, and disappeared, being at once swept to the southward by the current. This time it did not return, and when the tidal stream had changed for two hours, and there was still no sign, it was given up for lost. At 6.30 p.m., it became necessary to move the "Research" to the other side of Gairsay, four miles distant, where the currents take quite a different direction. The journey occupied about three-quarters of an hour. About 9.30 p.m. the stoker of the steam cutter, which was made fast to the stern, and who had remained alone in the boat to prepare her for the following day, heard a bark, and, looking over the side, saw the seal, which he promptly lifted in and passed on board.

Unhappily, a week later this interesting and affectionate little animal died. All efforts to keep it alive with pap failed. It was probably too young to

catch much food, and its excursions overboard had been fruitless.

When the strangeness of its environment is considered, an environment in which no hereditary instinct could possibly have assisted it (for no seal in that part could by any chance have been on board ship), it must be admitted that this animal did exhibit certain powers of reasoning—firstly, in appealing for the protection of the boat's crew; secondly, in finding its way overboard from the ship, and in indicating after the excursion that it wished to be taken back; thirdly, in finding its home (the ship) after an absence of twelve hours, having been swept about during that interval by currents of at least four different directions, and though the ship had been moved four miles from the position where it had left it.

In the year 1865 the present writer was serving in H.M.S. "Revenge." During the passage to England there were two dogs on board, a Newfoundland and a retriever, who were on bad terms and generally fighting, the Newfoundland getting the best of it. One day, while the ship was dismantling alongside Devonport Dockyard preparatory to paying off, the Newfoundland was seen to walk over the brow, descend the steps of a basin close to, and plunge into the water for a swim. The retriever followed, descended the steps of the basin about half a minute after the Newfoundland, swam fast behind it, and, having overtaken it, put its paws on the shoulders of its enemy, and deliberately ducked it again and again. Situated as the two dogs were at the moment, the Newfoundland was helpless, and would have been drowned, had not a bystander, who happened to be watching this performance, jumped into a punt and

separated the dogs. It will hardly be denied, in this case, that the retriever had been watching an opportunity for revenge on its stronger antagonist, had reasoned out a little scheme of attack, and was nearly successful in carrying it out to a fatal conclusion.

The anxiety of dogs on board ship to land is well known; but it is only known to those who are familiar with their habits in men-of-war, that intelligent dogs seldom attempt to follow an officer in uniform to the gangway or attempt to go into his boat. When the same officer, however, shows himself on deck in plain clothes, it is quite another affair. The dog barks, leaps around him, and shows an unmistakable desire to accompany him. If animals have no reasoning powers, how, in this case, does the dog arrive at the sound conclusion that the officer in uniform, though going out of the ship, is not going on shore?

In 1868 the present writer was serving on board H.M.S. "Hydra" at Bombay when the elephants were shipped for the Abyssinian expedition. One of the elephants had been much teased by a man in the crowd which watched their arrival in the town. On the day of embarkation the same man was in the throng around the quay. The elephant as he passed along to the ship singled out this man, seized him with his trunk before the mahout could control him, placed him under his feet, and trampled him to death.

Anecdotes of elephants would fill a volume. They build bridges across streams in India, and show great intelligence in arranging the logs side by side and kicking them close together to form a neat and compact road. The mahouts certainly appear to

talk to them. On the occasion mentioned above, when the elephants were hoisted on board the transports for Abyssinia, the poor beasts showed the utmost consternation when lifted into the air, shrieking and bellowing as if they thought that their last hour had come. When landed in the hold they were in a state of distraction bordering on frenzy. As each animal was placed upon its feet the mahout descended at once, talked to it, and soon soothed it into complete contentment with its unfamiliar surroundings, finally coaxing it into its pen, where, it was said, mahout and elephant lived together for the voyage.

A messmate of the writer's told him, in 1868, that he had once seen an elephant put in charge of a child which was playing in a compound behind a small house on the outskirts of Calcutta. By some means or another the child managed to lift the latch of the wicket gate and strayed away. The elephant seized it gently round the waist with its trunk, lifted it over the low fence, placing it on its feet in the compound, and shut the gate. It would be difficult to deny this animal the possession of reason. And it would be equally difficult to assert that animals have not acquired a kind of elementary language. The shriek of the elephant, the roar of the tiger, the bay of the wolf, the bark of the dog, the mew of the cat, the bleat of a sheep, the neigh of a horse—all express thought.

It is probable that apes have more distinct methods of communicating with one another; that they possess a language which before long, it is hoped, will be discriminated. The social habits of the apes—their powers of concerted movement, travelling about in organised herds, and posting scouts—are not, it is

presumed, called into question. It has been stated by travellers that they have seen monkeys cross a stream in Africa in the following manner: On approaching the river bank, one of the troop climbed a tree and proceeded to the end of a branch overhanging the water, from which it hung head downwards. Another followed, and attached itself to the first, a third attached itself to the second, and so on, until there was soon a string of monkeys. This string soon began to swing to and fro across the stream. When sufficient momentum had been attained, the end of this living pendulum swung within reach of the branch of a tree on the opposite bank, which was immediately clasped by the lowest monkey of the chain. The troop now crossed the stream by this singular bridge. When the last member had crossed, the first monkey let go his hold, and the string swung over the stream and rejoined their companions. It is probable that the method has been used for ages, and has developed into a sort of instinct; but it may well be contended that the *first* troop of apes which adopted it were not destitute of reason, and it was a reason akin to that possessed by human beings.

In Sir John Lubbock's fascinating account of *Ants, Bees, and Wasps* there is a remarkable anecdote on p. 287: "Dr. Kerner, in *Flowers and their Unbidden Guests*, recounts the following story communicated to him by Dr. Gredler, of Botzen. One of his colleagues at Innsbrück, says that gentleman, had for some months been in the habit of sprinkling pounded sugar on the sill of his window, for a train of ants, which passed in constant procession from the garden to the window. One day he took it into his head to put the pounded sugar into a vessel, which he fastened with

a string to the transom of the window ; and, in order that his long-petted insects might have information of the supply suspended above, a number of the same set of ants were placed with the sugar in the vessel. These busy creatures forthwith seized on the particles of sugar, and, soon discovering the only way open to them—viz., up the string, over the transom, and down the window-frame—rejoined their fellows on the sill, whence they could resume the old route down the steep wall into the garden. Before long the route over the new track from the sill to the sugar, by the window frame, transom, and string was completely established ; and so passed a day or two without anything new. Then one morning it was noticed that the ants were stopping at their old place—that is, the window-sill—and getting sugar there. Not a single individual any longer traversed the path that led thence to the sugar above. This was not because the store above had been exhausted ; but because some dozen little fellows were working away vigorously and incessantly up aloft in the vessel, dragging the sugar crumbs to its edge, and throwing them down to their comrades below on the sill, a sill which, with their limited range of vision, they could not possibly see!”

Sir John Lubbock (now Lord Avebury) touches upon the extremely limited capacity of man, and says : “ It is not impossible that insects may possess senses, or sensation, of which we can no more form an idea than we should have been able to conceive red or green if the human race had been blind.” It is probable that a human being is insensible to two-thirds of the spectrum.

Professor Mivart’s words, when denying reason to

animals, should be quoted (*The Origin of Human Reason*, p. 297): "We must confess ourselves more than ever confident of the truth of the judgment we have now so long maintained—the judgment that between the intellect of man and the highest psychical power of any and every brute there is an essential difference of kind, also involving, of course, a difference of origin." Dr. A. R. Wallace is not so insistent in the expression of his views.

Nothing can settle the point with perfect security but the discovery of the fossil links which bind the anthropoid apes in a direct series with man. The solitary fragments quoted by Ernst Haeckel are not sufficient to convince the world. If others are discovered more complete in detail than the remains of the *Pithecanthropus erectus*, and showing each step of the ladder of physical development, and if, at the same time, more particular notes are made of the acts and utterances of animals—more especially Simian—which lead to the conclusion that they do communicate with each other by articulate sounds, it will be impossible to avoid the conclusion to which the majority of Mr. Darwin's followers have already come, that the mental faculties of man have been developed in the same manner as his physical—through the agencies of natural selection. In the meantime, it may be noted that there are tribes of aborigines in Australia and Africa whose condition is scarcely better than that of apes. They live in caves and subsist on roots; their agility rivals that of their Simian brethren; cannibalism is a matter of course (though this habit is practised by other races much higher in the scale); and their language and knowledge of numbers appear of the most elementary description. They have, it is



true, the power of making fire, of fashioning rude weapons, and of making themselves understood by gestures. In other respects they are brutes, and it would be impossible to distinguish a microcephalous idiot among them from an anthropoid ape, especially if he happened to be a deaf mute.

Compared with most forms of life, man takes a long time to develop, though Professor Henry Drummond is not correct when he says: "It is well known to those who study the parables of Nature that there is an ascending scale of slowness as we rise in the scale of life. Growth is most gradual in the highest forms. Man attains his maturity after a score of years; the monad completes its humble cycle in a day"; for the elephant grows to 90 years and lives to 100 years; it has been known to live to 130; the tortoise to 80 years, some to 100 years; and has been known to grow up to the day of its death: and parrots live in confinement 60 years, and are supposed to live to a far greater age than man, in their native woods. Humboldt stated that he met with a venerable parrot in South America which was the sole possessor of a literally dead language, the whole tribe who spoke it having become extinct. Pike and carp have been ascertained to live 150 years, and it has been asserted that they often live much longer; and eagles and crows have been known to live 100 years.

That man is making sure though slow advance from his early bestial condition cannot be doubted, notwithstanding that he does not yet appear to be properly accustomed to the erect posture. As education increases, crime decreases. Cruelty, persecution, and preventable suffering of all kinds are on the wane. War is not yet one of the evils of the past, nor does

there seem to be any immediate prospect that it will be ; but there is a growing disinclination on the part of civilised States to enter into it ; and, when undertaken, it is conducted with less cruelty and even less bloodthirstiness than of old. Among Western nations torture is abolished, and religious persecution, with the various horrors perpetrated in the name of Christianity, has become almost unknown :

“ No one suffers loss or bleeds
For thoughts which men call heresies.”

But, although man has made great strides in development since he first appeared, he is still far from being in complete correspondence with his environment. His sense-organs are powerless to enable him to intercept, or to interpret, more than a few of the vibrations of the ether. It is known that vibrations in the atmosphere numbering between 32 a second and 56,000 a second produce *sound* ; that vibrations through the ether of about 1,000 millions a second give *electricity* ; those between 400 billions and 700 billions in a second *light* ; and between 280,000 billions and six trillions *Rontgen rays*. No organ has yet been developed which enables us to assimilate vibrations between 56,000 and 1,000 millions a second, though it is quite possible that certain animals possess the power of doing so. We know nothing of the vibrations between 1,000 millions and 400 billions a second, nor those of between 700 billions and 280,000 billions a second, though it may be accepted as certain that they have some function ; nor do we know anything of vibrations over six trillion a second : the capture of the Rontgen rays is quite a recent discovery.

We seem to have almost reached the limit of the

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assistance which can be rendered by optical aid in the form of telescopes and microscopes; and yet it is quite impossible to adequately realise either the magnificence of the universe or the minuteness of the objects on the earth. Who is capable of really grasping the idea of 1,000 light-years? or who can fully comprehend the movements of the molecules in hydrogen gas, molecules which are said to be so small that fifty million touching one another would extend one inch, and if a cubic inch of them were spread out they would encircle the earth more than 1,000 times? It was said by Professor Thomson, F.R.S., in a discourse at the Royal Institution, March 30th, 1900, that students of physics declare that the image of a "Great Eastern" (the largest vessel the world has ever seen), filled with framework as intricate as that of the daintiest watches, does not exaggerate the possibilities of molecular complexity in a spermatozoon, whose actual size may be less than the smallest dot on the watch's face. That little dot is the primary origin of human life. Who can properly realise this marvellous fact? It is difficult to decide which is the more removed from our comprehension—the wonders hinted at in the revelations of the telescope, or those partly revealed by the microscope. It is perhaps as well that we do not fully appreciate the depth of our ignorance, or, perchance, the race would decay through the apathy of despair.

As the brain develops further, it may be anticipated, judging by the past record, that these gaps in our knowledge of the vibrations or waves emanating from the sun will be filled up.

M. Flammarion, in his recent work, *L'Inconnu*, has

drawn attention to communication between minds at a distance from one another, more especially telepathic messages from people at the moment of death ; and hints that the force exerted may act in the form of vibrations at such speed as will be found to fill up some of the gaps above mentioned.

The subject of telepathy has been so long the happy hunting ground of charlatanism that instances brought forward from time to time by reliable witnesses have not received the attention they deserved. There is, however, scarcely an intelligent family in the kingdom who has not some evidence in its possession of the truth of the assertion that minds, especially those in sympathy, do act upon one another at a distance, and that the amount of distance is not a very prominent factor in the operation. From a legal standpoint, the evidence for telepathy is far superior to anything which has yet been put forward in support of the truth of the narratives in the Synoptic Gospels.

M. Flammarion has taken the trouble to collect the testimony of a great number of witnesses to the remarkable effects of telepathy, psychic action, dreams, distant sight in dreams, and premonitory dreams. The evidence is carefully sifted. It is quite incredible that all his informants can be either insane or guilty of wilful falsehood ; nor is it possible, supposing them to be both sane and truthful, that so many people of various ages, occupations, habits, nationalities, and places of residence, could have been all victims of self-delusion. But let us for the moment suppose that all the carefully-selected narratives of M. Flammarion are false except ten ; if these ten are solid facts, the case for telepathy is

proved ; and the theory of the author of *L'Inconnu*, that psychic waves emanate from certain brains, and, annihilating distance, are propagated to other brains in sympathy with them, will soon be acknowledged to be true. That a case is made out for the immortality of the soul is not a fact. The truth appears to be this : at the moment before death, the dying person's thoughts revert with peculiar intensity to the being to whom he, or she, has been most attached. Psychic waves or vibrations are set in motion, and are received in the brain of the object of their thoughts. In this brain they give rise to a form or apparition, which resemble the dying person, and sometimes his, or her, surroundings. The process of transference is akin to electricity ; that of the vision to light : the wave is the same, but its length in the two processes is different, the change in the length taking place in the brain of the recipient, just as it does in the apparatus devised for transmitting a picture through a solid obstacle, which was tried with success some years ago.

But if the soul were able to travel at the moment of death, and impress its message upon a distant person in such a way as to give rise to an image of the deceased, there seems to be no reason why it should not return afterwards and repeat the same phenomenon. Of this M. Flammarion offers no satisfactory evidence. In *L'Inconnu* evidence is adduced of apparitions seen about the time of death, not after ; the last expiring effort is to influence the person most dear to the deceased. In full life and health the brain is occupied with various thoughts and scenes of interest around ; there is much "induction." Psychic waves do travel between people of peculiar susceptibility ; but they do not make the same impression, as

they are not of the same intensity. When the last moment of life draws very near, interest in the ordinary affairs of the world ceases, and thought is concentrated—apparently with extraordinary vigour in some natures—on the most beloved object; psychic waves are released, and advance with lightning speed to their destination.

The cases as yet considered sufficiently reliable to be tabulated are, of course, rare, considering the thousands who die daily. The tie binding people by an intimate sympathetic connection of the kind described above is most uncommon, as is the concentration which can fix the brain upon one subject immediately before dissolution. M. Flammarion does not deny the fact. He carefully tells us that he has not himself received such manifestations. "Several times during my life has my own soul been torn by sudden separation from one whom I loved. In my youth an intimate friend, a class-mate, died, having promised to prove his survival after death, if it was possible. We had so often discussed the question together! Later, one of my dearest colleagues of the Press proposed the same compact to me, and I accepted it with joy. Later still, a person who was particularly dear to me vanished from my life at the very moment when this problem of a future life was moving us both passionately, and even while giving me the positive assurance that his sole and only desire was that his premature death should be the means of demonstrating this truth. And never, never, in spite of my attempts, in spite of my desire, in spite of my vows, have I received any manifestation whatever from him. Nothing, nothing, nothing!



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“ Evidently my brain is not adapted to the reception of this kind of wave, either from the living or from the dead. No influence whatever reaches me from the dying, and no communication has come to me from the dead.”

The evidence given in *L'Inconnu* of dreams and premonitions are far more difficult to understand than those of telepathic communications; but here again, if ten of them are true, it is enough to show that there is a natural force akin to electricity, of which we have as yet a mere suspicion, but which will certainly be made plain when the human brain is ready to understand it.

Human eyes have never seen the rays which impress the very distant stars upon the photographic plate; the experiments of Sir John Lubbock show how ants are influenced by rays beyond the violet, which our vision is incapable of discerning.

There does not appear to be any doubt that the faculty of “second sight” or prophecy has been exercised not only in ancient times, as is testified by the Israelitish history, but in recent periods. The most remarkable instances of this in Great Britain are in the highlands of Scotland, where, up to a late date, there were noted seers, who undoubtedly had the gift of foretelling events which were to happen in the future. Their power was to a certain extent obscured by their ignorant minds, and they often described the pictures presented to their imagination in such language as to give an appearance of deceit. They had the faculty of seeing what was to come to pass, but the vision had to be related in terms of their own knowledge. Thus, for instance, Coinneach Odhar Fiosaiche, the Brahn seer, saw a train run through

the Muir of Ord, and described it as a "chariot without horse or bridle." He did not know how to describe it, except by comparison with a vehicle with which he was familiar. This is natural enough; and was a characteristic of the ancient prophets, whose mental equipment and refinement of mind appear to have been of a low order, if we are to judge by the images which have found their way into the Old Testament Canon.

In these days of bustle and work we do not hear much of second sight; in cities it is a thing unknown. The reason is not far to seek. There is too much distraction. Second sight requires concentration of mind; and the faculty could not be exercised amid the noises and conflicting interests of a town. Among the solitudes of the mountains, far away from the busy ken of men, in a period when railways had not reached the highlands, when even coaches were unknown, and there was absolutely nothing to occupy the thoughts but changes in the weather, a few receptive brains were found to be peculiarly susceptible to this curious phenomenon. The evidences that certain people in Scotland were gifted with "second sight" are too numerous to be ignored. There are many now living who can testify to having been told, or seen in writing or print, of a prophecy in their youth, and have witnessed its fulfilment in middle-age. The prophecies of Coinneach Odhar Fiossaiche, who lived in the early part of the seventeenth century, are the subject of a small work by the late Mr. Alexander Mackenzie, F.S.A. Scot. Striking examples are given of the foretelling of events, some of which have only recently come to pass. This man foretold the battle of Culloden, the Caledonian canal, the Highland

Railway, the number of bridges over the river at Inverness, the Strathpeffer wells, the Tomnahurich Cemetery near Inverness, the downfall of the Seaforth family, the losses to the Mackenzies of Rosehaugh in Black Isle, and the establishment of the present owner. The last prophecy is so remarkable, and its fulfilment is of such recent date, that it is better to quote it at length:—

“But foolish pride without sense
Will put in the place of the seed of the deer the
seed of the goat;
And the beautiful Black Isle will fall
Under the management of the fishermen of Avoch.”

It is a fact that the present owner of Rosehaugh is the great-grandson of a fisherman of the small fishing village of Avoch, two miles west of Fortrose. The deer and the deer's horns are the armorial bearings of the Mackenzies, while the goat is that of the present owner, Mr. Fletcher. When the writer was at Black Isle in 1898, Mr. Fletcher was seizing every opportunity which presented itself of purchasing surrounding properties as they came into the market; and there seems every probability of the whole of the Black Isle falling some day under the management of a descendant of a “fisherman of Avoch.”

In the prophecies of the Brahn seer, of which the above is an example, we have undeniable testimony; and he was only one of many who possessed a gift the nature of which we do not yet exactly understand, but which we certainly cannot ignore. No doubt these old seers frequently muddled up what they saw in their inner consciousness; but that they had the gift of prophecy there can be no doubt.

Gipsy soothsayers have somewhat gone out of fashion; and as there was, as a rule, more that was

false than true in their palmistry and so forth, it is not to be wondered at that they have fallen into disrepute. They were, however, often correct. A case known to the present writer is worth recording.

A lady, now well advanced into middle life, was taken as a child of ten to the Devil's Dyke, near Brighton. A gipsy on the spot, rather a notorious character at that time, offered to tell her fortune. After intently examining her hand for some time, the crone looked up and said: "My little lady, you will have to cross the seas, to the other end of the world, to find your husband." Some laughter occurred over this apparently absurd forecast; the usual fee was paid, the party left, and the incident was soon forgotten. But sixteen years later the lady became engaged to be married to a naval officer, who was appointed to the command of a ship on the Australian station. His departure could not be delayed, and he left England without the marriage taking place. The lady followed him twenty-one months later, accompanied by the same faithful nurse who was with her at the Devil's Dyke, and the marriage took place at Sydney.

Referring again to the subject of telepathy: The writer is intimately acquainted with a very united family, the unmarried portion of which consisted of two brothers and two sisters, who lived in the same house in London. The younger of the brothers and the younger of the sisters were on terms of special sympathy. The two sisters were on one occasion paying a visit to Ireland, and occupied adjacent rooms. The younger of the two was alone in her room one evening, dressing for dinner, when she heard her name called three times. Thinking her

sister had called her, she opened the door which led into the next room, and, to her astonishment, found the room empty. On descending to the drawing-room a few minutes later, she discovered that her sister had been downstairs half-an-hour, and certainly had not called her. The next morning a telegram arrived from her eldest brother recalling her to London on account of the illness of the younger brother, who had on the previous evening repeatedly expressed a desire to see her. It was subsequently found that the time corresponded with the time of the voice she had heard.

It is not here suggested that there was any real sound which would have been audible to another person if such had been in the room, but that the psychic wave was, in this instance, transferred by the brain of the young lady into sound instead of light. It should be mentioned that there was a great similarity between the voices of the younger of the two brothers and the elder of the two sisters.

There are certain fakirs and jugglers in India who possess natural powers of which we have no cognisance whatever. The writer once heard a distinguished prelate relate the following experience which occurred during his brief Army career: He was sitting in his verandah at an Indian cantonment during the heat of the day, when two jugglers made their appearance before him and suggested that they should exhibit, to which he assented. The verandah was of the usual type, and there was no possible means of a man getting away without being perceived. One juggler made a few passes with other antics over his companion, and the latter suddenly disappeared. The Churchman added that he had often since reflected on

this incident, and that he was totally unable to account for the manner in which it was done. It is extremely improbable that the gentleman who narrated this event was ever subject to hypnotism.

The writer is indebted to the late General Donald Macintyre, V.C., of Fortrose, for the two following instances of second sight, one of which occurred in Scotland, and was related to him by his mother; the other took place in India.

A woman known to possess the gift of second sight was sent for by General Mackenzie, of Redcastle (grandfather of General Macintyre), and asked to exhibit her powers. She declared that, in a given time, a man dressed in shepherd's tartan would be found dead under a rock; and that a post boy in the service of General Mackenzie would be drowned in a neighbouring river. As foretold, the shepherd was found dead, precisely as described, under a rock. The General, alarmed at this fulfilment of the woman's words, and about to leave home, gave orders that the post boy should not be sent on his usual daily journey during his absence. Whether from oversight, or forgetfulness, or on account of some unexpected call or press of business on the estate, the boy was once sent by the factor to the post, and was drowned in crossing the river.

About the year 1860 a native regiment was settling into a cantonment at Nowshera, on the Cabul river. According to the usual custom, a piece of ground was allotted to four young English officers (two or three of whom were known to General Macintyre), in one corner of which was a fakir's tukkia (small temple). The officers requested the fakir to efface himself, which he steadily declined to do. He was repeatedly

asked to move, and over and over again begged to be allowed to stay. At last, finding that nothing could be done by persuasion, the officers took steps to have the tukkia removed beyond their boundary. Before being turned off the premises the fakir deliberately cursed the evictors, and told them they would all four be dead within a year from that date. Nothing could be less likely than that this curse should be fulfilled, and the young men laughed loudly at the fakir. Nevertheless, three of them met with violent deaths long before the year was out. The fourth happened to be lunching at a military mess at Allahabad, on the day before the year expired; and, the story of the fakir being the subject of conversation, he was chaffed, and congratulated upon his immunity. He went away declaring in high glee that "he had done the old fakir." That very afternoon he was drowned from a small boat on the Ganges.

It is difficult to account for these and other well-authenticated instances of prophecy, except by assuming that there are a few human beings in all countries, living in mountainous and desolate regions, who possess the power of mentally viewing what is to come to pass. They see imperfectly, because their mental vision is not devised for the future, but for the present time; and the relation of their visions is clothed in the language they are accustomed to use when talking of their surroundings. When we think of the numberless discoveries of the nineteenth century, we have reason to hope that the laws which govern these natural forces will not now long remain hidden. Before the end of the twentieth century many of our gaps will be filled up; and the human being of a thousand years hence will be as much wiser

than a man of to-day as a man of to-day is wiser than Abraham ; even then he will not have reached the summit of possible knowledge.

The earth is a magnet. This is a fact of the highest importance to communication, as it enables the oceans to be traversed with security. The discovery of the properties of the needle, and the consequent use of the mariner's compass, is very ancient, and attributed to the Chinese. Magnetism is a force at present but feebly understood. In addition to the two main foci or magnetic poles of the earth, which are several hundred miles from the poles of the axis, there are various spots on its surface where the most remarkable local attractions occur. The number of these spots yet discovered is at present small ; but, no doubt, this century will see them largely increased. One of the most remarkable at present known is near the port of Cossack, in Western Australia, a brief description of which may prove interesting.

The present writer, who was on a voyage down the coast of Western Australia in 1890, found it to be his duty to examine an area of the sea off Cossack, where certain unexpected deflections of the compass had been experienced by another vessel some years before. About two-thirds of a mile (as it afterwards turned out) from the track in which the original deflection was detected, he found a focus of attraction which was briefly surveyed. Passing over the same locality in 1891, the whole neighbourhood was closely examined for "declination" (that is, the horizontal variation of the needle), "inclination" (that is, the dip of the needle), and for "intensity." The ship was moored

with the longest scope possible on the cables, one anchor being dropped at each side of the focus. She was then hauled across the focus link by link, veering one cable and heaving in on the other; one officer observing the declination with the standard compass, and another the inclination and intensity with a "Fox circle." The depth of the water was 60 feet over a sandy bottom; the height of the standard compass above the bottom of the sea was 77 feet; and of the "Fox circle" 83 feet. The observations for magnetic intensity were made only over the focus. The results were remarkable. When the standard compass arrived within a few feet of a position immediately over the focus, the north-seeking end of the needle was repelled $55^{\circ} 56'$ to the east of the normal position. As the ship moved slowly on, the needle gradually assumed the normal position, and, immediately over the focus, pointed correctly: it was then repelled to the west, and the declination increased to $26^{\circ} 12'$, a few feet beyond the focus; after which it again decreased. Thus the total deflection of the needle in a space of something like 70 or 80 yards was no less than $82^{\circ} 8'$. The Fox needle dipped to $76^{\circ} 57'$, and the observed vertical force was + 4.444., larger than in any part of the world. The two latter elements were no doubt affected by the induction caused by the iron in the ship, which was of composite build; but this was not the case with the declination (or horizontal deflection), which gave a true measure of the angular attraction. The amount was quite unprecedented, even in positions of local attractions on the shore where the attracting object would be in sight. The magnetical instruments were deflected more or less over an area of eight square miles off Cossack; the focus was at the south-west end

of what may be called a "ridge" of magnetic disturbance. No explanation of this phenomenon has ever been forthcoming. A full account of the observations is to be found in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, vol. 187 (1896); paper by Captain E. W. Creak, R.N., F.R.S., "On the Magnetical Results of the Voyage of H.M.S. 'Penguin,' 1890-93."

Captain Cook noticed a deflection in his compasses in about the same latitude as Cossack, on the eastern side of Australia, off Magnetic Island—named thus in consequence of this observation. It is highly probable that another ridge will be found there, and similar foci in many other parts of the world. One has already been discovered in the Hebrides. Before the end of the present century the secrets of magnetism, now so obscure, will certainly be revealed.

Closely allied to magnetism and to the functions of the earth as a magnet is the brilliant display of the Aurora Borealis and the Aurora Australis, which are observed at their greatest brilliance in the neighbourhood of the magnetic poles.

In Chapter I. we have seen that the moon is distant from the earth 238,818 miles. It is 2,160 miles in diameter; its volume is to that of the earth as 1 : 49.4, its density is 3.46 times as much as water; and its mass compared with that of the earth is 1 : 81.4. It has no atmosphere, and what we see of its surface, which is only about one-half, is a rugged sterile desert covered with extinct volcanoes of enormous dimensions. Its period of revolution on its axis is about the same as that of the earth, twenty-four hours; consequently, only one-half of it is

ever seen. Originally, the moon was a part of the earth, and for many ages revolved around it at a very short distance, getting further and further away as time went on. In the course of æons of years it will again approach the earth; and, if no catastrophe happens to the solar system beforehand, will eventually fall into the earth from whence it sprung.

The moon is the principal cause of the tides. Of periodical phenomena few are so well understood, in theory, as the tides. It is to be hoped that this century will see their enormous power turned to some practical use. The energy of the Swiss cascades, and of the great waterfall of Niagara, has already been turned to account. It remains for the genius of the twentieth century to bring under control the energy of the semi-diurnal rise and fall of the ocean, which, at certain places on the surface of the earth, rushes in upon the coast with such force that it is regarded, in our present state of knowledge, as nothing but a curse.

Information respecting the supreme effort of the tidal wave called the "bore" in England and India, the "mascaret" in France, and the "pororoça" in Brazil, is very meagre in all parts of the world. The present writer enjoyed opportunities of watching it, in the years 1888 and 1892, rush up the Tsien Tang Kiang, a river in China between Ningpo and Shanghai, which has a bell-shaped estuary open to the Pacific tidal wave. The stream of the river runs swiftly out to sea, and the head of the estuary is filled with a bar of sand, covering an area of over 100 square miles. This bar has two channels through it, which are never dry. The rise and fall at springtide is 25 to 34 feet at

the outside edge of the sand flats; at the town of Haining, situated at the mouth of the river, 19 to 22 feet; and at the city of Hangchau, 20 miles up the river, six to seven feet. So great is the pressure of the ocean at one time of tide, that the water has risen 19 feet in the estuary while it is still dead low water at Haining. The bore forms 12 to 13 miles to seaward of Haining, beyond the bar, and sweeps through the channels, the two streams meeting with great impetuosity two miles outside of the mouth of the river. One of these streams runs through and over the other, charges the sea wall, and rebounds, forming breakers, the tops of which are 25 to 30 feet above the level of the river in front of the now united bore. These breakers in a few minutes settle down, and the flood enters the river with a convex transverse surface, its front one continuous majestic cascade 12 feet high (near the middle and over the deepest part of the river), about one mile across from bank to bank, slightly curved seawards where the opposing river stream is strongest, at a speed of 12 to 15 miles an hour, and with a loud roar which becomes deafening as the cascade approaches the observer. It is a splendid spectacle on a fine day or on a bright moonlight night. If the weather is calm, it can be heard at night, when it is distant 11 miles. Its usual life, from the time it forms to the time it breaks up, is three to four hours, when it has travelled about 40 miles; but on exceptional occasions it has been known to maintain its character as a bore for eight hours, and to travel 60 to 70 miles up the Tsién Tang Kiang, ending 80 miles from its place of formation, which is from 12 to 15 miles to seaward of Haining.

The protection of the Yangtse delta from this

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charging mass of water is a great sea wall 40 miles long, 60 to 80 feet broad, and 25 feet high, faced with blocks of cut stone placed end outwards and riveted together with iron. Outside of this are shelter ledges, protected by buttresses, upon which the junks can ground at half ebb, safe from the bore, but ready to take advantage of the swift after-stream which sweeps them up to Hangchau at the rate of 11 miles an hour. As many as 30 may be sometimes seen drifting up behind the bore to their destination.

No attempt has yet been made to utilise the energy of this immense force, which occurs in a greater or less degree twice in every day throughout the year; and the bores in England, France, India, and South America have been similarly neglected.

Evolution of the means of communication has been one of the extraordinary features of the last century. When the century opened, steam power, railways, telegraphs, telephones, microphones, and phonographs were unknown. Each one of these, regarded in the light of the average intelligence of a hundred years ago, is a miracle. The art of photography, to which astronomy is so much indebted, is a discovery of even the last half of the century; as is also the spectroscope, from which we have derived the important knowledge of the homogeneity of matter in the universe. Telescopes and microscopes have been immensely improved. At the Bradford meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (1900), Dr. A. A. Common, F.R.S., said: "In order to appreciate better what optical aid does for the sense of sight, we can imagine the size of an eye, and therefore of a man, capable of seeing in a natural way what the ordinary eye sees by the aid of a large

telescope; and, on the other hand, the size of a man and his eye that could see plainly small objects, as we see them under a powerful microscope. The man, in the first case, would be several miles in height, and in the latter he would not exceed a very small fraction of an inch in height."

But, perhaps, the most wonderful of all recent discoveries is that of wireless telegraphy, brought into practical development simultaneously by Captain H. B. Jackson, F.R.S., of the Royal Navy, and Signor G. Marconi, in 1896. It is now possible, owing to the rapid developments of Signor Marconi, to communicate without wires between this country and America, Russia, and Italy.

The advance in surgery during the nineteenth century has been of the most remarkable character; and also in hygiene and the prevention of disease. Even as late as 1850 people, usually considered quite sane, slept in bedsteads surrounded by curtains and often covered in on the top; the curtains, when the weather was at all cold, were drawn close, and the windows of the room closely shut. Not only did parents sleep in these confined spaces, but infants were made to pass the night within the curtains; small wonder that so few members of large families, even among the well-to-do classes, reached maturity! Owing also to our ignorance, the seeds of consumption were, through inadvertence, spread among whole families. It was supposed, so late as 1880, that, when several members of the same family succumbed to the fell disease, it was inherited from one of the parents; whereas, in reality, the spread of the germ was entirely due, in the majority of cases, to the fact that they attended upon one another, often in close rooms, and

without any proper sanitary precautions. The communication of disease in a family from one member to another is naïvely described in a book, which was very popular some years ago, called *Catherine and Craufurd Tait*. It is quite clear that the Bishop and his wife gave the scarlet fever to their children.

As to drainage, it was as bad as it could be until the last thirty years of the century. In the City of London it is a notorious fact that a large proportion of the houses of business had cesspools under the ground floor.

In all branches of medicine, as well as in surgery, there has been marked evolution, and the process will doubtless go on rapidly in the next hundred years. At the end of this century the improvements in the methods of preserving life will be such that the present generation will probably be regarded then as we now regard our predecessors of—say, the year 1810—a population of involuntary murderers and suicides.

It has been truly said by Dr. H. S. Williams, M.D., in the *Story of Nineteenth-Century Science* (p. 320), that in the last hundred years “the lowest forms of life have been linked with the highest in unbroken chains of descent. Meantime, through the efforts of chemists and biologists, the gap between the inorganic and organic worlds, which once seemed almost infinite, has been constantly narrowed. Already philosophy can throw a bridge across that gap. But inductive science, which builds its own bridges, has not yet spanned the chasm, small though it appears. Until it shall have done so, the bridge of organic evolution is not quite complete; yet, even as it stands to-day, it is the most stupendous scientific structure of our century.”

Among the discoveries in the provinces of anatomy, physiology, and medicine since the year 1800 may be mentioned the stethoscope; the cellular structure of all organisms, the protoplasm ("the physical basis of life"), the nuclei, and means of multiplication of cells; the active principle of the gastric juices (pepsin); anæsthetics; the origin of putrefaction; bacteria; antisepsis, with which the name of Lord Lister will for ever be associated; the extension of the principle of inoculation (instituted by Jenner in 1796) to anthrax, rabies, diphtheria, tetanus, cholera, and plague; the means of avoiding, and even exterminating, malarial fever; the rational methods of treating the insane; the reflex action of the nerve centres; hypnotism, as a curative agent; and the Rontgen rays. The treatment of consumptive patients has undergone a complete revolution; and great hope is entertained that a cure will shortly be found for that rapidly-increasing disease, cancer. It must, however, be added that, notwithstanding our success in fighting disease, it is a significant and regrettable fact that the increase per cent. of the population of England and Wales is not so high as it was in 1811. This is not the case in Germany, where the population is increasing with astonishing rapidity.

Methods of education are also happily undergoing a process of evolution. More attention is being devoted to the education of women; but much, however, in that direction remains to be done. Even in the present day, the number of actual years and months considered necessary for teaching all that a young English lady should know is little more than half those forced upon the young English gentleman. On the face of it, this is absurd. It may be prophesied that

at the end of this century it will not be the universal custom for parents in comfortable circumstances to withdraw their girls from instruction at the age of 17 or 18, nor to allow them to marry before the age of 21 or 22. They will probably aim at placing them, in the matter of general information, on an equal footing with the men they are likely to marry.

Since the great wars which terminated with the incarceration of Napoleon on St. Helena, evolution in all branches of science has gone on apace. If even the speed of the last 80 years is kept up, the achievements of the next 100 years will be quite beyond anything we, with our confined faculties, can at present comprehend. The intellectual man of 2004 A.D. will be as superior to the intellectual man of 1904 A.D. as the latter is from an ancient Saxon; but, even then, he will be but a drifting speck of no particular account in the infinite universe of matter around his insignificant planet. As far as can be seen, his function in existence will be simply to act, if he can, as a step in the improvement of one small section of a race, which is, as a whole, advancing by slow stages towards a very exalted type—a type from which he himself will be as far removed as he will be himself removed from the monera. What will be the ultimate destination of his perfect descendant he will be quite unable to determine; but he will have discovered that it is one in which he will have no share, and which he is not endowed with the capacity to realise.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHRISTIAN BELIEF AND CREEDS

Religious populations of the world—Number of Protestants among English-speaking peoples—Belief of the average Protestant fifty years ago—The sin against the Holy Ghost—The Roman Catholic Faith—Professor Mivart—His correspondence with Cardinal Vaughan—The Formula—Letters which followed—Father Clarke, S.J.—His statement of the Roman Catholic position—The belief of the average Protestant at the present time—Unitarians—The Greek Church—The Creeds briefly summarised—The “Nicene” the only Creed with a history—The Apostles’ Creed—The Athanasian Creed—Its fraudulent history—Not read in Westminster Abbey—The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion—Every priest of the Church of England announces his adherence to the Articles on assuming Incumbency—Dr. Magee’s views on the Atonement—Divines differ widely on this subject—*Lux Mundi*—Brief criticism of the Articles—Why English gentlemen do not present themselves for ordination—Dexterous manner of reading the Articles—Youth of the world—If no accidents occur, great progress may be expected.

THE population of the world is estimated at about 1,470 millions. Of these, 470 millions are, nominally, Christians; about 223 millions of Christians are Roman Catholics, 157 millions Protestants; and 90 millions belong to the Greek Church. The number of Mahommedans in the world is placed at 200 millions; Brahma-Buddhists, 600 millions; so-called Heathen of various types, 180 millions; Jews, 10 millions; and about 10 millions have no religion at all.

The Protestants in Great Britain, the Colonies, and the United States number over 100 millions of all

denominations. They have various missionary societies, with an aggregate income of over 2½ million pounds, which supports over 12,000 missionaries of both sexes.

The belief of the average Protestant Christian is a very different thing to-day to what it was even fifty years ago. In the middle of the last century the hideous doctrine of eternal punishment by torture and fire was in full vogue. Many millions of earnest people firmly believed that this world was created in six actual days, and that the sixth was occupied in the special creation of animals and man; that man was created perfect, placed by God in the Garden of Eden, and given a wife made out of one of his ribs; and that, owing to the temptation of the woman, at the suggestion of the devil who appeared in the form of a serpent, man disobeyed the injunction of God, and was, consequently, expelled with ignominy from his terrestrial paradise; that Adam lived 930 years, and his immediate descendants also survived to what we should now consider extraordinary ages, one of them, Methuselah, 969 years; that the "sons of God came in unto the daughters of men and they bear children to them, the same were the mighty men which were of old, the men of renown"; that, owing to the continual wickedness of man, God destroyed all things living by a mighty flood, reserving one family only, and a pair of all forms of life, which were preserved from drowning in an ark of questionable stability; and that from this human family, and from these pairs of the then existing species, the human race—and, broadly speaking, the present existing forms of life all over the globe—are descended; that the Old Testament as well as the New was actually inspired—

written, so to speak, at the dictation of the Almighty, subject to no imperfections whatever; that the books which appear to many in the present day as ordinary poems or fables intended to illustrate an idea or point a moral, but not to be taken as fact, were either literally true, or parables used to represent the relation of God to His people or Church (such, for instance, would be the "Song of Solomon"); that the teaching of Paul, Peter, John, James, and Jude, as expressed in their Epistles, was also inspired, and practically without any blemish whatever; and that the books in the Bible have been chosen by God through the instrumentality of man, and arranged as they are now through His direct fiat. It was also generally believed, in the first half of the last century, that infants *were not saved for a future life who died without the rite of baptism.*

If there is any person who thinks this is an exaggerated picture of the beliefs of the fathers and mothers of most Christians in this country now over fifty years of age, they can easily inquire of some of the hundreds of thousands at present living, who will be able to relate the facts of their own early teaching, the sermons they were forced to hear as boys and girls, the pictures which used to be put before the minds of children half a century ago; how they were threatened with hell fire; how the devil was held up unceasingly as a living, though invisible, personality; and specially how "the sin against the Holy Ghost" was dwelt upon (Matt. xii. 32). This last form of horror, the unforgivableness of an undefined offence, has sent many girls, and some men, mad. The present writer is intimately acquainted with a Christian family where the hallucination of having committed the unpardon-

able sin extended through four generations, appearing in one member of each generation. In each case the child was entirely guiltless of even ordinary levity as to the holy writings, and their minds were as pure as snow. Fortunately, the delusion only occurred as a passing mental phase, lasting in each case about two years, but causing during that period untold misery. Precautions were adopted, and the reason of the children was saved. Even in the present day this is not an uncommon form of insanity. When it appears in a person advanced beyond middle life, physicians usually hold out little hope of recovery. The present writer is, however, acquainted with an aged clergyman, who suffered from this delusion for some years after he had passed middle life, but who, after his recovery, was appointed to a living. He was a man of exceptional culture and blameless life, and the father of a large family.

Before describing the beliefs of the average Protestant Christian of to-day, it would be as well to say a word as to the Roman Catholic faith. In all essential particulars, the above description of the beliefs of Christians in the first half of the last century will hold good for the Roman Catholic belief of the present time. Fortunately—or, as some would think, unfortunately—there need be no delusion whatever as to the attitude of the Pope and Cardinals towards the Bible. Quite recently, the late Professor St. George Mivart, the distinguished biologist, wrote certain articles in the *Fortnightly* and the *Nineteenth Century*, explaining his views, and the views of some other Roman Catholics, with reference to the contradictions and inconsistencies of the Biblical narratives. An extract from his article in the *Nineteenth Century*,

of January, 1900, will be of interest: "Comparatively few persons now believe that the account in Genesis of the creation of the world, or of Adam and Eve, is in any sense historical and true; or that the account of the Fall is such; or that diversities of language were due to God's fear lest men should build a tower to reach heaven; or that Joshua or Isaiah in any way interfered with the regularity of the earth's rotation on its axis.....Wonderful indeed is the change which has come over the Catholic body as regards their belief about Scripture. It is, of course, still regarded as 'inspired'; but the meaning given to that term is rapidly changing. Who, indeed, that recognises the immanence and universality of the Divine Activity can fail to regard That as the real Author of all that is best and noblest in the thoughts, deeds, and words—spoken or written—of mankind? Can we venture to deny that Homer and Plato, Æschylus and Aristotle, Virgil and Tacitus, Dante and Shakespeare, were in various degrees inspired?"

Again, with reference to the prophecy of Isaiah, in chap. vii. 14-16: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings." Professor Mivart goes on to show that the word which has been translated "virgin" really means "a young woman," and not necessarily a "maiden," and he proceeds to expose the fallacy of Matt. i. 22, 23: "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the

Lord by the prophet, saying," etc., and goes on to say : " Yet there is probably no well-informed Catholic now who would deny that what Isaiah said was intended to calm the dread which Ahaz (King of Judah) felt with respect to Pekah (King of Israel) and Rezin (King of Syria), by assuring him that, before a young woman's newly-born child should be old enough to know right from wrong, the two kings so dreaded should have disappeared. No one would now fail to see the absurdity of supposing that King Ahaz could be comforted by being told of an abnormal birth to take place five hundred years after his death." Again, as regards the " Fall " : " No man of education now regards the Biblical account of the ' fall ' as more than ' a myth intended to symbolise some moral lapse of the earliest races of mankind,' or, possibly, ' the first awakening of the human conscience to a perception of right and wrong.' This is the utmost which such a man would admit, while most scholars would deny that there is more historical evidence for the Garden of Eden than for the garden of the Hesperides."

The article from which the above extracts are taken is throughout extremely interesting; and additional point is lent to the arguments it contains when it is remembered that Dr. Mivart professed the Roman Catholic religion, and was the leading opponent to Darwin and his disciple Mr. Romanes on the question of the evolution of human intellect and mind, though he accepted the doctrine of evolution as regards the physical nature of man.

The article of Dr. Mivart raised a considerable storm, and led to the following correspondence in the *Times*, which revealed, more precisely than any other pronouncement of recent years, the attitude of the

Roman Catholic Church towards the Old Testament Canon. The letters are reprinted by special permission of the Editor of the *Times* :—

The "Times," Monday, January 23rd, 1900.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND DR. ST.
GEORGE MIVART.

The following circular has been addressed to the Roman Catholic clergy of the diocese of Westminster by the Cardinal Archbishop :

NOTICE OF INHIBITION OF SACRAMENTS.

Archbishop's House, Westminster, Feast of
St. Peter's Chair, 1900.

Rev. Dear Father,—Dr. St. George Mivart, in his articles entitled "The Continuity of Catholicism" and "Some Recent Apologists," in the *Nineteenth Century* and the *Fortnightly Review* for January, 1900, has declared, or at least seemed to declare, that it is permissible for Catholics to hold certain heresies—regarding the Virginal Birth of Our Lord and the Perpetual Virginity of the Blessed Virgin; the Gospel account of the Resurrection and the immunity of the sacred Body from corruption; the reality and transmission of original sin; the Redemption as a real satisfaction for the sins of men; the everlasting punishment of the wicked; the inspiration and integrity of Holy Scripture; the right of the Catholic Church to interpret the sense of Scripture with authority; her perpetual retention of her doctrines in the same sense; not to speak of other false propositions. As he has thereby rendered his orthodoxy suspect, and has, moreover, confirmed the suspicion by failing, after three notifications, to sign the annexed profession of faith when tendered to him by me, it now becomes my duty to take further action, and I hereby inhibit him from approaching the sacraments, and forbid my priests to administer them to him, until he shall have proved his orthodoxy to the satisfaction of his ordinary.

Believe me to be, Rev. dear Father, Your faithful and devoted servant,

HERBERT CARDINAL VAUGHAN, Archbishop
of Westminster.

P.S.—If it were true, as Dr. Mivart asserts, that there were persons calling themselves Catholics who hold any of the above heresies, it would be necessary to remind them that they have ceased in reality to be Catholics, and that if they were to approach the sacraments they would do so sacrilegiously, at the peril of their souls, and in defiance of the law of the Church.

HERBERT CARDINAL VAUGHAN.

The profession of faith which Dr. Mivart was called upon to sign ran as follows:—

FORMULA.

I hereby declare that, recognising the Catholic Church to be the supreme and infallible guardian of the Christian faith, I submit therein my judgment to hers, believing all that she teaches, and condemning all that she condemns. And in particular I firmly believe and profess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages, in the fulness of time, for us men and for our salvation, came down from Heaven and was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary—that is to say, that the same Jesus Christ had no man for His father, and that St. Joseph was not His real or natural father; but only His reputed or foster-father.

I therefore firmly believe and profess that the Blessed Virgin Mary conceived and brought forth the Son of God in an ineffable manner by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and absolutely without loss or detriment to her Virginity, and that she is really and in truth, as the Catholic Church most rightly calls her, the “Ever Virgin”; that is to say, Virgin before the birth of Christ, Virgin in that birth, and Virgin after it, her sacred and spotless Virginity being perpetually preserved from the beginning, then, and for ever afterwards.

I therefore condemn and reject as false and heretical the assertion that doubt or denial of the Virgin Birth of Christ or the perpetual Virginity of the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, is—or at any future time ever can be in any sense whatever—consistent with the Holy Catholic faith. (*Cf.* Nicene and Apostles’ Creed and Constitution of Paul IV., “Cum Quorundam,” and Clement VIII., “Dominici Gregis.”)

I believe and profess that Our Lord Jesus Christ, after His death and burial, rose again from the dead, and that His Body glorified in His Resurrection is the same as that in which He suffered and died for us upon the Cross. I reject and condemn the statement that the Body of Christ rotted in the grave or suffered corruption as false and heretical, and contrary to the Holy Catholic faith now and in all future time.

I firmly believe and profess in accordance with the Holy Council of Trent that the first man Adam, when he transgressed the command of God in Paradise, immediately lost the holiness and justice in which he had been constituted, and that he incurred through that prevarication the wrath and indignation of God, and that this prevarication of Adam injured, not himself alone, but his posterity, and that by it the holiness and justice received from God were lost by him, not for himself alone, but for us all. (*Cf.* Council of Trent, Session V.)

I firmly believe and profess that our Lord died upon the cross, not merely (as Socinus held) to set us an example or an "object lesson" of fidelity unto death, but that He might give Himself "a redemption for all" by "bearing our sins in His body upon the tree," that is, by making a true and full satisfaction to the offended justice of God for the sins original and actual of all men, and that these sins are taken away by no other remedy than the merit of the "one mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. 5), who has reconciled us to God in His own blood; "made unto us justice, sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30. Cf. Council of Trent, Session V.)

I reject and condemn all doctrines which deny the reality and transmission of original sin, and the perfect sufficiency of the atonement by which man is reconciled to God in the blood of Jesus Christ, as false and heretical, and contrary to the Holy Catholic faith now and at all future time.

I firmly believe and profess that the souls of men after death will be judged by God, and that those who are saved will "go into everlasting life" (Matt. xxv. 46), and those who are condemned "into everlasting punishment." I reject as false and heretical all doctrines which teach that the souls in Hell may eventually be saved, or that their state in Hell may be one which is not of punishment. (Cf. Constitution of Council of Lateran IV.)

In accordance with the Holy Councils of Trent and of the Vatican, I receive all the books of the Old and New Testament with all their parts as set forth in the fourth session of the Council of Trent, and contained in the ancient Latin edition of the Vulgate, as sacred and canonical, and I firmly believe and profess that the said Scriptures are sacred and canonical—not because, having been carefully composed by mere human industry, they were afterwards approved by the Church's authority, nor merely because they contain revelation with no admixture of error; but because, having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their author and have been delivered as such to the Church herself. Wherefore, in all matters of faith or morals appertaining to the building up of Christian doctrine, I believe that to be the true sense of Holy Scripture which our Holy Mother the Church has held, and now holds, to whom the judgment of the true sense and interpretation of Holy Scripture belongs. (Cf. Council of Trent, Session IV.; Council of the Vatican, Dogmatic Constitution of the Catholic Faith, chap. ii., can. ii.)

I firmly believe and profess that the doctrine of faith which God has revealed has not been proposed like a philosophical invention to be perfected by human ingenuity, but has been delivered as a Divine deposit to the spouse of Christ, to be faithfully kept and infallibly

declared, and that therefore that meaning of the sacred dogmas is to be perpetually retained which our Holy Mother the Church has once declared, and that that meaning can never be departed from, under the pretence or pretext of a deeper comprehension of them. I reject as false and heretical the assertion that it is possible at some time, according to the progress of science, to give to doctrines propounded by the Church a sense different from that which the Church has understood and understands, and consequently that the sense and meaning of her doctrines can ever be in the course of time practically explained away or reversed. (*Cf.* Dogmatic Constitution of the Vatican on Catholic Faith, chap. iv., can. iv.)

Moreover, I condemn and revoke all other words and statements which in articles contributed by me to the *Fortnightly Review* and the *Nineteenth Century*, or in any other of my writings, are found to be in matter of faith or morals contrary to the teaching of the Holy Catholic Faith according to the determination of the Apostolic See; and in all such matters I submit myself to the judgment of the said see, receiving all that it receives and condemning all that it condemns.

The "Times," Saturday, January 27, 1900.

DR. ST. GEORGE MIVART AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES."

Sir,—I shall be grateful to you if you will publish the accompanying correspondence.

I did not, unfortunately, keep a copy of my first letter to Cardinal Vaughan, written on January 6. Therein I complained of the *Tablet's* personal insults, but protesting I had no objection whatever to hostile criticism, and assuring him my two articles had been written from a strong sense of duty.

You have already published, *in extenso*, the profession of faith I was required to sign, and also the notice of my excommunication. I have only to add that the latter was issued by the Cardinal without waiting for a reply to his third summons, although surely no reasonable person could expect so long and complex a document to be signed without allowing ample time for a careful study of it.

The order of the letters is sufficiently indicated by their dates.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

ST. GEORGE MIVART.

77, Inverness-terrace, W., Jan. 24.

Archbishop's House, Westminster, S. W., Jan. 9, 1900.

Dear Dr. Mivart,—I have received your letter, in which you complain of comments made upon your conduct by one of the Catholic papers, while you assure me that the articles in the *Nineteenth Century* and the *Fortnightly Review* were written by you "under a sense of duty, thinking death not far off."

Before touching on these points, it is necessary to be clear as to the substance of your position.

You have publicly impugned the most sacred and fundamental doctrines of the faith, while still professing yourself to be a Catholic. It becomes, therefore, my primary duty, as Guardian of the Faith, to ascertain whether I am still to treat you as a member of the Church and subject to my jurisdiction, or to consider you outside the unity of the faith.

As a test of orthodoxy regarding certain doctrines dealt with by you in your articles in the *Nineteenth Century*, I herewith send you a Profession of Catholic Faith. I invite you to read and return it to me subscribed by your signature. Nothing less than this will be satisfactory. I need not say how deeply I regret the necessity which compels me to take official action of this kind, and how earnestly I hope and pray that you may have light and grace to withdraw from the position in which you stand, and to submit yourself unreservedly to the authority of the Catholic Church.

Believe me to be, yours faithfully,

HERBERT CARD. VAUGHAN,
Archbishop of Westminster.

January 11, 1900.

Dear Lord Cardinal,—I have received your Eminence's letter, enclosing a document you invite me to sign and return. Before I can do that, however, there is a previous question; as "grace supposes nature," so before I am a Catholic I am an English gentleman, and in that capacity I have been grossly outraged.

Granting, for argument's sake, I have impugned certain doctrines (which I deny), that gives no man the right to assault or insult me at his pleasure.

The foul, vulgar, and brutal personalities of the *Tablet*, charging me with cowardice and wilful, calumnious mendacity, are such that no man with a particle of self-respect could tolerate.

Before anything, therefore, I must ask for reparation, and I ask it of your Eminence, not as a cardinal or a priest, or even as a Christian, but simply in your character of a distinguished English gentleman,

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desiring to act rightly and with the courtesy befitting that character. I ask, then, for reparation in one of the following modes:—

(1) A letter from yourself reprobating, and expressing your regret for, the abusive utterances of your journal in my regard; or

(2) The publication in the *Tablet* of a complete withdrawal and full apology for its imputations against my courage, veracity, and straightforwardness; or

(3) A letter from the writer of the article withdrawing his charges against me as a man, and begging my pardon.

I note with surprise that, in the letters I have received, your Eminence does not appear to recognise your responsibility for the utterances of your journal, the *Tablet*.

For my part I, of course, fully recognise and respect your Eminence's ecclesiastical position, with its rights and duties; but I recognise the right of no man to insult me (himself or through his subordinates), by personal imputations which relate, not to matters of belief, but to my natural qualities and characteristics.

Believe me, yours faithfully,

ST. G. MIVART.

To his Eminence Cardinal Vaughan, Archbishop of Westminster, etc.

Archbishop's House, Westminster, S.W., January 12, 1900.

Dear Dr. Mivart,—I have received your note of yesterday's date. I have only two things to say in reply to it.

First, if you have any personal correction to make in the criticism of your article by the *Tablet*, you are free, like any other author whose publication is under review, to address yourself to the editor.

I know not by what privilege or usage you address yourself to me instead. Kindly go to the proper quarter.

Secondly, my own duty towards the Church and your assertion, while professing yourself to be a member thereof, that good and devoted Catholics hold certain blasphemous and heretical doctrines, and that these doctrines may become some day generally held within the Church, are matters of too great an import to allow of their being put aside by references to journalistic criticism or to any other side issues.

Your assertion is equivalent to saying that a person may be actually a Catholic and yet a disbeliever in the Incarnation and the Resurrection, and that the Church herself may change her belief in these doctrines.

A mere disclaimer of personally holding such heresies in general, and a mere general profession of adherence to Catholicity, such as is contained in your letter to the *Times* of to-day, is not sufficient to

repair the scandal or to acquit you of complicity in the promotion of such heresies.

You tell me that your object has been to "open as widely as possible the gates of Catholicity" and "to make conformity as easy as might be."

This renders it all the more necessary that I should ask you to sign the formula of Catholic Faith, which I sent to you on Tuesday. As you are aware, no one can reject the profession of faith contained therein and still be a member of the Catholic Church. I ask you, therefore, to sign, having regard to your own honour and position as a Catholic as well as to the interest of souls committed to my care.

Believe me to be, your faithful and devoted servant,

HERBERT CARD. VAUGHAN,
Archbishop of Westminster.

January 14, 1900.

Dear Lord Cardinal,—I thank your Eminence for your letter of January 12. In reply, permit me to say I claim no "privilege," save that of old and valued friendship, in addressing you directly with respect to the *Tablet's* insults. It would be useless for me to address my friend Mr. Snead Cox. He must, of course, give insertion to whatever is authoritatively sent him from "Archbishop's House," and would do the same were it an apology. I make no objection to criticism of my writings; what I object to is the imputation to me of defects as to ordinary courage and honesty.

I repeat that my appeal is to your Eminence both as proprietor of the *Tablet* and as a gentleman as regards family and sentiment. I so appeal because (since "*qui facit per alium facit per se*") you have, through your subordinates, imputed to me calumnious mendacity and cowardice. I must confess myself amazed and somewhat scandalised that your Eminence does not seem anxious at once to step forward and do me right (in a small matter so easily effected) as a matter of ordinary ethics, quite apart from religion. If the latter is to be brought into account, has not your Eminence (of course, unwittingly) broken the Commandment—"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour"?

Reluctantly, and with the greatest respect, I feel, then, compelled once more to demand an apology in one of the three modes pointed out in my last letter—namely (1) a letter from your Eminence; (2) an apology for and withdrawal of personal imputations in the next issue of the *Tablet*; or (3) a letter from the writer of the article asking my pardon and withdrawing his insults.

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Before receiving such apology I can do nothing more in this matter, anxious as I am to meet your Eminence's wishes to the full extent of my power. I ask you, then, to kindly remove the cause which paralyzes me. What would be the good of my signing anything if I am to remain branded by your organ, and therefore by your Eminence, as a coward and a liar? Evidently it would be said that I have signed insincerely and through fear! But if I am astonished at the seeming want of ethical perception as to the moral necessity for undoing a personal wrong, I am, if possible, still more amazed to find that your Eminence can never have read the articles you condemn. How otherwise could you write as you do about the doctrines of the Incarnation and Resurrection? I have not written one word about the latter doctrine, or about the fact of the Resurrection; I have only put forward a notion (propounded to me by the best theologian I ever knew) respecting its mode and nature.

To the doctrine of the Incarnation I have not referred, even in the most distant manner.

As a theologian, your Eminence of course knows, far better than I do, that God could have become incarnate as perfectly in a normal human embryo as in an abnormal one.

Indeed, I think some scholastics have (amongst their various subtleties) taught that God, did He so will, could become incarnate in a mere animal or in an onion. For my part, I do not see how it is possible for the human intellect to set bounds to the possibilities of the *absoluta potestas* of the Almighty with respect to matters so utterly inconceivable. The things which have been written about my articles really remind me of the attack made by Kingsley on Cardinal Newman.

As to much I am saddled with, I can say truly, as Newman did, "I never said it." If your Eminence could only spare time to read my articles carefully, you would see that I have scrupulously abstained from putting forward my own unimportant notions, and have strictly confined myself to making statements as to matters of fact which I believe to be incontrovertible.

I remain, dear Lord Cardinal, your Eminence's most faithful and devoted servant,

ST. G. MIVART.

Archbishop's House, Westminster, S. W., Jan. 16, 1900.

Dear Dr. Mivart,—I regret that I must call upon you a third and last time to forward to me, with your signature attached thereto, the form of profession of faith, which as your Bishop I felt bound to send to you in consequence of the articles published by you in the *Nineteenth Century* and *Fortnightly Review*. And at the same time

I require you to express your reprobation of those articles and your sincere sorrow for having published them.

I cannot allow you to evade this duty on the ground of anything that may have been written in the *Tablet*. If you have a grievance against the *Tablet*, you must go to the editor. I am responsible neither for its language nor its arguments.

My dealing with you is exclusively as your ordinary and as guardian of the faith of my flock.

Failing dutiful submission on your part, the law of the Church will take its course.

Believe me, your faithful and devoted servant,

HERBERT CARD. VAUGHAN,
Archbishop of Westminster.

January 19, 1900.

Dear Lord Cardinal,—I regret that illness has, till now, hindered my replying to your Eminence's last letter.

Therein you say you are "dealing" with me "exclusively" as my "ordinary." It is also in that character only that I write to you to-day, putting aside for the moment the question of apology which I cannot doubt your sense of right will be sure, in some form, to secure for me. The fact is I am exceedingly anxious to meet your Eminence's wishes and to give all the satisfaction I can to my Catholic friends. I remain attached to Catholicity and its rites, at which, happen what may, I shall not cease to assist, for I consider Divine worship (in the words of my friend Dr. Gasquet) "the highest privilege of a rational nature." To your Eminence, then, as my ordinary, I confidently appeal to help me out of a difficulty and to resolve a point of conscience which troubles me.

When I was admitted as a Catholic I made, of course, a profession of the creed of Pope Pius IV. But I have no recollection of ever having made, or been asked to make, the following profession which forms part of the document I am now asked to sign:—

"In accordance with the Holy Councils of Trent and of the Vatican, I receive all the books of the Old and New Testament, with all their parts, as set forth in the fourth section of the Council of Trent and contained in the ancient Latin edition of the Vulgate, as sacred and canonical, and I firmly believe and confess that the said Scriptures are sacred and canonical—not because, having been carefully composed by mere human industry, they are afterwards approved by the Church's authority, not merely because they contain revelation with no mixture of error, but because, having been written by the inspiration

of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their author, and have been delivered as such to the Church herself."

Now, I beg of your Eminence, as my ecclesiastical superior, to tell me whether I am, or not, right as to what would be the consequences of my signing the above?

It would be easy, of course, by a little dexterity, to distort and evade what appears to be its real and obvious meaning. As God is the First Cause and Creator of all things, He is, in that sense, their Author. Author of the Decameron of Boccaccio, as well as of the Bible. But to make a profession with such a meaning would be, in my eyes, grossly profane and altogether unjustifiable.

Your Eminence, of course, means and wishes me to sign *ex animo* the document sent to me, and I, for my part, desire to be perfectly—transparently—honest, candid, and straightforward.

Now, in my judgment an acceptance and profession of the above-cited portion of the document sent me would be equivalent to an assertion that there are no errors, or altogether false statements, or fabulous narratives, in the Old and New Testament, and that I should not be free to hold and teach, without blame, that the world was not created in any six periods of time; that the story of the serpent and the tree is altogether false; that the history of the Tower of Babel is a mere fiction devoid of any particle of truth; that the story of Noah's Ark is also quite erroneous, as again that of the plagues of Egypt; that neither Joshua nor Hezekiah interfered with the regularity of solar time; that Jonah did not live within the belly of any kind of marine animal; that Lot's wife was never turned into a pillar of salt; and that Balaam's ass never spoke. I only put these forward as a few examples of statements (denials) which it seems to me any one who holds that the "books of the Old and New Testament, with all their parts, were written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and have God for their author" ought not and could not logically or rationally make.

If, however, your Eminence can authoritatively tell me that Divine inspiration or authorship does not (clerical errors, faults of translation, etc., apart) guarantee the truth and inerrancy of the statements so inspired, it will in one sense be a great relief to my mind and greatly facilitate the signing of the document, your Eminence's decision on the subject being once publicly known, and also the conditions under which I sign it.

I therefore most earnestly adjure and entreat your Eminence to afford me all the spiritual help and enlightenment you can; for the question I now ask is my one great trouble and difficulty. I cannot and will not be false to science any more than to religion.

If only your Eminence can tell me I have judged wrongly, and that

I shall be held free and deemed blameless for denying the truth of statements whereof the Council of Vatican has declared God to be the Author, it will afford my conscience great and much-needed relief.

I trust I may receive an answer on Tuesday next at the latest. I feel it is possible, however, that, as your Eminence has so far declined to apologise, you may not accord me the authoritative answer to the question I so earnestly address to you as my ordinary. In that case I shall (according to custom) take silence to mean consent, and deem you think me right and agree with me in judging that no one who accepts the decrees of Trent and the Vatican (and Leo XIII.) about Scripture is free to proclaim the entire falsehood of any of its statements or professed histories.

I have the honour to remain, dear Lord Cardinal, your Eminence's most obedient and devoted servant,

ST. GEORGE MIVART.

Archbishop's House, Westminster, S.W., January 21, 1900.

Dear Dr. Mivart,—I am sorry to hear that you have been ill, and sincerely hope that you are recovering. In reply to your letter of the 19th, let me first of all urge you to place your feet down upon the firm and fundamental principle which is the ground on which every true Catholic stands—viz., that the Church, being the Divine teacher established by Christ in the world, rightly claims from her disciples a hearty and intellectual acceptance of all that she authoritatively teaches. This principle, given us by Our Lord, will carry you safely over all objections and difficulties that may spring up along your path. It was applied by St. Augustine to his acceptance of the Scriptures, where he says: “Ego vero Evangelio non crederem, nisi me Catholicæ Ecclesiæ commoveret auctoritas.”

But if you are going to give the assent of faith only to such doctrines as present no difficulties beyond the power of your finite intelligence to see through and solve by direct answer, you must put aside at once all the mysteries of faith, and you must frankly own yourself to be a rationalist pure and simple. You then constitute your own ability to solve difficulties, intellectual or scientific, into your test of the doctrines proffered for your acceptance.

This is to return to the old Protestant system of private judgment, or to open rationalism and unbelief.

But you will let me, I hope, be frank and urge that it is your moral rather than your intellectual nature that needs attention. God gives this grace to the humble; it is “the clean of heart” who “shall see God.” Let me press upon you the primary necessity of humility and persevering prayer for light and grace.

Having said this much in general, I now refer more directly to your questions as to Holy Scripture. For an authoritative recent statement see Leo XIII.'s Encyclical on Holy Scripture.

I would also recommend you to study Franzelin's *Treatise de S. Scriptura*, Hummelauer's *Commentaries*, and his account of the Creation. See III. Vol. of *Biblische Studien*, 1898, Friburg in Brigau, or his *Récit de la Création*.

But, perhaps, more useful to you than this would be a conversation with Rev. Dr. Clarke or with F. Tyrrell, S.J., both of whom would be able to understand your state of mind and to give you counsel and assistance. I refer you to them.

Believe me to be your faithful and devoted servant,

HERBERT CARD. VAUGHAN,
Archbishop of Westminster.

January 23.

Dear Lord Cardinal,—I thank you. I rejoice to say I am better. My "ordinary" has indeed acted promptly in the character of an authoritative prelate, and hardly with the patient pastoral consideration some persons expected. You have issued your "inhibition" without waiting for a reply to your third summons. Your last letter is, however, less "dogmatic" than could have been wished, seeing that, though Cardinal Archbishop and head not only of the diocese but of the province of Westminster, you say neither "yes" nor "no" to my very simple question. You refer me to two of your clergy, to Franzelin, and to Leo XIII. for an answer. To Pope Leo I will go.

As to what you say about "private judgment," all of us, however submissive to authority, must, in the last resort, rest upon the judgment of our individual reason. How otherwise could we know that authority had spoken at all or what it had said?

It is impossible to accept anything as true which is a contradiction in terms. Upon that truth all theological reasoning is based and all other reasoning also.

I greatly desire to state plainly and to make your Eminence clearly understand what my religious position is and what it has for some years been. As you well know, I was once an ardent advocate for Catholicism. The best years of my life have been spent in its defence, while all I said in its favour I most thoroughly meant. Though, like many others who have thought much on such subjects, I have occasionally passed through periods of doubt, yet for years I was, on the whole, happy and full of confidence in the position I had taken up, which was clearly expressed in my article, "The Catholic

Church and Biblical Criticism," published in the *Nineteenth Century* for July, 1837. Therein I rested much on the teaching of Cardinal Newman, which gave me to understand that Catholics were "free only to hold as 'inspired,' in some undefined sense of that word, certain portions or passages of the books set before them as canonical." I found great latitude of scriptural interpretation to be not uncommon amongst Catholics, both cleric and lay, and my efforts seemed to meet with approbation, notably from Pius IX., and afterwards, in a less degree, from Leo XIII.

All of a sudden, like a bolt from the blue, appeared, in 1893, that terrible encyclical about Scripture known as "Providentissimus Deus," containing the following unequivocal words:—

"It is absolutely wrong and forbidden, either to narrow inspiration to certain parts only of Holy Scripture, or to admit that the sacred writer has erred. For the system of those who, in order to rid themselves of these difficulties, do not hesitate to concede that Divine inspiration regards the things of faith and morals, and nothing beyond, because (as they wrongly think) in a question of the truth or falsehood of a passage, we should consider not so much what God has said as the reason and purpose which He had in mind in saying it—this system cannot be tolerated. For all the books which the Church receives as sacred and canonical are written wholly and entirely, with all their parts, at the dictation of the Holy Ghost; and so far is it from being possible that any error can coexist with inspiration, that inspiration not only is essentially incompatible with error, but excludes and rejects it as absolutely and necessarily as it is impossible that God Himself, the Supreme Truth, can utter that which is not true. This is the ancient and unchanging faith of the Church, solemnly defined in the Councils of Florence and of Trent, and finally confirmed and more expressly formulated by the Council of the Vatican.....Hence, because the Holy Ghost employed men as His instruments, we cannot therefore say that it was these inspired instruments who, perchance, have fallen into error, and not the primary Author. For, by supernatural power, He so moved and impelled them to write—He was so present to them—that the things which He ordered, and those only, they, first, rightly understood, then willed faithfully to write down, and finally expressed in apt words and with infallible truth. Otherwise it could not be said that He was the Author of the entire Scripture. Such has always been the persuasion of the Fathers....It follows that those who maintain that an error is possible in any genuine passage of the sacred writings, either pervert the Catholic notion of inspiration, or make God the Author of such error."

It then seemed plain to me that my position was no longer tenable,

but I had recourse to the most learned theologian I knew and my intimate friend. His representations, distinctions, and exhortations had great influence with me and more or less satisfied me for a time; but ultimately I came to the conclusion that Catholic doctrine and science were fatally at variance. This is now more clear to me than ever since my "ordinary" does not say whether my judgment about what the attribution of any document to God's authorship involves is, or is not, right. To me it is plain that God's veracity and His incapability of deceit are primary truths without which revelation is impossible. The teaching, then, of Leo XIII., addressed dogmatically to the whole Church, comes to this:—Every statement made by a canonical writer must be true in the sense in which he put it forward—whether as an historical fact or a moral instruction.

Thus it is now evident that a vast and impassable abyss yawns between Catholic dogma and science, and no man with ordinary knowledge can henceforth join the communion of the Roman Catholic Church if he correctly understands what its principles and its teaching really are, unless they are radically changed.

For who could profess to believe the narrative about the tower of Babel, or that all species of animals came up to Adam to be named by him? Moreover, amongst the writings esteemed "canonical" by the Catholic Church are the book of Tobit and the second book of Maccabees, and also the story which relates how, when Daniel was thrown a second time into the lions' den, an angel seized Habbacuc, in Judea, by the hair of his head and carried him, with his bowl of pottage, to give it to Daniel for his dinner.

To ask a reasonable man to believe such puerile tales would be to insult him. Plainly the Councils of Florence, Trent, and the Vatican have fallen successively into greater and greater errors, and thus all rational trust in either Popes or Councils is at an end. Some persons may ask me, "Why did you not at once secede?" But your Eminence will agree with me that a man should not hastily abandon convictions, but rather wait, seek the best advice, and, above all, Divine aid. It is also a duty of ordinary prudence for a man to carefully examine his conscience to see whether any fault (*e.g.*, "pride" as you suggest) may not be at the root of his trouble and perplexity. Now, I have myself maintained, and maintain, that a secret wish, an unconscious bias, may lead to the acceptance, or rejection, of beliefs of various kinds, and certainly of religious beliefs. But when the question is a purely intellectual one of the utmost simplicity, or like a proposition in Euclid, then I do not believe in the possibility of emotional deception. The falsehood of the historical narration about Babel is a certainty practically as great as that of the equality of the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle.

Still when, in two or three years, I had become fully convinced that orthodox Catholicism was untenable, I was extremely disinclined to secede. I was most reluctant to give pain to many dear Catholic friends, some of whom had been very kind to me. My family also was, and is, strongly Catholic, and my secession might inflict, not only great pain, but possibly social disadvantage on those nearest and dearest to me.

Why, then, I asked myself, should I not continue to conform, as advocated in my *Fortnightly Review* article? Why should I stultify my past career when approaching its end, and give myself labour and sorrow? It was a great temptation. Probably I should have remained silent had I not, by my writings, influenced many persons in favour of what I now felt to be erroneous and therefore inevitably more or less hurtful. To such persons I was a debtor. I also hated to disguise, even by reticence, what I held to be truth.

These considerations were brought to a climax last year by a grave and prolonged illness. I was told I should probably die. Could I go out of the world while still remaining silent? It was plain to me that I ought not, and as soon as I could (in August) I wrote my recently published articles. Therein I felt it would be useless to confine myself to that question which was for me at the root of the whole matter—namely, Scripture. Therefore, while taking care to use no uncertain language about the Bible, I made my articles as startling as I could in other respects, so as to compel attention to them, and elicit, if possible, an unequivocal pronouncement. In this I have, thank God, succeeded, and the clause about Scripture I am required to sign is for me decisive.

I categorically refuse to sign the profession of faith. Nevertheless, as I said, I am attached to Catholicity as I understand it, and to that I adhere. If, then, my recent articles had been tolerated, especially my representations as to the probability of vast future changes through doctrinal evolution, I would have remained quiet in the hope that, little by little, I might successfully oppose points I had before mistakenly advocated. The *Quarterly* article of January, reviewed by me, and written, I suspect, by a Catholic, proceeds upon the very principle for which I am censured. I am not altogether surprised that your Eminence has shirked replying to my question, and referred me to Dr. Clarke, whose dishonesty (not, of course, conscious) and shuffling about Scripture so profoundly disgusted me. It is to me truly shocking that religious teachers, cardinals and priests, profess to think certain beliefs to be necessary, and yet will not say what they truly are. They resemble quack doctors, who play their long familiar tricks upon the vulgar, but act otherwise to those they cannot trifle with.

It has long been painful to me to think of the teaching given in Catholic schools and often proclaimed from the pulpit. There need be small surprise at the opposition existing in France to the authoritative teaching of fables, fairy tales, and puerile and pestilent superstitions.

Happily I can now speak with entire frankness as to all my convictions. *Liberavi animam meam*. I can sing my *Nunc dimittis* and calmly await the future.

In concluding, I must revert to the apology, about which your Eminence seems as disposed to shuffle as about Scripture statements. If you have recently sold the *Tablet*, you have, of course, ceased to be responsible. If not, however you may disclaim it, responsible you are, as a court of law would soon demonstrate under certain circumstances. I cannot but suspect the great reason for refusing to apologise is the desire to represent doctrinal agreement amongst Catholics to be much greater than in fact it is. When I spoke of exceptional opinions being held by "good Catholics," I did not mean to affirm they were theologically blameless, but simply that they were persons who looked upon themselves as Catholics while leading "good" lives in the ordinary sense of that word.

As to public opinion, it is plain the *Tablet* is not approved of, as to its treatment of me, by other Catholic journals, while I know that many of your Eminence's clergy, who have no sympathy with me, are much disgusted with it.

Considering how much less is implied by the imputation of folly to a man than by what has been said of me by your agents, I conclude by calling the attention of your Eminence to the words attributed to Christ by Matthew in his fifth chapter and 22nd verse.

Your most obedient servant,

St. GEORGE MIVART.

Dr. Mivart, no doubt, somewhat overstated the case when he expressed his belief that a change of great importance was taking place in the beliefs of the Catholic body. The February number of the *Nineteenth Century* contained a scholarly article from the Rev. Father Clarke, S.J., from which a few extracts will be useful, as defining the position:—

"Before our Lord ascended into heaven, we are told in Holy Scripture that, during the forty days that intervened between His resurrection and His ascension

into heaven, He appeared to His apostles 'speaking of the Kingdom of God' (Acts i. 3). Now, the Kingdom of God is in the New Testament a synonym for the Church on earth, sometimes for the Church in heaven. In this passage it has reference primarily to the Church on earth. It informs us that Our Lord instructed His disciples on the nature of the Church which He had come to found on earth, its constitution, its government, its discipline, its sacraments, and, above all, on the sacred doctrines which it was commissioned to teach to mankind. He bequeathed to it a body of dogma, clear, definite, and unmistakable, which was to be the substance of all its future teaching. This sacred deposit He placed in the hands of His twelve apostles. After the death of the last of them no sort of addition was to be made to it. No Council, no Pope, no Saint, not the whole Catholic Church united together, could add one jot or tittle to it. To attempt any further addition would not only be a departure from His commands, but would be an act of apostasy and sacrilege, so that to it may be applied the words of St. John in the Apocalypse: 'If any man shall add to these things, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book.'

"Hence it follows that every dogma that has been defined from then till now is a part of this inviolable and exclusive body of doctrine. Every Decree of Councils, every infallible utterance of Popes, is but the unfolding of some further portion of this body of doctrine which had not been previously unfolded, the promulgation of some truth consigned by our Lord to the keeping of His Church in the persons of His apostles, which they and their successors, and none else, had the power to publicly and officially promulgate

to mankind. If the Vatican Council defined as of Faith the infallibility of the Vicar of Christ, it was because our Lord had taught this doctrine to His apostles, and had informed them that it was a part of that body of truths that He gave into their keeping.Every defined dogma bears the Divine authority of Jesus Christ Himself; and that, therefore, it is a virtual rejection of Him and of His words either to reject it, or to accept it in any sense different from that which was intended by the Council or the Pope who defined it. For Pope and Council are in their definitions but the mouthpieces of Jesus Christ."

This is indeed entertaining! Solely on the strength of nine words in a letter written by a physician called Luke (who had not only never seen Jesus Christ, but who had never, as far as we know, even been intimately acquainted with any person who had seen him)—to his noble friend Theophilus—the fabric of Roman Catholic authority is built up.

The words (Acts i. 3) form the sole justification, according to Father Clarke, for the assumption of infallibility by the Pope. It is not even pretended that the words emanated from Jesus Christ; no onlooker is mentioned; it is simply an unsupported statement by a perfect stranger as to what happened during the forty days after the resurrection, and all the events of those forty days are condensed into nine words, "and speaking the things concerning the Kingdom of God." On this short sentence the discipline of the Church containing 223 millions of members entirely depends.

Further on Father Clarke informs us "Converts there are (*i.e.*, to the Roman Catholic Church) who really are not converts at all. They have learned to

admire the Church, and to recognise her superiority to any other religion in the world. They are attracted by her logical consistency, by her inviolable unity, by the holy lives of her saints, by her correspondence with the Church of the New Testament, by the high standard which she proposes to her members, or by some other of the countless motives which constitute her credentials to mankind. In all this they act on their own private judgment (guided, it may be, by the Holy Spirit of God), as all must do outside the Church. But when they enter the Church's precincts, they continue in the same habit of mind. They bring their private judgment with them into the Church, instead of bidding it farewell on the threshold. They continue to act on their private judgment just as they did before. They never lay it down at the feet of the Vicar of Christ, renouncing henceforward all claim to judge of that which the Church has stamped with the mark of her infallible teaching."

In this correspondence we have, in a nutshell, the Roman Catholic position in its bare, unvarnished despotism. The Church of Rome is nothing if not consistent. No compromise is tolerated. She has burned her boats! The private judgment of the most intellectual layman is nought. The Vicar of Christ—in other words, the pious but fallible man, who is for the time Pope, assisted by a Council of similarly fallible mortals, not one of whom may have ever read the works of a Newton or a Darwin—is to be the final arbiter in a matter of evidence. Of what avail is the astonishing progress of science during the last half of the nineteenth century?

But, to return to the Protestant belief of the first

half of the nineteenth century, the "formula" of the late Cardinal Vaughan, which he unsuccessfully endeavoured to persuade Dr. Mivart to sign, represents very nearly the faith of the average Protestant at that period. Happily, there has been evolution in the Protestant Churches; and this extraordinary document does not represent their feeling to-day. The teaching of science and the life-work of its devoted slaves have not been lost upon them. Profoundly modified by recent works, of which Mr. Darwin's *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man* rank first, the belief of the average Protestant has undergone a considerable change, and it may be now stated in brief outline as follows:—

The book of Genesis, so far as it relates to the creation of the world, is allegorical. The earth and its inhabitants of animals and man were not created in six days, nor, for the matter of that, in six million years; nor was the order of creation precisely as stated in the narrative; but this latter was so nearly correct as to justify the belief that the author or authors of the narrative were possessed of exceptional knowledge as to the cooling of the earth and the beginning of life (it is now recognised that the Chaldeans and Egyptians were in a very civilised condition long before the children of Israel occupied the land of Goschen); that the ages of the patriarchs as given are probably incorrect, and that the years attributed to them are more likely to be "moons," which, indeed, would be the usual manner of expressing units of time in the East, as it is in this day; that there was a flood, at any rate over a limited portion of the earth; that the story of Moses and the Israelites, their sufferings, emancipation, and journeys

on the Sinaitic peninsula, is, in the main, a true story, with its miracles; but somewhat tinged by Eastern imagery and with the natural imperfections of the historians: that the establishment of the chosen people in Palestine—the land of Promise—is, in the main, also a correct narrative, together with the record of the prophets, priests, and kings; that the history of David, his crimes, his virtues, his victories, and his defeats, is, on the whole, a true history; that the long-promised Messiah was born of a lowly virgin through the operation of the Holy Ghost, her supposed husband being a lineal descendant of the great king of Israel and Judah; that, after a faultless life and a brief period of teaching, Christ the Messiah fell a victim to a fanatical people opposed to the doctrine which he taught, and was crucified as a malefactor; that He rose again the third day, appeared to His disciples, and eventually disappeared into the clouds; that His work was carried on by His apostles, later by their followers; and that the teaching so inaugurated has been carried down to the present time. The average Protestant of to-day does not believe in the verbal inspiration of the Old Testament: he considers that it is impregnated with the faults, imaginations, and want of literary skill of the human writers—though written by the Will of God. He does believe, however, in the infallibility of the New Testament, with all the miracles therein recorded; and he looks upon the Epistles and Revelations as the direct Word of God, intended to guide man in every difficulty which he is at all likely to meet. He believes in the Trinity, and in this earth being an object of special concern to the Almighty; that the people of Israel were particularly chosen by

Him to illustrate His policy, so to speak, on the earth ; that He watched over them with special care, and guided them in their journeys and their establishment in Palestine, in their subsequent exile and restoration ; that these Israelites will ere long return to their own country, and that all the events foretold in the Apocalypse will surely come to pass. To him the devil is still a living spirit urging all to evil ; and the Song of Songs is an inspired, allegorical, prophetic poem, specially illustrative of the loving union which was eventually to take place between Christ the Messiah and His Church on earth.

This, in rough outline, is the belief of the average Protestant. The Unitarian sect, which is very large in the United States, and increasing rapidly, differs from other forms of Protestantism in one very important particular, and the members of that sect differ among themselves. Many of them believe that Jesus Christ was man like ourselves, born naturally ; that He was infused with a special degree of the Almighty Spirit, but was not God. None of the Unitarians believe that an intercessory is needed to approach the Almighty ; and they regard the resurrection of a man as the most effectual proof of the resurrection of the body at the last day.

Although he regards the earlier parts of the book of Genesis as an allegory inspired by God, but not literally true in fact, the average Protestant Christian believes in the "fall." He accepts the doctrine of the evolution of the physical nature of man, but denies that his intellect and moral attributes were a part of that process. He believes that man was, originally, endowed with a lofty moral nature, sinless and immortal ; that he succumbed to temptation, in

consequence of which his whole physical nature was changed, and became from that time subject to corruption and dissolution; that he became a degraded being, and has been working out his punishment ever since. His hope of escape from the curse laid upon all mankind by the moral fall of the first man lies in the atonement alleged to be made by Jesus Christ, who suffered on the cross in expiation for our sins, and who has thus made redemption possible for the past souls who walked aright as well as for those in the future. He has implicit faith in the eternal happiness of the righteous who believe in the Saviour. Of the fate of the wicked, and of those who do not believe in the divinity of Christ, he professes to know nothing, but piously desires that they may work out their salvation in some manner and some place not known to him. He sums up with the wicked a class of people called "Agnostics"—that is, those who do not "know," because their reason forbids them to accept the slender evidence adduced for the supernatural character of Christ, and for the immortality which He is said to have promised to those who profess belief in Him; also a rather large proportion of the population of the earth called "heathen" or "pagans," which practically includes everybody, except, perhaps, the Roman Catholics, who do not agree with him in the essentials of his religious faith, such as Taouists, Buddhists, Brahmins, Confucians, Mahommedans, and the like: as to Roman Catholics, his judgment is suspended. He considers it his bounden duty to assist by every means in his power to propagate his own particular form of religion; not only among the races which have no faith worth the name, such as the South Sea Islanders and the

aborigines of Australia and Central Africa, whose beliefs may more properly be called "superstition"; but among nations of ancient civilisation who have honourable and elevated religions of their own, such as the Chinese, Hindoos, and so forth. He hopes, and expects, to meet in heaven those loved members of his family and friends who have passed away before him, including his unbaptised children, and to be joined hereafter by those he has left behind. As to what is the destination of the soul which leaves the body at death, and where it rests till the day of judgment, the ideas of the average Protestant are in a nebulous condition. He refuses to entertain the idea of purgatory, and thinks that all souls who have been on earth, from Adam to the last man, will be judged when the end of the world has come.

Such is the belief of the average Protestant. The Unitarian, of course, as before remarked, does not believe in the destruction of those who cannot regard Christ as God. The Roman Catholics have entire faith in the effectiveness of the intercession of the Virgin Mother of Christ; and in the damnation, not only of heathens, but of all the members of the Protestant Churches. The Greek Church, in its customs, follows more closely the Roman Catholic than the Protestant Church, but is essentially different in its faith. It possesses no one infallible Pope, nor does it sanction the worship of Mary; in fact, its belief is far more in agreement with the Protestant Churches than its ceremonial and worship would at first lead the casual spectator to suppose. Celibacy is not enjoined for the priests; confession is obligatory before the Eucharist is administered.

We now turn to the creeds of the Christian religions. The earliest is the "Nicene," which was composed in its original state by the first Œcumenical Council, which met at Nicæa, in Bithynia, in the summer of 325 A.D. This Council consisted of about 300 bishops, and was the outcome of dissensions in the Church, caused principally by Arius. The creed issued by the Council is very different from that now in use. It was as follows: "We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things both visible and invisible; and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, *only begotten, that is to say, of the substance of the Father, God of God and Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, both things in heaven and things on earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, made man, suffered, and rose again on the third day, went up into the heavens, and is to come again to judge the quick and the dead; and in the Holy Ghost.*"

There were some clauses after this anathematising the assertions of the Arians, but the above is the substance of the real Nicene Creed. Arius was present in attendance, but not one of the Council. He appears, however, to have been frequently called in and allowed to express his opinions, his chief opponent in argument being Athanasius.

The creed now in the Prayer Book, says Dr. Tulloch, from whose article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* the above information is obtained, is supposed to have been determined upon by the Council of Constantinople in the year 381 A.D. Some of the above clauses were condensed, and the following added:—"The Lord

and Giver of Life, who proceeded from the Father (and the Son), who with the Father and the Son are worshipped and glorified, who spake by the prophets. And I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come."

The Nicene Creed is the only one used by the Greek Church.

The origin of what is known as the "Apostles' Creed" is wrapped in obscurity. It is needless to say it had nothing to do with the apostles themselves, who had been dead and buried two centuries before it was ever heard of in its crude form, and at least six centuries before it came into general use. Dr. Tulloch considers that it originated with Marcellus, Bishop of Ancyra, in Galatia, who found it necessary to send a confession of faith to Julius, Bishop of Rome, about the year 336 A.D. In its present completed state it can be traced back no further than the middle of the eighth century. The clauses referring to "descent into hell" and "the Communion of Saints" were not in the original confession of Marcellus, and nobody knows who is responsible for their insertion. The authority for the use of this creed in public worship is of the most unsatisfactory character. It is founded on the defence of a bishop accused, and, indeed, expelled, from his see for heterodoxy; and finished up by no one knows whom. The public expression of the Christian faith by means of the Nicene Creed is intelligible to all; but the "Apostles' Creed" (a name given to it, no doubt, for the purpose of securing the support of the masses ignorant of its origin) is a slovenly and unnecessary addition to the Book of Common Prayer.

The Athanasian Creed, which is of more doubtful authority even than the Apostles' Creed, is certainly not the work of the famous father of the fourth century whose name it bears. Dr. Tulloch says: "The conclusive reasons against this supposition may be stated as follows: (1) There is no trace of such a creed in any of the older MSS. of Athanasius; (2) Athanasius himself.....in consistency with the prevailing Church sentiment of his time, expressly disclaims as superfluous the use of any creed except the Nicene; (3) the original language of the 'Athanasian' symbol is clearly Latin and not Greek; (4) the symbol was entirely unknown to the Greek Church up to the year 1000; and (5) there is no evidence of its existence even in the Latin Church before the end of the eighth or the commencement of the ninth century."

The application of the name of Athanasius is evidently a fraud, designed to clothe the creed with more authority than it would otherwise possess. The existence of the "Quicumque" was unknown till the reign of Charlemagne; the first evidence of it in its present form is found in a prayer book of Charles the Bald, written about 870 A.D.; and it probably came into use in the Prayer Book about 850 A.D. It had its origin, no doubt, in a desire to emphasise the doctrine of the Trinity, which, apparently, was sadly in want, at that era, of some extraordinary support.

The fraudulent history of this creed (the imposture of the name being evidently concurred in by the heads of the Catholic Church), its want of authority, together with its savagery, have rendered it unpopular among the intelligent people of this country. The best educated members of the priesthood dislike it; but it is

ordered to be read in the Church of England fourteen times a year ; and the fear which has seized possession of moderate Churchmen with reference to innovations in the ritual, a fear which has arisen from the growing tendency to copy the ceremonies of the Church of Rome, has enabled the clergy to obey the mandate of the bishops, without, so far, irritating their congregations, who rise in nearly every Established Church and respond to its objectionable clauses. If ever the time comes to recast the ritual of the Church of England—and the common sense of its members must soon prevail in this matter—the Athanasian Creed will no doubt be the first document sacrificed. It is no longer read in Westminster Abbey.

An account of Christian beliefs and creeds is not complete without a brief reference to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion. These articles were drawn up by Archbishop Parker, sanctioned by Convocation in 1562, and published by royal authority in the following year. They are not intended to be a complete system of theology, but only enumerate certain truths of such primary importance that anyone denying them is thereby excluded from the Church. Every candidate for Holy Orders is required to believe them absolutely, which, considering their antiquity and manifest contradictions, must be somewhat difficult to an intellectual man who has made himself acquainted with the teachings of science and the higher criticism of the Bible. Every priest, when he assumes an incumbency, is obliged to read the Articles, in his church, to the congregation. This is generally done from the pulpit on the first Sunday of his ministry. He declares, or should declare, his entire adherence to

the whole of them before Almighty God, then (according to the faith of the Church) present in the building.

The first Article, "Of Faith in the Holy Trinity," is an abbreviated addition of the principal features of the creeds; and it requires no effort on the part of a student who is satisfied with the latter to accept it. But the second, which may be read with the thirty-first, ends with a declaration which may well cause him to pause before subscribing to it in the literal meaning which it is undoubtedly intended to convey: "And to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men." Certain of the clergy construe this word into the meaning "a rendering sacred," but this does not satisfy the context. The only Son of God did not require to be "rendered sacred"; and, in connection with "original guilt" and "the actual sins of men," such an interpretation has no meaning at all. When Archbishop Parker, or Convocation, penned this word, it was meant to imply "that which is offered to a deity as an expression of penitence or reconciliation," the "payment of a just debt," a "satisfaction for evils committed or to be committed," without which man could not hope for forgiveness or reconciliation with the Almighty in this world, or in the world to come. Yet that this view, which is the only view which can be taken of the clause, is most repugnant to the higher minds in the Protestant Church is clear from some of their writings. Perhaps the most explicit is that given by the late Archbishop Magee, in his small work, *The Atonement* (p. 108): ".....This idea of Christ suffering the same, or an equivalent, penalty with that which is due by us, and this suffering being a satisfaction to the justice of

God, is wholly indefensible; at any rate, I cannot attempt to defend it. Nay, I go further, and I say that this whole idea of transferring certain exact and mathematically equal amounts of moral suffering from one person to another, as if they were so many weights in a scale or so many chemical quantities in a laboratory, seems to me unthinkable; I cannot even imagine it. Persons are not things; personal feelings, states, conditions, cannot be made to change places as if they were material substances. He who takes my place in suffering does not, and cannot, take my sufferings. These cannot be the same for him as they would be for me, simply because he is not I. In his place I should not feel precisely as he did; I might feel more, I might feel less; I should certainly feel differently; my penalty, therefore, cannot be transferred to him. And as to such transference being an act of justice, I wholly deny it. The clumsy and grotesque analogy, so often employed to explain it—that, namely, of a schoolmaster, who has threatened punishment for some fault, accepting a strong boy, who has not committed that fault, for punishment, in place of some sickly boy who has, and then boasting that he has kept his word, and that his justice is thereby fully satisfied—seems to me a downright insult to our understanding.”

Coming, as they do, from an Archbishop of York, these are important words. Dr. Magee denies that the vicarious sufferings of Christ expiated the sins of men. We find in this little work of his that he believes that the death of Christ had some effect in reconciling the Almighty to sinful man. What that effect was he professes himself entirely ignorant; and

we may therefore conclude that he, at least, entirely disagreed with the closing words of the second Article. But, surely, even if this distinguished Churchman had not published his view on this subject, common sense prohibits us from supposing that the sins of mankind and their effects, which consist very largely of remorse on the part of the sinner and widespread consequences on innocent persons, could be forgiven and wiped out through the cruel death of an innocent and entirely blameless person; the difficulty being immeasurably increased by the fact that this person was the Immaculate Son of God.

Divines of the Church of England differ widely on the doctrine of the Atonement. It was St. Paul, not Christ, who insisted that the mystical reason of the death of the great Teacher should become a matter of dogma in the Church. No book is probably so representative of Church of England views, as they now exist, as *Lux Mundi*, edited by the Bishop of Worcester (sixteenth impression 1902). The chapter on the Atonement is written by the Rev. and Hon. Arthur Lyttelton, Cambridge. In it he says (page 222) : " Of one part of His work, of the sacrifice which He offered for man's guilt, the essence was its vicariousness. Man could not and never can offer a sacrifice which can avail to propitiate for the sins of the past. It is only in virtue of that one final and perfect propitiation that we can draw nigh to God, can accomplish anything good, can recognise that we are delivered from wrath. The sins of the past are cancelled, the guilt is wiped out : in this respect all was accomplished by Him for us who are in Him, and nothing remains for us to do. He as our Representative, because He shares our nature, can offer for us a

prevailing sacrifice." With reference to this statement, we wish to observe that nothing in the Gospels sustains the opinion of the Master of Selwyn College.

The third and sixth Articles may be considered together. The third contains the amazing statement that Christ descended into Hades. We look into Scripture for some evidence to support this; and we find one solitary verse, 1 Peter iii. 19: "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison." Thus, on the evidence of a letter attributed to the disciple Peter, and not known for certain to emanate from him, our clergy are required to hold as a fundamental belief that Christ descended into hell. After His resurrection Christ Himself never stated this, or we may be sure it would have found its way into the Gospels. Where did the disciple receive his information? He could not have known of the event first-hand. By what right has anyone to require belief on such slender evidence? Yet, this is also in the creeds.

The sixth Article is sound enough: "So that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an Article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." It is a most unfortunate circumstance that this Article was not impressed upon those who drew up the remaining thirty-eight, and upon those who composed the creeds. Curiously enough, this Article is followed by one which stands towards it in direct contradiction. "Both in the Old and the New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ." It would puzzle any student to find a single passage in the Old Testament offering everlasting life to mankind by

Christ. It is true that certain passages in the Psalms, in the prophecies which pass under the name of Isaiah, those of Jeremiah, and those of Zechariah, have been alleged to refer to a Messiah ; but, as will be shown in another chapter, it is clear that quite nine-tenths refer to other events and times, the remaining tenth being of very disputed authenticity. In any case, there is no promise of everlasting life to mankind by Christ. Everlasting life was unknown to the Old Testament writers. They apparently had some notion of a place for departed spirits, for it is frequently referred to by David and Samuel ; but it was not a place of happiness, nor in any sense such as would be described as a region of everlasting life. This is all the more curious as the Egyptians had distinct notions on the question of life beyond the grave. The only conclusion to be arrived at is that Moses adopted all that he thought likely to be useful to him in the lore of the Egyptians, and deliberately rejected their religious views, as he supposed he was specially instructed on such subjects by the Almighty Himself ; consequently, all other knowledge was superfluous. If he felt this, he would naturally discourage and discountenance any leaning towards Egyptian creeds among his people, who were enjoined to follow the one true God.

Article VIII. is open to the same objection as Article VII. Parts of the Nicene and the Apostles' Creeds cannot be supported by Scripture ; nor is there in any part of the Old or New Testament the smallest warrant for either the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed or the very detailed and particular description of the Trinity. What the Founder of Christianity did not attempt to define has been taken up

700 years after His death by His ignorant and obscure followers, with the result that might have been anticipated.

In Article IX., "Of Original or Birth-sin," we have a definition of evil, which, no doubt, in the feeble light of the age in which it was written, was natural enough. But is this definition a satisfactory Article of Faith for a minister to subscribe to in the present day? Science has traced the rise of man from lower types, and refuses to separate his physical from his mental nature. With the imperfections and now useless organs of the beasts from which he sprung, man has inherited in a modified form the animal appetites, selfish instincts, and savage nature of his remote ancestors in the lower scale. When his moral nature had advanced sufficiently to enable him to perceive the depravity of fighting for his food or for his mate, or of following any course which was chosen solely with a view to his own self-gratification, he became guilty of sin if he pursued that course. There is abundant scope for sin in the inherited attributes of the earlier types of evolution. Education, improving the moral capacity, diminishes the tendency to selfishness and sin. History pronounces that, for every thousand human beings, active sin was more common 2,000 years ago than it is in the present day; the percentage of savages, and of sinners, decreases as knowledge increases. Original or Birth-sin—that is to say, the inherited selfishness of our ancestors—becomes of a feebler type with every generation of civilised peoples, provided they are advancing in their civilisation. To meet the needs of the present day Article IX. is of poor assistance.

Article X. is somewhat vague, and begins with an

assertion as to the fall of Adam, which, though it is described in Genesis and mentioned by St. Paul, is not proved by the general teachings of Scripture. It is not alluded to by Jesus Christ, who never on one single occasion, as far as the Gospels teach us, made any statement, direct or indirect, to the effect that He had come to wipe out the alleged disastrous results of Adam's disobedience. Article XI. is in the same strain as the "Quicumque," and implies that only that limited portion of the human race who believe in Christ can obtain a higher life.

Articles XII. and XIII. declare that good works performed without faith in Christ are not good works, "yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin." The plain English of this is, that a self-denying and charitable life is of no avail unless animated by faith in Christ. An upright and benevolent Parsee, for instance, who spends his leisure in directing works of charity, and his fortune in alleviating the miseries of his fellow-men, is to find his portion in hell when judgment is pronounced, simply because, either through absolute ignorance of His existence or conviction of the truth of his own religion, his works do not spring necessarily out of a lively faith in Jesus Christ. Is it possible that young men entering the Church of England in the twentieth century do believe this? What can be expected from the teachings of a minister who does believe it, or who, not believing it, subscribes to this barbarous statement?

Articles XIV. and XV. call for no comment. Article XVI. alludes to that mysterious sin never explained, but darkly hinted at by St. Matthew, which has a special

terror for feeble minds, and which has been the origin of so much insanity. The last part of Article XVI. is surely somewhat unnecessary. No sane person can have imagined that they could no more commit sin because they have received the Holy Ghost.

Article XVII., "Of Predestination and Election." —The obvious meaning of this Article is to limit the grace of God to a portion of the human race who have been specially selected; a very sad, comfortless doctrine, and one which, if true, would overshadow the Christian world as with a gloomy curse. Plainly, if two people marry and beget a family of, say, ten children, the probabilities are in favour of a proportion of them being predestined to everlasting perdition. The efforts of the parents to bring up their progeny in the right way can be of no avail. Some must inevitably be lost. Is there any warrant in Scripture for such a faith? If a righteous man and woman were to marry believing this cruel creed, they could not have a moment of happiness: the fear that, despite their most stringent endeavours, some of their beloved ones were sure of damnation would poison their lives. We have heard of men marrying with some hereditary taint hanging over them, and their daily fear that it would appear in their offspring; the agony in this case would be mild compared to the apprehension which must arise from the extreme probability that, whatever happened, some of their children were doomed to the pangs of hell.

It may be said that the true meaning of this Article is simply an expression of the foreknowledge of God, who is able to predict the number who will, in the exercise of free-will, accept the true faith. If so, it is most obscurely worded: "Whereby (before the

foundations of the world were laid) He hath constantly decreed by His counsel secret to us to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind." This is the creed of Calvin, and can only be interpreted as a predetermination of certain souls to damnation, a doctrine in opposition to the ministry of Christ. Such an Article should have no place in the Prayer Book of the Church of England.

The last paragraph, "Furthermore we must receive God's promises in such wise as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture: and, in our doings, that Will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God," is apparently inserted in order to minimise the effect of the earlier parts of the Article, of which it is almost a contradiction; for nothing is more certain than this—that Christ's daily teaching is opposed to the doctrine of unborn souls being predestined to hell.

Article XVIII. might have been written by the authors of the Athanasian Creed: "They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved." Written in a spirit of intolerant bigotry, it practically assigns to perdition every person, however correct his or her life, who does not believe in the Christian religion.

Article XIX. is natural enough as emanating from a Convocation of the Protestant Church; but Article XX. is a contradiction of many of the other Articles: "And yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written,

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neither may it so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation."

Article XXI. is on much the same lines as Article XX. It would puzzle a student to find authority in Holy Scripture for many of the clauses in these Articles, or for some of those in the creeds.

Article XXII. is true enough, and needs no comment, unless it be that in it the Church of England condemns the Roman Catholic Church for a fault which it is guilty of itself—customs "vainly invented and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God."

Articles XXIV. and XXV. need but little comment, though it would be difficult to find warrant for the last clause of Article XXV. (which is repeated in Article XXIX.)—"but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves damnation, as St. Paul saith." This may have been St. Paul's opinion, but he was very often mistaken. He thought the end of the world was at hand; and it is to his misguided writing that the fiction of the Fall receives its greatest support.

It would also be difficult to find warrant in Holy Scripture for Article XXVI. This pronouncement may or may not be true. In any case, it is difficult to believe that Absolution pronounced by a wicked priest can be of much use to anybody.

The remainder of the Articles require but few remarks. The Thirty-ninth cannot be supported by Holy Scripture, as swearing *at all* is expressly

forbidden by Christ. The whole subject-matter of the Articles might have been condensed into less than half of the space, and the number could easily have been reduced to twenty. As specimens of literature, they are a disgrace to the English language and a blot upon the Book of Common Prayer. They require the most careful revision before they can be unreservedly accepted by any educated man of the twentieth century.

Surprise is often expressed that so few young English gentlemen present themselves for ordination. As is well known, it is very rare to find a batch of candidates wholly composed of University men, and that, if the standard of examination (now low enough) were raised, the Church of England would have no recruits at all. Sometimes not half the batch are any higher in the social scale than the farmer class: when assembled at the bishop's palace for ordination, it is quite usual to find that only two or three have brought with them the necessary change of clothes to enable them to appear in the drawing-room. It is often alleged that the reason of this unwillingness to join the Church is the decreasing stipends of the clergy. But we think it is more usually the instinctive dislike of the English gentleman to utter that which he believes to be untrue. He has learnt at his college the history of his true descent, and he hesitates to subscribe to Articles which imply that his education has been of no avail.

We will suppose, for example, that a young student who wishes to become a minister takes up Article IX. He there finds "Original or Birth-sin" attributed to the unfortunate Adam; and, in order that there shall be no possible misunderstanding, a note of contemptuous

allusion is added to the Pelagians, a sect which he knows held precisely the opposite view—namely, that Adam was responsible for his own misdeeds, such as they were, but not for the transmission of sin to the whole human race. What is he to do? He knows very well that the despised Pelagians were, in this matter, nearer the truth than the writers of the Article; he believes that in the far-away past he had no ancestor at any period who was sinless, or specially and miraculously created, but that he had a good many who crawled on all fours, devoured grass and roots, and made their wishes known by means of inarticulate howls and bellows. He has no power to alter the Article: he is told, in effect, to take it whole or renounce the Church as a profession; and he knows, moreover, that, when his time comes to take up a charge of souls, he must solemnly announce to his people, in the presence of God, that he believes all Thirty-nine Articles. Can we wonder at the result? He cannot bring himself to lie, so he goes off to some other occupation, where he can follow his natural bent towards straightforwardness and truth.

The writer once asked a friend of his how he could bring himself to subscribe to this Article. This was the reply: "I am bound to the actual words of the Articles, but I am not bound to interpret them. As you say, the meaning of the writers of that Article does appear to be that original sin is solely due to Adam, who was specially created without sin; but they were providentially withheld from saying so in plain language, and it is possible—as the wording is obscure—that they may have meant something else. In any case, it is my business to subscribe to the Article, not to find out what was passing in the minds

of those who composed it." This gentleman's attitude to the Articles may help to explain how many good men manage to swallow them. It is surely a mystery that the Church of England contains so many gifted men who skip happily along with their creeds and their Articles just as if the *Origin of Species* had never been written; though it is quite out of the question that any one of them could have escaped the lessons therein expressed. What perhaps is more curious is, that there still lives one distinguished physicist who believes firmly in the inspiration of the whole of the Old Testament, including the account of the Creation, Fall, and Dispersion, as given in Genesis.

But the world is yet young! It is less than fifty thousand years since man assumed the erect position (probably much to his physical disadvantage, though to his mental advantage), and became a responsible being. Unless there is a collision, or, what is more probable, another Ice Age, or unless there is an outburst at the bottom of the ocean on a larger scale than Krakatoa, when the crust of the earth is rent for some great distance, man will probably exist, and go on improving, for quite twenty million of years. Much has been done to change public opinion during the last fifty years; if the change goes on at the same rate, we may hope that in another hundred years the present dogma will have given place in Protestant countries to a more rational religion.

CHAPTER IV.

THE JEWISH CANON

Divisions of the Canon—The Pentateuch not the work of Moses—Abuse of the Bishop of Natal—Author of the Narrative must be taken literally—Abraham's pusillanimity—Isaac—Jacob, the meanest of men—Cruelties of the Israelites said to be committed by command of Jehovah—Infallibility of the record not claimed—Biographies in the Old Testament bear the impress of truth—Miracles will not stand scrutiny—Butcheries under Joshua—The earth ceased to revolve upon its axis—Times of the Judges—Treachery of Jael—The tower of Shechem—Samson—Raid upon Laish—War between Israel and Benjamin—David—His deliberate murder of Uriah—David's unhappy family—His dying orders to assassinate Joab—Christ said to be descended from Bathsheba—King Solomon—His evil courses—Probably the author of Ecclesiastes and Canticles—Rehoboam—Kingdom again disunited—Wars, foreign and internecine—Ahab—The Moabite stone—Kings of Israel and Judah—Elisha—Jehu—Isaiah—Nebuchadnezzar—What lessons to be learnt from Israelitish history?—Possible criticism—Rev. G. S. Streatfeild's paper at the Southport Conference—Indignation of Evangelicals—Darwin played out?—Have Mr. Streatfeild's opponents heard the history of the human egg?—Impious story of Elisha cursing the children—"Christian evidence" at Portsmouth Town Hall—Questions of earnest inquirers—The Book of Ruth—Job—Different views of that book—The Prophets—Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, Esther and Jonah—Story of the Jews to the birth of Christ—The site of the Temple still the scene of worship of the one true God—Appendix.

THE Jewish Canon, which is the same as our present Old Testament, is composed of thirty-nine books, and was not regarded as complete until after the Christian era. It is usually divided into three

parts—viz., the “Pentateuch,” the “Prophets” (earlier and latter), and the third Canon, or Hagiographa, which comprises the remainder of the books. The writers of all the books are anonymous. No importance was attached, in those early times, to authorship; the compilers were in the habit of collating two or more accounts, and adding their own version or discursive remarks, so that it is impossible to say, with any certainty, who were the original historians.

One fact is established. The Pentateuch, as it appears in the Old Testament Canon, is not the work of Moses, though it is possible that some parts of it may have been written from records left by him. The adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, he was carefully educated in all the learning of the Egyptians; it is probable that he was imperfectly aware of the processes and order of the creation of the world, and that the account in the first chapter of Genesis is partly derived from a narrative originating with him.

Few intelligent people will be found in the present day to support the belief so widely, almost universally, held in this country up to within forty years ago, of the historical truth of the Pentateuch. It is remarkable that a conviction of the inspired character of the narrative of the origin of the world and of the human race survived so long. It is probable that it would have remained several decades longer if it had not been for the courageous Bishop of Natal, Dr. J. W. Colenso, who took the trouble to collect and edit evidences against the theory of the Mosaic authorship of the books in question. His criticism was received with derision. The terms “false,” “childish,” “heretical,” “blasphemous,” “abominable,” were

applied to his opinions by his episcopal brethren; and he was alluded to as "an instrument of Satan." He was inhibited from preaching in most of the pulpits of the land, and efforts were made to expel him from his diocese. Yet within a quarter of a century it came to be recognised by his countrymen that his criticism was just and true; and, if his noble life had been spared, he might have had the satisfaction of knowing that he was considered an orthodox divine. The bishop or incumbent now who ostentatiously refused him a pulpit would be covered with ridicule. Yet the old notion of a specially inspired record was held by the late Mr. W. E. Gladstone, whose work, *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, is witness to the fact; as it is to the facility with which that distinguished scholar enabled himself to prove to his own satisfaction any theory which he desired to believe.

In the present age it appears incredible that any thinking person who lived at a time when astronomy and geology, as sciences, had made such considerable progress could have been satisfied with the crude description in Genesis and the following books of the creation of the earth and the heavenly bodies, the origin of man, the Garden of Eden, the so-called Fall of Adam, the tower of Babel, the Deluge, the beginning of the Semitic race, its vicissitudes, journeys, and eventual establishment in the land of Canaan. But so it was. Every unusual circumstance in the narrative was ascribed to a "miracle"; whole congregations were silenced and their understandings soothed by such trite sayings as "All things are possible with God." One writer, considered as an able exponent of the Scriptures, wrote as follows:—

"The Bible is none other than the *Voice of Him*

that sitteth upon the Throne! Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every syllable of it (where are we to stop?), every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High! The Bible is none other than the Word of God—not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike, the utterance of Him who sitteth upon the Throne—absolute, faultless, unerring, supreme” (quotations from Dean Burgon’s *Inspiration*, etc., p. 89).

The composition, or collation, of the Pentateuch was certainly subsequent to the occupation of Canaan by the Israelites. The proofs are so numerous that it must excite wonder as to why they were not noticed by English divines long before they were collected and arranged by Dr. Colenso. Events are alluded to of which Moses was necessarily ignorant, as they took place many years after his death. Geographical names are used which arose long after the wanderings, such as Hebron, Dan, etc.; references are made to the conquest as already accomplished; and the narrative even presupposes the existence of a Kingship in Israel (Gen. xxxvi. 31): “And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.”

It is improbable that any part of the Canon, as we have it now, is in the exact language of the original composers, whoever they may have been, for the absence of vowels in the Hebrew writings was always a great difficulty. But we have, no doubt, in the Pentateuch a fairly accurate transcription of the original writings. It is unprofitable, attempting to twist the narratives into meanings which it is obvious were foreign to the intention of the author. He said that the Creation occupied six days, and he meant it;

he believed that the Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the day; that the seventh or eighth generation of descendants of the first man were capable of playing on musical instruments and of forging and cutting brass and iron; and that the Sons of God came in unto the children of men. He believed in the ages which he has given of the patriarchs; that six human beings and a pair of all fauna throughout the earth entered the ark, lived there a year, and survived, to become the ancestors of all present living beings; that God descended from heaven on to the plain of Mamre, visited Abraham, and had long conversations with him face to face; that two angels, who accompanied the Almighty on that occasion, visited Lot, and were the subject of the filthy attentions of the people of Sodom; and in the destruction of the Cities of the Plain, and of Lot's wife. The compiler holds Abraham to be the chosen man of God, who is considered by Him as the most worthy to perpetuate a favourite race; and, at the same time, he depicts him as guilty of despicable meanness. In Egypt this hero, "in whom all the nations of the earth are to be blessed," denies his wife, and yields her to the arms of Pharaoh, in order to save his own miserable carcass. Again, in the land of the Philistines, a few months after God in Person has announced to him that Sarah is to bear him a son in a year's time, he is guilty of the same pusillanimous surrender of his wife (whose person at that period at least should have been held sacred) to Abimelech, his excuse being that, if he did not give up Sarah, "they will slay me for my wife's sake." Isaac is represented as being guilty of the same crime for the same reason.

Jacob is described as one of the meanest of men.

He cheats his brother Esau, cringes to his father-in-law, robs him, and grovels to his brother when they meet again. Yet he wrestled with God, and prevailed. He is furious with his two sons Simeon and Levi for avenging the dishonour of their sister Dinah; and deliberately curses them on his death-bed for this act, which, whatever objections he may have had to details, he should certainly have approved of in principle.

The compiler evidently believes that a vast host of about 2½ millions of people left Egypt, and that they had among them about 600,000 fighting men. It is useless endeavouring to interpret his words into any other meaning, for the record of the able-bodied men is checked in a variety of ways. He believes that this number of people thrived and multiplied in the desert; that they fought with many other large tribes, being generally victorious; and that, at the personal command of God, they committed a series of unequalled atrocities, including the massacre of 60,000 women and children, who were, at the time, prisoners of war (Numbers xxxi.); and he believes in the final establishment of the children of Israel in Canaan through the immediate intervention of God, who superintended every movement.

In the opinion of Dr. Colenso, the author or compiler of the first four books of the Pentateuch was Samuel, assisted possibly by his pupils. It is quite consistent with what we know of the character of the stern, unbending zealot who "hewed Agag in pieces," that he should write with fervour of the slaughter of the Midianitish women and little children.

Traditions of the Creation, Garden of Eden, the Fall, Tower of Babel, and the Flood were not confined to the Israelites. Many other nations had, and now

have, similar legends. Dr. Colenso quotes from *Kalisch* :—

“Krishna also, as the incarnation of Vishnu, is represented now as treading on the bruised head of the conquered serpent and now as entwined by it and stung in the heel.

“Equally striking is the resemblance (that is, to the story of Paradise) to the belief of the Persians, who suppose that a reign of bliss and delight, the town Eriene Vedsho, or Heden, more beautiful than all the rest of the world, traversed by a mighty river, was the original abode of the first men; before they were tempted by Ahriman, in the shape of a serpent, to partake of the wonderful fruit of the forbidden tree Hòm.”

These traditions were handed down from generation to generation, losing, it is certain, nothing of the marvellous, but probably a good deal in accuracy, until at last they were arranged into books by the seer and his young men, and came to be called the “Books of Moses,” just as there is a “Book of Judges,” a “Book of Ruth,” “Books of Samuel,” and “Books of Kings.”

Dr. Colenso states that it is not claimed anywhere in the Hebrew manuscripts, or in printed copies of the Hebrew Bible, that Moses wrote the Pentateuch; nor are they even styled the “Books of Moses” in the Greek Septuagint or the Latin Vulgate, but only in our modern translations.

Infallibility is not claimed by the writer of the Pentateuch, and it is not in the smallest degree probable that later authors would have presumed to mix up their own compositions with writings which they believed to emanate directly from Moses, and

which they would (under such a belief) have supposed to have been dictated by "the very mouth of Jehovah Himself." The dual account (Elohistic and Jehovistic) in Genesis is the first and best evidence of the manner in which the Pentateuch was edited.

The present writer has travelled in the desert of Sinai. He has ascended Jebal Musa (undoubtedly the Sinai of the Old Testament) and Serbal, which for many years was thought to answer to the description of Sinai; and he has seen from a distance the largest part of the desert. It is an area of strange beauty, on account of the varying colours of its granite and basaltic mountain cliffs and ranges. But it is almost waterless, entirely destitute of vegetation, and quite incapable of supporting now, or at any past time (allowing the recorded miracles to be true), even the modest estimate of the numbers of the Israelites stated as the probable figure by Dr. Colenso. Inscriptions there are in some of the waddies, but none which throw any light on the narrative. That there was, over three thousand years ago, a large tribe that wandered among these magnificent rugged mountains is probable; but that it attained any such size or importance as is claimed for it is out of the question. There can be no reasonable doubt as to the main features of the narrative of the origin, residence, journeys, and final establishment of the descendants of Israel. The legend has a basis of fact. Divide the numbers of people and cattle by twenty, allow for altered circumstances—more rain in the past, more vegetation—and the story is not an altogether impossible one.

The histories of the lives of their great men bear a distinct impress of truth. If it was found, as it is in

the case of most modern biographies, that the lives of their heroes contained no act but that which was manifestly to their credit, there would be reason for doubting the fidelity of the main narrative. The contrary, however, is the case. If the courage and wisdom of their leaders are extolled, their weaknesses, mistakes, and crimes are also laid bare. In the case of the greatest of Israelitish heroes, he from whom the Messiah was to come, it would not have been remarkable if the historian had endeavoured to pass by in silence those events of his life which are so much to his discredit. But the life of David, so full of incident, bears on the face of it the impress of a true narrative. It would be difficult to say whether there is more to admire, in the wisdom, energy, military genius, and extraordinary personal influence of this remarkable man, than to condemn, in his dissoluteness, cunning, cruelty, and neglect of his large family. As far as wisdom alone was concerned, the Jews probably held Solomon in greater awe than his father; but there is no attempt to cover over his sins. So again with Noah, Lot, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and other national heroes. The prophets and priests, indeed, are treated with more mercy and less candour; but it is hardly to be expected that a faithful record would be retained of the priestly section of the people, especially as they usually kept the records and dominated their contents.

The system of records is somewhat similar to a custom in China. At Peking there is (or rather was) a Board of Censors. Every act of importance of the reigning Emperor is recorded in a book, with the Censors' remarks. The monarch is not allowed to see this commentary; but directly his successor comes to

the throne he is allowed to peruse it, to enable him to avoid committing the same mistakes. The records of the Hebrew prophets and priests were probably edited in the same way, and sometimes with the same object. Be this as it may, there is no attempt in the books to hide, nor even to minimise, the ill deeds of their rulers; nor to purify their genealogies by concealing the lapses of their ancestors. The genealogy of David through Tamar and Ruth is a case in point.

But, although the essential features of the narrative have, on the face of them, the appearance of truth, the miracles will not stand scrutiny. No story is considered too marvellous to be used, if it exalt the powers and grandeur (as they thought) of their God. Their ideal of the Almighty must have been a peculiar one. Whenever any special butchery was contemplated, the commands of Jehovah were invoked as a reason for the crime. Mercy was a quality unknown; the innocent and the guilty shared alike; there was, as a rule, no quarter; women and children, the aged and the sick, were ruthlessly massacred whenever it suited their purpose.

This habit of bringing in their deity to give sanction to every inhuman transaction was not confined to the Israelites. On the Moabite stone, a cast of which is in the British Museum, there is an inscription describing a war with the Israelites. The Moabite deity (Chemosh) is brought in much in the same manner as Jehovah in the Old Testament story. Substitute "Jehovah" for "Chemosh" in this inscription, and it would read as a portion of Israelitish history.

It is the custom to speak of the cruelties of the Israelites in a tolerant way: "The times were different"; "we must not judge by our present

standards"; and so forth. But this line of reasoning will hardly bear investigation when it is remembered from whence the children of Israel came. Egypt was, at the time of the Exodus, in a state of civilisation. It was not in Goschen that they learnt to conduct their wars with the savagery which the compiler of the Pentateuch takes such pride in recording.

The slaughter of the Midianites has already been alluded to. It was not till under the leadership of Joshua, and after passing the Jordan, that the blood-thirsty instincts of the people found full vent. Beginning with the siege of Jericho, which city fell through the treachery of Rahab, a harlot, the record states that "the city shall be devoted, even it and all that is therein, to the Lord (Jo. vi. 17).....and they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, both young and old.....and they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein.....so the Lord was with Joshua; and his fame was in all the land." At the taking of Ai, which Joshua captured by a clever ruse and ambush, 12,000 men, women, and children were slaughtered, and the king hanged. We come next to the defeat of the Amorites, where God is represented as actually taking part in the combat. "The Lord cast down great stones from Heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died" (Jo. x. 11): the historian is careful to add "they were more which died with the hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword."

During this battle it is asserted that the earth ceased to revolve upon its axis (see verse 13): "And the sun stayed in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened

unto the voice of a man : for the Lord fought for Israel." Observe, there is no mistake about what the historian means. No explanation of a long twilight, an unusually clear atmosphere, or any other natural phenomenon will avail ; for we read :—

“ And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies.

“ Is not this written in the book of Jashar ? ”

The moon as well as the sun was apparently arrested : the earth must have ceased to revolve !

We do not know much about the all-convincing book of Jashar ; but we do know that severe consequences would result if the earth ceased to revolve upon its axis. Let us hope that there is as little foundation for the atrocities of the Israelites as there is for this legend !

A short time afterwards the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon were put to death in cold blood. This was followed by the wholesale massacre of the inhabitants of Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir. The chronicler exults (Jo. x. 40) that Joshua “ utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord, the God of Israel, commanded.” More butchery followed in Kadesh-barnea, Goschen, Merom, and Hazor. Finally, we are told : “ For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, to come against Israel in battle, that he might utterly destroy them as the Lord commanded Moses.”

The condition of mind which sees the hand of God in the annexation of a rich country and in the extermination of its inhabitants was not confined to the historian of the Israelitish victories. It has reappeared since many times, and may be said to have existed to the present day.

Some considerable time was occupied by the children of Israel in settling those parts of the country which they had so effectually cleared ; and it was not till after the death of Joshua that hostilities recommenced. The tribes of Judah and Simeon defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites (Judges i.) ; and, having made Adoni-bezek prisoner, cut off his thumbs and his great toes. Adoni-bezek is said to have approved of his own mutilation on the ground that he had done the same thing to seventy other kings ; but there is an air of improbability about this part of the narrative. The assassination of the king of Moab by Ehud is suggestive of certain anarchist ventures of the present day (Judges iii. 20) ; but the defeat of the Moabitish army was not attended by the usual massacres of women and children.

The exploit of Shamgar (Judges iii. 31) as a story, does not strengthen belief in the strictly historical accuracy of the book ; but it is consistent with the usual tone of all the writings which refer to the chosen people that Jael should be made the heroine of Deborah's poem because she had treacherously murdered Sisera under the guise of hospitality :—

“ Blessed above women shall Jael be,
 The wife of Heber the Kenite,
 Blessed shall she be above women in the tent.
 He asked water and she gave him milk ;
 She brought him butter in a lordly dish.
 She put her hand to the nail,
 And her right hand to the workman's hammer ;
 And with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote
 through his head ;
 Yea, she pierced and struck through his temples.
 At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay :
 At her feet he bowed, he fell ;
 Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.”

The massacre of the seventy sons of Jerubbaal by their brother Abimelech (Judges ix. 5) and the burning of 1,000 men and women in the tower of Shechem by the same (Judges ix. 49) are examples of the atrocities committed in those days. This time it is not said that these acts were performed by command of God; but they indicate the standard which prevailed and the savage character of the people. The murder of his daughter by Jephthah (Judges xi. 30) is not a bad instance of their ignorant and superstitious fanaticism.

In the book of Judges Jehovah is not so often invoked as in the book of Joshua, but similar ferocities occur. For a petty quarrel 42,000 of the tribe of Ephraim are killed in a civil war. The manner of distinguishing the members of this tribe for slaughter was quaint. If they left out the first "h" in the word shibboleth, they were immediately put to death. The story of Samson, in some of its features, is not unlike that of Hercules; it would appear as if the compiler of the book of Judges has drawn from mythological and classic sources. Samson was a most unsuitable judge. There is not a single incident in his life which tends to show that he had a special share of Divine support, or even that he sought it. Yet he appeals to the Deity with a certain amount of familiarity at the time of his humiliation, after his eyes have been put out, and is thus able to pull down the house upon himself and his enemies. His life was a loose one; and his general behaviour, especially towards the people of Ashkelon and towards his wife, was not such as might be expected from a ruler and administrator of the law, or from one whose birth was ushered in with special indications of Divine favour.

The lawless condition of the country after its occupation by the Israelites is instanced by the raid upon the city of Laish by the Danites (Judges xviii. 27). A people "quiet and secure" were attacked simply because their land was wanted, and "smitten with the edge of the sword; and they burnt the city with fire." It is a sign of better days that this brigandage is not attributed to commands of the Almighty. But in the next chapter, after the incident of the Sodomite sons of Belial and the Levite and his concubine, God commands an attack on the tribe of Benjamin by the other tribes of Israel. Israel is at first defeated, but afterwards gains the victory. In this bloody civil war 50,100 Benjamites and 40,000 Israelites (all fighting men) are said to have fallen; and the historian leads us to suppose that the greater portion of, if not all, the unmarried women of the tribe of Benjamin were massacred. In order to provide wives for the men of Benjamin who survived the conflict, 12,000 men of Israel were sent to Jabesh-gilead with these orders: "Ye shall utterly destroy every male and every woman that hath lien by man." Four hundred young virgins were captured, and handed over to the wifeless Benjamites, who were also allowed to lay in wait and seize the young women who came to the feast of the Lord in Shiloh. With this characteristic incident the book of Judges comes to an end.

Passing by the book of Ruth for the present, as it has only an indirect interest in our study of Jewish history, the next records are the books of Samuel, which contain perhaps the most interesting portion of the Israelitish archives. Their principal features are the lives of Saul and David. The life of David is related in great detail, and probably we are told every-

thing which is worth knowing respecting the great national hero. We can trace him from his innocent boyhood, through his chequered manhood and miserable old age, to his death. Musician, poet, warrior, and king, he was without an equal in Jewish history. Yet his crimes were many. It is said that, "except in the matter of Uriah, David walked in the sight of the Lord"; but his treatment of Nabal, whose wife he coveted, would not bear close inspection; nor would the sacrifice of his seven nephews; nor, indeed, his intentions to his host Achish.

Credulity is strained to the utmost when we read the twenty-first chapter of the second book of Samuel. Saul, it appears, had been exercised in his mind over the disobedience of Israel and Judah to the commands of Jehovah, in leaving alive any of the native inhabitants; and had endeavoured to appease the Almighty wrath by pursuing the remnant of the Ammorites (now called Gibeonites), many of whom he had killed. This act we should have supposed would have been acceptable. Not at all! David inquires of the Lord about the famine, and the Lord said: "It is for Saul and for his bloody house, because he put to death the Gibeonites." Acting upon this hint, David approaches the Gibeonites and asks: "What shall I do for you, and wherewith shall I make atonement?" The Gibeonites, nothing loth, ask for seven men of Saul's house—his grandsons, in fact—who were at once handed over, and promptly hanged. The touching incident of Rizpah, the mother of two of the victims, carefully guarding the bodies, where they hung, from the wild beasts and the birds, day and night for months, has been the theme of many a painting and many a poem.

When the Philistine king set out to attack Saul, David and his small army were with the rearguard. It was obvious that he was not contemplating an attack on the "Lord's Anointed." He started on the expedition willingly. Whom did he intend to attack? Apparently, his design was to fall upon the Philistine army in the rear during the impending battle. If this was not his idea, it is difficult to understand why he accompanied Achish, for he could not have remained inactive. That such an act of treachery was suspected by the Philistine princes is clear from their remonstrance to Achish, which led to his polite expulsion from the army. On his return to Ziklag, he finds that his wives and retainers had been carried off by an enemy, and, on consulting his fetish, learns, or pretends to learn, the direction in which they have gone. Then follows the account of one of those expeditions which stamp David in history as a chief of such splendid resource. Though one-third of his force broke down in the chase, he recovers his wives and property and signally defeats his enemy; returning in triumph, to learn the fate of Saul and Jonathan, and to assume the reins in Judah. Some ten years after he had established his authority in Judah, and had also become king over Israel, he is guilty of the crime which stained his career. Uriah, a valiant member of the conquered tribe of Hittites, was one of the thirty mighty warriors, fighting in his cause at the siege of Rabbah. His wife was at Jerusalem, and came under the notice of the king, who seduced her. Fearing for the consequences of his action—even in those days, and considering all the circumstances of the case, a mean and treacherous one as against one of his principal generals—he sent for Uriah, ostensibly

to give him news of how matters were going on at the front. On his arrival, he endeavoured to persuade him to go to his home and rest while he was preparing his despatch to Joab. Uriah, who, doubtless, had been made aware on his arrival of the state of affairs between the king and his wife, declined with true diplomacy. "The Ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in booths; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open field; shall I then go into my house to eat and to drink?" David, finding it impossible to persuade Uriah, sober, to visit his wife, invited him to dinner and made him drunk, hoping that he would wander home after the entertainment. In this he was again disappointed, as Uriah "at even went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord." Then, and not till then, did David determine upon the crime of murder. He had exhausted all other means of escaping from the consequences of his treachery; he perceived that Uriah had divined his secret, and had carefully avoided the only means of extricating him from detection; and "it came to pass in the morning" (that is, the morning of the third day of Uriah's visit to the capital) "that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. 'Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him that he may be smitten and die.'" It would be difficult to find in history a blacker case of ingratitude and treachery, when the distinguished services of the victim are taken into account.

Joab, with his usual cunning, made use of the welcome news of the death of Uriah to propitiate David when he was obliged to announce his next defeat. The messenger was carefully instructed where

to bring in the interesting item of information concerning Uriah's death (2 Samuel xi. 21); all went off well, for David said unto the messenger: "Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing [that is, his defeat with heavy loss] displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it." Bathsheba is allowed a decent interval for mourning, and then became David's wife. Nathan, in his indictment, dwells less upon the first offence committed in the heat of passion than upon the premeditated murder and marriage of the king: he then exercises his gift of second sight, and foretells the evils which will fall upon his house.

As years roll on the children of David grow up, apparently without any guidance whatever. Never was there such an unhappy family. Tamar is the victim of a foul crime committed by her half-brother Amnon, who is killed in revenge by her own brother Absalom. Absalom rebels against his father and defiles his household; and the king is placed in the extremely humiliating position of having to flee before his son, who, however, is eventually defeated, and slain by Joab with his own hand. From this moment, Joab (his first cousin, and for many years his commander-in-chief) is regarded by the king with abhorrence. David does not appear to have any particular gratitude for his long and faithful services. He makes no sign at the time, and it is only on his death-bed that his long-concealed resentment blazes forth, and he gives directions for him to be assassinated. Joab's manner of conducting his duties was not altogether free from the mistakes to which those who wield high power are most liable; but, whatever

errors he made, he had served David for thirty-five years with the greatest loyalty, and his assassination (the reasons given by his master are evidently after-thoughts; the death of Absalom was the real offence) casts a black light upon the last hours of the king. It is so apparent that he would have caused the death of Joab long before if it could have been contrived without risk to himself. His charge to Solomon with reference to Shimei was also quite unworthy of so great a man.

It is poor work, dwelling upon the weaknesses and crimes of this fascinating soldier; but it is necessary to mention the above facts on account of the very exalted pinnacle upon which he has been placed in the Jewish Canon. Through him, and no other son of Judah, was the Messiah to come. The contradictory genealogies in the Gospels agree in this, that Jesus Christ was a descendant from this unholy union. Solomon was the tenth legitimate son of David, and the fourth by Bathsheba; Nathan was ninth son, and third by Bathsheba. So much from 1 Chron. iii.; but from 2 Samuel xii. 24 it would appear that Solomon was his second son by Bathsheba. It seems probable that Nathan was the second by Bathsheba, and that he was named after the prophet. Solomon probably was third by Bathsheba, and ninth of the nineteen legitimate sons.

In *Guesses at the Riddle of Existence* (p. 71) Professor Goldwin Smith thus justly sums up the character of David: "David is loyal, chivalrous, ardent in friendship, and combines with adventurous valour the tenderness which has led to our accepting him as the writer of some of the Psalms. So far, he is an object of our admiration, due allowance for time and

circumstances being made. But he is guilty of murder and adultery, both in the first degree; he puts to death with hideous tortures the people of a captured city; on his death-bed he bequeaths to his son a murderous legacy of vengeance; he exemplifies, by his treatment of his ten concubines whom he shuts up for life, the most cruel evils of polygamy (2 Samuel xx. 3). The man after God's own heart he might be deemed by a primitive priesthood to whose divinity he was always true; but it is hardly possible that he should be so deemed by a moral civilisation. Still less possible is it that we should imagine the issues of spiritual life to be so shut up that from this man's loins salvation would be bound to spring."

The books of Kings and Chronicles teem with revolting incidents, recorded generally as having been performed at the command of God. They open with the murder of Adonijah, his elder brother, by Solomon; and the carrying out to the letter of the intentions of David respecting Joab and Shimei. There was then (and it was high time) a long period of peace. Solomon built the Temple, the plans and materials for which were prepared by his father. His wisdom is much extolled by the biographer; but at least one of the instances given, of his unusual acuteness, is very similar to an Indian story. In Mr. Edward Clodd's *A Sketch of Jewish History to the Birth of Christ* there is a quotation from Denny's *Folk-lore of China*, which bears a striking resemblance to the narrative in the Old Testament of the two women and the child:—

"A woman came with her infant to a pool, in order to bathe, and, leaving him on the bank, went down into the water. As soon as she had done so, a wicked woman, seeing the child and wishing to have it, said,

'Friend, is this pretty baby yours? May I nurse it?' The mother replied, 'Why not?' Upon which the evil-hearted woman took the infant, and, after nursing him a little while, ran off with him. The mother pursued, screaming for her child, while the false woman boldly cried, 'When didst thou own a child? It is mine.' While the quarrel went on, they came near the Buddha's hall, and he, hearing the noise, asked what was the matter. Being told this, he said: 'Will you abide by my judgment?' to which they both agreed. He then had a line drawn on the ground, and the child laid upon it, and, telling the false mother to seize its arms, and the real mother its legs, said, 'He shall be the son of her who pulls him over the line.' The wicked woman agreed, for she was the stronger; but the mother, seeing that the child must suffer pain, said, weeping, 'Let her take the boy; I cannot bear to see him hurt.' Then the Buddha asked of those who stood around, 'Whose hearts are tender to the children?' They replied, 'O, Pandit, mothers' hearts are tender!' Then he said, 'Which think you is the mother?' and all answered, 'She who let it go is its mother.' He then restored the child to her, and sent her glad-hearted away."

Solomon, according to his own account, enjoyed many conversations with God; but when a little more than half his reign was over, he took to evil courses, and was much worried by his enemies, especially by Hadad, a relative by marriage of his wife. He appears, however, to have died in his bed, without having suffered any serious reverses or loss of territory. There is reason to suppose that both the disputed "Ecclesiastes" and the "Canticles" were written by Solomon. The former is quite the sort of

essay which might be expected of what is told of his character; and, as to the latter, it is difficult to account for its incorporation in the Canon if ancient tradition did not recognise him as the author. The various attempts which have been made to identify this poetical love lyric with the ethical doctrine of the union of the Almighty with His chosen people, or Christ with His Church, are strange indeed; and would, perhaps, be amusing if they were not slightly blasphemous.

In the loose manner which distinguishes many of the records in the Canon, we are informed that the life of Solomon was written by Nathan the prophet, who must have died at least twenty years before him. Nothing is heard of Nathan after the accession of Solomon. It is not likely that he was younger than David.

After Solomon's death the storm burst. Owing to Rehoboam's injudicious conduct when he ascended the throne, at the age of forty-one, Israel revolted; and the kingdom, united by the genius of his grandfather, was again divided, Jeroboam becoming king over Israel. Wars broke out frequently at this time between Israel and Judah, during one of which 500,000 men of Israel were slain; and there were also raids from Egypt. Israel was also internally dis-united; savage fights appear to have been of monthly occurrence. But the next incidents of a particularly sanguinary character are the murder of Baasha and all his family and friends by Zimri (who himself only reigned seven days), the massacre of the prophets of Baal, and of Ahab's seventy sons. A very singular incident in the narrative is the support alleged to be given by God to the idolater and renegade Ahab when

attacked by Ben-hadad, the drunken king of Syria. No less than 100,000 Syrians are said to have been killed in one battle, and 27,000 shortly afterwards in the city of Aphek, to say nothing of the first encounter in the hills. So sanguinary is the life at this time that the historian makes it a point that, after the death of Naboth the Jezreelite, who was stoned to death after a mock trial, "they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel." Ahab, after playing an exceptionally mean trick on his ally Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, is shot by accident in a battle with the Syrians near Ramoth-gilead, and is succeeded by his son Ahaziah, whose reign is chiefly remarkable for quarrels with Elijah, whose ascension to heaven in a chariot of fire is said to have occurred about this time. Ahaziah reigned two years, and Joram, his brother, came to the throne of Israel in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. He is called Jehoram in chapter iii. of the second Book of Kings, but his name is afterwards abbreviated, probably to distinguish him from the son of Jehoshaphat, whose name was the same, and who reigned in Judah during a part of his time.

It was during the reign of Joram, and while Jehoshaphat was still king of Judah, that the joint expedition was made by the two kings, and the king of Edom, against Mesha, king of Moab. There are two accounts of this campaign—one in the Old Testament, and one on the Moabite stone, a cast of which is in the British Museum. It is supposed by some learned people that the inscription on the stone refers to a previous war in the time of Ahab; but it is extremely improbable that Mesha would be paying tribute of the wool of an hundred thousand lambs and

an hundred thousand rams either to Ahab, Ahaziah, or Joram, if, as the stone relates, he had defeated Ahab and "laid waste Israel for ever." The Bible narrative breaks off at a significant point (2 Kings iii. 27) with the announcement that "there was great wrath against Israel; and they departed from him [*i.e.*, Moab] and returned to their own land." The inscription, from which the following is an extract, is probably a description of what happened when "there was great wrath against Israel":—

"Omri took possession of the land of Medeba and he dwelt therein in his own days and somehow in the days of his son, even forty years. But in my time Chemosh gave back the land unto me. Then did I build Baal-Meon, and I made.....and I built Kiryathayim. The people of Gad had dwelt in the land of Ataroth from days of old; and the king of Israel built the city of Ataroth. I assaulted the city and I took it, and I slew all the people thereof in the sight of Chemosh and Moab; and I carried away the *Ariel* of David, and I dragged it on the ground before the face of Chemosh at Kerioth. And I carried away the people of Saron and the people of.....And Chemosh said unto me, 'Go, carry Nebo over Israel.' And I went up by night, and I fought against the city from dawn even until noon, and I took it, and I slew every man, even seven thousand men, and children, and women, and maidens, and slaves, and I dedicated them unto Ishtar-Chemosh. And I carried away from them the *Ariels* of Jehovah, and I dragged them on the ground before the face of Chemosh. And the king of Israel built Yahas and dwelt therein after that he had fought against me; but Chemosh drove him forth before me."

All this may refer to a turn in the fortunes of war after the sacrifice of the king of Moab's eldest son on the wall ; it certainly did not occur in the time of Ahab, or there would be no talk of tribute in the time of Joram, his son. In any case, it is extremely interesting, as showing the view taken of the Chosen People by a contemporary, who speaks of the Israelitish "Jehovah" as an inferior God to his own "Chemosh," whose protection and guidance he invokes, just as his enemies (when it suited them) appealed to their deity.

It was during the reigns of Joram in Israel and Jehoram and Ahaziah in Judah that Elisha lived and performed most of his miracles. The historian exults in describing his marvellous powers. The people of Israel were hard pressed by the Syrians ; constant fights were going on ; and at one time, during the siege of Samaria, food was so scarce that cannibalism was resorted to (2 Kings vi. 29). Elisha is the prominent figure through all. After the war between Hazael and Joram, he determines that a change of rulers is necessary, and stirs up Jehu to head a revolution, which proves to be successful. The reasons for the choice of Jehu are not very obvious ; but he certainly carried out his alleged mission, which was to exterminate the House of Ahab. Amongst the most sanguinary incidents of a Book, teeming with narratives of savagery and crime of every description, is the butchery of the seventy sons of Ahab. The work of Jehu is well summed up by Professor Goldwin Smith as follows :—

“Jehu, a usurper, begins by murdering Joram, the son of his master Ahab, king of Israel, and Ahaziah king of Judah, neither of whom had done him any

wrong. He then has Jezebel, Ahab's widow, killed by her own servants. Next he suborns the guardians and tutors of Ahab's seventy sons in Samaria to murder the children committed to their care and send the seventy heads to him in baskets to be piled at the gate of the city. Then he butchers the brethren of Ahaziah, king of Judah, with whom he falls in on the road, two and forty in number, for no specified or apparent crime. On his arrival at Samaria there is more butchery. Finally he entraps all the worshippers of Baal by an invitation to a solemn assembly, and massacres them to a man. At the end of this series of atrocities the Lord is made to say to him, 'Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes and hast done unto the house of Ahab all that was in my heart, thy children unto the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.' Jehu had undoubtedly done what was in the heart of the Jehovist party and right in its eyes. But between the sensuality of the Baalite and the sanguinary zealotry of the Jehovist it might not have been very easy to choose."

With reference to the Divine blessing bestowed upon Jehu for his murders in Jezreel, the following passage in "Hosea" is interesting: "So he went, and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; and she conceived, and bare him a son. And the Lord said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu....." (Hosea i. 3). The biographer of Jehu and the writer of Hosea evidently took a different view of this bloody revolution in Samaria. But yet the anxious reader of the Bible is told "The Bible is none other than the *Voice of Him that sitteth upon the*

Throne.....every letter of it is the direct utterance of the Most High."

The record of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, after the murder by Jehu of Joram and Ahaziah, is a confused narrative of wars, assassinations, foreign intervention, and idolatry, terminating with the removal of both nations, and their captivity, by the kings of Assyria and Babylon. Elisha died in Samaria in the time of Joash, his last act being to advise the king, who sought his help when the prophet was on his death-bed; and his last prophecy—to foretell the triple defeat of the Syrians by Israel. When not fighting Moab, Edom, or Syria, the intervals were filled in by Israel and Judah making war upon each other. Such an incident was the campaign undertaken by Joash (2 Kings xiv. 8) when he had received what he considered a challenge from Amaziah. Amaziah was defeated at Bethshemesh and made prisoner. Joash proceeded to pull down 400 cubits of the wall of Jerusalem, and to sack the temple—an act of sacrilege which is extraordinary when it is considered how recently he had invoked the assistance of God in his war against the Syrians.

Jeroboam succeeded Joash in Samaria, and reigned forty-one years; but his son Zechariah had only been on the throne six months when he was assassinated by Shallum. Shallum's reign lasted only one month: he was murdered by Menahem, who reigned ten years, and who was guilty of the atrocity at Tipshah—"all the women therein that were with child he ripped up" (2 Kings xv. 16). It was at this period that the first serious attack of the Assyrians was made. Pekahiah, the son of Menahem, sat on the throne for two years, when he was slain by one of his captains,

Pekah, who usurped the throne for twenty years, but was, in his turn, murdered by Hoshea. In Hoshea's time Israel was carried away into Assyria.

Reverting to Judah: After the murder of Ahaziah by Jehu, Athaliah, his mother, proceeded to destroy all the "seed royal" (2 Kings xi. 1), but missed little Joash, a son of Ahaziah, who was secreted by his aunt Jehosheba. Athaliah was killed by Jehoiada the priest, and Joash placed upon the throne at the age of seven. He reigned forty years, and was eventually killed by his servants, after taking the hallowed things from the house of the Lord to pay ransom to Hazael, king of Syria. Amaziah, his son, who reigned twenty-nine years, was the victim of a conspiracy, and was murdered at Lachish, being succeeded by Uzziah, his son, who was a leper, but who reigned for no less than fifty-two years. Very little is told of Jotham, the next king. The reign of Ahaz is chiefly remarkable for his seeking the assistance of Tiglath-pileser against the combined forces of Israel and Syria, and for his stripping the Temple to pay for his services. It is singular that, at this juncture, the prophet Isaiah is not mentioned in Kings or Chronicles. He was called in by Ahaz, and gave him the best advice, telling him that in a few years, "before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good" (say six years), "the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken" (Isaiah vii. 16). This prophecy, upon which so much has been built by Christian priests, is alluded to in other chapters.

Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, reigned twenty-nine years; and it was a time full of incident. During this period Israel was carried off into Assyria by Shalmanezzer; and Judah was hard pressed by

Sennacherib: Isaiah procures Divine intervention, and the army of 185,000 Assyrians is said to have been destroyed by an angel of the Lord (2 Kings xix. 35). But the evil day of Judah is only postponed for a short time. Berodach-baladan, king of Babylon, sends spies to Jerusalem, and they are foolishly entertained by Hezekiah. On hearing of this folly, Isaiah visits the king and foretells to him the future captivity of Judah, which prophecy Hezekiah listens to with philosophy: "Good is the word which thou hast spoken.....is it not so, if peace and truth shall be in my days?"

Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, was twelve years old when he succeeded his father, and he reigned fifty-five years. His rule was bad in every way. In the middle of this long period, it is said that he was carried into Babylon, but after a time was released and allowed to return to Jerusalem. Amon, his son, reigned two years, and was followed by Josiah, who came to the throne at the age of eight, and reigned thirty-one years (2 Kings xxii.). It was in Josiah's time that the "Book of the Law" was found in the Temple. Dr. Colenso is of opinion that this was the Book of Deuteronomy, and that it was written about that time by Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, the high priest, who produced it at an opportune moment for the edification of a king whom he knew would respectfully receive it and propagate it amongst the people.

Josiah was slain at Megiddo when fighting Pharaoh-necoh as an ally of the king of Assyria, and was succeeded by Jehoahaz, who only reigned three months, as he was taken prisoner by Pharaoh-necoh, who put his brother Eliakim on the throne of Judah and changed his name to Jehoiachim. Jehoiachim had a

very troubled reign of eleven years, during which period he fought against Nebuchadnezzar, the Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites, and the children of Ammon. He was followed by his son Jehoiachin, who, after a brief reign of three months, was carried away by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon, together with ten thousand of the cream of his people. According to Chronicles, he was eight years old when he began to reign, "and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord" (poor little man!). Even if, as stated in Kings, he was eighteen, he could not have done much harm in three months. Mattaniah, his uncle, was put in his place, his name being changed to Zedekiah. But again the Babylonians attacked Judah, destroyed Jerusalem, and carried off the puppet king and what remained of the fighting men, leaving only the "poorest of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen": over them Nebuchadnezzar appointed a governor (2 Kings xv. 22). The Books of the Kings end with the murder of Gedaliah, the first governor, and the news of great improvement in the position of the captive Jehoiachin when Evil-merodach succeeded Nebuchadnezzar.

Thus came to an end the nations of Israel and Judah, as separate States. Modern readers may be excused if they close their perusal of the narrative with the fervent hope that they have heard the last of them, and that they do not emerge from the captivity which they so justly deserved. Erase from the Books the frequent expressions, "The Lord said unto Moses," "The Lord said unto Joshua," etc., etc., and nothing is left but sordid scenes of ignorant superstition, stupid brutality, treachery, proofs in plenty of the debasement of women, and of unnatural crimes. The theory

promulgated by the Church is that the history of the Israelites is sacred and instructive as teaching the worship of the one true God; and that this people held together and prospered on account of this monotheism. The idea is fallacious.

It is true that their first chiefs did all that lay in their power to instil into them the belief in Jehovah; but they were not attentive pupils. Their history shows how frequently they lapsed into idolatry, and how easily they adopted the gods of the various nations with which they came into contact.

A few of their kings and all their prophets had lofty ideas of Jehovah; but to the majority He was little grander than Chemosh. The records teem with mythological stories (some of which have been taken from other nations), with inaccuracies and contradictions. It cannot be truthfully said that any valuable moral lessons are to be learnt from them; and, for many reasons, they are unfit to be put into the hands of anyone of tender years. If the history of the Israelites had never been written, or if the fragments we have had not been saved from destruction, the world to-day would not have been one whit less civilised, nor further from a proper estimate of the Ruler of the Universe.

The criticism which may possibly be levelled against the foregoing pages by some laymen will be, "This is flogging a dead horse. No one believes now in the infallibility of the Old Testament so far as regards the history of Israel, nor that the Pentateuch contains any other special doctrine than that of the one true God." Wait! On May 22nd, 1901 (not so very long ago), the

Rev. G. S. Streatfeild, Vicar of Christ Church, Hampstead, read a paper at the Southport Conference on "Questions that must be faced; or, Evangelicalism and Modern Thought." Mr. Streatfeild, in this address, made a wholesome, honest endeavour to battle with the intolerant, conservative attitude on the part of Evangelicals, which he saw was doing harm to the Church and to the beliefs of the young generation. He is not what could be called a "Broad Churchman," but he conceded that "the fact of evolution is now hardly questioned in the scientific world, one might almost say in the world of thought"....."it is, I suppose, generally agreed that the evolutionist has worthier, more rational, more truly philosophical views of the Divine Will and action than those who hold to the traditional theory, and that we have greatly gained by exchanging a mechanical for an organic view of the universe. Moreover, it is the Christian evolutionist who has brought back to the world of thought the great and beautiful and illuminating truth of the Divine immanence in Nature."....."The only readjustment of thought involved, so far as I know, is in regard to the Fall of man and the doctrine of original sin....." After pointing out that it was the duty of the elder clergy to approach the questions raised by new discoveries with an open mind, and to apply them to the exegesis of the Bible, if they were satisfied of their truth, Mr. Streatfeild goes on to say: "Absolute silence will prove in the long run suicidal, because, whilst we hold our peace, the world with which we have as God's ministers to deal is carried away from us on the stream of thought."....."Has this condition of things any bearing on the lack of candidates for the Evangelical ministry, which we all so much

deplore? The same question might perhaps be asked in regard to Sunday-school teachers of intelligence and the dwindling attendance of men in the House of God."

Could any propositions be more reasonable than those contained in Mr. Streatfeild's paper? And how were they received? For answer, we refer those who are interested in the subject to copies of the *Record* of June and July, 1901. Canon Garratt, and nearly every rector who contributed to the correspondence, opposed Mr. Streatfeild. Canon Girdlestone added his voice to that of the lecturer in so far that he desired that evolution should not be ignored, but he more than hinted that inquiry would not upset the existing evangelical view of the Bible. He wrote: "When Science has spoken its last word, there is strong reason for believing that it will harmonise with the true interpretation of the first page of the Bible." This gentleman appears to believe in the "Fall" as related.

The Rev. Thomas Richardson, Vicar of St. Bennet's, Stepney, made this remarkable statement: "Yes, I have lived to see Darwin practically set aside on Evolution, and am inclined to think that his work on 'Worms' will outlive his work on 'Evolution.'"

Of course, the reverend gentlemen who took part in this discussion belong to one section of the Church. They do not represent the majority of the clergy of the Church of England. Nevertheless, they are responsible, in the aggregate, for superintending the instruction of thousands of children—our future citizens—and they are, therefore, a power in the State. There is one question we should like to ask those who found fault with Mr. Streatfeild's address:

Have they ever heard or read anything of the history of the human egg from the time of the foundation of the first cell to the time the child is ready to come into the world? If not, let them seize the next opportunity that their medical man comes to the house, and have five minutes' conversation with him on the subject. He will tell them that the history of the human egg is literally the history of evolution as it was propounded in 1859 by the greatest of modern philosophers, and he will also tell them that this fact was not really established until after his death.

To revert to the difficulty of accepting the history of the Jews as in any sense sacred—there are stories of such fiendish injustice that it would be impious to suppose for a minute that they were true. Such an one is related in 2 Kings ii. 23, "and as he" [that is, Elisha] "was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head. And he looked behind him and saw them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she-bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them." In December, 1898, the Rev. Alexander Harrison, of the "Christian Evidence Mission," gave a series of lectures in the town hall of Portsmouth on Bible difficulties, which were well attended by dockyard artisans and their wives. One lecture, delivered on December 8th, was on "Old Testament Difficulties." The speaker's discourse, which lasted for an hour by the clock, was most eloquent. The peroration was accompanied by repeated blows on his shirt front, to emphasise his convictions. "Here!" (smack) "Here! my dear friends" (another smack), "I feel it is true," and so forth; and, as he

sat down, strict to time, there was a storm of applause. The chairman, Dr. Jacob (now Bishop of St. Albans), then asked if there was anyone in the hall who would like to ask the lecturer any question on what seemed to him to be difficulties; if so, would he kindly come up on the platform? At this a dockyard matey arose, and, amid the subdued applause of the occupants of the surrounding benches, slowly marched up the hall, ascended the steps, and was welcomed by the chairman. He then turned to Mr. Harrison and shook hands with him in the manner of a prize-fighter who wishes to show goodwill to his opponent before a combat. Then he struck an attitude and spoke as follows: "Now, Sir, I wants to arsk you" (then wheeling round for half a minute to face the body of the audience), "and you mothers in this 'all, listen to what I'm going to say" (with emphasis); then facing the lecturer and speaking earnestly and distinctly, "Do *you* believe that a just and merciful gawd would set on bears to tear forty-two little children just because they chaffed an old man with no 'air on his 'ead?" There was a shout of laughter from the thousand and odd people in the hall, in which the chairman and the lecturer could not help joining. Another artisan asked Mr. Harrison's opinion on the "Song of Solomon," adding that, in his opinion, it was a "love ditty pure and simple." Both these men were in earnest, and did not intend to be flippant: their difficulties were, to them, very real. The lecturer endeavoured to reply to the questions; but his explanations were nebulous and unsatisfactory. No "Christian Evidence Meetings" have since been held in Portsmouth.

But the point is this. These questions were not

irrelevant; both, indeed, were very rational. Can any minister, or layman, answer them in a sense which is consistent with the doctrine that the Old Testament Canon is written by the Will of God? And, if not, why should we suppose that any other part of the Canon is promulgated by an express mandate from on High? The wrestling of Jacob with the angel, the conversation between Balaam and his donkey, the story of Jonah and the whale, the moon standing still, to say nothing of the many other extraordinary episodes related in the Canon, but foreign to ordinary experience, all require explanation. The onus of proof rests with our ministers who say they are true, and not with those who decline to believe them. The argument that is so widely promulgated from the pulpit and by the press, that if the Eternal Spirit had not endorsed the writings in the Canons they would not have lived to this day, shows appalling ignorance. Are not the sacred books of the East still in existence? And do Christian ministers mean to declare that the preservation of these writings is a proof of their Divine origin?

Many writers of distinction have extolled the Book of Ruth. To our judgment it is interesting indeed as giving a candid view of the debasement of women in those times; but there is no moral to be derived from it, any more than from the Book of Esther. Ruth's conduct in following Naomi is worthy of praise, as is also the just, self-respecting character of Boaz; but what is to be said of Naomi for trying to induce the widowed Moabitess to become the concubine of Boaz—a position which, even in the days of the Judges, was held in a certain amount of contempt? Boaz was too

honourable to take advantage of the alluring offer, and married his kinswoman. But, even remembering the times, there is nothing specially beautiful nor instructive in the story. Ruth schemed for a man to support her, Naomi schemed for Ruth's settlement in life—whether as wife or concubine she cared not. Ruth was an ancestress of Joseph (some say also of the Virgin Mary), and she was descended from a daughter of Lot.

Job is a book which has given rise to a great deal of discussion. All the Roman Catholic ministers and many hundreds of the Church of England, if asked "Do you believe that Job was a real personage, and that the book is a real history?" reply "Certainly! Does not Holy Scripture state 'There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil?' The Holy Scriptures do not lie. Job was a real person." This representation of the case is no legend. On February 16th, 1902, the present writer heard a sermon from the elderly curate of Portsmouth parish church. His text was from Job i. 6-8, and the subject was treated on the above lines. Job was a real person; Satan also: and the latter was represented as the author of all Evil. In the course of his sermon the curate enlarged upon the iniquities of the devil. "My brethren," he said, "look at the deceit of the father of lies; what did Satan say when the Lord inquired 'Whence comest thou?' Instead of confessing his evil practices, he replies: 'From going to and fro upon the earth, and from walking up and down in it.' Is there a hint here that he has been doing all the harm he can in

tempting the human race? No! He wishes the Almighty to believe that he has been innocently employed".....and so forth.

But, thanks to progress in education, the younger cultured clergy do not take this view. The present rector of Highfield gave a series of lectures on Job, also in 1902, in St. Jude's Church, Southsea. These lectures should have been printed. "The Book of Job," he said in effect, "is a beautiful poem evidently designed to give some sort of a key to the mystery of 'Pain.' Job was not a real person: the Adversary was not the father of lies, but one of God's angels deputed by the Almighty to test mankind. The book conveys, by means of a fictitious narrative, the same teaching as that found in the Gospel of St. John ix. 3: 'Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.'"

This, surely, is a reasonable view to take of the Book of Job. Imagine a man, even in the mild climate of Chaldea, sitting in a dust-bin, and scraping himself with a fragment of an earthenware pot, surrounded by three friends—all in silence—for seven days and seven nights. "So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great" (Job ii. 18). Imagine, further, these long-winded addresses from Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, each in itself a carefully polished poem; the equally poetical replies of Job; the long lecture by the younger visitor Elihu; finally, the restoration to Job of all his possessions: and observe that he is given seven sons and three daughters to recompense him for those he had lost, the assumption being that

it did not matter very much as long as the number was made up; and that they are thrown in, so to speak, amongst his blessings, after the thousand she-asses. Looked at as literal fact, we refuse to believe this story; but, as fiction, we can understand the moral which it is intended to convey.

The Prophets' writings are not particularly interesting except so far as their prognostications refer to the coming Messiah. Second sight was not confined to the prophets of Israel: there were plenty of Gentile prophets (Balaam is the best known in history); and this curious faculty of looking into the future exists in the present day. The prophecies of the Old Testament referred to by the writers of the New are alluded to in the next chapter. We propose here to make brief allusion only to those prophecies said to foretell the coming of a Messiah which are not specially claimed in the New Testament. Of these there are about ninety, according to the belief of the Church; but a careful reading of the whole chapter in each case shows that they do not refer to Jesus Christ. If one single verse is taken without the rest of the chapter to which it belongs, no doubt it is possible to put an interpretation upon it which makes it appear as if it were a prophecy of Christ. This is specially the case in the Psalms and Isaiah; but read the Psalms through, and it will be seen that the writers are not contemplating any future event so far ahead as the Church theory would imply. If we read through the seventh and ninth chapters of Isaiah, upon which, it may be said, the whole question of Messianic prophecy stands or falls, it is quite clear

that the prophet was talking all the time, and thinking all the time, of the existing trouble. To believe that these chapters contain predictions of a Messiah is to believe this: that, when he was in the presence of Ahaz, and while he was talking to him about the evil which threatened Jerusalem, Isaiah, two or three times, went into a fit or trance, made a prediction about something which was to happen in 700 years' time, then again became conscious of his surroundings, and took up the thread of his conversation where he had left off.

It is, of course, a matter of common belief that Isaiah had nothing to do with half the book which passes under his name. It is not the least likely that he wrote the beautiful fifty-third chapter, nor that he wrote of Cyrus by name (xliv. 28—xlv. 2). The compilation of the Book of Isaiah throws serious doubt upon the method adopted in compiling all the Canon. It is quite as likely as not that some of the most striking passages in the Prophets were introduced after the events took place.

It would be difficult to explain why Ecclesiastes is looked upon in any sense as the "Word of God," though it is, undoubtedly, a sensible work of philosophy, and has every appearance of having been written by Solomon. The "Song of Songs" is one of the most beautiful lyrics ever composed. It was probably written by Solomon, as it states in the first line. Who else could have written it? Who in those days had the poetic sense so finely developed? And finally, why otherwise should it be in the Canon? We know the profound veneration which the Jews felt for any composition of their great king. What he wrote was

a precious deposit, and would probably be incorporated in their sacred writings.

But has this poem any spiritual significance? All Roman Catholics and the majority of the ministers of the Church of England say that it has. They consider that it is indicative of the union of God with His chosen people, and a prophetic vision of the union to take place between Christ and His Church.

It is difficult to assent to this view, because the text is sensual and unnecessarily realistic. We wish to mention the following passages as examples, though they do not exhaust the list of those which might be named: Chap. i. 10-12; chap. ii. 5-7; chap. iii. 5, 10; chap. iv. 11-16; chap. v. 5, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15; chap. vi. 2, 8, 9, 13; chap. vii. the whole; chap. viii. 1-5 and 8. Assuming (as a distinguished layman wrote once for the edification of the present writer) that "frequently the figure of matrimony is made use of in the Old Testament to represent the relation of God to His people," is it not at least improbable that such passages as are alluded to above would be introduced into a sacred allegory?

The Book of Esther, though extremely interesting as contemporary history of the captivity, and no doubt much prized by the Jews, need not be discussed as "Holy Scripture." The Book of Jonah reads like a chapter of the *Thousand and One Nights*. The idea of a man existing three days and three nights in the belly of a fish, and, while in this confined space, composing an elaborate poem of supplication to the Almighty, is only to be classed with the productions of Arabic romance.

That period of Jewish history which falls between the Old and New Testaments, and which we have in a fragmentary form in the Apocrypha, is well told by Mr. M. Bramston in his book entitled *Judea and Her Rulers, from Nebuchadnezzar to Vespasian*. It is a most interesting work, none the less so because it is not interlarded with the frequent commands of God, which appear indispensable to the writers of the Canon. After the capture of Babylon (the eve of which is so graphically described by Daniel) Cyrus allowed the captives to return to Jerusalem. More than 42,000 of them took advantage of the permission, headed by Zerubbabel, the Tirshatha. After an interval of many years, the temple was rebuilt. Alexander the Great destroyed Babylon after the battle of Issus, 333 B.C., and the Jews became his subjects. Following his well-known policy of religious toleration, he spared Jerusalem, and allowed the people to continue their observances. But, after his untimely death, the Jews fell under the dominion of Egypt, and later under that of Antiochus the Great, King of Syria, who took Palestine from Ptolemy in 217 B.C. His son Antiochus Epiphanes, who succeeded him, suppressed the religion of the Jews, and this caused an insurrection, commenced by the brave Mattathias the Asmonean, and carried on after his death by his famous son Judas Maccabæus, who defeated the forces of Antiochus on several occasions, and died covered with glory in 161 B.C. His brothers who succeeded him in turn were not so fortunate as Judas; but a sort of independence was achieved, and John Hyrcanus the son of Simon, the fifth brother, had a long and prosperous reign, dying in the year 107 B.C., after being in power 28 years. The accessions of his sons one after another

were marked by various sanguinary episodes. Eventually a wily Idumean, by name Antipater, worked himself into power through the Romans, who had by this time conquered the country, and he eventually became procurator of Judæa under Cæsar about 45 B.C. His notorious son Herod succeeded his father in 37 B.C. Mr. Bramston thus describes him:—
“Herod’s character is one of the strangest in the range of history. On one side he seems more like a fiend than a man; on another, we see him capable of inspiring gratitude, affection, loyalty. He was at once capable of the most atrocious cruelty, and treachery, and of the most passionate affection; at the same time wily and impulsive, with an iron will and easily-stirred emotion, a lover of art and philosophy, a deep thinker, and a master of the art of building; one who had great impulses of beneficence and generosity, who bribed the Roman soldiers out of his own purse not to damage the public buildings of Jerusalem, and yet one who could be worked into the mood of a tiger by his wicked sister Salome, or his fiendish son Antipater. His character seems made up of contradictions, and it is difficult to realise the existence of such a man, though the minute details about him which we get through Josephus seem to leave us little doubt that the riddle actually existed.”

He married the beautiful Asmonean princess Mariamne, with whom he was, unquestionably, deeply in love. Had it not been for her intriguing mother Alexandra and for Herod’s sister Salome, who unfortunately lived with them, it is possible that they might have existed happily together, and that, through the influence of Mariamne, the Jews might have been wisely ruled. As it turned out, the name of Herod

the Great has been handed down to posterity covered with execrations. In the case of Christians, the horror of his name is largely due to his attempt to kill the Infant Christ; but the Jews had good reason to detest him, notwithstanding that he rebuilt the temple on a scale of great magnificence. He murdered his boy brother-in-law Aristobulus, and in 29 B.C. caused his wife to be executed. Long, deep, and bitter remorse followed this atrocious act, well described by Byron:—

“ She’s gone, who shared my diadem ;
 She sunk, with all my joys entombing ;
 I swept that flower from Judah’s stem,
 Whose leaves for me alone were blooming ;
 And mine’s the guilt, and mine the hell,
 This bosom’s desolation dooming ;
 And I have earn’d those tortures well,
 Which unconsumed are still consuming !”

The misunderstanding with his proud wife began with her discovery that he was responsible for the death of her brother, and that, on setting out to appear before Antony in Egypt, he had left orders for her to be put to death in the event of his not returning—in order that he should not lose her society in the next world. This is curious, as showing that hopes were entertained at that time of a future life of happiness very different to the old Sheol. But Mariamne, though she had been attached to Herod, and was not indisposed to join him in the realms of bliss—all in due time—much resented this summary method of forcing her premature departure from a world where she was still fairly comfortable. She is described as a haughty woman, who scorned to simulate affection or respect. An estrangement began on Herod’s return, and, being assisted by the plots of Salome, ended in her execution.

The deep remorse felt by Herod did not, however, prevent him from murdering his two sons by Mariamne, Alexander and Aristobulus, about 16 B.C. We are told in Matthew ii. that he ordered all the male children in Bethlehem that were under two years old to be slain. He had been suffering for some time from a painful internal complaint, and died shortly after this massacre. His eldest son (by Doris), Antipater, was executed, by his orders, five days before he died. "His last act," says Mr. Bramston, "was in keeping with the rest of his life. He summoned all the representatives of the nation to Jericho, and shut them up in the Hippodrome. He then called Salome and said: 'The Jews will rejoice when I am dead, but I mean to have mourning at my funeral. Do you send soldiers to the Hippodrome, and slay all these men as soon as I am dead, and every family will lament for me, whether they will or no.'"

After a trial of Archelaus (a son of Herod, by Malthace) as ethnarch, the Romans established direct authority in Judæa in 6 A.D. Shortly after his father's death, Herod Antipas (another son, by Cleopatra) was made tetrarch of Galilee. We hear a good deal about him in the gospels.

Eighteen hundred years had elapsed since Abraham's faith had been tested on Mount Moriah, and over one thousand since the plague had been stayed, and the land of Araunah the Jebusite had been dedicated to the worship of the one true God. Ever since, this spot had been of surpassing interest to the descendants of the patriarch. According to the prophets of the day,

Jehovah himself had rested upon it. It had seen three temples, two of which were of splendid magnificence. Battles had raged upon and around it. Taken and retaken many times, and sprinkled with the blood of millions of men, it was associated with all the struggles, all the hopes, and all the aspirations of the Jewish race. And what, after all these interminable wars, butcheries, and fights for supremacy, has been the fate of this focus of Hebrew worship? For the last 1,280 years it has been in the possession of the Moslem. For the whole of that time a mosque has stood where the temple once was. There is considerable doubt as to the position of Calvary and the tomb of Christ: they certainly were not both in what is now the church of the Holy Sepulchre. But of the site of the temple there is no doubt whatever. Some of the bevelled stones which formed the lowest row of the walls of the Court still remain. The Mosque of Omar is erected not very far from the ancient Holy of Holies, and contains some of the temple ornaments. Under the lofty dome there is a huge bare rock. An indentation on this rock is pointed out to the visitor as the last footprint of Mahommed as he ascended to heaven.

Indirectly, this spot has been of the greatest benefit to the Western nations. Not long after the Norman conquest of England, the crusades were started with the intention and confident hope of wresting Palestine from the Saracen; and they lasted for two hundred years, drawing off the unquiet element of their populations. There was not much religion about the movement. Hundreds of thousands of men were spoiling for a fight; and this object, blessed by their Church, gave legitimacy to their desires. Had it

not been for the crusades, they would have fought amongst each other at home.

To those Christians who believe in the constant interposition of Providence in the affairs of men, it may give some food for reflection that this interesting site has been attacked over and over again by Trinitarian nations who never had any but temporary success. It is now crowded with worshippers, whose faith is nearer in its essentials to that of the Israelites than any other nation in the world. The political vicissitudes of the Turks during the last thousand years have made little difference to Jerusalem. The threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite is still the altar of a rigid Monotheism, and, as far as can be foreseen, is long likely to remain so.

CHAPTER IV.—APPENDIX I.

THE following is one of a series of sermons on the "Song of Songs," preached in the Oratory of St. Margaret's, East Grinstead, by the Rev. John Mason Neale, D.D., to the maiden ladies of that establishment, on Palm Sunday, in or about the year 1866. It is selected as a specimen of the teaching of the doctrine that the "Song of Songs" is prophetic of the union between Christ and His Church. It is hardly necessary to add that the whole of Chapter VII. should be read, to appreciate the value of this discourse.

Dr. Neale's view of the "Song of Songs" is largely held by both divines and laymen in the present day.

SERMON XXVIII.

CANTICLES vii. 7.—"*I said, I will go up to the Palm Tree: I will take hold of the boughs thereof.*"

It is worth while noticing how often expressions of faith, and hope, resolution and penitence, begin with that—"I said." Day after day, and one hour after another hour, we repeat those words—"I said, LORD be merciful unto me: heal my soul for I have sinned against Thee." How often again, "I said, I will take heed to my ways that I offend not in my tongue!" And so here, "I said, I will go up to the Palm Tree." Ah, my dear Sisters! and it is not without a deep, deep reason. We begin by saying—the doing is a very different matter. We are like Saul, in the lesson last night, who, when he had smitten one garrison of the Philistines, blew a trumpet, and said, "Let the Hebrews hear!" Our LORD'S was doing first, and saying afterwards: "the former treatise have I made of all that Jesus began to do and to teach."

"I said"—and I know not that there are many sadder words in the English language, I said—when the King of kings came Himself to visit me in the Blessed Sacrament, that now, indeed, He should be wholly and only my LORD and my GOD. I said, when I last knelt in confession, that to such a temptation I would yield—indeed, I would yield—no more. I said that I would strive more and more earnestly after such a grace; and then these resolves went the way of all the "I saids"—"they say, and do not." "I said, I will take

heed to my ways that I offend not in my tongue." Oh, how often! So very easy to say—so intensely difficult to do! "I said, I will go up to the Palm Tree." Is that an easier resolution? Let us see.

It is not without a double mystery that we are this day called to say, "I will go up to the Palm Tree." Of all weeks in the year, this week of such pain and woe as none other—this week in which GOD was sorrowful and very heavy. GOD, being in an agony, prayed more earnestly; GOD fell under the weight of the Cross—this is the very last week that we should have thought to begin with the Tree of all joy and triumph, the Sign of victory, the Reward of the Conqueror, the Palm. What does this teach, but that it is the same thing for the SON of GOD to go out to war, and to win the fight?—to gird the sword upon His thigh, and to find it according to His worship and renown?—to go forth with the armies of heaven, and have on His vesture the name written, King of kings, and LORD of lords?—And so, again, it is said by the prophet, "Behold"—not His work is with Him, and His reward before Him—but "His reward is with Him, and His work before Him." Well, therefore, might He enter Jerusalem as a Conqueror at the beginning of this sad week, Who so shortly will ascend into the Heavenly Jerusalem as the everlasting Victor of death and hell.

But there is another sense for us. "I said, I will go up to the Palm Tree." None ever doubted that by this Palm Tree is meant the Cross. It is as though the faithful soul had, at the first commencement of her true service of her LORD, looked on the Cross as the sign of all victory, the form of all glory, the crown of such innumerable triumphs. But she forgot that it was something else besides all this—that the struggle preceded the victory, that the wilderness came before the Promised Land, that the Cross came first and then the palm. She forgot how many hours of patient endurance there must be: hours which none but her LORD could know or feel for: hours that seemed to effect nothing and to be borne for nothing. She fixed her eyes on the end and forgot the road: she did not realise the much tribulation by which we must enter the Kingdom of GOD. It is so natural, so just according to our own feeling, "I said I will go up to the Palm"—as if it wanted one struggle, and then all would be over: one advance, and the ground held for ever: so very easy to be spoken of—and as easily to be done.

But yet, my dear Sisters, this resolution must be in our hearts as well as on our lips this day. This true and living Palm, this Cross, with its precious fruits, is set before us, and we must go to it; go up to it, mind; for up-hill work it is, as we all know, as, the more we have tried to draw near to it, the better we know. Like that Palm, it flourishes best in barren and dry lands where no water is: the

heavier weights it has to bear, like the Palm, it grows the better. We must go up to it, indeed : must make it, as David, all our salvation and all our desire. "The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree." He Who is only righteous : He Who is our righteousness : so He flourished at this time ; and into that wilderness of suffering and desertedness, and to that heavy load of grief, He calls us to approach.

"I will take hold of the boughs thereof." And how ? Surely, in the first place, by clinging to them as the only firm hold in the evil day. We have all read of shipwrecked men, when washed by some enormous wave on the shore, how they have grasped at some rock or stump, and held on to it as for very life during the recoil of the wave—how, almost suffocated by the fearful rush of the retiring waters, their eyes blinded with its green colour, their ears stupefied by its roar, their arms well nigh torn from the sockets, they have, nevertheless, hung on for very life until that tyranny were overpast ; and, so holding on, have sometimes, like Job's messengers, only escaped alone to tell the tale, while the rest of their shipmates have been swallowed up in the mighty waters. So it is that, in the shipwreck of this world, dear Sisters, we must cling on to the Cross : no one ever perished there yet : the thief was saved that grasped it in the very last hour : Judas would there have been saved if he had cast himself at the foot, and had cried to Him that hung thereon, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me."

But why are we to apply this verse to ourselves and think of our own poor sayings, when the very time would rather have us refer them to our Elder Brother, the voice of Whose Blood will so soon cry from the ground : "I said, I will go up to the Palm Tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof." And who shall tell when that word was first said ? Fore-ordained He was from all eternity ; He offered Himself from all eternity : when this world was made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made, in it He already saw the battlefield of this His contest with Satan : when the LORD GOD made the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind, already He knew of that Tree which should "bring forth his fruit in due season" ; that Tree of Life which should atone for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—that Cross which was the path of life to the wise, that he may escape from hell beneath : already it was—"I said, I will go up to the Palm Tree."

And since then how often had He said it ! He had said it by types, as when Moses stretched out his rod—the rod of God—over the sea, and the waters went back all that day and all that night : figuring thereby how it is by the virtue of the Cross that we pass the Red Sea of Death : when the same Moses, seated on the Mount of GOD, had his arms held out crosswise by Aaron and Hur, till Amalek

was utterly defeated : when the brazen serpent was set up on the pole, which, being set up, everyone that was bitten by the fiery flying serpents, and looked towards it, lived : when the Blood was sprinkled in the sign of the Cross on the lintels and two side-posts of the doors of the Israelites so that the avenging Angel might not touch them : when Joshua drew not back the spear that was stretched forth in his hand till the armies of the confederate kings had perished, and the sun had stood still upon Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon : when the poor widow was gathering the two sticks, and thus taking up her Cross at the very moment when the man of GOD brought deliverance to her house. He had said it by prophecies—“Tell it out among the heathen that the LORD reigneth from the Tree: the glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of My sanctuary, and I will make the place of My feet glorious”: those feet which were nailed thereto, and made that place glorious with their own royal blood. Or, again, in that verse—“Now will I arise, saith the LORD: now will I be exalted: now will I lift up Myself.” Or yet, once more—“As birds flying, so will the LORD defend Jerusalem”; for how do birds fly, except by making the sign of the Cross? and how does the LORD defend His Church but by the mark of the same? And lastly, He said it with His own gracious lips. “Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the Prince of this world be cast out; and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.” And again: “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”; or yet, again, still more plainly: “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow Me”; or plainer still: “And they shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge, and to crucify Him.” “I said, I will go up to the Palm Tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof.” And how did He say it? “I have a Baptism to be baptised with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!”

“I will take hold of the boughs thereof.” And so He did twice. Once, when He took them up in His arms to carry them to the top of Calvary; lastly, when with a still firmer and more painful grasp, a grasp which nothing but death could loose, He took hold on them there. Had He let them go, He had let us go along with them; but seeing it is written, “My FATHER Which gave them Me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my FATHER'S hand”; therefore, He still held them fast, not willing, even in the act of death, to be separated from them.

“I have left you an example, that ye should do as I have done

unto you." I may seem unkind and cruel, dear Sisters, always to be reminding you of self-denial: constantly to be urging you to take tighter and tighter hold of this Palm. But what am I to do? I would not be like those who set forth good wine at the beginning, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse. I have no road to show you but that by which our dear Master went—went at all times, but never so gloriously, as well as never so painfully, as in His Most Holy Passion. That *Via Dolorosa*, that going from the Hall of Judgment to Golgotha, is but a type of every Christian journey—doubly a type of yours. I would fain see you not the last in the long and lovely band of those who, with your own purpose of heart, in your own sex, with your own temptations, with your own helps, have cried out, "I said, I will go up to the Palm Tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof." By that Palm Tree, in the hour when it bore its fruit, if there stood but one man, and He the Apostle of Love, there stood three women: the Spotless Virgin, the Saintly Wife, and the Glorious Penitent. To that Palm Tree you must also draw closer now. Then, it might be said to each of you, Behold He Whom thou lovest is sick to the death, that He might take away the sins of the world; and yet, in another sense, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of GOD, that the SON of GOD may be glorified thereby."

This Palm will bring forth its fruit in due season, and one of those seasons is now. Come to it, then, my dear Sisters, and begin this week of our LORD'S sufferings by receiving Himself: come, resolving with every power of your heart that this shall better deserve its name of Holy Week, so far as you are concerned, than ever yet. Come, and once more give yourselves to Him Who, by going up to the Palm Tree and taking hold of the boughs thereof, once gave Himself for your ransom, and now offers Himself to you as food.

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER IV.—APPENDIX II.

The following is one of the chapters of a small book called *Joined to the Lord: Thoughts on the Song of Solomon*, by Miss Annie W. Marston, with preface by Dr. Elder Cumming, of Glasgow. It is in its second edition, and is published by Marshall Brothers, Keswick House, Paternoster Row. Price 2s. 6d. Date 1901.

Those who are interested in the question as to whether the "Song of Songs" is, or is not, a divinely-inspired and prophetic poem would do well to read the whole of this book with its marginal references; as the views therein expressed are representative of the sort of teaching going on in the British Islands. At the time it was published, it was said that this book contained the substance of Miss Marston's Bible-class addresses to young men.

CHAPTER X.

THE JOY OF POSSESSION

"Behold, thou art fair, My love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from Mount Gilead. Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof everyone bear twins, and none is barren among them. Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely: thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks. Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an amoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies."—*SONG OF SOLOMON*, iv. 1-5.

AND now they are alone together, each at rest in the other, possessed by the other, satisfied with the other. It seems as though now, for the first time, the Lord is able to take His fill of love, to take a full undisturbed look at the one who is now altogether and for ever His own; to go into the details of her beauty, while hitherto He had only had passing glimpses of the whole. Now He has her close to Himself; she is His own, and they both know it; and with the glad pride of

possession He looks upon her, and one by one goes over the several graces which He sees in her. It is the pride of love, which notes and enlarges upon every feature, finding in them all some special attraction, which only the eye of love would detect, and comparing it with a comparison which only the heart of love would suggest. And this Lord of love, who notices every detail in our spiritual being, who lets not even the smallest mark of beauty escape the searching scrutiny of His gaze of delighted love, is your Lord and mine. Is it not worth our while to take pains to cultivate every Christian grace that we see in Him, and that we read of in His Word, if He takes

- Ps. xlv. such a pride in us as this? If He so "greatly desires" our beauty,
 11. shall we not be beautiful for Him? If every new grace will bring new joy to His heart, and win from Him new words of approval,
 2 Pet. i. shall we not give "all diligence to add to our faith virtue; and to
 5-7. virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance
 R. V. patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness love of the brethren; and to love of the brethren love," and go on claiming that
 John i. 16. we shall receive "out of His fulness grace for grace," and that He
 2 Cor. ix. shall make "all grace abound toward us," that we may be neither
 8. barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Him, that the beauty of
 2 Pet. i. 8 the Lord our God may be upon us, and that, as He looks day by day
 Ps. xc. 17. for something fresh in which He may take delight, He may never
 Isa. liii. have to turn disappointed away from us, but may daily see in us of
 11. the travail of His soul and be satisfied?

Let us look at some of the things which He considers marks of beauty, which He admires in His chosen ones, that so we may see wherein our beauty is defective, and may be guided as to what definite graces we may claim, in order that He may be pleased.

- Ver. 1. "Behold, thou art fair, My love; behold, thou art fair." With what satisfaction He repeats the words, and then goes on to tell wherein her fairness consisted. "Thou hast doves' eyes behind thy
 Ch. I. 15 veil." Once before He had told her she had doves' eyes, and then had stopped short, as though that had been the one point worthy of commendation in her; for if we have only one grace, the Lord will not fail to notice it. Now, though she had gained so many new graces, she had not lost the old one; it is still the first point which attracts the attention of her loving Lord. Is there not sometimes a little danger, as we discover some new grace that we specially need, of our devoting all our energy and attention to the acquiring of *that*, to the neglect of others which we had previously possessed, so that, while we go on in one direction, we go back in another? While we
 Phil. iii. forget the things which are behind, and reach forth unto those things
 18. which are before, as those who have not already attained, but who follow after, if that they may apprehend that for which also they are

apprehended in Christ Jesus, let us remember that it is also written, "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same things." Verse 16.

It was true now of this friend of Jesus, as long before, that she had doves' eyes, symbolising gentleness and tenderness: "Be ye therefore . . . harmless as doves." On several occasions the Lord calls her His dove. Asaph speaks of himself to the Lord as "Thy turtle dove," alluding to his weak and defenceless condition. And it may well be that the look of the bride to the Bridegroom here was one expressive of her trust in Him as her Protector. It is one characteristic of the dove, that it cannot rest apart from its mate, but in its absence sits solitary and coos mournfully till its return. Doves are remarkable, too, for their faithfulness to one another and to their homes, to which they will return from long distances, if they have been taken away; and also for their ready forgiveness of injuries. Are we like doves in all these respects? Is our look to the Lord a look of trustful confidence, a look of devoted love, a look of faithfulness? As He looks into our eyes, does He know that we are true to Him? that we shall never be able to rest or be glad apart from Him? that, if it were possible for anyone to separate us from Him, we should always come back again to Him, as the dove from her wanderings returned again to Noah unto the ark, because we too can find no rest for the sole of our foot away from our Friend and Guardian? And as He has always shown Himself so ready to forgive all the injuries He has received from us, does He always find us ready to forgive injuries from others? to forgive as we have been forgiven? Can He call us His doves? Can He say, "Thou hast doves' eyes"?

Matt. x.
16.
Ch. ii. 14;
v. 2; vi. 9.
Ps. lxxiv.
19.
Isa.
xxxviii,
14.
Isa. lix.
11.
Gen. viii.
9.
Ver. 1,
R.V.

And here the doves' eyes are said to be "behind thy veil"; a part of the description which was not used when the same comparison was made before. Does not the addition tell us of a modesty, a humility, which had been acquired since those early days, of a meekness and lowliness which made her a more fitting companion for Him who is "meek and lowly of heart"? Are we content to be veiled ones, not seeking the admiration of men, but just as anxious that the glory of our beauty shall not be "unto us," as we are that it shall be to His name? Is our secret intercourse with Jesus, and our public intercourse with man, the intercourse of the dove, and the intercourse of the veiled one?

Ch. i. 15.
Matt. xi.
29.
Ps. cxv. 1.

"Thy hair is as a flock of goats that lie along the side of Mount Gilead"; long and silky. Long hair everywhere in Scripture is the token of consecration and subjection. Is there not, therefore, a deep meaning for us in the words of Samson the Nazarite?—"There hath

Ver. 1,
R.V.
See Num.
vi. 5.

- 1^o Cor. ii. 6-16. not come a razor upon mine head : for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb : if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man."
- Jud. xvi. 17. Is it so with us, that we who once were strong for the Lord are now weak ? that we who used to be known as His fellow-workers are now
- Num. vi. 5. "like any other," because we are no longer separated unto the Lord, and therefore our strength has gone from us ? He by whom "the
- Matt. x. 30. very hairs of our head are all numbered," will not overlook one little act or word of devotion to Himself. Can He praise us for our
- 1 Sam. i. 11. complete subjection to Himself in all things ? or has He to mourn over our broken vows, that we who said we would be His all the days of our life have defiled our separation, and are presenting Him with "lost" days ? for "If he (the Nazarite)...defile the head of his consecration...he shall separate unto the Lord the days of his separation, and shall bring a lamb of the first year for a guilt-offering ; but the days that were before shall be lost (or void), because
- Num. vi. 9, 12. his separation was defiled." Are our days *just now* separated days or lost days ? If we are losing them, shall we not hasten to bring our guilt-offering and our burnt-offering, that the sin of the "lost" days may be forgiven, and that once again we may begin to live as separated ones ?
- "Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing ; whereof everyone bear twins, and none is barren among them. Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely." The teeth and the lips are the two parts of the body, visible to the beholder, which are used in the production of speech ; comeliness of speech is given as the result of the proper condition of these organs. "Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep which are even shorn." What a rare virtue is *evenness of speech*. In how many ways we notice the lack of it ! How we are pained sometimes by Christians who say too much ; who pour out things to us about others—sometimes about other Christians—which we feel would have been so much better left unsaid ; which it did them no good to tell, and us no good to hear ; which have given us an "uncomfortable feeling" about fellow-Christians, and thereby sometimes robbed us of our influence over them and our fellowship with them. Do we ourselves always remember to "speak evil of no man," and to care for the reputation of Christians, as being part of the reputation of their Master ? or do we sometimes give people
- Titus ii. 2. occasion to say of us, "Their teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword" ?
- Ps. lvii. 4. But, on the other hand, how often we have forbore to speak, and by our silence have brought positive injury to others, or perhaps more frequently have failed to give the possible, and even the

expected, help to the weary and wandering and sorrowful ones, who knew, or at any rate supposed, that we were walking with God, and confidently looked for a "word in season" from us, though they were too shy, perhaps, to ask for it, and left us disappointed. How ready we are to follow the example of Moses, in one of the few things in which his example is not safe to follow, his way of making excuses about his speech. May it not be said of these excuses, "Their name is legion, for they are many"? All the old excuses which have been made before the Lord by His servants from Moses' day till now—

"WHO AM I, THAT I SHOULD GO?" "It would be so much better, if so-and-so or so-and-so would speak; they would have so much more influence." "WHAT SHALL I SAY?" "Ten to one I should say something that would give offence, and do more harm than good." "BEHOLD, THEY WILL NOT HEARKEN TO MY VOICE." "Other people have spoken to them, and it made no difference; they are so worldly, they don't care about these things; it is only casting pearls before swine to talk to them of Jesus." "I AM NOT ELOQUENT." "I make such a bungle of it, whenever I try to speak. Some people always seem to be able to say the right thing; I always say the wrong one, and when it is said I know quite well what I ought to have said, but it is too late then. I am sure I am meant to show my religion by my life, but not to talk it." "I can talk to poor people; I am not afraid of them; but I cannot speak to people of my own rank in life, and, what is more, I do not believe I am called to that kind of work." "I can speak to Christians, I always feel the Lord gives me messages to them; but I don't seem to know what to say to an unconverted man or woman," or "I can speak to the unsaved, but I cannot speak to Christians; it looks like setting myself up to be better than they." "I can speak to people alone, but I cannot speak in a meeting"; or, "Well, I don't the least mind taking a meeting, but I cannot speak to people personally."

And then there is the worst unevenness of all, the unevenness of speaking freely of Christ in public or to strangers, and denying the same Lord by our un-Christlike speech in private or at home. Is our literal "conversation," as well as our whole "manner of life," "such as becometh the Gospel of Christ"? "sound speech that cannot be condemned"? Is our speech "always with grace"? in the drawing-room as well as in the Mission Hall? in the kitchen as well as in the prayer meeting? in the street as well as in the study? or are we like those Jews in Nehemiah's day, who "spake half in the speech of Ashdod," and half in the Jews' language? If we are disciples of Jesus at all, our speech will come under one or other of these descriptions, and it is true of the one class as of the other,

"Surely thou also art one of them, for thy speech bewrayeth thee."

Prov. xv.
23.

Ex. iii. 11.
Ver. 13.

Ch. iv. 1.

Ver. 10.

Phil. i. 27,
Titus ii.
8.
Col. iv. 6.

Neh. xiii,
24.

Matt.
xxvi. 73.

Do you say, "I can quite see how it ought to be. I know I ought to be always consistent. I ought to be able to go to whomsoever God shall send me, and to speak whatsoever He shall command me. But though I know it quite well, the fact remains that I do not do it, and it seems as though I could not. What shall I do?" Let us come back to our description of the bride, and see if it will tell us.

- "Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep which are even shorn, which
 Ch. iv. 2. *came up from the washing.*" Is not that the secret? Just as a pure
 Ver. 3. heart must be a cleansed heart, so "comely" speech must be *cleansed*
 speech. Did not Isaiah prove it when, as a chosen prophet of God,
 Isa. vi. 5. he cried, "Woe is me, for... I am a man of *unclean lips*," and one
 of the seraphim flew unto him, and taking a live coal from the altar—
 Ver. 7. a type, surely, of the fire of the Holy Ghost—caused it to touch his
lips, and said, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is
 Ver. 9. taken away, and thy sin purged"? Then came the message, "Go,
 and *tell* this people"; and with purged lips he went forth to be the
 Ver. 8. messenger of the Lord of Hosts, who is still saying, "Whom shall I
 send, and who will go for us?" and who is still ready to give, not
 only a cleansed heart, but purged lips, to those who, conscious of
 their uncleanness, will go to Him for the power to do His will and to
 speak His words.

- Ezek. We who have heard Him say, "A new heart also will I give you,
 xxxvi. and a new spirit will I put within you," have we gone to Him for
 26. the cleansed lips with which alone we can speak His words, in His
 power, with His blessing? Shall we not go to Him, since He is our
 Shepherd, and ask Him to use His shears upon us, to cut off all the
 excrescences, and to level all the unevennesses of speech which grieve
 Him in us, and then at His call go down to "the washing," that our
 speaking powers, as well as our whole selves, may be "washed" and
 1 Cor. vi. "sanctified," "in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of
 11. our God"?

- And let us "come up from the washing" with the expectation that
 the result of His dealing with our surrendered and renewed powers of
 Ch. iv. 2. speech will be, even as it was here, "Every one hath twins, and
 none is barren among them." Oh, how barren our speech has been
 in the past. How many, even of those of our words which have
 Matt. xii. not been positively harmful, have been "idle words," having no
 86. result. But cleansed speech will be fruitful speech, and when our
 conversation is yielded to the Lord, who *creates* "the fruit of the lips"
 Isa. lvii. (so our "having no gift in that line" will be no disadvantage to
 19. Him), to be wholly at His command, it will be with us as with
 1 Sam. iii. Samuel, the Lord will be with us, and will let none of our words fall
 19. to the ground. He will use our lips to "feed many." We may not
 Prov. x. always know it, nor see the fruit; often we shall, and the Lord will
 21.

see the effect of even those words which seem to us to be fruitless, and "the fruit of lips which give thanks to His Name" shall be unto Him a "sacrifice of praise continually."

Heb. xlii.
15.

"Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet." There is a scarlet line running all through the Bible, which constitutes the life-giving power of its words, telling, as it does, of the poured-out life, of the atoning blood, of the sacrificial death, of Him who, by His life and death, has "brought life and immortality to light" for us; who by His atonement has reconciled us to the Father; whose blood "cleanseth us from all sin." There will be no comeliness in our speech in the sight of God, and no life-giving power in our words, to man, if the scarlet thread is wanting. There may be much human "excellency of speech," but the excellency of the power will be of man, and not of God.

Ch. iv. 3.

2 Tim. i.
10.

1 John i.
7.

1 Cor. ii.
1.

When we speak for God, let us see to it that we do not only speak of Jesus as the *Standard* of life, but also and first of Jesus as the *Source* of life; of Jesus the Saviour, then of Jesus the Master; of Jesus the Sacrifice, then of Jesus the Example; that, as He hears us speak of Him, He may be able to say, "Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely." So shall we know the fulfilment of the words, "He that loveth pureness of heart, and hath grace in his lips, the King shall be his friend."

Ver. 8.

Prov.
xxii. 11.

"Thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate behind the veil." Very plain and unattractive to the outside beholder, who sees *only* the outside, and has no sympathy of acquaintance with the Lord; within, full of beauty and sweetness; primarily for Himself; then, for His sake, to those who know and love Him. With the Bride, as with the Bridegroom, to the eye of the world "there is no form nor comeliness," no beauty that she should be desired; but to the King, who greatly desires her beauty, and who sees the inner life of love and devotion, she is "all glorious within," with the beauty of humility "behind the veil."

Isa. liii
2.

Ps. xlv.
18.

Ch. iv. 1,
R. V.

"Thy neck is like the tower of David, builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men." For she is a warrior, this fair and helpless and trustful one, equipped for the fight as a "good soldier," strong in the might of her Lord, "taking the shield of faith," not in one promise only, but in all the "exceeding great and precious promises" of His Word: "His truth shall be thy shield and buckler." There are thirty-seven thousand of these promises, all ours, "given unto us" by the Lord God Almighty, the Faithful Promiser, who is "able also to perform" what He has promised. But we have only taken practical possession of so many of them as we have claimed for our own need. "Mighty men" of

2 Tim. ii.
8.

Ep. vi. 16.

2 Pet. i. 4.

Ps. xci. 4.

Heb. x.

28.

Rom. iv.

21.

2 Sam.

xxiii. 8.

- Heb. xi. old have claimed these "precious promises" one by one, and, claim-
 83, ing, have "obtained" them, and with their shields have quenched
 Eph. vi. "the fiery darts of the wicked one." How many shields have we in our
 16. "armour"? How many promises have we definitely appropriated and
 claimed and "obtained"? When the Lord counts them up, can He do
 Ver. 4. it with satisfaction and delight? Can He say rejoicingly of us, "Thy
 neck is as the tower of David, builded for an armoury, whereon there
 hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men"? Shall we
 not go on to stock our armoury with buckler after buckler, as we
 search into the Lord's treasure-house, and take from it day by day
 every promise that we find which meets a need of ours, and which we
 had not hitherto appropriated? that so He may have the joy of giving
 out to us the weapons of war which He has laid up in store for us,
 and the joy of seeing us go forth strong in His power, fortified by His
 Word, to overcome His enemies and ours, that He may add our
 names to His list of "mighty" ones, which surely He keeps as fully
 2 Sam. chronicled as were the lists of "the mighty men whom David had,"
 xxiii. 8.
 1 Chr. xi. 10, 11. whose shields were hung in "the tower of David."
- Ver. 5. "Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins." We
 need go no further than the "armoury" for the explanation of these
 Eph. vi. words; for does not St. Paul, who counsels us to take unto us "the
 11. whole armour of God," tell us of the double "breastplate of faith and
 1 Thess. love"? and are they not truly "twins"? born on the one day when
 v. 8. we received Him "whom, having not seen, we *love*, in whom....
 1 Pet. i. 8. *believing*, we rejoice," growing up together from that day to this, our
 love increasing as we believe more, our faith deepening as we love
 2 Thess. more? Can it be said of us, "Your *faith* groweth exceedingly, and
 i. 3. the *love* of you all one toward another aboundeth"? Our faith and
 our love should be "like two *young roes*," always fresh and always
 developing. It is a bad sign if our faith or our love has ceased to
 Ver. 5. be "young," and is only of the same stature to-day that it was last
 year, or even last week. Do we trust our God more now than we did
 a month ago? If not, is it because there is something wrong with
 our love? Perhaps not consciously with our love to God, but with
 1 John iv. our love to others, "for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath
 20, 21. seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen? And this
 commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his
 brother also." Is Jesus more precious to you to-day than He was
 last year? Do you love the Father more? If not, is it because you
 do not trust the Father and the Son as simply as you did then?
 1 Pet. ii. "Unto you who *believe* He is *precious*." Faith and love are
 7. "twins"; they are born together; they grow together; they languish
 together: God has joined them together; you and I can never put
 them asunder.

“Two young ones that are twins, which feed among the lilies.” For that is where the Shepherd feeds His flock—“among the lilies”; Ver. 5. among them, not upon them. Faith and love can never flourish in a life of selfishness, of spiritual solitude. We must live as Jesus lived, if we would grow as Jesus grew. If we would feed upon Him, we must also feed with Him, and learn to find our satisfaction, as He found His, and finds it still, in watching and tending the spiritual life of others; in praying for the tempted and weak ones; in feeding the hungry; not living “to be ministered unto, but to minister”; content to wash the feet of others, “to lay down our lives for the brethren.” We are to be lilies “among thorns,” it is true; but though the Lord loves me with such a wonderfully individual personal love, I am not therefore to live as though I supposed I was His *only* lily. There are many other lilies in “His garden,” and while on the one hand I am to be His lily, watered and nourished by His hand of love, cared for continually by His heart of love; on the other hand, I am to be His companion, watering and nourishing others, sharing his love and solicitude for them, entering into His faith and His hope concerning them. My faith and my hope will only grow, as they feed with Him “among the lilies.” Do you complain that you have so little faith, so little hope? that you are always doubting and fearing? Come out of the narrow groove of your own spiritual life, and instead of seeking only to feast continually with your Lord in the “banqueting-house,” put your hand in His, and ask Him to let you go with Him “among the lilies.” Seek out the trembling, timid ones, and see if you cannot tell them something about your Lord which they have not yet learned. Look out for the drooping lilies, and pour out upon them some of the water with which the Lord has refreshed you. See if you cannot find one so buried in thorns that the sun can hardly reach it; and, even at the risk of being scratched and wounded yourself, clear away at least enough to make way for a little sunshine, to leave room for a little growth. While you pour out your love on others, your love for the Lord will deepen; and while you exercise faith on behalf of others, hoping even for the “hopeless,” believing even for the faithless, you will learn to claim so much for yourself that the doubts and the fears will be forgotten, and in “the full assurance of hope,” in the firm confidence of faith, you will labour with your Lord, and share His joy and His reward, as together you feed among the lilies.

Luke ii. 52.

Luke xxii. 32.
Matt. xiv. 20; xx. 28.

John xiii. 5.

1 John iii. 16.
Ch. ii. 2.
Ch. vi. 2.

Ver. 5.

Ch. ii. 4.

Heb. vi. 11.

CHAPTER V.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON

Few scholars now consider the writers in the New Testament as specially inspired—The Synoptic Gospels—Founded on one common tradition—When written—Acts of the Apostles—Prophecies quoted from the Old Testament—"Revelation"—Poverty of information respecting Jesus Christ—The Ascension—No record by the Romans—Small effect made on the disciples by Christ—His Personal influence during His Life less than that of many leaders since His time—Quotations from the Old Testament manipulated by the writers in the New—Isaiah ix., and Babylonian hymns to Merodach—Dubious passages in the New Testament—The woman taken in adultery—Beauty of the Gospels, no proof of their divine inspiration—Professor Huxley's remarks—Contradictions in the Gospels—Forty-five incidents given by Luke not mentioned elsewhere—The Unjust Steward—The apparent inconsistencies of Christ—The Canaanitish woman—Christ's prophecy of the end of the world—His miracles—His abuse of His opponents—His death a natural consequence—His unsatisfactory appearances after His Resurrection—Evidence for the Ascension—How Gospels were selected—St. Paul—Death of Stephen—St. Paul's vision—Epileptics in history—Mahommed—Joan of Arc—Dr. Ireland's accounts—Luther's delusions—St. Paul's hallucination of great benefit to mankind—His mistake as to the end of the world—His doctrine as to the Fall and Atonement—Flashes of wisdom in his writings.

THE New Testament Canon consists of twenty-seven books. The originals of all have been lost, and the alleged authorship of at least ten is a matter of dispute. The revised version, and the searching criticism of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, have been the means of exposing several portions of the books as forgeries. That any of the books can be

considered as inspired in the true sense of the word is believed by but few scholars of the present generation. But it is still an axiom of faith with the majority of the people of this country that the writers were specially imbued with the Divine Spirit, and that what they wrote should be received as the direct revelation of God, subject to such imperfections as were due to the human agents whom He impelled to write.

The first books of the New Testament are the three "synoptic gospels," as they are usually called, because they are supposed to relate to the same period. They are all founded on what is termed the "Triple Tradition"; and the first which appeared was the gospel according to St. Mark, which was probably not composed till after St. Peter had completed his preaching, say about 60 A.D. The second to appear is believed to have been the gospel according to St. Matthew, sometime before 80 A.D. St. Luke's account is supposed to have been written after the year 80. The followers of Christ expected the end of the world to come in their time. Oral teaching was sufficient. It was not until they had despaired of the strict fulfilment of the prophecy of their Master as to the early date of His second coming, that they committed to writing, or caused to be committed to writing, the fragmentary history of His life which has been passed on to us. As Dr. Westcott says (*The Bible in the Church*, p. 55), "*The time seemed to be imminent when they which were alive and remained should be caught up to meet Him.*"

The authorship of the fourth gospel has been much disputed. If the youngest of the disciples wrote it, he must have been little short of a hundred years of age

at the time. "Revelation" was written by him about the year 68 A.D.—of this there appears to be little doubt; and its style is so strikingly dissimilar from the gospel that competent critics have hesitated to declare that they are by the same hand, unless they can be assured that there was a very long interval between the two compositions.

Until the end of the first quarter of the second century there was no collection of books recognised as the Canon of the New Testament; and it is considered very doubtful whether it can ever be determined with certainty who were the real authors of the gospels. There seems, however, to be a general consensus of opinion that Matthew the disciple was himself the author, or that he inspired the author, of the first book; that Mark, the sometime companion of Peter, wrote the second, from information derived from his master; that Luke, the physician, who was two or three years with St. Paul, wrote the third from the oral teachings of his companion; and that the fourth was written by some intimate friend of St. John, who, for reasons given above, could scarcely have written it himself.

The Acts of the Apostles, upon which the truth of many features of the Catholic religion depends (as through this book faith is based upon the life and spiritual qualities of St. Paul), was certainly written by the author of the third gospel. This is clearly shown by the reference in the first verse of the first chapter to the "former treatise." It is responsible, in a large measure, for our belief in the prophetic character of the psalms of David, from which the author quotes several extracts. Had it not been for these quotations, which are regarded as inspired

words, it is doubtful if it would have come to be generally understood that David was referring, when he wrote, to a Messiah whose advent nothing in his experiences could have led him to expect. For instance: Chap. ii. 24-28. Peter, according to Luke, says, "Whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David saith concerning him:—

"I beheld the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved.

"Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope.

"Because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption.

"Thou madest known unto me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of gladness with thy countenance."

"Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day.

"Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set *one* upon his throne; he foreseeing *this* spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left in Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption."

Turning to Psalm xvi., which begins "Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust," it is apparent to anyone who will take the trouble to read this beautiful passage throughout that David referred to himself, and to his hope of some sort of immortality. He believed himself to be God's anointed king over

Israel, and, immediately preceding the passage from which Peter quotes, he declared triumphantly :—

“The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places.”

“Yea, I have a goodly heritage.”

“I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel.”

“Yea, my reins instruct me in the night seasons.”

We observe, moreover, that the Messiah in no sense sprang from the loins of David, though two of the synoptists have endeavoured to prove independently by genealogies which differ widely from each other (even to the extent of attributing the descent through different sons of Bathsheba) that the foster father of Jesus Christ, who, it is expressly declared, had no cohabitation with the Virgin Mary, was so descended.

Again : In Acts iv. 25–28 Luke represents the friends of the lame man, who had been healed by Peter, rejoicing thus :—

“Who by the Holy Ghost, *by* the mouth of our father David thy servant, didst say,

“Why do the Gentiles rage,

“And the peoples imagine vain things ?

“The kings of the earth set themselves in array,

“And the rulers were gathered together,

“Against the Lord, and against his Anointed.”

“For of a truth in this city against thy holy servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel fore-ordained to come to pass.....”

In the ordinary sense in which the term is generally used, Jesus Christ was not anointed, but David was. In the sixth verse of the psalm from which the above extract was taken, we read,

“ Yet have I set my king
“ Upon my holy hill of Zion,”

which is surely an allusion to David himself. The latter verses of the psalm are ambiguous ; but it is more probable that they refer to the writer David as the “ son of the Lord ” than to a future Messiah. In this psalm, David appears to be denouncing in somewhat inflated and boastful language the presumption of those who oppose the anointed of God (that is, himself) and the violent words,

“ Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron,

“ Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel,”

cannot refer to the peaceful spread of the gospel of Christ.

The Acts of the Apostles gives all that is known of the life of St. Paul ; and, since the writer had excellent opportunities of learning the facts from St. Paul himself, besides being an actual witness to some of the incidents recorded, it is probably the most truthful part of the historical portion of the New Testament. Of the fourteen epistles said to have been dictated or written by St. Paul, some eight or nine, including that to the Hebrews, are now not believed by many competent critics to have been inspired by him. The second epistle of St. Peter is no longer considered genuine ; and doubts have been cast upon the authenticity of the second and third epistles of St. John. With reference to the book of Revelation, most readers of it will sympathise with Cardinal Caietan (see *Bible in the Church*, Westcott, p. 255), “ I confess that I cannot interpret the Apocalypse according to the literal sense. Let him interpret it to whom God has given the power.” The one and

only argument for the retention of this extraordinary work is that it has a very ancient standing in the Canon, and has, throughout all controversies and changes, hardly ever been disturbed. But the same might be said of the Canticles in the Old Testament Canon; though no one who reads that book through can fail to perceive that it is purely and simply a love song, and has no possible doctrinal or, indeed historical, importance.

The two figures which take the most prominent place in the New Testament are Jesus Christ and St. Paul. The former was so remarkable a Personality that what strikes the reader most, who studies the New Testament, is the extreme poverty of the information regarding Him. He lived for about thirty-two years. All we are told of His life is one or two incidents of His childhood, and a disjointed narrative of the last three years; and these are recorded in such a peculiar manner as to arouse doubt of the entire genuineness of the story. Contemporary history of Him, such as might be expected from the colonising race in Palestine, there is none. We can trace the lives of the tetrarchs and procurators; we know the history of the Jews during that period, and the various acts and decrees of the sovereign power of Rome; but of Jesus Christ there is not a word. In the years that followed, there is abundant testimony of the existence of Christians; none of the Founder of their religion. Yet crowds followed Him. He performed numerous miracles in the presence of thousands of Jews, and many Romans. Many centurions knew Him; and, on one occasion, shortly before His death, He rode into Jerusalem surrounded by a vast crowd, and created a most

unwonted stir in the streets, and in the courts of the temple itself. He was the subject of a public trial before the procurator, and was condemned to the death of a malefactor. At His execution, it is alleged that there was an extraordinary natural phenomenon ; also that graves were opened, many of their occupants coming to life and walking into the Holy City, where they appeared "unto many." He was buried by a rich Jew, and, according to the account, rose again in about thirty-six hours, and appeared at various times afterwards to hundreds of people. The fact of the disappearance of His body is said to have been known to the authorities, who contented themselves with the assumption that His disciples had stolen the corpse. Finally, He, in the presence of numbers of people, and from a spot close to Jerusalem, ascends into the clouds. The people separate ; and human nature being much the same then as it is now, it may be assumed that they did not conceal the stupendous miracle to which they had been witness. It is incredible that no Roman official heard of this unparalleled event. Yet no record is made of it ; and the outside world, by its silence, appears entirely oblivious of one and all of these remarkable incidents.

The eastern portion of the Mediterranean was not then in a state of savagery. There were manuscript documents ; there were learned men ; there were abundant witnesses of these occurrences. But not a single record has been preserved to posterity, except what are to be found in the writings of men who were enthusiastic believers in the personality of Jesus Christ. Saul of Tarsus, then a young man of not less than twenty-five years of age, and studying at Jerusalem, was, apparently, for some time after the

Ascension, quite ignorant of the facts of the astounding story which had agitated so many of his countrymen, including the powerful Sanhedrim. He was a man of exceptional intelligence and cultivation, but appears to have been quite oblivious to what had been going on around him.

It might be supposed that the magnetic personality of Jesus Christ would have had some effect in agitating the minds of those who were not His followers. Contemporary history is silent on the subject. It is, indeed, alleged by the followers of Christ that Pontius Pilate was overawed by the majesty of His deportment ; but no record is left by the staff who surrounded him. Not one of them was sufficiently interested to write his experiences to his friends, or to leave behind him any note which throws light on this remarkable trial.

But there is a still more extraordinary circumstance in the life and character of Jesus which demands attention. The disciples had lived in intimate personal communion with their great Teacher for a period of two or three years. They were with Him daily, were eye-witnesses to His miracles, and hour by hour imbibed from Him what some of them afterwards asserted to be convincing proofs of His origin and the object of His mission upon earth. They listened to His discourses with rapt attention, and were at all times subject to His marvellous influence. Yet, so little permanent was the impression which he made upon the twelve, that one actually betrayed Him ; and the rest, when the hour of trial came, forsook Him and fled. They had been cautioned that a dangerous time was coming (Matt. xxvi. 31) : " Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended in me this night : for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep

of the flock shall be scattered abroad.....But Peter answered, and said unto him, If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended....." A few hours later and Peter's boastful courage is gone, as we learn in the 69th and following verses: "And a maid came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilæan. But he denied them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and saith unto them that were there, This man also was with Jesus the Nazarene. And again he denied with an oath, I know not the man. And after a little while they that stood by came and said to Peter, Of a truth thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and swear, I know not the man....."

Before, and since, the time of Christ instances have not been wanting of fidelity to the death of servants and slaves to their masters, pupils to their teachers, sailors and soldiers to their chiefs, subjects in thousands to their kings and queens fighting in a desperate cause. Simple faith in the mission or office of those for whom they have died has been the only incentive. Yet here, in this history, we have the greatest Man that ever lived, possessed of the most remarkable powers, which He constantly exhibited to twelve men of His own choice, entirely deserted when it came to the critical test. In the crowd which followed Him to execution there was not one of them to step forward and offer to bear the burden of the cross. One, the youngest, claims to have been present at Calvary; but the Synoptists do not mention the fact. It has been frequently put forward in their defence that the disciples were poor, uneducated men,

who had no proper conception of the real nature of their Master ; but this excuse cannot be supported in the face of their numerous utterances showing that they knew very well who the Man they followed claimed to be, and of the prayer of Christ Himself : " I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes : yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight," which, if it did not refer immediately to His companions (the most probable solution), was distinctly an allusion to the futility of learning in the search after God ; but, what follows, points to the word " babes" as referring to the disciples, for He goes on to say : " No one knoweth the Son save the Father, neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal *him*. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light " (Matt. xi.). In the gospel of Luke, Jesus Christ is represented as turning to His disciples after the words " reveal him," and saying privately : " Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see ; for I say unto you, that many prophets and kings desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not ; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not." In Matt. xiii. 11, He is represented as saying to His disciples : " Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." Again, in Matt. xix. 28 : " And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit upon the

throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my name's sake shall receive a hundredfold and shall inherit eternal life." Again, in John x. 29, 30: "My Father, which hath given *them* unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

It cannot, therefore, be denied that Jesus gave His followers every opportunity of learning, in full, His own conviction of His close relationship to God, and His power to ensure to them, after death, an eternity of everlasting bliss. Nothing was wanting to take away the sting of death from their eyes. It is an amazing fact, that not one of them had sufficient courage to suffer with Him. The defection of Peter is the more extraordinary, because he is represented as having openly confessed his Master: "He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. xvi. 16). Jesus replies: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven....." He then prohibits His disciples from spreading abroad their knowledge of His true nature—"they should tell no man that he was the Christ."

Not only the disciples, but some of their relatives, appeared to recognise the Almighty claims of Jesus Christ. "Then came the mother of the sons of Zebedee with her sons, worshipping *him*, and asking a certain thing of him. And he saith unto her, What wouldest thou? She saith unto him, Command that

these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy Kingdom" (Matt. xx. 20). The indignation of the other disciples at what they deemed the presumption of James, John, and their mother shows that they entered fully into the significance of the request, and that they appreciated the fact that special rewards would, after death, be conferred upon those who were the companions of Christ, and believed in His Godhead.

The immediate personal influence of Christ over the minds of His chosen followers was not then so great as that of hundreds of distinguished men before His time and since. Had it been so, they would have refused to be separated from Him, and would have cheerfully shared his ignominious death.

The authors of the Gospels were men evidently well acquainted with the Hebrew books, afterwards made up into the Old Testament Canon. Their quotations are numerous, and they all evince a great leaning towards proving the fulfilment of what they considered to be ancient prophecy. So much is this the case that it may be questioned whether certain phrases are not deliberately copied from the Hebrew books, and put into the mouth of Jesus Christ, and others of the less important speakers of His time. Thus, for instance, in Matt. xxvi. 14 Judas Iscariot is represented as going to the chief priests and saying: "What are ye willing to give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they weighed unto him thirty pieces of silver." Again, xxvii. 7: "And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the

thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was priced, whom *certain* of the children of Israel did price; and they gave them for the potter's field as the Lord appointed me."

The prophecy quoted here is not in Jeremiah, but it is in Zechariah, showing that the writer was quoting from memory in a loose way. It runs thus: "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my hire; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my hire thirty *pieces* of silver. And the Lord saith unto me, Cast it unto the potter, the goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty *pieces* of silver and cast them unto the potter, in the house of the Lord" (Zech. xi. 12, 13).

In this instance there appears to be considerable doubt whether the writer was not using the words of Zechariah to describe the scene between Judas and the high priests, instead of, as he wishes his readers to believe, making his narrative, and then calling attention to the prophecy of Zechariah. Who could have accurately reported the words of Judas to the high priests or of the high priests to Judas? It was not usual for the high priests to communicate incidents of this sort to the people, and they certainly would not have done so to followers of Christ. Judas certainly would not have betrayed his own rascality, and, besides, immediately after the last incident, he "went and hanged himself."

There are frequent quotations in the gospels which have no real point, as the passages in the Old Testament are evidently not intended to refer to the occurrences mentioned in the New. It would be impracticable to mention all these dubious extracts; but we will recall a few examples:—

Matt. i. 22, 23: "Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son,

"And they shall call his name Immanuel."

This quotation from Isaiah vii. has been alluded to in Chapter III. of this essay. If the chapter is taken as a whole, and not mutilated by simply extracting verse 14, it will be seen that Ahaz was in great trouble as to the siege of Jerusalem by Rezin, King of Syria, and Pekah, King of Israel. Isaiah goes to him, to allay his fears; and, in the course of the conversation, declares: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, when he knoweth to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken. The Lord shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; *even* the King of Assyria."

Whatever may be the precise interpretation of this prophecy, it is certain that it referred to the existing trouble, the siege of Jerusalem by the kings of Syria and Israel, and did not refer to the birth of a Messiah which is alleged to have occurred over 700 years later. Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, came to the rescue of Ahaz, as was foretold by Isaiah, fell upon Damascus "and took it, and carried the people captive to Kir, and slew Rezin." Pekah was assassinated about the same time by Hoshea, the son of Elah (2 Kings xv. and xvi.).

In Matt. ii. 14, 15, 16, the writer of the Gospel states: "And he arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son."

The prophecy here alluded to is in Hosea xi.:—

"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. As they called them, so they went from them: and they sacrificed unto the Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. Yet I taught Ephraim to go; I took them on my arms; but they knew not that I healed them....." Plain readers will probably consider that this passage relates exclusively to the Exodus. It certainly does not refer to the return of Joseph and Mary, who were not connected with any sacrifice to Baalim.

Verse 15, chapter xxxi. of Jeremiah has apparently no reference to the slaughter of the innocents by Herod, though such is asserted by the Gospel writer; nor does Isaiah xl. 3 bear the interpretation which is put upon it by the same author: "The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a high way for our God."

In Matt. iv. 6 Satan is represented as saying: "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written:—

"He shall give his angels charge concerning thee:
And on their hands they shall bear thee up,
Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone."

This is a quotation from Psalm xci. 11, 12. It has no reference to the Son of God. The Psalm finishes with the promise, "With long life will I satisfy him,

and show him my salvation." The tenour of the entire Psalm shows that it is a psalm of thanksgiving for Almighty providence over man. It begins :—

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High

Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

It may be fairly inferred that Satan said nothing of the sort, and that the words given as his temptation are merely loose writing or invention of the Synoptist.

Reading on in the fourth chapter of Matthew, there is a quotation from Isaiah ix. It is a remarkable passage, and precedes one still more remarkable—in fact, the most mysterious of the prophet's utterances, one that it is natural should be called in as a forecast of the birth of the Messiah. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." But see what follows: Verse 11: "Therefore the Lord shall set up on high against him the adversaries of Rezin, and shall stir up his enemies; the Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. Yet the people hath not turned unto him that smote them, neither have they sought the Lord of Hosts. Therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel head and tail, palm-branch and rush, in one day....."

It would be presumption to attempt to interpret this chapter; but it is worthy of remark that Isaiah should again revert to the anxiety of the day, the invasion of Rezin and Pekah, and again allude to the means of rescue, as if this subject was in his mind

throughout. As Rezin was king of Syria, the word Syrians appears to be a mistake for Assyrians.

Under the heading "Babel and Bible," Mr. W. St. Chad Boscawen writes to the *Times*, February, 1903, as follows :—

".....As to Dr. Delitzsch's denial of the Messianic doctrine of the Old Testament being directed to Jesus, he is not alone. I have long pointed out in your columns and elsewhere the strong evidence there is that most of the Messianic passages in the Old Testament can be found *verbatim* in the Babylonian hymns to Merodach, who in the later Babylonian creed had a distinctly Messianic office. He was believed to have founded and ruled in Babylon, and it was believed he would do so again. He it was who was the divine mediator, the restorer of peace, and the healer. The first of the so-called Messianic passages—that in Genesis iii. 15—is almost a direct quotation from the Fourth Creation Tablet. The relation of the Messianic tradition to Jesus is in a large number of cases very doubtful, and often the result of deliberate reading in. I will not trespass on your space more than to refer to one passage, that in Isaiah ix. The epithets here might, and, indeed, probably were, taken from the litanies to Merodach in Tablets iv. and vii. of the Creation Series, where we have these titles of Merodach—the Child, the Son, the First-born Son, the Counsellor, the Restorer of Peace, the Mighty God, the Lord, the Director of Mercy and Judgment—upon whom is conferred the Sovereignty of the whole earth and everlasting Lordship. The Hebrew Messianic hope was that of a mundane and temporal kingdom, I am convinced; and surely it was the belief of St. Peter when he rebuked Jesus....."

It must be repeated here that nearly half the chapters of the book attributed to Isaiah were not written by him, according to the opinion of competent critics. Among the dubious chapters is the fifty-third, which, to many earnest people, is the most attractive of all.

The searching light to which the New Testament has been subjected during the last century revealed many passages in the gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, of doubtful authenticity, and others of doubtful interpretation. The last twelve verses of the gospel according to St. Mark are found in the revised version with a significant marginal note, "The two oldest Greek manuscripts and some other authorities omit from verse nine to the end. Some authorities have a different ending to the gospel."

One of the most exquisitely touching incidents recorded in the gospel according to St. John is that of the woman taken in adultery (chapter viii.). The author of *Ecce Homo*, after introducing the accusers and their victim (p. 119), thus describes the attitude of Christ upon the occasion: "The effect upon him was such as might have been produced upon many since, but perhaps upon scarcely any man that ever lived before. He was seized with an intolerable sense of shame. He could not meet the eye of the crowd, or of the accusers, and perhaps at that moment least of all of the woman. Standing as he did in the midst of an eager multitude that did not in the least appreciate his feelings, he could not escape. In his burning embarrassment and confusion he stooped down so as to hide his face, and began writing with his finger on the ground. His tormentors continued their clamour, until he raised his head for a moment

and said, 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her,' and then instantly returned to his former attitude. They had a glimpse, perhaps, of the glowing blush upon his face, and awoke suddenly with astonishment to a new sense of their condition and their conduct. The older men naturally felt it first, and slunk away; the younger followed their example. The crowd dissolved, and left Christ alone with the woman. Not till then could he bear to stand upright; and when he lifted himself up, consistently with his principle, he dismissed the woman, as having no commission to interfere with the office of the civil judge.

"But the mighty power of living purity had done its work. He had refused to judge a woman, but he had judged a whole crowd. He had awakened the slumbering conscience in many hardened hearts, given them a new delicacy, a new ideal, a new view and reading of the Mosaic law."

A great deal has been said from time to time of the gospels being their own witnesses. It is asserted that, so far back as eighteen hundred years ago, it was impossible for any writer to have composed a narrative so intrinsically pure and beautiful except from accurate history. And, if there is one incident in the life of Jesus Christ which exhibits His sinless humanity in the most striking light, this is the one. Yet few competent critics amongst our divines now doubt that this story is an interpolation, and was not originally in the record of St. John, or his friend or friends, who wrote the fourth gospel. In the revised version it is entered in brackets with a marginal note: "Most of the ancient authorities omit John vii. 53 to viii. 11. Those which contain it vary much from

each other." Practically, it is considered as a forgery.

Dean Farrar, in his article on the "Literature of Religious Criticism" (*Library of Famous Literature*, Vol. VII.), says: "It is no longer disputable that the last sixteen verses of St. Mark are a later and dubious appendix to that Gospel; that the narrative of the woman taken in adultery in John viii. 1-11—though bearing evidence of its own truth—was no part of the original Gospel: that the text about the three heavenly witnesses (1 John v. 7, 8) is spurious; that the verse about the angel troubling the water of the Pool of Bethesda (John v. 4) should have no place in the genuine text of the Fourth gospel; that the Eunuch's confession is an interpolation in the text of Acts viii. 37; and that the word 'fasting' has been introduced by ascetic scribes into Matthew xvii. 21, Mark ix. 29, 1 Cor. vii. 5, Acts x. 30."

As will be seen in the revised version, there are such strong doubts as to the authenticity of Matthew xvi., part of verse 2 to end of verse 3, xvii. 21, xviii. 11, xxiii. 14; Mark vii. 16, xi. 26, xv. 28; Luke xvii. 36, xxiii. 17, that they are omitted.

In *Science and Christian Tradition*, p. 223, Professor Huxley makes the following appropriate remarks: "Now, let any reasonable man ask himself the question—If, after an approximate settlement of the Canon of the New Testament, and even later than the fourth and fifth centuries, literary fabricators had the skill and audacity to make such additions and interpolations as these, what may they have done when no one had thought of a canon, when oral tradition, still unfixed, was regarded as more valuable than such written records as may have existed in the latter

portion of the first century? Or, to take the other alternative, if those who gradually settled the canon did not know of the existence of the oldest codices which have come down to us; or if, knowing them, they rejected their authority, what is to be thought of their competency as critics of the text?"

But there are also direct contradictions in the gospels. Those according to Matthew and Luke differ widely in the particular of the genealogy of Christ, or, rather, the genealogy of the foster-father of Christ. Both are anxious to prove the true descent from David, in order that prophecy might be represented as fulfilled. In either case the descent from David is a mere conceit, as great care is taken to impress upon us that Joseph was not the father of Jesus. In the one case there are recorded forty-two generations from Abraham, in the other fifty-five. Matthew gives the descent through Solomon, the fourth surviving son of Bathsheba; and Luke through Nathan, the third son. It is a discreditable genealogy. Joseph apparently claims amongst his ancestors Perez, one of the twin sons of Tamar by her incestuous connection with her father-in-law Judah; Obed, a son of Boaz by Ruth the Moabitess, a direct descendant of one of the daughters of Lot by her incestuous connection with her father; as before mentioned, Bathsheba is also brought in. Rahab is also mentioned by Matthew i. 5; but there is no proof that this was the harlot who treacherously admitted and concealed the spies of Joshua, though annotators of the authorised version imply that such was the case; and the special mention in Matthew, where wives' names are usually omitted, lends colour to the supposition.

In the gospel according to Mark, which is the

earliest of the synoptic writings, the Lord's Prayer is not mentioned, nor the Sermon on the Mount; and the accounts given by Matthew and Luke of the sermon are rendered in some respects differently; moreover, one is said to have been delivered from a mount, the other from a level place; and, as Professor Huxley points out (p. 275): "While there are only 29 verses in the sermon on the Plain, there are 107 in the sermon on the Mount; the excess in length of the latter being chiefly due to the long interpolations, one of 30 verses before and one of 30 verses after, the middlemost parallelism with Luke." It is also pointed out by the same writer that in the gospel according to St. John it is represented that the "crucifixion took place before the Passover; which involves the denial, by implication, of the truth of the synoptic story."

It is very difficult to account for the manner in which the evidence reached some of the writers. Allowing, for the moment, that Matthew and John, the disciples, wrote the gospels to which their names are attached, and that Peter dictated to Mark what he should write, it might possibly be accepted that the promise contained in John xiv. 26, "But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you," ensures their testimony being true; though, if these gospels were not written or dictated by the disciples, it proves nothing at all. But, in any case, Luke's version is not covered by any promise of such plenary inspiration. Nor could his master, St. Paul, claim any special fitness for describing the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, who, as far as we know, he

never saw on earth. Luke does not even claim that he was instructed by St. Paul. He begins his gospel with these words: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately, from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed." It does not appear that Luke had any special mission to write, nor is it at all clear why he was canonised. Very little is known about him. He was what would be called in the present day a medical missionary, and he accompanied St. Paul, for a short time, in the capacity of physician. It was necessary for St. Paul to have someone in attendance upon him, if, as Dean Farrar and other critics think, he was subject to attacks of epilepsy.

Now, it is in the highest degree improbable that Luke could either by himself—or through a third party—have known accurately any of the circumstances related in the first chapter of his gospel. Zacharias and Elisabeth would be most unlikely to gossip on the subject of their experiences. Before the birth of John, Zacharias was dumb, and Elisabeth hid herself five months (i. 24). It is hardly to be believed that the Virgin Mary would speak of the honour prepared for her and communicated by the heavenly visitant. It is even less likely that she would refer to it after the birth of Jesus. As regards Zacharias, it is true that, after the birth of John, the peculiar facts of the case

were "noised abroad"; but it is most improbable that either his prophecy (i. 68-79) or the magnificat of Mary (i. 46-55) could have been faithfully passed down to the historian: they bear marks of editorship. The remarkable vision to the shepherds is also one which, in the nature of things, would not be accurately reported, when the humble and superstitious character of the first informants is taken into account. It is unlikely that Luke was born at this time. Through how many mouths would such a story have to pass before it reached him? And it was not committed to writing till eighty years after the event! In the present day we should demand a great deal more evidence of such phenomenal occurrences before we could accept these incidents as historically true; and in the case of Luke at least, whatever opinions we may have as to the inspiration of the other two Synoptists, there can be no reason why the same tests should not be applied as we consider necessary for credibility in our own time.

The gospel of Luke alone is responsible for the faith of the Christian world in the following incidents: The annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist; the annunciation of the birth of Jesus; the visitation of Mary to Elisabeth; her return to Nazareth; birth and infancy of John the Baptist; the visit of the angel to the shepherds; the song of praise by the heavenly host; the adoration of Jesus by the shepherds; the presentation and purification; the childhood of Jesus; the first preaching of Christ in Galilee, in the Synagogue; His third retirement for solitary prayer; His raising the son of the widow of Nain; the adoration of Christ by the woman which was a sinner, in the Pharisee's house; His journey to

Jerusalem through Samaria; the jealousy of the Samaritans; the anger of the "Sons of Thunder"; the mission of "the Seventy"; the return of "the Seventy"; the parable of "the Good Samaritan"; the visit to Martha and Mary; the discourses on the rich fool, the murdered Galilæans, and the barren fig tree; the healing of the woman with an infirmity; the message to Herod; the healing of the man with the dropsy; the parables of the "Lost Coin," the "Prodigal Son," the "Unjust Steward," "Dives and Lazarus"; the healing of the ten lepers; the parable of the "Unjust Judge," and of the "Pharisee and Publican"; the visit of Christ to the house of Zacchæus; the angel in the garden of Gethsemane; the dismissal of Christ by Pilate to Herod, and by Herod back to Pilate, mocked, and arrayed in gorgeous apparel; the words on the cross, "Father, forgive them," and "to the penitent thief": "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise"; "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"; the return of the women to the tomb; and the appearance to Peter after the resurrection.

Not one of these forty-five incidents is mentioned in any of the other gospels. Of the three Synoptists, Luke is the one who was least likely to know the real facts of the life of Jesus Christ, and he was the last to write. He had a great predilection for angels, and is responsible for the belief of Christians in their appearance not only to the shepherds at the time of Christ's birth, to Zacharias, the Virgin Mary, and to Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, but in the angels who appeared at the Ascension (Acts i. 10), the angel who released St. Peter (Acts xii. 7), and the angel who informed St. Paul he would

have a safe voyage to "stand before Cæsar" (Acts xxvii. 28).

Amongst the above parables which are recorded in Luke's gospel alone is one which defies reasonable explanation, that of the "Unjust Steward" (xvi. 1-13). If the parable ended with the eighth verse, the commentators would have had a comparatively easy task, and no great difficulty would be felt in accepting the interpretation that Christ meant to teach that it would be well with all men if they applied the same astuteness to their search after the kingdom of God that they employed in the pursuit of their mundane affairs. And it is only with this portion of the discourse that most of them attempt to grapple. But the following verses do not admit of this easy method of disposing of the question: "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles. He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." This passage prohibits the interpretation that Christ intended to praise the cleverness of the steward for striking off a part of the debtor's account to his lord; and leaves us in doubt as to what ground the latter had for his commendation of him.

To ordinary people, whether they lived in Palestine in the first century or in England in the twentieth, it would appear that the steward added very sensibly to his former defalcations, for which he was to be discharged, by acquitting the debtors of a portion of their account for mercenary reasons of his own. He had been "unrighteous" throughout the whole of the transactions, was altogether undeserving of being entrusted with the "true riches," and had tried to serve two masters. No explanation, such as that of the salary of the steward being by commission on debts or so forth, will meet the case. Verse 9 is entirely enigmatical, and opposed to the usual teaching of Christ, which was "Sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow, for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." The vulgar narrative of the unjust steward is that of a man who played a low Jewish trick upon his master; and of the master, apparently forgetting that he himself was the sufferer, commending him for his sharp practice. It contains no moral, and, as it is in striking contrast to the usual teaching of Christ, which was always simple, clear, and easy to comprehend, we may conclude it is an invention of Luke, or of some copyist who was incapable of a proper appreciation of the real mission of Christ. In any case, it detracts much from the value of the gospel, and creates doubt as to its general accuracy.

Several earnest writers on the gospel histories lay great stress upon the majestic self-assertion of Christ as proof of His Godhead. But they do not appear to note the inconsistencies of the narrative with reference to this same self-assertion. In Matthew xxv. 31-46

we find the best instance: "But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in....."

The rest of the chapter is in the same lofty strain of royal self-assertion. But two days later Jesus went through His supreme agony in the garden of Gethsemane. "And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and sore troubled. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: abide ye here and watch with me. And he went forward a little and fell on his face, and prayed, saying: O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Again, a second time, he went away, and prayed, saying, O, my Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came again and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. And he left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying again the

same words. Then cometh he to the disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest; behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me."

The first question which occurs to a careful inquirer anxious to sift the evidence for the truth of the narrative is—Who could have informed the writer of the gospel of the tenour of these prayers in the garden? Only three of the disciples were near, and they were apparently not within earshot. Moreover, we are distinctly told that they were asleep. In their attempts to show the truth of the story, English clergymen sometimes suggest that Christ himself revealed the incident to His disciples after His resurrection. This is extremely improbable; an admission of weakness before His death would be totally inconsistent with His whole attitude; and, as there is nothing in the gospels to support such a theory, it may be dismissed.

But what a change is depicted here from the lofty position and tone assumed two days before, and implied in the words reported in John viii. 58, "Before Abraham was, I am!" On the former occasion Christ is a heavenly king subject only to His Father in heaven. He is to come in majesty, surrounded by a heavenly host, to judge the world, and to separate mankind into two classes, one of which He will appoint to everlasting bliss, the other to "eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels"; but now, in the garden, He is represented as exhibiting the natural weakness of a human being conscious that he is to die a humiliating death which he would fain escape if such escape were possible

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with a consistent discharge of his duty. Luke, with his usual audacity in relating incidents not mentioned elsewhere, says: "And there appeared unto him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground." Mark adds to Christ's speech to the disciples after the first prayer: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." John does not mention the prayers in Gethsemane at all. The whole story of these prayers as found in the synoptic gospels is, in the highest degree, improbable. The method of the termination of Christ's ministry upon earth was, according to all accounts, well known to Himself. He was fully aware that He was to be crucified about the time of the Passover; that such was the Will of God, and that no supplication could arrest His fate. If, which we do not admit, he possessed the Omnipotence, Omnipresence, and Omniscience of the Almighty, He must have been well aware of the inutility of such an appeal, so inconsistent with the Divinity claimed for Him by His enthusiastic followers.

Before leaving this subject, it is necessary to touch upon the theory of Dean Liddon and other writers, that Jesus Christ was either Divine, or that He was a wilful impostor, or that He was insane. The time is not far distant when the common sense of the world will object to be driven into a corner by a demand to accept one of these alternatives. A man may be so influenced with a superlative degree of the Almighty spirit of wisdom and love as to be to all purposes, and to all appearance, "Divine." He may, moreover, be possessed of such a profound sense of the importance

of His mission as to claim the highest authority for all His words and actions, and to appear to be in the most personal intimate communion with God; He may be so intensely absorbed by his task as to claim regal functions and to be a part of His Father in heaven; He may do all this, and yet be neither an impostor nor insane. Some very remarkable people have lived on the earth since the time of Christ, who made claim, though in a somewhat lesser degree, to having received a direct mandate from the Almighty, yet they have not been considered, in the ordinary sense of the words, either charlatans or insane. Two notable instances are Mahommed and Joan of Arc. People have walked the earth in hundreds who, without claiming an especial relation to God, have enjoyed an overmastering belief in their own powers and in their life's work, people of extraordinary diligence and intellectual vigour, and who have swayed the thoughts and actions of immense bodies of their fellow creatures. Some of them have done a great deal of harm, but they have been neither insane nor impostors. It would be a bold person who would call the late Mr. Gladstone, for instance, either mad or an impostor; nevertheless, there are certain acts of his, acts upon which he specially prided himself, which are now regarded by a great majority of his fellow-countrymen as most grievous errors. Now that the glamour of that great personality is gone, is there an educated man who cannot see the abject folly of the peace made with the Boers in 1881, the delay in the rescue of Gordon, or the attempt to separate Ireland from Great Britain?

The fact is, we are not at all obliged to declare for the Divinity of Jesus Christ or for His insanity or

fraud. He was certainly gifted with extraordinary powers of hypnotism, coupled with an unshaken belief in His mission, and a singularly pure and holy nature. But if the statements made in the gospels are all to be believed, He was not infallible nor, indeed, wholly consistent in His teaching. For example, in Matt. xv. 22-28: "And behold, a Canaanitish woman came out from those borders and cried, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. And he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs....."

It must be admitted that this is a singular passage, not in accordance with injunctions to the "seventy," nor with His general teaching on other occasions. Nowhere else does He assert that "I was not sent *except* to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," though it is true he does say to his disciples (Matt. x. 5)—"Go not into *any* way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The allusion to the children's meat is insulting. Jesus is represented as having come down upon earth to save the world—not the small portion of it covered by the descendants of Abraham; and He repeatedly announced the universality of His mission. There is no reason to suppose that He ever made a deliberately false statement or concealed a truth in order to achieve some ulterior object. The explanation given by certain

commentators that His answers to the woman were intended to try her faith cannot be brought into line with the general trend of His teaching.

Again, He is represented as prophesying His second coming as an event which was to take place in the near future. Thus Matt. x. 23, "I say unto you, 'Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.'" Then Matt. xvi. 28, "Verily I say unto you, There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Mark ix. 1, "Verily I say unto you, There be some here of them that stand *by*, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power." Again in Luke ix. 27, "But I tell you of a truth, There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God."

We have every right to accept as the sense of this downright statement that which is obvious in the plain words in which it is clothed. If it means anything at all, it is that some of the disciples would not die before the second coming. So the Christ's followers understood it, and so it was interpreted by St. Paul many years after. But, if any misunderstanding is possible in reading the above passages, it would appear to be set at rest by Luke xxi. 27. "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh." This saying terminates the prophecy of the siege of Jerusalem (v. 20), "But when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand," and

is in immediate connection with that event. In Matt. xxiv. 3-31 the time is still more explicitly defined:—"And as he sat on the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall* be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?' And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man lead you astray.....": Then follows the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem—"the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet"; finishing with these words, "But immediately, after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Mark's account is much the same, but a mysterious verse is added (xiii. 20), "And except the Lord had shortened the days, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he chose, he shortened the days."

In *The Divinity of Our Lord* (Bampton Lectures, 1866) Dr. Liddon says very truly: "But it is obvious to rejoin that in cases like that before us [this is not in allusion to the second coming] language must be morally held to mean what it is understood to mean by those to whom it is addressed. After all, language is designed to convey thought; and if a speaker perceives that his real mind has not been

conveyed by one statement, he is bound to correct the deficiencies of that statement by another."

The miracles do not present an insuperable obstacle to belief in the pure manhood of Jesus Christ. Many others besides Him are represented in both the Old and New Testaments as gifted with the power of performing miracles. Miracles are merely phenomenal acts, the natural reasons of the performance of which, we have not sufficient knowledge yet to understand. As distinguished from those of the prophets and the apostles, there is only one of Christ's (always excepting the Birth, Resurrection, and Ascension) which it is entirely beyond the imagination and conception of people of our own time to attribute to natural causes—the alleged feeding of the four thousand and the five thousand. Professor Huxley dismisses these miracles with the following words (*Science and Christian Tradition*, p. 201): "We not only have a right to demand, but are morally bound to require, strong evidence in its favour before we even take it into serious consideration. But what is the evidence in this case? It is merely that of those three books which also concur in testifying to the truth of the monstrous legend of the herd of swine."

Mr. Huxley's position is surely perfectly correct. If certain events are stated to have occurred which are, without question, beyond the ken of human experience, the onus of proof, or, at any rate, of producing good testimony, rests with the narrator. He has no right (this is a truth very seldom recognised by our preachers) to say, "Can you prove that such or such an event did not take place?" His hearers have the undoubted right to say, "This is an event

outside all known human experience ; what testimony have you that it *did* occur ?” As the foundations of the synoptic gospels were evidently taken from a common source (see *Encyclopædia Britannica*, ninth edition), the mere fact that certain striking events are recorded in all three, in almost identical language, is no proof of the historical truth of the original story. The Triple Tradition, edited by three different people, each inserting here and there an anecdote which he has heard independently himself, and occasionally a little homily of his own composition ;—this is the gospel which the Christian world is called upon to accept as the truthful narrative of the life of the greatest man who ever lived.

An instance of how one of Christ's sayings is altered in two different gospels is the conversation with the rich man (Matt. xix. 16, 18 ; Mark x. 17, 19) : “ And behold, one came to him and said, Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life ? And he said unto him, Why askest thou me concerning that which is good ? One there is who is good : but if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments.....” The marginal note draws attention to the other edition of this dialogue. “ And as he was going forth into the way, there ran one to him, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life ? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good ? none is good save one, *even* God. Thou knowest the commandments.....” Luke edits this passage much in the same way. It will be observed that the transposition of the adjective “ good ” alters the entire meaning of Christ's reply. Matthew's version appears to be the most probable.

The reply, as given by Mark and Luke, is opposed to the usual utterances of Christ, and might be quoted indeed as evidence that He was not what He repeatedly asserted Himself to be, "Divine."

There is also an extraordinary passage in Mark xiii. 32. Christ, after describing the last day, says, "But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." This is rendered in Matt. xxiv. 36, "But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only." This pronouncement has caused, at one time and another, a good deal of controversy. Dr. Liddon's remarks on the point are extremely unsatisfactory:—"If then we should understand that our Lord in His human soul was, at the time of His speaking, actually ignorant of the day of the last judgment, we shall find ourselves sheltered by Fathers of unquestioned orthodoxy." No doubt! but this does not help us much. The deliberate statement of Christ is inconsistent with the "Omnipresence, Omniscience, and Omnipotence" claimed for Him by a Church which loses no opportunity of asserting His "Oneship" with the Father; and it cannot be reconciled with His assumption of Royal prerogative as the "Son of Man" coming in His glory, "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." In the face of this, and many other passages of majestic self-assertion, it is not easy, for those who claim that Jesus Christ was God, to explain away a confession of ignorance such as the one we have mentioned, by attributing it as due to His human



nature. Either He *was*, or He *was not*, God. If He *was*—and this is the Catholic religion—He was Omnipotent; and the form in which He condescended to manifest Himself on earth would not prevent Him from retaining His Omniscience.

The magnetic or hypnotic character of the person of Jesus Christ seems to be indicated in the story of the woman "having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, and could not be healed of any." It is related in Luke viii. 44 that she "came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately the issue of her blood stanch'd. And Jesus said, Who is it that touch'd me? And when all denied, Peter said, and they that were with him, Master, the multitudes press thee and crush thee. But Jesus said, Some one did touch me: for I perceived that power had gone forth from me."

When the reasons for the death of Christ are under consideration, the inevitableness of it is generally put forward as the sole explanation, the usual theory being that this humiliating and vulgar execution was absolutely necessary as an atonement for the sins of mankind, which are more or less due to the transgression of the first man, Adam. No account is ever taken of the aggressive nature of His discourses, or of the hatred which was aroused by His unmeasured abuse of those Jews who honestly believed His assertion of a Divine origin and authority to be false; see Luke xiii. 32. His message to Herod, "Go and say to that fox....." Matt. xv. 7, "Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying:—

"This people honoureth me with their lips;
But their heart is far from me.

But in vain do they worship me,
Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.
And he called to him the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man....." Matt. xii. 34, "Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things?" The twenty-third chapter is devoted to nothing else but abuse of the scribes and Pharisees:—"But all their works they do for to be seen of men....." "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter....." "Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup....." "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity....." "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and garnish the tombs of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets....." "Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?....." and so on. Again, in Luke xviii. 11, we find the story of the Pharisee and the publican: and on one occasion when He was teaching in the temple, Matt. xxi. 23, "The chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him," and Jesus saith unto them (v. 31, 32), "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him

not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him.....”

It should be borne in mind that Jesus Himself had enjoined silence upon His disciples as to His alleged Divinity—see Matt. xvi. 20—after the heartfelt confession of Peter, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”.....“Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ.” Again, in Matt. xii. 15, 16, “And he healed them all, and charged them that they should not make him known.”

In the present day—in this twentieth century—in this country, the effect of an enthusiast standing before a multitude, singling out from that multitude the members of an influential and respected section, and pouring upon them torrents of contemptuous abuse, might be laughter, but quite possibly brickbats, and a riot to follow. Not many centuries back, such an orator would certainly have been killed. If such a scene were to take place in India at the present moment, say that a Christian missionary were to harangue a crowd of Mahommedans or Brahmins in a bazaar, and cover the leaders of their religion with vituperation, his life would not be worth five minutes' purchase. When the present writer was serving on the Coast of Zanzibar, in the year 1873, a young, enthusiastic missionary, fresh from England, endeavoured to preach a little homily to an Arab caravan on the evils of the slave trade. The caravan had halted for a midday rest on the road some ten miles inland. The Arabs allowed the preacher to continue his sermon until the time came to continue their journey. They then killed him, buried him on the roadside, and marched on to the Coast. No body of

self-respecting men will tolerate abuse, if that abuse is not backed up with force. The general attitude of Jesus Christ towards those whom He considered unworthy of respect was such as to ensure His eventual death. Not only did He hurl contempt and violent denunciation at the most respected members of the community in the presence of whole crowds; but He was, in their eyes, guilty of a far greater offence—that of blasphemy—He made himself equal with God, in their eyes an unpardonable crime. To do them full justice, this sin of blasphemy was the principal cause which made them resolve to put an end to His life. But even if His assertion of Godhead and Kingship had never reached their ears, the end would have come sooner or later in consequence of His determined hostility to all who did not sympathise with His views.

Accounts of the appearance of Christ, after His alleged resurrection from the dead, are of the most meagre description. He is first seen by Mary Magdalene, who “knew not that it was Jesus,” but supposed Him to be the gardener (John xx. 15). A few hours after this two of the disciples were going “that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was threescore furlongs from Jerusalem. And they communed with each other of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, while they communed and questioned together, that Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him, and he said unto them, What communications are these that ye have one with another, as ye walk? And they stood still, looking sad. And one of them, named

Cleopas, answering said unto him, Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we hoped that it was he which should redeem Israel. Yea, and beside all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass. Moreover certain women of our company amazed us, having been early at the tomb; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the tomb, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they were going: and he made as though he would go further. And they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent. And he went in to abide with them. And it came to pass, when he had sat down with them to meat, he took the bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight."

This account, which is from Luke xxiv., is also in brief, in Mark xvi.; but it is just in that part of the last chapter of Mark's gospel upon which serious doubt has been thrown by the revisers.

Again, a few hours after this incident, Jesus appeared to the disciples at Jerusalem, but in such a form that they were "terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had beheld a spirit." Eight days after this, according to John, He returns through closed doors, and proves to Thomas that it is his Master whom he really beholds. Again, He is said to have manifested Himself to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. Finally, according to Matt. xxviii. 16, He appeared to the eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee, "And when they saw him they worshipped *him* : but some doubted."

The Ascension is recorded by two of the Synoptists, Mark and Luke. Neither had any personal knowledge of the incident, and the account of one is entirely discredited by the revisers. Even if Mark's account had been confirmed by the distinguished scholars who undertook the revision, it is more than probable that the verse 19 in chapter xvi. would have always excited suspicion in the minds of intelligent lay critics: "So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God." Unsupported as it is by any evidence from eye-witnesses, Luke's account of the Ascension from Bethany is worthless.

Strange as are the beliefs of thousands of very able men and women in the absolute historic truth of the gospels, nothing is so remarkable as the implicit belief of all sections of the Christian Church in the Ascension. This astounding phenomenon is related by one man—a physician—who writes the account

quite fifty years after the event. At the time it occurred he was probably a boy; he does not give his informants' names; his story is unsupported by the disciples, or by contemporary history; and it is couched in such a short sentence as to convey the impression of a silly fraud—"And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven." The account by the same writer in the first chapter of the "Acts of the Apostles" gives scarcely more detail. This is all! This extraordinary sight, a man lifted off his feet by an invisible power, and slowly rising into the clouds, is dismissed in a few words, just as we might say, in the present day, that our friend "took the express train to Brighton."

But all the accounts of Jesus Christ after the resurrection are shadowy. His appearances and disappearances through no visible opening are not those of mortal man; they are those of a Being of two or of four dimensions. Even His most devoted followers and intimate companions during the previous three years did not recognise Him at all in some cases, and not without considerable persuasion, in others. It is simply astonishing that such a record has lasted till the present day.

To sum up our notes on the gospels:—

The accounts given by the Synoptists are based upon a former tradition, into which the authors have introduced many additions of their own. The gospel according to St. Mark was written first, and this record is the most reliable. The authors of Matthew and Luke borrowed from Mark. The gospel according to St. Matthew was the second written; and Luke, in addition to borrowing from Mark and Matthew, has

incorporated much extraneous matter of doubtful authority. He is solely responsible for the narration of most of the events which bring so heavy a strain upon our powers of credulity. The fourth gospel, written by some disciple of St. John, is published for a different purpose to the other three, but with full knowledge of their contents; and the author occasionally borrows from them. Not one of the gospels was written till thirty years after the death of their Hero: their respective value as history is very much in inverse proportion to the length of time which elapsed between the death of Christ and the time of their publication. Luke is the least reliable. His gospel was written not less than fifty years after the events it professes to record. The diffuseness and new matter in the narratives increase with the distance of time from the primal tradition. The Synoptists quote the Old Testament in a fraudulent manner, and in many cases borrow the words of the Old Testament to assist in the narration of incidents which they wish to show are the fulfilment of prophecy.

There is, however, abundant evidence to establish the fact that nineteen hundred years ago a Great Teacher and Example lived in Palestine; that He was imbued with a superlative share of the Spirit of God; and that He enunciated truths which have been of inestimable benefit to mankind. But there is not sufficient evidence to lead us to the assumption that He was in Himself Divine, co-equal with Almighty God; and there is none worth the name to justify us in believing in His miraculous Birth, His Resurrection, or His Ascension into heaven. His humiliating death was the natural result of His self-assertion of Divine attributes, and His unmitigated abuse of His opponents.

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The four canonical gospels were chosen out of a much larger number—about forty—in the fourth century. In the *Riddle of the Universe*, pp. 319, 320, Professor Ernst Hæckel says: "As to the four canonical gospels, we now know that they were selected from a host of contradictory and forged manuscripts of the first three centuries by the 318 bishops who assembled at the Council of Nicæa in 327. The entire list of gospels numbered forty; the canonical list contains four. As the contending and mutually-abusive bishops could not agree about the choice, they determined to leave the selection to a miracle. They put all the books (according to the *Synodicon* of Pappus) together underneath the altar, and prayed that the apocryphal books, of human origin, might remain there, and the genuine inspired books might be miraculously placed on the table of the Lord. And that, says tradition, really occurred!"....."The most important sources after the gospels are the fourteen separate (and generally forged) epistles of Paul. The genuine Pauline epistles, *three* in number, according to recent criticism—to the Romans, Galatians, and Corinthians—were written before the canonical gospels, and certainly contain less incredible miraculous matter than they. They are also more concerned than the gospels to adjust themselves with a rational view of the world."

Considering the number of interpolations already found by the revisers of the Authorised version, the doubts thrown upon many passages, the obvious contradictions in fact, and inconsistencies in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, as that life is represented in the gospels; considering also the age in which these gospels were written—no printing press—no reporters

—no copyright—and the boundless superstition, veneration, and fanatical reverence of the writers and copyists for the Hero of the story; we do well to doubt their historical accuracy, especially with regard to those three exceptionally phenomenal events—the Virgin Birth of Christ, His Resurrection from the dead, and His Ascension into heaven.

The account of Saint Paul given by himself and his friend Luke, the physician and amanuensis, is not open to the same objections as are indicated above with reference to the gospels. There is less of the marvellous, and a far more common-sense narrative altogether. The marvellous is not, indeed, eliminated, but what there is of it is nothing more than we should expect for that age. There is no doubt as to the main facts of Paul's life and ministry. Luke might be adrift in writing the life and sayings of Christ whom he had not seen; but he could not make the same kind of blunders in a biography of the man with whom for some years he had lived on terms of intimate personal friendship.

The first we are told of Saul of Tarsus is at the death of Stephen, Acts vii. 58: "and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul."....."And Saul was consenting unto his death." Saul was probably a member of the Sanhedrim, and was deputed to see the sentence carried out on Stephen. Stephen had courted death. He had used the most abusive language towards his judges, and was, in the opinion of the Council, guilty of blasphemy. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost :

as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them which shewed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not.

“Now when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him.....”

Stephen, young enthusiast as he was, must have been aware that in thus railing at those who were sitting in judgment upon him, and in arrogating to himself the power of penetrating the sacred mysteries of heaven, he was offending the most cherished beliefs of the Sanhedrim. It must be admitted that they listened to him with patience until he burst forth with what they considered outrageous insults and impudent assumption of supernatural power. Be this as it may, he met his death with supreme fortitude, expressing his faith, and praying for his executioners. Saul was a young man, of the highest education and intelligence; and there can be little doubt but that the sight of Stephen's martyrdom had upon him a profound effect. The first result was a feverish restlessness and desire to pursue the members of the sect to which the martyr belonged: he is represented as laying waste the Church, “entering

every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.....yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord"; going to the high priest and asking of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, "that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem." This zeal is much what might be expected of his active, strenuous nature. He believed at first that his course was the correct one: the spectacle of Stephen's heroic death had shaken his inward convictions; and in order to stifle a growing feeling of uneasiness as to the propriety of his antagonism to the Christians, he endeavoured to throw himself with greater activity into the crusade against them. But the inward doubt could not be smothered. On the road to Damascus he had abundant time to turn the matter over in his mind: to him it was a comparatively idle week. No doubt he pondered day after day, and night after night, on the awful scene of brutal murder and courageous faith of which he had been witness. Greatly agitated in mind, and probably having had little sleep, he arrived within sight of the city in which it was his self-imposed duty to make further havoc among the sect which Stephen represented. Let us suppose him to have had an hereditary predisposition to that complaint so common in Palestine—epilepsy. We may be sure the weather was intensely hot, and it was noonday: "And suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what

thou must do. And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus."

In Acts xxii. 9, Paul says: "And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me."

In Acts xxvi. 13, he said: "I saw on the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them that journeyed with me." In this discourse before King Agrippa, Paul describes the instructions that he received from Jesus in heaven, whom he represents as saying: "But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me."

The accounts, therefore, of what Saul's companions actually saw or heard of the heavenly vision are conflicting; and it is reasonable to conclude that they saw and heard nothing at all. Saul fell down in a fit, and was blind and ill for three days. That he suffered from epilepsy during his ministry is a theory accepted by theologians, Dean Farrar among the number: but some are of opinion that this "thorn in the flesh" was brought on by the shock he sustained on the occasion now under discussion. It is surely not an

unreasonable supposition that the (alleged) vision was the first attack. Visions and voices are not uncommon symptoms of epilepsy, as medical men can testify. In *The Blot Upon the Brain*, Doctor W. W. Ireland has drawn attention to some historical examples of hallucinations of sight and hearing. Mahommed received his first revelation when he was forty-two years of age. He was no impostor; nor was he insane: but according to his own account he had a long conversation with an angel in the cave of Hira; he believed that every stone and tree in the defiles and valleys about Mecca greeted him as he walked along with the words: "Hail to thee, O Messenger of God"; on mount Hira, when he was wandering about in despair at not again seeing the heavenly visitant, he beheld Gabriel sitting with crossed legs upon a throne between heaven and earth, who exclaimed, "O Mahommed, thou art in truth the messenger of God, and I am Gabriel"; he had revelation upon revelation, and described his experiences thus:—"Inspiration descendeth upon me in one of two ways. Sometimes Gabriel cometh and communicateth the revelation unto me, as one man to another, and this is easy; at other times it affecteth me like the ringing of a bell, penetrating my very heart, and rending me as it were in pieces, and this it is which grievously afflicteth me." During a lecture which he gave in November, 1901, Dr. Lauder Brunton, speaking of Mahommed, described his visions, trembling fits, and convulsions; and said it was curious to speculate how different might have been the course of the world's history if the prophet had been thoroughly dosed with bromide of potassium.

According to Gibbon, says Dr. Ireland, Mahommed

was considered by some of the old writers to have been the victim of epilepsy, or the "falling sickness"; yet Gibbon did not believe it himself. But Dr. Ireland continues later (page 43): "Epilepsy, especially when the fits are frequent, is a malady which is often most destructive to mental force and soundness of thought. On the other hand, cases are not uncommon, especially when the disease has appeared after puberty, where there is no observable injury to mental powers; in others the mind is little affected, or the patient may be simply capricious or irritable. In some rare cases, instead of mental enfeeblement, the reverse is noticed. With some epileptics the intellectual faculties are excited, they are men of talent, sometimes men of genius.....Dr. Howden, a physician of great experience in insanity, has remarked that in epilepsy there is often an exaltation of the religious sentiments....."

Again, on page 45, speaking of the experiences of Dr. Toselli: "During the stage of the religious delirium some epileptic patients receive orders from the Divinity—feel themselves invaded by the genius of a prophet or reformer, and hear voices which impel them to acts of unheard-of ferocity."

In his chapter "On the character and hallucinations of Joan of Arc" Dr. Ireland says (page 59): "She seldom heard a voice without seeing a light, generally a bright one. The light came from the same side as the voice. When she was in a grove she could hear voices approaching her."

Again (page 60): "Suddenly before her eyes a bright cloud or haze appeared, and from the cloud a voice came saying: 'Joan, you must lead another life, and do wonderful actions, for it is you whom the King of Heaven has chosen for the succour of France, and

the help and protection of King Charles, expelled from his dominions. You will put on male attire, and, taking arms, will be the leader of war. All things will be ruled by your counsel.' ”

Many other interesting particulars are given in this book of the hallucinations of La Pucelle. This author also gives some details respecting the delusions of Luther, which it may be as well to notice in this connection (pages 52-55). In 1530 Luther writes: “When I try to work, my head becomes filled with all sorts of whizzing, buzzing, thundering noises, and if I did not leave off on the instant I should faint away. For the last three days I have not been able even to look at a letter. My head has lessened down to a very short chapter; soon it will be only a paragraph, then only a syllable, then nothing at all. The day your letter came from Nuremberg I had another visit from the devil. I was alone, Vitus and Cyriacus having gone out, and this time the Evil One got the better of us, drove me out of my bed, and compelled me to seek the face of man.”

Again: “Once in our monastery at Wittenberg [said Luther] I distinctly heard the devil making a noise. I was beginning to read the Psalms, after having celebrated matins; then, interrupting my studies, the devil came into my cell, and thrice made a noise behind the stove, just as though he were dragging some wooden measure across the floor. As I found he was going to begin again, I gathered together my books and got into bed.....Another time in the night I heard him above my cell, walking in the cloister; but as I knew it was the devil, I paid no attention to him, and went to sleep.”

It does not appear at all necessary that a man who

is a victim of epilepsy should be otherwise than sane between the attacks. In fact, the disease is sometimes to be found in people with extraordinary mental powers. The attacks are, more often than not, accompanied by hallucinations of sight and of sound—visions and voices. Taking into consideration the allusions in his epistles to a “thorn in the flesh,” the apparent necessity for the attendance of a physician, and the story of his conversion, we may conclude that the Apostle was cursed with this very prevalent complaint; also, that he was not aware of the deceptive character of the sights and sounds; and not only did not recognise them as symptoms of his disease, but thought them manifestations of Divine Grace. The hallucination was of the greatest use to humanity. Convinced that he had seen Jesus Christ, and received from Him commands to preach, the energy and zeal which he had evinced on behalf of the Sanhedrim then turned into a new channel, and he became the greatest agent of civilisation in that corrupt age. The world would have been much poorer in morals and conduct if St. Paul had not lived. Infallible, he certainly was not; but, as a missionary, his work was at that juncture particularly useful—though it was not better work intrinsically than that of many devoted men who came after him, such as St. Francis Xavier, Livingstone, Selwyn, Williams, Hannington, and others. All these men were inspired by the Almighty Spirit to civilise mankind; there is no evidence that St. Paul was superior to them. His celebrity arises more from the fact of his being the *first*, and his mission having peculiar value on account of the existing darkness and criminality of the Roman Empire.

If, as we are led to suppose by the teaching of our Church, St. Paul was directly and specially inspired by God in a supernatural manner to preach and to write, it may be taken for granted that he would not have made the mistakes which he did. Let us mention two. He believed and taught that the end of the world was at hand : and he preached that Jesus Christ came to restore the Divine interest in man forfeited by the fall of Adam.

As to the near approach of the end of the world and the second coming :—

1 Thess. iv. 14–18 : “ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first : then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” (Also see 1 Cor. vii. 29.)

Now, as to the Fall of Adam, it is a curious fact that amongst the many references represented as having been made by Christ to events in the Old Testament, there is not one single passage which can be construed into an allusion to the so-called “ Fall.” If the appearance of a Messiah had a relation to Adam’s supposed transgression, have we not a right to expect that in one, at least, of His many discourses He

would have announced so significant a feature in His mandate from the Father? He alludes to the "blood of Abel" (Matt. xxiii. 35); but he says nothing about Adam. Yet St. Paul declares: "For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 21, 22). "For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life; and not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned:—for until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed where there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses....." (Rom. v. 10–14). Again, in verse 15: "For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many." Again, in verses 17–19: "For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, *even* Jesus Christ. So then as through one trespass *the judgment came* unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness *the free gift came* unto all men to justification of life. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous."

Thus, we are left in no doubt as to St. Paul's view of

the "Fall." Sin, he declares, was not inevitable; the first chapter of Genesis is *not* accepted by him as an allegory descriptive of the first consciousness of man, and his knowledge of right from wrong, and—in the exercise of his will—his first deviation from the right path—a deviation as sure to come to pass as his eventual improvement. St. Paul implies that perfection was possible from the first, and leaves the onus of the faults in human nature upon the unfortunate Adam. In trying to persuade his readers that the end of the world was to be expected in his life-time, he was able to appeal to the testimony of Jesus Christ, who asserted the same awful forecast. But all he had to support him in his theory of the responsibility of Adam as to sin and death having entered the world was the first chapter of Genesis, which one would have thought he would have been more intelligent than to have taken in its literal sense. It is a point worthy of consideration, whether a man who could take so narrow a view of the early writings, possessed such profound spiritual insight as to justify the reliance which the Christians for eighteen hundred years have placed upon the fragments of his writings which have come down to them.

St. Paul, in his epistles, gives a great deal of honest, homely advice, which, in those days, must have been very useful to the Churches he had founded. Much of their teaching is of a very lofty nature, as in 1 Cor. xv., not, as we have endeavoured to show, always quite accurate, but the general tenour is such that nobody could derive anything but benefit from their perusal. He was a martyr to the cause in which he believed, and his life was such as to expiate in a measure his assenting to, and assisting at, the death

of Stephen, who was cruelly murdered under his eyes. He took no small share, by his teaching, in the progress of civilisation; but the admiration which he has excited is rather exaggerated. Better men have lived since his days; and this fact will come to be recognised before long. As an exponent of Christ, he was at a disadvantage, for he did not know Him, and was therefore unfitted for the task.

There is one curious omission in the Acts which must, to a certain extent, throw doubt upon Luke as a careful and accurate biographer. Nothing is mentioned of St. Paul's retirement into Arabia (Gal. i. 17). He must have been absent from Damascus a very considerable time, perhaps as much as a year, or possibly two; but there is not a hint of this absence in Luke's account.

Amongst the old-fashioned, homely counsels in the epistles, there occasionally flashes forth a sentence of wisdom which will last for all time. What, for instance, can be truer advice, or greater wisdom, than 1 Cor. x. 12, 13: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: for God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it"? This is downright, practical wisdom; its truth is felt in the heart of every sane man or woman; and it affords abundant encouragement to the struggling sinner.

But there is nothing in the writings or reputed discourses of St. Paul which would justify us in saying that he was permeated with any very special degree of the Divine afflatus. His history and

teaching, and his opinion, must be taken for what they are worth.

It is most probable that, in the course of another half century, the New Testament will be read in a more judicious spirit than it is at present; and that when that time comes its contents will prove of increasing value to mankind.

CHAPTER VI.

FAITH AND HUMAN NEEDS

Is Faith a monopoly of the Christian Religion?—Genesis of belief in a future life, and in God—Evolution of the idea of God—Definition of Faith—Individual faith an accident of birth—Christians claim supernatural direction in faith—Why, then, are there so many Christian faiths?—The problem of Conversion—Dr. Beattie Crozier's article in the *Fortnightly Review*—Alleged finality in the Christian Religion—No finality in anything—No final standard of Beauty—Curious conceptions of the Supreme Being—Miracles of the nineteenth century—Faiths of the world—Finality expounded in *Lux Mundi*—Promises of comfort, and of immortality—Human needs at present demand a future life—When human needs change, religion will change—Criticism by divines no longer confined to the Old Testament—Doctrine of the Fall will be abandoned—What will follow?—Dangers of attempting to force belief—All scientific advance has been made on foundations of error—Religion advances in the same way—Roman Church cannot accept Evolution—Rosary of the Blessed Virgin—Apparent disbelief of the Churches in the general progress of mankind—Conceit of man—Very few comprehend the word "infinity"—Human needs change during the individual life—The man of the future.

JUDGING by the tone which many people in this country adopt, it might be supposed that Faith was a monopoly of the Christian religion. If you ask these people how they have become convinced of the historical truth of the legend that man was created specially, and in a state of perfection, and fell into temptation at the instigation of a conversational serpent, thereby placing the entire human race under a special curse, they reply "by faith." Ask them how they know

that the one narrator of the marvel of the Ascension, who gives no authorities, and does not pretend that he was an eye-witness, has given an historically correct account of that phenomenon, they answer "by faith."

This shows very little more logic than was exhibited by the Boer who, when asked how he knew there was such a personage as the devil, replied: "Of course there is a devil! I have a picture of him in my Bible." It does not appear to have occurred to those who are willing to accept everything "by faith" that this attribute, to which they attach so much importance, is quite as strong, and in many cases stronger, amongst the members of what they contemptuously term the heathen or pagan religions; that the faith of those who disbelieve the Christian dogmas in their entirety is just as pure, just as strong, as those who believe them.

Faith can be tested in a variety of ways. If a man has real faith that a happy future awaits him after death, he will face any enemy or any death without the smallest dismay. Many of the Christian martyrs had such a faith. But equal fortitude has been shewn by Mahomedans. At the battle of Omdurman (the "stricken field") a party of some few hundred dervishes led by Yakub, the Commander-in-chief of Abdullah's forces, advanced towards the British square animated by a faith in their prophet which may truly be termed heroic. From the first it was obvious that they could not reach their enemy. Volley upon volley was fired upon them until every man but one fell. This sole survivor, who held the standard, was at last desperately wounded; but he did not fall until he had planted his flag-staff in the sand; and when the

British advanced, this man sacrificed his life in a vain attempt to cut down the General.

Lord Avebury once gave, in a lecture, an example of what he called "faith." It was a story of an aged Fijian who, having come to the conclusion that he was a burden to his family, called upon a friend to club him, and enable him to pass to the unknown land where he never doubted that he would live again.

Thousands of instances might be adduced of faith in living and dead leaders of religion, apart from the particular convictions of the Christian world. Belief in another and a happier world is as old as the history of man. Each community fills this future existence with the circumstances and joys which are the reflection of its own wishes; the ideas which constitute what it conceives to be the greatest bliss being derived from what it feels to be the highest happiness in this life. The North American Indian realises his happy hunting grounds; the Fijian of the past was to be carried across the sea, which divides this world from the next, in a fine canoe; and he expected to find on the other side a good soil, abundant yams, and a beautiful wife; the Moslem peoples his heaven with houris, and every sensual delight; while the Christian finds rapture in picturing to himself an environment of perpetual worship and full knowledge of the Supreme Being. From a very early stage of consciousness man has shrunk from the idea of annihilation at death, and has earnestly longed for the continuation of his individuality. The Buddhist is perhaps an exception; but even he anticipates numerous re-incarnations, ending, when he is tired of it, in eternal sleep.

Human need demanded this faith in a second and

happier life, and thus it arose. From the first evolution of consciousness there has also been an intense longing for help, for assistance to stand; and, the more ignorant the man, the greater has been the tendency to seek this support in supernatural agencies. It was not remarkable that animals endowed with reason, but destitute of all knowledge of the world in which they lived, of the immensity of the universe, and of the infinitesimally small proportion which their location bore to this universe, should imagine, for instance, that the stars were specially provided for their use, and that the sun and all the heavenly bodies revolved round the earth; or that they should regard thunder, lightning, earthquakes, storms, and floods as manifestations of the displeasure of their unknown Creator, who had to be propitiated. Ignorance being ever allied to conceit, they imagined that their wants, their maintenance, their happiness, their future, was the sole care of their fetish or god. With sufficient consciousness to know their weakness and need of protection and guidance, but without the knowledge to enable them to appreciate their insignificance in the vast programme of the universe, they invented various schemes of sacrifice and religion, hoping to keep their god in good humour. From hence sprung numerous faiths, each one adapted to the particular genius of the people professing it, some higher, some lower, just in proportion to their habits and their degree of knowledge and civilisation. Though a great deal of misery and evil resulted from many of these faiths, especially where it was considered necessary to propitiate the god with human sacrifices, they had on the whole a good influence on the morals, habits, and general civilisation of the

various races. All, or nearly all, had a conception of the one supreme God, though in many instances smaller gods, who were supposed to be His attributes and to work His will, were worshipped as more easily approached.

The curious feature, is the human character supposed to be the property of all the gods. They were conceived to be actuated by vengeance, anger, joy, hope, love, just as were the people who designed them in their imagination. As the mind of man developed, these material views of the deities became gradually modified and improved. The history of the ideal God is a history of progress in the human race from the beginning of man to the present time. Even in the comparatively short space of time—about 4,000 or 5,000 years—covered by the Bible, the conception of God changes enormously.

Faith, as faith, has been, and is now, as strong in one form of religious belief as in another; is as strong in Buddha and in Mahommed as it is in Jesus Christ; is as strong in one Christian sect as in another. By faith "Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac," and, by faith also, Torquemada committed his atrocities in Spain. By faith Mahommed honestly believed that he received the commands of God from the angel Gabriel in person; by faith Joan of Arc placed herself at the head of an army. Faith is none the less faith because it has what we may consider a mistaken foundation. To us, in the twentieth century, it is amazing that only a few hundred years ago men, apparently leading pure and holy lives, should really have conceived the idea that the torture of those who held slightly different views to themselves as to the composition of the Trinity or the nature of the Real

Presence during the administration of the Holy Eucharist, was acceptable to an Omniscient and Benevolent Almighty Being ; but the operating cause in this case was none the less "faith."

In very recent times we find a council of men of blameless lives and religious fervour, deciding, after prayer, that the mother of Jesus Christ was immaculately conceived, and that the decisions of the Pope of Rome on questions of religious dogma are infallible. If this was not achieved by "faith," it is difficult to know what the word means, for there is no foundation for either of the pronouncements in the Scriptures.

Faith is defined in the Hebrews as the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen. This is an unsatisfactory definition. The Christian faith, for example, depends for its justification upon a variety of evidence as to things not seen, which evidence, to many anxious searchers after the truth, appears to be eminently unreasonable. It cannot, in itself, be "the proving of things unseen." To start with, it requires the stupendous belief that Jesus Christ was Himself God ; that He was, not merely a materialised attribute of the Almighty, but a part of His Being, inseparable from Him, and able to exert the same powers.

It requires, moreover, a belief that man was introduced into the world in a condition of perfection ; and that, because he succumbed to temptation, he doomed the whole human race to struggle, toil, hardship, and misery. And it demands, further, the belief that Jesus Christ not only suffered the death of a malefactor to purge out the sins of mankind, but that He fulfilled His thankless mission without once alluding to the initial sin of the first man, which was

the original cause of the evil that had tainted the inhabitants of the world, past, present, and to come. Nothing in the "faith" of Christians can prove the identification of Christ with the Father. They may have faith that such was the case: proof there is none, for assertion is not proof, and the assertion of Christ himself is not even proved. Statements from memory of what the Founder of a Religion said of himself, disbelieved by a large majority of his countrymen at the time, and not recorded until at least thirty years after his death, are not "proof." Faith, in this case, is, doubtless, the "assurance of things hoped for," but it is certainly not the "proving of things not seen."

Faith would be better defined as the belief in things which cannot be proved. If they could be proved, they would be facts. Faith would no longer be necessary. Some years ago, Mr. Marconi had faith that he would sooner or later be able to transmit messages across the Atlantic Ocean without employing any visible medium. His faith has now, happily, been converted into fact. In the year 1899 the British Government had faith that it was in their power to incorporate the Transvaal and the Orange Free State into the British Empire. They had no proof that they would be able to accomplish this tough job. It has now become fact. In short, it is futile misnaming faith as the "proving of things not seen." It is the inner belief of things not seen, and which cannot be proved. And this inner belief is just as good faith, as faith, in the Pagan as in the Christian. The faith of the Saracen in his ability to maintain his hold upon the Holy City was of as good a quality as the faith of the Crusaders who endeavoured to wrest it from his hold. In this instance

it was not the faith of the Christian which was converted into fact. The situation of every historical association which the Christian holds most dear—of Horeb, the wilderness of Sinai, the Temple, Calvary, and the tomb of Christ—remains in the possession of peoples which profess faith in One God and His Prophets ; and has been in their possession, with the exception of brief intervals, for over twelve hundred years.

In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, faith, so far as the individual is concerned, is a mere accident of birth. A man's ancestors have lived and died in a certain belief, and he, as a matter of course, drops into the same faith, partly through hereditary tendency, and partly through education and environment. In the plastic age of childhood, he is surrounded by the signs, ceremonies, and professions of a religion ; he is taught his faith at his mother's knee. It comes to him with no more trouble than learning to spell or to write ; and like a piece of music which by constant repetition works its way gradually into our affection, the fact of the essentials of his parents' faith being repeated in his hearing day after day, and with special emphasis on one day in the week, makes every doctrine so familiar to him as to become almost a part of himself. Until the age of sixteen he seldom questions anything. Doctrines such as that of the Fall, or the Atonement, find their way into his brain without creating in his mind any surprise. He no more thinks of questioning them than of asking why he was taught the English language and not the Russian. He learns without astonishment, that solely on account of the disobedience of two human beings, so grossly ignorant that they did not know

how to clothe themselves, a benevolent and all-wise Deity crushed the entire human race, and afterwards sent His only Son to die a disgraceful death as a propitiation for their sins. He stands beside his parents in church, and cheerfully assists them five or six times a year to damn all the inhabitants of the world who fail to grasp the mystery of the fusion of "three incomprehensibles" into "one incomprehensible," or "three uncreated" into "one uncreated"; he listens unmoved to obscene stories, the like of which he is well aware he will find nowhere in his father's house except in the Bible; and he absorbs the marvels of a birth from a pure virgin, the resurrection of a body from the dead, and the ascension of a man into the clouds, without considering the sharp opposition to natural law, and to human experience, which they involve.

Such is the force—the tremendous force—of heredity, environment, and education. Had our young Englishman been born a Thug, he would have believed with equal readiness that it was his all-important mission to throttle harmless travellers, and that the action was right in itself. Faith, after all, is not such a very important matter. We are all creatures of circumstance; and had we been born under different conditions of nationality, parentage, and climate, we should not profess the same faith as we do now.

It is not to be ignored that a claim is made by some Christians that their faith is the result of deep spiritual insight, quite apart from hereditary tendencies, environment, or education; the working, they would say, of the Holy Spirit.

No doubt, those earnest people who state that this experience has come to them truthfully believe all

they say; but the question is—have they really been blessed with such occult communion with the Almighty? If so, how comes it to be that there are so many different beliefs which claim the same origin? There are hundreds of intellectual men holding faiths of the most varied kind, who each think they enjoy privileged communion with the Spirit of God. Where religion is coupled with a very practical intellect, this claim of special insight is not made. Henry Drummond, the evangelist, one of the most earnest, practical Christians who ever lived, admitted to his familiar friends that he could not state any particular time when he first felt the influence of the Holy Spirit: he could name no date for his "conversion." And, in his case, the effect of heredity is most remarkable. On his father's death, in 1888, some notes were discovered written by William Drummond, his grandfather, which showed that the idea that the laws of nature and of the spiritual world were the same, was ever teeming in his mind. Both the spiritual and scientific sides of Drummond's character can be traced to his ancestry:—no sudden conversion or "call," but the steady results of hereditary tendencies, fostered by education and the accident of Moody and Sankey's great "revival" visit to this country. Without the hereditary tendencies, he would not have become the admirable teacher and sympathetic helper which he proved to be.

There is nothing strikingly remarkable in cases such as that of Henry Drummond. Nor are the instances of so-called "conversion," classified as such by revival meetings, much to be wondered at, when ignorant crowds are addressed with heartfelt earnestness by men of singular refinement, culture, eloquence,

and dexterity, such as he. The *Fortnightly Review* of December, 1902, contains a most instructive article on "The Problem of Religious Conversion," by Dr. Beattie Crozier. It will go far to convincing most people with open minds that there is nothing of the sort as "conversion," if the word is defined as some special change caused in the heart by the Spirit of God.

Dr. Crozier says (page 1,006): "A still more fatal objection to the belief of the convert, that it was the actual presence of God, or the Spirit of God in his soul, that was the cause of his conversion, is the fact that the illumination of which he is the subject gives him no additional insight into the laws of Nature, of the world, or of life, of his own body, or of that very mind of his with which the Spirit is supposed to be in immediate contact. All sorts and conditions of men have fallen under the sway of conversion, and have felt its transforming influence on their characters and lives—the brutal, the sensual, the rude, the ignorant, the pure, the intellectual, and the refined; but as they entered this state, so, intellectually, they came out of it, without any addition of insight or penetration beyond what comes to men in ordinary life on the occurrence of any novel or striking experience....."

Again (page 1,011): "Some parts of our brain in our normal condition are conscious, others unconscious, the latter serving as a kind of rag-bag or receptacle where a miscellaneous collection of old memories, experiences, impressions, and purposes are packed away and buried out of sight in order to prevent them from obstructing the thoroughfare of our conscious thoughts, which for purposes of clear

and consecutive thinking have to walk in file, as it were, one at a time. These unconscious or 'subliminal' regions of the mind, as they are called, like those of the ordinary conscious mind, may be practically divided into two sections, one of them being the receptacle for all that comes in by way of the senses, the organic life of the body, and the lower appetites and passions, the other for all that comes in by way of the higher sentiments and the higher life of the spirit; but the contents of each, although slumbering for the most part, are to be evolved and brought into activity in a variety of ways and by adequate and appropriate means. In drowning, for example, it is the unanimous testimony of all those who have been restored to life, that the memory of all they have ever thought or done comes back to them in a few flashes of illumination of intense and startling vividness. These memories are doubtless the contents of these subliminal regions blown for the moment into an activity so intense as to cause them to intrude themselves on the field of consciousness."

It is clear from the article by Dr. Crozier, and by Professor James's book, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, that the state of conversion can be produced very nicely by the inhalation, under certain conditions, of nitrous oxide gas (p. 1,009): "It appears that a book had been written on the subject, entitled *The Nitrous Oxide Revelation*, in which it was alleged that the administration of the gas would admit the recipient into a very sea of glory and truth impossible otherwise in our ordinary life on earth. For the purpose of testing it, Professor James experimented with it over and over again in his own person, and he tells us that the illumination and rapture which accompanied

it passed all belief, and, moreover, were as nearly as possible identical, while they lasted, with the detailed experiences recorded by those who have undergone sudden conversion. The sense of oneness with the Spirit of God, which is so marked a feature in conversion, is produced in the nitrous oxide revelation, Professor James thinks, rather by the abolishing of all the differences and contradictions of ordinary life than by resolving them, as it is the province of the normal intellect to do; and this is effected mainly by the speed with which the most opposite conceptions chase and pass into each other, as when the separate spokes of a parti-coloured wheel are made to revolve so fast that they appear like a plane surface of uniform white."

The really extraordinary instances of so-called Christian conversions are those of some of the coloured Evangelists, whose hereditary tendencies are so strongly opposed to the newly-offered religion. It is true that, where blank ignorance is joined to a naturally shrewd mind, it is to be overcome by gentle, persuasive teaching carried out by a man of superior education; but the opposing instincts are so strong that the results in the cases of such men as the late Bishop Crowther are certainly remarkable.

The members of all religions believe more or less in the finality of their belief; and Christians most of all. Notwithstanding their knowledge of the long tale of thousands of faiths spread over the globe, each adapted to the needs of their possessors, and varying in their purity of conception of a Supreme Being, hundreds of millions of thoughtful people firmly believe that in the Christian religion the end has

been reached, and the goal so long desired has, at last, been won. It is useless to remind them of the gradual process of evolution, evolution of the mind as well as of the physical nature, or of the evolution of religious thought. They are convinced that, in this early stage of the history of the world, they have found the faith which is to last for all time. The evidence is overwhelming that, barring accidents, the earth will last for, at least, over twenty millions of years, and that the minds of men will develop to an extent, of which, at the present time, we have no conception. No matter! This, the Christian faith, is the end of development, as far as religion is concerned. It is a curious phenomenon, this blind belief in the finality of the Christian faith.

Now, there is abundant evidence that, so far as the earth and its inhabitants have as yet developed, there is no finality in anything. Take the case of the beautiful in Art. Surely, it cannot be contested that the standard of beauty is liable to change. The most beautiful object, probably, is the human form; and because the human form has retained the same contours during historic times, the standard has not changed in any appreciable degree. But there was a time when the human form was of a slightly different shape, the arms longer, the gait not so erect, and the feet more prehensile; and there is reason to suppose that, in the course of ages to come, the figure will again change, arms will probably become shorter, heads larger, and so forth. The standard of beauty will then change, and what is to-day considered to be the most symmetrical in, say, the female figure, will then be regarded as below the highest type. The female form of that far distant day will be the standard, and the

marbles of Greece and Rome will no longer be the criterion of beauty in Art.

In a small way, we see how ideas change, as regards what is beautiful, by the alterations in dress. It may be presumed that fashionable dress has ever been that which, at any one period, is most admired by the majority of the people who adopt it, and those who watch the wearers. Forty years ago, the women of this country wore their dresses over a frame called a "crinoline," and men wore a garment called "pegotop" trousers, tight-fitting at the ankles and large at the hips. If anyone appeared in these dresses in the present day, they would excite the ridicule of every passer-by, if, indeed, they did not excite anything more unpleasant. The crinoline was succeeded by a "bustle," which was a contrivance for elevating the back part of a lady's dress, and one which we now consider to be as hideous as its predecessor. It was not, however, then thought to be unbecoming; it was really supposed to contribute to the elegance of the figure. The abolition of poke bonnets, ringlets, and ear-rings, is also evidence of the changes in the views of those interested in the matter of what is most beautiful in female attire and ornamentation.

Architecture, and especially Naval architecture, has undergone great changes, even in a few years, owing in a large measure to our greater appreciation of utility. The noble architecture of our cathedrals remains for the present an object for our admiration; but in our dwelling houses there has been a vast change, not only in form but in colour. Red brick is fast taking the place of white and gray. Whether this colour is really more æsthetically correct, is of no consequence; it is thought so now; it was not

thought so fifty years ago. Our ideas have changed. Perhaps the alteration of idea is most noticeable in ships. To most seamen of the present day, over forty years of age, there is no sight so beautiful as a full rigged ship of war under all plain sail "walking the waters like a thing of life." But ask the younger seamen, those of eighteen or twenty years of age. They will say that they see nothing in the beauty of masts and sails, or curving bow. Their education teaches them that the iron steam vessel is the more useful; it can proceed with greater speed from place to place; can carry heavier guns, and generally can do more work. Utility is so associated in their minds with beauty, that, in their eyes, the modern vessel of war is as much more symmetrical than the vessel of forty years ago, as their elders consider the vessel of their youth is superior to the ship of the days of Henry VIII.

Fifty years ago, a train passing through the lovely weald of Kent excited much indignation in the minds of lovers of scenery. It was said to spoil the view. In the present day, few people—none under thirty years of age—consider that any train spoils any view. On the contrary, they would say a train gives animation to the scene, and improves a prospect which would, otherwise, be somewhat sleepy-looking and monotonous.

It is a fact, that the engine-room of a large steam vessel is a thing of beauty for many a man who is not without a just appreciation of the æsthetic. The exact adjustments of good machinery, the shining steel, the harmonious movements of, say triple-cylinder engines, and the power and control displayed, have a great fascination for them. The sense of utility has

such firm hold upon their minds, that they do not see beauty in that which lacks usefulness.

In Painting, the standard of beauty is undoubtedly changing. It is true that it is still the custom to praise the productions of all the old masters. But except in the greater permanence of the colours used, which is indisputable, and due to the neglect of iteration by modern artists, it is doubtful whether the competent critics of the twentieth century really believe that the pictures of the old masters are superior to those of the new schools. For instance, the perspective is usually inferior, and the faces of women, madonnas and so forth (with, of course, notable exceptions), coarse, and deficient in spirituality. Enormous sums are paid for paintings by the old masters; but that is due more to the desire of possessing a rare article than on account of the intrinsic value of the pictures as works of Art. It is the same with any department of Art. Our standard is transient; there is no element of finality in it, and there never will be.

Earnest Christians who are prepared to admit the transient nature of human conceptions in natural philosophy, and in the arts and sciences, claim *finality* for their personal religion. They are mistaken. Under the ordinary processes of evolution, the conception of the Almighty Himself is undergoing great changes. The anthropomorphic idea of God is at last being superseded by a rational conception of an all-pervading Spirit. But the pictures of the fifteenth century, and before, show that the conception is of comparatively recent date. In the winter exhibition of Old Masters at the Royal Academy early in 1902, a picture, the property of Mr. Leopold Hirsh,

was exhibited, called "The Trinity," by Sandro Botticelli. The first Person of the Trinity, who was not unlike certain recent portraits of Paul Kruger, is represented as holding up the cross, on which is the form of the crucified Saviour, while the Dove is seen over the Saviour's head. In the Museum of Berlin there is a similar picture, but, in this case, God is represented in the robes and mitre of a Pope, and is holding the crucified Christ in his lap. In the National Gallery of Berlin there is a still more remarkable painting intended to illustrate the actual fulfilment of the promise of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, related in Luke i. 35. These realistic and audacious paintings were no doubt in sympathy with the conceptions of the people who lived at the time they were executed; but, in the present day, such material handling of spiritual ideas finds no favour. We have risen to a stage beyond, and have attained to higher visions; though there is no reason to suppose that the highest and purest thought of this day reaches to within even a faint approximation of the real Truth. ✕

In the meantime, it is quite possible to believe that, in the Protestant form of the Christian faith, we have a working religion which is the highest on the earth. As a guide to morals and right living, it is as good as the mind of man in its present state of development is capable of comprehending. That development is in a very early stage. Every year new discoveries are being made showing the infinity of everything around us, of the hitherto unexpected vast depths of heat and of cold, the infinity of distance in space, the infinity of the smallness of things in the universe as well as the infinity of the largeness of things. With the assistance of the microscope on the one hand, and

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the telescope on the other, we now see that there is practically no end to the sub-divisions of the minute or to the expansion of the great things of the universe. Nineteen hundred years ago, a variety of phenomena which we now know to be due to natural causes, must have appeared to the people of that time as nothing short of miraculous. Even twenty years back, if any person had declared that, with an apparatus of small compass and some twenty long poles, it was possible to project a message through the air from England to Spezzia, he would have been denounced as an impostor. After a survey of the wonders of scientific achievements during the nineteenth century, who is bold enough to say that the development of the human brain is nearing its completion?

And if this is not the case, if the development of man's brain is in a transient stage, and not near its completion, what right have we to suppose that the highest faith and the highest religion have yet been reached? Our religion of this day may be, and probably is, as good as possible for the nations which understand it, and for the times in which we live. So gradual is the change of thought in religious matters that it will probably survive in all its essentials for a hundred years or more. As an educational factor it is undoubtedly stimulating, elevating, and eminently suited to the present needs of society. But it is certainly not *final*. When the human brain has further developed, and the need for this particular faith has passed away, it will be supplanted by another.

A few years ago, an excellent book was published by William Blackwood & Sons, called *Faiths of the World*. It consists of twelve articles, by various

Scotch Divines, describing the religions of India, China, Persia, Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, Teutonic and Scandinavian religions, Judaism, Mahommedanism, Ancient Religions of Central America, and the book concludes with an article on "Christianity in Relation to Other Religions." It is admitted by the writers of the articles that each and all of these religions were suited to the needs of the various races which professed them, and were probably permitted to exist by the Almighty as preparation for the reception of the highest faith—the Christian. But the writers maintain, not only that the Christian religion is at present the highest and purest on earth, a thesis which will command the assent of most educated men in Europe and America, but that it is in itself the final step in spiritual evolution. It is to last for all time. The world may exist for fifty millions of years, but further illumination of spiritual truth is neither necessary nor possible. Those who believe in Christ as the Son of God, to the end of the world, will be those only who will attain immortality. To them, there is nothing more in the sphere of religion to be learnt! This is rather curious reasoning. Everything else may change; the human form may become altered in shape, the brain may develop twice its present activity and usefulness; but it will not assist its possessor to attain to any greater knowledge than is now to be obtained by a study of the life and precepts of Jesus Christ, and an appreciation of His personality and mission as there recorded.

In *The Foundations of Belief* Mr. Balfour writes as follows: "I like to think of the human race, from whatever stock its members may have sprung, in

whatever age they may be born, whatever creed they may profess, together in the presence of the One Reality, engaged, not wholly in vain, in spelling out some fragments of its message. All share its being; to none are its oracles wholly dumb. And if both in the natural world and in the spiritual the advancement we have made on our forefathers be so great that our interpretation seems indefinitely removed from that which primitive man could alone comprehend, and wherewith he had to be content, it may be, indeed I think it is, the case that our approximate guesses are still closer to his than they are to their common object, and that far as we seem to have travelled, yet, measured on the celestial scale, our intellectual progress is scarcely to be discerned, so minute is the parallax of Infinite Truth."

The doctrine of the finality of the Christian faith is expounded at some length by Canon Scott Holland, in his essay on "Faith" in *Lux Mundi* (page 37): "The real question as to Christian dogma lies in the prior question—Is Christianity justified in claiming to have reached a *final* position? If this position is rightly final, then the intellectual expression of its inherent elements is final also. Here is the deep contrast between it and science. The scientific man is forbidden, by the very nature of his studies, to assume finality for his propositions. For he is not yet in command of his material. Far, very far, from it. He is touching it on its very edge. He is engaged in slowly pushing tentative advances into an unknown world, looming, vast, dim, manifold, beyond his frontier of light. The coherence of his known matter with that huge mass beyond his ken, can be but faintly imaged and suspected. Wholly unreckoned

forces are in operation. At any moment he may be called upon to throw over the classification which sums up his hitherto experience; he may have to adopt a new centre; to bring his facts into a novel focus; and this involves at once a novel principle of arrangement. In such conditions dogma is, of course, an absurdity. But, if we are in a position to have any faith in Jesus Christ, then we must suppose that we have arrived at the one centre to all possible experiences, the one focus, under which all sights must fall. To believe in Him at all is to believe that, by and in 'this Man, will God judge the world.' In His personality, in His character, we are in possession of the ultimate principle, under which the final estimate of all things will be taken. We have given us, in His sacrifice and mission, the absolute rule, standard, test, right to the very end. Nothing can fall outside it. In Him, God has summed up creation. We have touched in Him the 'last days,' the ultimate stage of all development. We cannot believe in Him at all, and not believe that His message is final.

"And it is this finality which justifies dogma. If Christianity is final, it can afford to be dogmatic; and we, who give our adhesion to it, must, in so doing, profess our adhesion to the irreversible nature of its inherent principles: for, in so doing, we are but re-asserting our belief in the absolute and final sufficiency of His person."

The above extract probably interprets the view of the majority of people in this and other European countries and in America. Christ, as Man alone, the Church values as nothing. His glorious teaching and sinless life are of no account unless it is admitted that he was also God. "We have touched, in Him, the

ultimate stage of all development." Here lies the crux of the whole question.

This essay in *Lux Mundi* closes with a note which asserts unequivocally the doctrine of the Fall, and which alludes to the original condition of "unfallen man, when his *nature* was itself supernaturally endowed with its adequate and sustaining grace." Throughout the entire paper, it is assumed that Faith is a monopoly of Christianity; that there is only one kind of faith; and that the only description of faith worth the smallest consideration is that which is professed by the writer and by the Church. The whole of *Lux Mundi* is a flat denial that the life and teaching of Jesus Christ are of any use whatever unless He was God incarnate.

The Church view of Christianity is, above all things, eminently adapted to human needs as they at present exist. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"; "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"; "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow"; "In my father's house are many mansions.....I go to prepare a place for you".....: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life"; "Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners": these and other promises of inestimable comfort are showered upon the weary struggler in the brief journey of life. Christ, who has been upon earth and borne our infirmities, still lives and offers help to all who look to Him as the author and finisher of their faith. According to the Church, we are to look behind us to the

first pair of sentient human beings as the medium through which sin and death came into the world; and to regard them with abhorrence as having, with full knowledge of the awful penalty, placed us, their descendants, in the ignominious position that we now occupy. But, owing to the voluntary sacrifice of God, Himself incarnate in human form, it is now made possible for us to redeem ourselves.

Immortality, the eternal life of our individuality, is promised to all who believe that this stupendous miracle actually occurred, and who repent them of their sins. Death, we are told, is a mere change of existence, and only parts for a time those who have loved on earth. To the righteous it is a change for the better, but human weakness rebels against separation; hence the grief of survivors. Reunion and recognition are promised in the next life, whether it be, as some Christians imagine, in heaven, or in the intermediate state—Hades. This last consideration is indeed a powerful appreciation of human needs: it softens the bitterness of parting, and annihilates despair. It constitutes one of the stoutest supports of the Church. There can be no doubt that this strongly implanted hope of meeting again, and at no very distant time, the wives or children whom they have lost, has, during the first wild moments of bereavement, saved many men from suicide, and many women from madness.

The Church has a complete answer to give to all human needs. But the question is: When human needs change, will the Church change? Is the present condition of human beliefs *final*? Can we imagine a time, when the average human mind, owing to the strengthening agency of education and of

Christianity, will become naturally firmer, better able to resist the evil, because it is more and more purged from the clogging effect of the wrong doings of previous generations; and therefore less in need of the promises which have been its support in the past? Is there any sign that such a change is impending?

The reply to this query is certainly in the affirmative. Human needs no longer demand belief in a cruel and barbarous hell, nor in the literal acceptance of all the revolting narratives in the Old Testament as being inspired by God. Evolution and the geological record have knocked the bottom out of the historical foundation of Genesis. The English Church has changed its faith gradually, but completely, on the subjects of future punishment and the degree of inspiration of the Scriptures. For proof of this, we have only to recall the storm which was raised in this country when Bishop Colenso's criticism of the Pentateuch was published forty years ago, and to see how readily it is now accepted by nearly every well-educated clergyman in the country. When it was written, Dr. Colenso was regarded by millions of Churchmen with much the same feeling of abhorrence as is, to-day, the Clapton Messiah. And now, who, outside the Roman Church, believes in the "tortures of the damned"? Then, the belief in a purgatory is rapidly gaining ground in all sections of the Protestant Church. It is not, indeed, called by that name; but the "intermediate state," to which Mr. Chambers, in his work, *The Life After Death*, and others, refer, is approximately the same conception as the purgatory of the Roman Catholics, both Churches founding their belief in such a state upon the allusions in the Bible

to "Sheol," "Paradise," "Hades," and "Abraham's bosom."

If Dr. Colenso were now to be raised from the dead, he would be somewhat astonished to find himself regarded by half the English Church as a somewhat conservative and ultra-orthodox minister. Changes are taking place rapidly.

Up to within the last year or two, criticism was mainly confined to the Old Testament, and seldom originated with Churchmen. It was believed that any attempt to upset the old Church beliefs in any part of the New Testament would wound the feelings of the great majority—which, being translated, means, would render the New Testament less satisfying to human needs. But now, it is not such an uncommon occurrence to hear of ministers casting grave doubts upon the literal truth of the mystery of the Incarnation or of the miracles. On October 29th, 1902, the Dean of Ripon stated in public:—"Taking the moral supremacy of Christ for granted, they were met on the threshold of two Gospels by what seemed a prodigy—the birth of Christ from a Virgin. His own belief was that they might safely leave that out of account, and treat it in exactly the same way as the words 'descended into Hell' were treated. Outside the first two chapters of Matthew and the first two chapters of St. Luke, the Virgin-birth was absolutely non-existent in the New Testament. The natural inference was that it was unknown to the writers of the New Testament, except to those who penned those four chapters. And might it not be that they arose from a misunderstanding? As to the miracles, was it irreverent to believe that Our Lord Himself could not have made a distinction between what modern science

would recognise as death and the many forms of swooning, syncope, or hysteria, which sometimes deceived the wisest in modern times, and that, when He bade His disciples to heal the sick and raise the dead, He was speaking of a process very different from that which would be accepted as the raising of an actual dead body to life?"....."He had never been able to think of the Resurrection as a violation of natural law."

Again, the Bishop of Ripon has written the following, after explaining how certain portions of the Gospels are common to all the Synoptics, and which he therefore proposes to call the "common stock" (Huxley calls it the "Triple Tradition") :—
"Now, in the common stock gospel, the miraculous accessories connected with the birth and resurrection of Jesus do not find a place. These accessories are found in the group of secondary witnesses, *i.e.* in narrative common to two evangelists. Upon these, in the first instance, we have purposely refused to lay stress. Our belief in Jesus Christ must be based upon moral conviction, not upon physical wonder. The argument that He was wonderfully born and miraculously raised, and that therefore He was of God, does not evoke, at any rate to-day, an adequate and satisfactory response; even if it could be considered valid, it would not create a worthy or an acceptable faith. We must invert the process. The weight of the argument, then, hangs upon the moral splendour of Jesus Christ; it is because He interprets us so completely to ourselves that we recognise the God in Him, and, recognising this, the physical marvels at the opening of His career do not appear incongruous" ("The Ripon Episode," *Nineteenth*

Century and After, January, 1903, article by Mr. W. R. Cassels).

The above utterances of Dr. Fremantle and Dr. Carpenter would appear sufficiently startling in the present day. They would have been thought intolerable forty years ago. Now, if these changes of thought in vital points of Christian dogma are taking place in the very heart of English churches, in response to the demand of human needs, which again are modified from time to time by advancing education and development; what reason is there to suppose that we have arrived, or have any prospect of arriving, at a final religion? No sane Christian of the English Church under forty years of age believes in the hideous doctrine of everlasting torture. It is safe to assert that, in fifty years from now, no sane Christian of the English Church under forty will believe in what has been so unfortunately misnamed "the Fall."

The doctrine that the first pair of human beings were responsible for sin and death, for the pains of childbirth, for the weeds and thistles which obstruct cultivation, and for all the ills we are heirs to, will give place to a rational conviction in the gradual progress of man's mental and physical nature, upwards from the beast from which he sprung; and it will come to be seen that the allegory of Genesis iii. refers to the first dawning consciousness of the human being who previously was "not under the law," but who now became responsible for his choice of ways; that he *inevitably* took the wrong road some time or the other, and that what we know as "evil" is but the selfishness of our humble ancestors transmitted through heredity, and probably decreasing with every generation.

But what then ?

Directly it is allowed, as it certainly will be by the majority of English Churchmen before the end of this century, that the mythical account of Genesis does not fairly represent the dealings of Almighty God with the first naked, tottering pair ; that, in short, they were not intended to be perfect, but only a rise upon their irresponsible forefathers, and that their lapse was inevitable, the teaching of the Apostle Paul on this important subject will cease to have any power. It will be remembered that Christ said nothing, and hinted nothing, about the "Fall." According to the only records we possess of His life and ministry, He nowhere declared or implied that man had enjoyed, at any time, the privilege of remaining in a blissful condition free from the conditions of work, sin, and death. He expressly alludes to the Creation, "male and female created he them," but never to the "Fall." When St. Paul's teaching on the "Fall" no longer rivets the minds of men, the Church theory of redemption will have to be profoundly modified, and very different views than those held at present will be entertained as to the nature of the Atonement and Expiation for Sin. Thus will human needs alter Faith.

What may come after this would certainly be considered by Churchmen of the present day as very momentous : but it will not be thought so by the Churchmen of that day. So gradual will be the change of faith, adapting itself to human needs, and so much wider will then be the appreciation of the universe, that it will cause no alarm or misgivings in the minds of thoughtful men. Nothing is more likely to precipitate the change in human needs and

faith than compulsory education in the creeds of a Church held in any one transient period. Any attempt to bind the human intellect to particular beliefs, or to particular interpretations of the legends of the past, is sure to be met with resistance of some sort, passive or active, according to the temperament; and it might actually be instrumental in robbing society of all religion for a time, removing existing restraints from immorality and vice, and plunging the nation which attempted it into a hopeless condition. In the discouragement of monasteries, and of the power of the priests during the last half century, certain European governments have shown themselves to be fully alive to the danger of a rigid sectarianism, the recent laws of the French Chamber being specially directed at religious intolerance, and the pressure on the young of a particular form of Christianity. It is not necessary to go very far back in the history of the world—a mere moment in its life, past, and to come—to see the deadening effect on human development which accompanies attempts to force particular forms of belief on any race by persecution and torture. And it is a mistake to suppose that the spirit which animated the Inquisition is dead. The intolerant and bigoted frame of mind, the belief in the finality of the creed which they profess, and the desire to ram it down the throats of those who are of a different opinion, is even now rampant amongst millions of cultured Christians, though happily it cannot be so forcibly expressed as it was a few centuries ago. As the great American poet said :—

“The reign of violence is dead,
Or dying surely from the world ;

While love triumphant reigns instead,
 And in a brighter sky o'erhead,
 His blessed banners are unfurled.
 And most of all thank God for this ;
 The war and waste of clashing creeds
 Now ends in words, and not in deeds,
 And no one suffers loss, or bleeds
 For thoughts that men call heresies."

And again :—

" Not to one church alone, but seven,
 The voice prophetic spake from heaven ;
 And unto each the promise came,
 Diversified, but still the same ;
 ' For him that overcometh are
 The new name written on the stone,
 The raiment white, the crown, the throne,
 And I will give him the Morning Star ! "

" Not to one Church alone, but seven." Yes! And more than that. All religions not accompanied by barbarity are gropings after the Truth, and acceptable to the Almighty as satisfying human needs for a time; the Christian the best, because the people who received it were most fit to assimilate its tenets, but even this is not final. The others have all helped to raise those who professed them. The railway would not have come into existence if it had not been for the stage coach: the modern gigantic vessel of war would never have appeared if it had not been for the galley of two thousand years ago. Chemistry is evolved out of alchemy, and astronomy out of astrology. There are instances in the building up of our knowledge of electricity and other sciences where theories, now known to be erroneous, have been held as true for scores of years, and used to work with. When the truth came to light, it was owing to the work of many decades on a foundation of error; and it would not have been discovered if the investigations had not

begun on what later studies have shown to be false premises. Much of what Jesus Christ taught is embodied in the teachings of Buddha and Confucius. What our ministers term with contempt the Pagan religions are all rungs of the ladder ascending to ultimate Truth, lower, no doubt, than Christianity, but all on the same ladder; different, indeed, in quality, but not in kind.

The Roman Church, as has been demonstrated by the prelate who was recently the guardian of its interest in this country, refuses, so far, to assent to the doctrine of evolution: and, as long as this is the case, there is no possible hope of its adopting any other than the final position. No theory of the origin of the human race through processes of natural selection, or of the lowly ancestry of man, can, by any possible means, be made to fit in with the assertion that God is the Author of the Latin Vulgate edition of the Scriptures. The Roman Church is nothing if not dogmatic. Cardinal Vaughan's formula may be taken as the final position with reference to the books of the Bible. ".....; but because having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their Author." The *Providentissimus Deus* of 1898 has it thus: "For all the books which the Church receives as sacred and canonical are written wholly and entirely with all their parts at the dictation of the Holy Ghost; and so far is it from being possible that any error can co-exist with inspiration, that inspiration not only is essentially incompatible with error, but excludes and rejects it as absolutely and necessarily as it is impossible that God Himself, the supreme truth, can utter that which is not true....." "Hence because the Holy Ghost employed men as

His instruments, we cannot therefore say that it was these inspired instruments who, perchance, have fallen into error, and not the primary Author. For, by supernatural power, He so moved and impelled them to write—He was so present to them—that the things which He ordered, and those only, they, first, rightly understood, then willed faithfully to write down, and finally expressed in apt words and with infallible truth. Otherwise it could not be said that He was the Author of the entire Scripture."

Whatever attacks may be made on the Roman Church, the charge of ambiguity should not be one of them. The above fiat we may object to, but we cannot deny that it is concise and clear. It absolutely shuts out any chance of reconciling the evidence of scientists, as to the evolution of species and the evolution of language, with the Hebrew cosmogony, and the account given in Genesis xi. of the origin of differences in speech. It stamps with Divine authority the various contradictions of the Scriptures, such, for instance, as the two genealogies of the foster-father of Christ through two different sons of David, and saddles the Almighty with the entire responsibility for the "Song of Songs" and "Bell and the Dragon." The interpretation of the Old and New Testament Canons of the second century is to be the interpretation now. The alteration of a single word is not permissible.

It has been supposed by some that the Christian world will wake up some morning to find that the Roman Church has accepted the evidence of the evolution of man from lower forms of life, wholesale, as it is now being gradually, though reluctantly, accepted by the English Church. And it must be

admitted that the appointment, by the Vatican, of a commission of inquiry into the scope to be allowed by authority to Biblical exegesis, lends some colour to this pious hope. Such books as *Les Origines*, by J. Guibert, S.S., superior of the "Institute Catholique" of Paris, seem to be passed at Rome without exciting any great indignation, while the Abbe Loisy, one of his predecessors, though he had to resign, still continues, apparently, to work freely on the scientific aspect of the Scriptures. If it had not been for this fearless priest, the world would never have seen the *Providentissimus Deus* alluded to in Chap. III. But it is surely a vain expectation to hope for such a radical change in vital essentials? Without climbing down from the final position held for centuries to be absolutely infallible, such a "volte-face" would be quite impossible. To admit that the interpretation of the Scriptures to-day, as assisted by recent discoveries in science, may be superior to that of the time of St. Augustine, would be to strike at the very roots of Catholic dogma, and to announce that the Latin language was incapable of giving it expression.

The attitude of those millions of human beings within the fold of the Roman Church is quite intelligible, though somewhat contemptible. They say in effect: "We neither have the ability nor the knowledge to interpret the Holy Scriptures for ourselves." "The Church is the custodian and the interpreter of these deposits of the Almighty. We have faith that the Church will teach us aright, and we accept her directions unreservedly in all matters." This is not individual faith in Christ; it is faith in a Church. Private inquiry and private judgment are alike disallowed: the Church is the "praying-wheel" of the

Roman Catholic. He deals with heaven by deputy, and entirely surrenders his liberty of mind to other human beings no nearer in the intellectual scale, to God, than himself. This saves the individual a great deal of trouble, but, like many other things which save trouble, it induces a very flabby condition of mind, inimical to independence of thought and general character, and a danger to the State; for who knows when this abnegation of spiritual faculties may not be extended to things temporal, and the director of the conscience become also a factor to be reckoned with in the body politic? As before remarked, this danger has been foreseen by the governments of certain European States, and steps have been taken to guard political affairs from the interference of the Roman Church.

An interesting feature of Roman Catholic worship is the "Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary." Contemplation is a most excellent practice; but before beginning it, the devotee should assure himself, or herself, that there is foundation in fact for the subject of thought. The fourth and fifth of the "Glorious Mysteries" are the "Assumption" and the "Crowning" of the Virgin. The writer once asked a Roman Catholic priest what authority there was in Scripture, or the traditions of the Fathers, for the particulars detailed in these two Mysteries. "My dear Sir," was the reply, "the Catholic Religion is a science. We rely not only upon the Scriptures; but, as in every other science, deductions are made, in this case by the heads of the Church, from the Scriptures and from other sources. You ask: 'What authority we have for declaring that the Blessed Virgin was assumed into heaven accompanied by angels, and for Her Coronation

with great jubilee and exultation of the whole court of Heaven?' Well! *Is it not reasonable to suppose that Christ would thus welcome His Mother into Heaven, and cause Her to be crowned!''*

A point is to be noted in this connection. Both the Roman and the English Churches claim that they are guided by the Revelation of the Holy Spirit. Each Church contains many men of undoubted piety, who are eminently fit, by earnest prayer and meditation, to receive communication from on High. Is it not at least curious that the two Churches have arrived at such diverse conclusions as to the position of the Mother of Christ; and, indeed, as to other essentials of their respective faiths?

One of the principal reasons why the members of the Churches, especially the Roman Church, consent to adopt the final position with regard to the Christian religion, is their disbelief in the slow but general progress of mankind as a whole, and of the European and American people in particular, and their indifference to, or their inability to perceive, the increasing development of the human brain, as evinced by the extraordinary discoveries of the last century. It is even asserted by some Churchmen that the character of man is becoming worse instead of better. And yet there are the most striking evidences on every side to the contrary. Let us mention two instances. Take the war with the Boers. Was there ever, in the history of the world, a conflict fought out so long and with so much determination on both sides, which was prosecuted with so much humanity? Brushing aside a few instances of flagrant misuse of the white flag and of murder in cold blood, there was a display of chivalry to prisoners, care for the sick and wounded,

and tender treatment of women and children, which bore a marked contrast to wars of the past, and which were totally unknown in the days of Greece and Rome. Then take the gradual progress in the desire for arbitration in national disputes, and the abolition of personal combats for trivial matters of quarrel. As to the development of brain, it cannot be disputed that some hundred or so of the discoveries of the nineteenth century rank as positive miracles, if a miracle is to be defined as the accomplishment of something totally unknown before and contrary to all human expectation. Now, who can say where this development is to end? Can it be supposed from any analogy of previous experience that we have arrived, or have any prospect of arriving, at the end of this development? The duty of man to his neighbour becomes more plainly imperative as education spreads. Owing to education chiefly, aided by the softening influence of the Christian religion—a cult so far in advance of its predecessors—human needs are developing with most astonishing rapidity; and it is idle to suppose that they will long remain satisfied with the dogmatic theology of the present day.

There is another factor which militates largely in support of the doctrine of the finality of the Christian faith. It is the innate conceit of man. Bearing in mind from whence he sprung, his self-importance is colossal. Regardless of the well-ascertained fact that, compared with the matter in the universe, that portion of it called the Earth is infinitely small; regardless also of the fact that, compared with the life of the universe, the period since sentient man appeared upon the earth is infinitely small, and that, even if he remain upon the earth 100 million of years, the period

of his future is infinitely small; nothing short of the conception of a shameful sacrifice of Almighty God, incarnate in the form of man, will satisfy his mind that he is in a potential condition for a state of salvation. Christian dogma feeds his vanity. He knows, at last, that his little planet is but a speck of dust in the vast galaxy of the heavens, and that the entire population of it is as nothing to the probable number of sentient beings which are living in the boundless realms of space; but so absorbed is he in his own pigmy individuality that he believes himself to be the special object of protection and care of the Omnipotent and Omniscient Being who owns the whole.

This is partly due, no doubt, to the mental inability of ninety-nine people out of a hundred to form any sort of comprehension of the meaning of the word "infinity." Just as our forefathers of ten thousand years ago, like some of the lower types of humanity to-day, were not able to count more than the number of their fingers and toes, so the great majority of existing human beings are unable yet to conceive the idea conveyed by the words "infinite time" and "infinite space." Eternity is drummed into their heads from childhood. It is a familiar word, but it is doubtful if it conveys any solid impression to their minds. They are, therefore, unable to realise the insignificance of the earth, and all upon it, nor the pitiful fragment of time occupied by the life of each individual. If they did realise it, they would see at once the disproportion between the lives of the righteous and the promised reward of eternal happiness, on the one hand; and the lives of the wicked and their threatened punishment of eternal misery, on the other. Under these circumstances, though

they profess to appreciate the condescension of the Almighty in becoming man, they do not appear to regard the transaction as one between the infinitely great and the infinitely small. Did Churchmen really try to appreciate what the word "infinite" means, they would pause before coming to a conviction that their individuality was so important as all this implies.

To this, Churchmen would reply they have sufficient evidence in the Gospels, aided by insight furnished to them by the Holy Spirit, to enable them to understand the miraculous birth, the life, the death, the purpose, and the resurrection of their Divine Master. The nature of the evidence given in the Gospels has already been shown to be anything but infallible. There is good testimony in the common-stock gospel, or, as some call it, "the triple tradition," of the existence of a great and holy man called Jesus Christ, and of His death; but of His miraculous birth, His resurrection, and His ascension, where is it? The hearsay evidence of Luke, who does not profess ever to have seen Christ or to have heard anything about Him first hand from those who accompanied Him on His mission, would be considered very feeble testimony if it were brought forward for the purpose of proving any less important subject. It has often been asserted, and it is quite an article of some Churchmen's creed, that Luke derived his information as to the Incarnation and Birth from the Virgin Mary; but the historian states this nowhere, and it would be curious indeed, if this were true, that he should not mention so important a support to the truth of his narrative. Yet it is on Luke, and Luke alone, that Churchmen depend for their evidence of the heavenly host which appeared to the shepherds at

the birth of Christ, and for His ascension into heaven. The appearances of Christ after the crucifixion, as related in the Gospels, are in the highest degree contradictory and illusory, and depend to a certain extent upon the ascension. If there was no ascension, where would be the certainty of the resurrection? And if there was no resurrection there was certainly no ascension! As far as we know, there is no reason why we should suppose Luke to have been even a specially earnest Christian. He was the physician and admirer of Paul, and, no doubt, learnt a great deal from him; but Paul could have told him nothing of the life of Christ—nor of His death, resurrection, or ascension. Until the honesty of the translators dealt with the last verses of Mark's gospel, in the new version, there were two authorities for the ascension. Now, it is upon the record of Luke only that the tradition depends. Human longings for another life can only be satisfied by the second-hand evidence of one man.

The argument in the epistles is that, if Christ rose from the dead, then man may do likewise: "Now, if Christ is preached that he hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection from the dead? But if there is no resurrection from the dead, neither hath Christ been raised." So St. Paul. Surely the proof, if there were proof, however convincing, that God raised Himself from the dead, is no proof that man will be so raised. If a man were raised miraculously from the dead nineteen hundred years ago, it might be taken as evidence that man would rise again; but the conditions are entirely changed if that man were supernatural. Human needs will, before long,

demand more evidence than is adduced in the Gospels, and, as soon as they do demand it, so soon will faith change with reference to the problem of immortality.

Human needs change, not only from age to age, but during the life of the individual. Take the not very uncommon example of a lady who has the misfortune to lose her husband and only child when she is under thirty years of age. If she has a well-balanced mind, she does not desire to be taken too; but she longs earnestly for a reunion with those she has lost when the moment shall come for her to die. Years pass away; time gradually softens the heavy blow, and she becomes reconciled to her lonely existence. Old age is reached, and she becomes infirm. Does she desire to be taken? Not at all! She clings to life, notwithstanding that her creed tells her that, directly she passes the boundary, she will be welcomed by her husband and child. Her ideas have changed. The woman of eighty recalls her husband of thirty with gentle, tender, memories, but not with the same intense desire to rejoin him as she felt fifty years before. It might be expected that, as the time approached, she would become more impatient; but this is not the case. The study of old people with strong religious views, and who have been bereaved of everything which appears to make life worth living, is very curious. So enigmatical is it, that one is tempted to ask, "Do they really believe in a future life?" They have not the least wish to be called away. If they had, they would soon die. It is, in fact, their mental tenacity of life that enables them to exist.

Man takes himself far too seriously. He is not of that vast importance as is implied by his scheme of

eschatology. The evolution of religion, however, is as certain as the evolution of mind. When the Christian dogma has done its work, higher faiths will arise, and the more perfect man of the future will realise that the man of 1904 was but a step to a higher being, who does the right simply because it is the right, not for any consideration of reward or punishment, nor for hopes of eternal individuality.

His immortality will lie in his excellence as a step in the progress of humanity, and he will demand no extension of this brief transitory existence, beyond the grave.

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

No progress to be made until we realize our true place in the universe—Sanguine theory of Dr. Wallace—Conceit of man fed by his hope of immortality—Monasteries the repositories of learning—Catholic religion at first suited to human needs—Abuses—Evil to the Church of the assumption of temporal power—Catholic dogma impossible to reconcile with evolution—Western Churches pledged to belief in the immortality of man—Death-bed repentance—Predestination—Other worlds—Erroneous theories put forward to support the Christian religion—British Empire not specially the care of the Almighty—Erroneous chronology of the Bible—Origin of Sin—Origin of Good—Cult of angels and devils—Monotheism—the Israelitish nation—The Gospels—Luke not under promise of inspiration—Roman Catholic Rosary—The Ascension—St. Paul—Miracles no proof of Divinity—Marvellous powers of Christ—Was He Omniscient?—Luke to be believed occasionally even where he is the sole authority—Was circumcision a holy rite?—Limitations of Christ—Providence and prayer—The Clergy—Need for the study of astronomy—Mr. Balfour's remarks—Mistakes of writers on the Divinity—Mistakes of the clergy—Hymns—The Unseen Universe?—Transcendentalism—Free will—Altruism—The conclusion of the whole matter—Appendix.

IN the previous pages it has been shown how any approach to a true conception of the Infinite Spirit which pervades the universe is impossible without some knowledge of the conditions and the scope of that universe; and how hopeless are the attempts to form any scheme of religion if the thoughts are confined to that one small speck of matter upon which we happen to live. Such attempts in the past have not

been entirely useless. As in the realm of science, error has frequently been the precursor and foundation of religious progress, and will continue to be so. Strenuous endeavour has enabled the devotees of science to find the truth at last by constant building up on erroneous premises ; and thus it will be in the distant future with religious conceptions. But no satisfactory progress will be made unless we try to comprehend the littleness of the earth in the vast, but hitherto unintelligible, scheme of the Cosmos. Before the time of Copernicus, our forefathers imagined the earth to be the centre of the universe. Only quite recently a distinguished man of science has attempted to convince the public that, though the belief of the Middle Ages that the sun and stars revolved round the earth was incorrect, our planet is, as a matter of fact, in the centre of the universe, and in the most highly favoured position for the development of a perfect being. The sanguine belief of Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace was shattered a month later by Professor H. H. Turner, and the theory is now as dead as dust ; but no better example could be put forward of the vivid conceit so inherent in man as to his origin and relative importance.

This ignorance and conceit as to his place in Nature has been fostered in man by his elementary religious beliefs ; and, as far as the western world is concerned, the Jewish and Christian religions have been responsible for the most advanced form of it. It has done the race no harm ; on the contrary, man's vanity has been a powerful factor in his education. To Abraham and to David, the assurance that they were the special objects of Divine care became a source of great stimulus to activity and development. They were pro-

foundly ignorant of the universe around them; and if they thought about it at all, believed that the sun, moon, planets, and stars were created for the special benefit of their race. Later on, the appearance of a great Teacher—a genius—born of lowly parents and under the humblest circumstances, gifted with knowledge apparently acquired without effort, and endowed with powers, the nature of which science even now, nineteen hundred years after, enables us only to dimly understand; and announcing Himself to His followers as the Son of God; confirmed the idea amongst a small fraction of the Jewish race, that man was the special care of the Almighty; and a new feature was introduced to feed his vanity—under certain conditions he was to be immortal. The peoples of the Mediterranean, then speaking practically only one language, took up the idea with rapidity, a Church was formed, various ecclesiastical establishments were slowly set up, and the Christian religion and learning advanced hand in hand. It is to the monasteries that we are indebted for the preservation of learning throughout those dark ages when the whole of Europe and western Asia were in a condition of perpetual strife.

As soon as the peoples of Europe ceased to fight continuously with one another, education began to make progress, and the human brain to show evidence of greater development. The monasteries were no longer the sole repositories of books. The sciences made great strides, especially those of mathematics and astronomy. Printing followed, causing the dissemination of knowledge to proceed with great rapidity. As homes for the custodians of books, the monasteries were no longer required. They became,

as time went on, somewhat of a bar to progress; for they were rallying points for those who nourished dead-and-gone ideas, and nurseries for monks who cherished the chief abuses of the Catholic Church. At the best, they became nothing more than interesting museums. By the end of the eighteenth century they had completely lost their influence; and, by the end of the nineteenth, they were practically extinguished. A few only now remain, as monuments, to remind us of the part they once played in the preservation of learning.

The Catholic religion, when first promulgated, was well suited to human needs. Had the Church been content to hold fast to the Scriptures as it received them, and to become the simple interpreter of what was supposed to be the Will of God, it would have continued to keep the respect of all the peoples of Europe. But abuses soon crept in. The early bishops were succeeded by the Popes, some of whom were of the worst personal character, and sought for temporal as well as spiritual domination. The great wickedness of the Church was the establishment of the Inquisition, which flourished more or less for six centuries. Torture and shameful death were applied to those who conscientiously opposed changes in the doctrine handed down from Christ, or who differed from the interpretations of Rome. Then, the temporal punishments, apart from torture, became the cause of grave scandal, for they were converted into the sale of indulgences, which raised a revolt among the more-intelligent laymen and Churchmen, culminating in the establishment of the Protestant Church in western Europe. The elevation of the Mother of Christ to a position but little inferior to that of Himself, the

doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and Assumption of the Virgin, and, finally, the dogma of the Infallibility of the Pope, raised further barriers to the spread of the Roman Church; while the practice of Confession, which, if tenderly handled by a Church whose head showed no desire to assume control over political matters, would have been no stumbling-block to civilisation, became a source of danger, social and political, when presided over by the lieutenants of an ambitious temporal ruler whose claims were professedly not confined to spiritual affairs. It cannot be denied that the Roman Church has done good in certain countries; that part of the British dominions where it is now predominant, Ireland, is the most moral country in the world. But it has also done much harm, by suppressing free thought and arresting development. On the whole, during the last few centuries, it has been more productive of harm than of good. The Inquisition inflamed men's minds, and caused infidelity; and the present stubborn resistance to free thought, and to changes of doctrine suitable to the revelations of science as time goes on, can only end in reckless doubt on the part of educated men who profess that form of religion; doubt which will not be confined to the Roman Church, but which will extend to the Protestant Churches, if they continue to enforce doctrines which are contrary to the ascertained facts of Nature.

The Roman Church, and some Protestant Churches, hold with inflexible determination to the literal accuracy of the history of the origin of man and woman as given in the book of Genesis. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and

man became a living soul."....." And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from the man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man." They cling also to the belief that man and woman were created in innocence, and intended to live for an indefinite period. ".....: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."

The Churches also hold fast to the belief that, had it not been for the act of disobedience described in Genesis (allegorically or otherwise), man and woman would not have been apportioned a life of toil, nor eventually returned to dust. ".....; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." These beliefs are irreconcilable with ascertained facts. Owing to the act of disobedience—so runs the narrative—the nature of the soil was changed, and the very structure of the human body was miraculously altered, in order to admit of final dissolution. If created without bad instincts, and designed to live for ever, how could man have been evolved from a lower type? No juggling with words will suffice here. It is to the corporeal nature of man that the historian alludes. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" indicated a curse; a punishment effected on the physical being. According to the Churches, man was not intended to die; but his destiny was changed. See Wisdom ii. 23: see also Genesis ii. 9, 17, and iii. 22. It is evident from the account that the only forbidden fruit was that

from the tree of the "knowledge of good and evil." But the disobedient pair were expelled for fear they should eat (or continue to eat) of the "Tree of Life." The enormous longevity of the first patriarchs in the history would lead us to suppose that the historian wishes to convey that Adam and Eve had already partaken of the fruit of the "Tree of Life." Consequently, any faith in the gradual ascent of man from lower forms, where death was the common lot, is entirely discredited. As has before been stated, the Roman Church is nothing if not inflexible and consistent. It stands or falls by the truth or otherwise of the dogma of the textual infallibility of the Canonical books. It cannot accept evolution.

To those who have any doubts as to the fact of a very large section of the Church of England being in agreement with the Roman Church on the question of the infallibility of the Old as well as the New Testament, we recommend the articles and letters in the *Record* of June and July, 1901, alluded to in Chapter IV.

All Churches of the West are pledged to a belief in a future life of everlasting happiness for the righteous, and everlasting misery for the wicked; also, that salvation and pardon for a bad life may be obtained at the last moment of existence; provided that the heart is entirely changed, repentance is sincere, and there is complete belief, on the sinner's part, in the Divinity and the mission of Jesus Christ. This faith, in the Roman Church (which allows of purgatory only for venial sins), opens up a curious question. Let us suppose a man, well-educated and carefully brought up by pious parents, falls into bad company, and lives a life of depravity, say, for forty years. In the course

of this time, he has deliberately planned and carried out the ruin of three innocent women, who, owing to his selfish acts of passion and subsequent desertion, fall into a state of prostitution to keep themselves from starving; and after a life of mental torment, recklessness, and infidelity, die suddenly, unrepentant. Eventually, the man also finds himself on his death-bed. His early teaching is recalled to him, he sincerely repents of his past life, he believes, is absolved from his sins, dies, and goes to heaven. Now, heaven is a place where the individuality is said to be preserved, consequently *memory*. It is also a place, according to the Church, where there are no delusions, and we see ourselves as we were on earth: every act of our lives is recalled, nothing is veiled. Without memory, individuality has no meaning in this connection. But heaven is also alleged to be a place of pure and unadulterated happiness. Can this man be happy? He recalls with startling vividness every act and thought of his past life. Amongst other numerous acts of wickedness, he is reminded of the ruin of the three women who, but for him, would probably have lived in virtue and attained to his present condition. His new intuition tells him that their wretchedness and spiritual death is his act. From a position secure among the blest, occupied in congenial thanksgiving, and praise of the Supreme Being, he, who now knows himself as he was, can watch the tortures of his victims in hell. And this is to last for eternity. If he is not happy, he is not in heaven. If he *is* happy, what can heaven be like?

Some Protestant ministers believe there is an intermediate life; that no individual is sufficiently purged on this earth from stain to be fit to mingle

with the angels. Hades, Abraham's bosom, and Paradise are names given to this state, which is believed to have various platforms, ranging from a near approach to heaven to the lowest depths of misery. The scene of the story in the parable of Dives and Lazarus is supposed to be the intermediate state; and when Christ uttered the promise to the penitent thief on the cross, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," it is said that He was referring to Hades, where He was to visit the "souls in prison" during the two days His body was in the grave. But even this creed helps our sincere penitent very little. He is on the higher plane, "Abraham's bosom," or "Paradise"; his victims on the lower. It is conceivable that they never reach the higher. Finally, his sins entirely purged, he enters heaven, leaving his victims below. Their original fall from grace has been his act. How can such a man attain everlasting happiness?

The doctrine of predestination to hell, believed in by the Calvinistic school, and which is stated by implication in one of the Articles of the Church of England, should, if the faith in it be genuine, cause much more concern than it appears to do. Let us suppose a pious woman, who professes this belief, is about to marry. She may, according to the experience of others, have as many as twelve or fourteen children. However carefully she may bring these children up, it is more than probable that *all* are not predestined to salvation. Her experience tells her that in large families there is usually one black sheep, if not more, notwithstanding the care and attention in rearing the family. Does this serious consideration cause her to hesitate? No! What conclusion must we come

to? There surely can be but one. She does *not* believe.

This leads to another consideration as regards the heaven of the Churches. How can parents, whose children have been suddenly cut off in the midst of sin, be happy? Memory, their individuality, recalls to them points of omission in their scheme of rearing these children. Moreover, love of offspring is not supposed to be extinguished by death, and it is understood that one of the privileges of heaven is the mutual recognition of those who have loved on earth. But there is no promise that supplication to the Supreme Being will be of any assistance to those whose sufferings are going on, and going on for *ever*. Can such parents share in the joy around them? We imagine not.

Recent discoveries in astrophysics have revealed many truths which were not even suspected when the Christian Church was first founded. It is now but plain common-sense that we should believe that in the visible universe there are many hundreds of millions of worlds at present in existence or in process of making, which are already, or will be in the future, inhabited by intellectual beings; and that there have been an infinite number in the past which have ceased to be able to maintain life, or have vanished; and that there will be an infinite number in the future when our world is dead. In our system, controlled by a star of small dimensions, there is at least one world, and there may be as many as four of the planets fit for the abode of life. The homogeneity of matter in the universe points to the conclusion that other planets in the universe have now, will have in their turn, or have had, inhabitants similar in

mental equipment to ourselves. The discoveries brought to a head by Mr. Darwin lead to the belief that the inhabitants of all worlds were gradually evolved from lower forms; and, as they ascended in the intellectual scale, expelled by slow degrees the low propensities which they inherited from their ancestors. The bodily form of the inhabitants of other worlds is immaterial: it probably is such as is best suited to its environment. But the mind is surely similar? One science must be common to all the denizens of the universe, the exact science of mathematics. If two and two make four in this small planet, two and two will not make five in one of the planets controlled by Alcyone or by Sirius, or by Canopus or Arcturus. The mathematical laws which govern what we call gravitation must be the same in every region of the heavens; light must travel through space with the same speed in every part; and we cannot conceive a state of affairs in any other world where the proportion of the diameter to the circumference of a circle is not the same as it is on this. It is hard to believe Dr. Wallace's statement (p. 396, *Fortnightly Review*, March, 1903) that the view "held by many great thinkers and writers to-day" is "that the supreme end and purpose of this vast universe was the production and development of the living soul in the perishable body of man."

Now, the western Churches profess that there is one God, and that the Founder of their religion is not an attribute of that God, not a materialisation of God who is in Himself Spirit, but His Son, "not made nor created, but begotten," co-eternal, co-equal—in short, God Himself. Is it to be conceived that the Son of God, or God Himself, went through these mental and

physical tortures in other worlds? Have we any grounds for supposing that there are any worlds evolved from the nebulæ in which inhabitants developed without requiring the same assistance as ourselves? And can we suppose, in common, sober sense, that such condescension or sacrifice as is alleged to have taken place, ever did take place before, or since, or will ever take place again? If not, let us go a step further and ask, Is it reasonable to suppose that this little earth was so specially favoured as has been stated? Such a presumptuous hope was pardonable up to the time of Copernicus. It is folly since the vast discoveries of Herschel.

And what, in addition to the unattested gospels, is there to oblige us to place credence in this marvel? Simply this, which has been brought forward by able Christian writers over and over again—it is said that the acceptance by a large portion of mankind for nearly eighteen hundred years of the narrative of the miraculous birth, life, mission, cruel death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, is sufficient evidence of its solidity and truth. But this might have been said with equal force in the fourteenth century, of the Ptolemaic theory of the universe. A very large portion of mankind believed it; but it proved to be utterly false.

Another pious belief largely held in England is that civilisation has only advanced in Christian countries. This theory is discredited, first by the state of civilisation in Egypt before the time of Christ, second by the civilisation of Greece and Rome at the time of Christ, and third by the history of Japan. The present Emperor of Japan is the one hundred and twenty-first of his line. The dynasty goes back to the days of

Nebuchadnezzar. For many hundreds of years, this nation has been in quite as civilised a condition as England was in the time of Alfred. Its civilisation began hundreds of years before that of Great Britain; and since the ports were opened up in 1862, and Western ideas were forced upon the people, they have shown a facility of adaptation, and love of learning, which is nothing less than marvellous; amply proving that, had they been less exclusive in the past, they would now be in the very forefront of nations. Not one of their national characteristics, not one of their steps in progress, even in the last ten years, has been due to Christianity.

Self-complacent people in England regard the establishment of the British Empire, now forty years old, as the special work of the Almighty. When it has lasted as long as that of Rome, it will be time enough to begin to attribute its origin to supernatural agencies. There are, unfortunately, no signs that it will be permanent. The Anglo-Saxon race may—probably will—be a great factor in the progress of the world during this and the next century; but the great American nation, which is no longer purely Anglo-Saxon, will reap the largest share of credit. Its rapidly-increasing population, its blend of races, its compactness and solidarity, must give it a preponderating voice in the world's affairs before another hundred years. When Great Britain loses her coal, her manufactures will not be able to compete with her neighbours. Her revenue will fall. No longer able to adequately protect her children, the colonies will separate from the mother country—and this will probably happen before two hundred years have passed away.

The chronology of the Bible, believed in for so many years, and put into form in the seventeenth century by Archbishop Usher, is a good instance of how error has crept into our interpretation of the Scriptures. This chronology has been in use for about 250 years, and is only, just now, beginning to be discredited. There are thousands of old people in the British Isles who believe in it firmly to the present hour. Of course, to an educated man, such dates as we find in the margin of the first chapter of Genesis only raise a smile. But this error was only exposed a few years ago, and ought to be a warning to us. It was sanctioned by the Bishops of the Church of England; and there are hundreds of thousands of Bibles, now in use, with the note B.C. 4004 placed in the margin against the words, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

The origin of sin is a cardinal principle of the Churches, and vitally affects all their doctrines. If they are correct in the view they promulgate, it is inconsistent of them to accept any theory of evolution; for any attempt to reconcile Darwin's teaching of the origin of species must result in failure. According to their dogma, sin originated with the first pair of human beings, and was not inherent in them. The Darwinian hypothesis teaches that man is a development from lower forms of life, and that he had within him when he first assumed the erect posture, the instincts and propensities of the beast from which he sprung, together with the organs of the latter, some of which were destined to gradually fall into disuse. The term "sin" had no application to the selfish propensities of the animal; but the

selfish propensities remained when the higher consciousness dawned in the erect man; and, when indulged in, as was inevitable, became "sin." Every form of evil of any description is founded on the love of self or the love of offspring; and there is no form of depravity known on earth which cannot be traced back to the instincts of the beast. Naturally, the enlarged brain power, afforded by an erect position, has increased the propensity to evil, for it has enabled its possessor to foster his faculty for the exercise of inherited bestial instincts; but, at the same time, it has given him the power to overcome them. The personal devil, a cherished possession not only of the western religions but of some in the East, notably the Persian, is quite unnecessary to those who accept the Darwinian theory of the origin of man.

Sin is a difficult topic to introduce into an essay which may possibly be read by people of both sexes and of various ages. It is dealt with in a singularly unsophisticated manner in the Bible, especially in the history of Abraham and of the Israelites; but, owing to many centuries of use, the subject has, in a sense, become deadened; and stories which, if related in modern works, would be deemed injurious to public morals, appear to fall on the ears of members of the congregation of a church without creating any shock. The Old Testament treats of the most revolting crimes in a very candid manner. That such degradation existed is proved to be the case by contemporary history: the broad facts as stated are undoubtedly true. It is not credible that a historian would have any motive in so openly dwelling upon the iniquities of the cities of the Plain, or of the Canaanites in the time of Joshua, unless such sins were really

committed. Moreover, the fact that unnatural crimes were common under the empires of Greece and Rome is notorious: no less notorious is it that they are unhappily prevalent in modern times. In the Eastern countries, whose inhabitants comprise at least one-third of the inhabitants of the earth, such sins are not only practised but tolerated by general consent, to this day. Nor is this all. Even in countries where a pitch of civilisation has been reached which commands general abhorrence of these particular sins, such as our own, they are not unknown. And they are not confined to what are termed the lower classes. Some of the most complicated cases have been those which have been brought home to men of high social standing and great intellectual attainments. In fact, the grosser forms of depravity would seem to be developed to their greatest extent by exceptional brain power. It is difficult to differentiate classes and degrees of crime: but it is safe to say that the worst crime of the nineteenth century was committed by a learned and accomplished Canon of the Church of England. Truth is a great deal stranger than fiction. In the case here alluded to, a series of sins of the most deliberate and abominable nature were in contemplation, if not in process of actual commission, at a time when the criminal was, Sunday after Sunday, carrying out the holy offices of the Church, and preaching the most heart-stirring sermons. With the connivance of some of his brother clergymen this man escaped from the country. It was a grave mistake from every point of view; and when the crime became known, which was not for a year afterwards, those who allowed the escape received merited condemnation, not only from the general public who heard of the

event but from many of their own profession. Their motive was, presumably, to avoid scandal to the Church; but it is doubtful if any injury to the Church, as a body, justifies such an act. Had the crime been murder, they dared not have done otherwise than hand the criminal over to justice. It was worse than murder, and they allowed him to go free, to recommence his bestialities in another country.

Now, the point of the matter is this—these crimes alluded to in the Bible are simply the evolution of certain bestial instincts. If the habits of animals are watched in the present day, the same instincts are observed. We can trace this particular crime from the beast, and again from the first sentient men, as far as history tells us of them, upwards to the present day. It appears in the Bible hundreds of times, and is conspicuous in the exhortations of St. Paul. No personal devil is required to instigate it. Bestial instincts and a perverted imagination are all that is necessary.

When writing his book, *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, Mr. Gladstone felt a difficulty in alluding to this subject; but that he did allude to it shows the importance he attached to the candid consideration of the sins mentioned in the Old Testament. One of the chief reasons why the Church is able to hold its ground in its doctrines on Sin, and the Fall of Adam, is the reticence of those critics, who, though fully aware of the horrible depravity existing in so many countries, and its origin, shrink from alluding to the subject. All writers prefer to feel that no apparent departure from good taste will prevent their thoughts from reaching all classes of the population. If those who have closely observed the habits of

animals were to publish all they know, which is impossible, it would have to be admitted that all the capacity for evil in man is derived from this source alone.

But the latent capacity for good is also an inheritance from our lowly ancestors. The beast is very far from being all selfish. Love of offspring early taught a sort of altruism to animals. The obligation of the mother to feed and tend her young, and of the father to protect both mother and young, and also to search for food after the offspring reached a certain age, could only lead to unselfishness. As the animal became erect and the brain was given a fair chance to develop, a community of interest was aroused amongst more than one family, and the individuals laboured not for their own good alone but for the good of the community. Language made the progress of this communistic feeling very rapid, and it has gradually developed to what we see in the present day. Woman from the first was ever more unselfish than man. Her maternal instincts, so purely altruistic, gave her the best start, and she has retained her supremacy. Sin in its most depraved form is almost unknown to her sex.

The cult of angels and devils originated with the people of Babylon, and was known long before the time of Abraham. It was natural that it should have been woven closely into the history of that patriarch and his descendants; but it was as mythical as that of the Greek and Roman gods. There is no evidence worth the paper, or the papyrus, it was written upon, in support of the legend of the appearance of either an angel or a devil upon this earth. Good has been slowly developed from love, protection, and community

of interest, assisted by the imagination conferred by improved brain power: evil is what remains of the selfish instincts of animals, intensified no doubt by this same imagination, but slowly expiring under the influence of the more powerful intellect, which, in the main, works distinctly in favour of the good. The idea of an evil spirit, apart from the human race, ever prompting man to sin, is a figment of the imagination; natural enough in the distant past, but inexcusable in the present day, when such illumination has been thrown by philosophers of the nineteenth century upon the origin of man and the habits and instincts of his progenitors.

The history of Abraham and of the Israelitish nation is an interesting record of the origin and growth of a strict monotheism, full of poetry, legend, and mythical romance; and deriving its principal importance from the literature preserved by its Seers, and their curious prophecies or second sight. It is not wonderful that, first the patriarch and his family, and later the nation descended from him, should cultivate the delusion that they were the special care of the Disposer of the universe, to the exclusion of other inhabitants of what they believed to be the rest of the world. Nor is it remarkable, absorbed as they were in the cult handed down to them, that the leaders of Israel should represent to their followers that the impulses which they felt within them were the direct commands of the God whom they worshipped. Their innate savagery, evinced chiefly in their barbarous treatment of prisoners of war, would appear under these circumstances to be sanctioned by Divine guidance. But now that the human race has begun to learn something of the nature of the universe and the small part which it

plays in it, is it necessary that we should believe in anything so manifestly improbable?

At the time of the Israelitish raid into Canaan the inhabitants were not more wicked than their neighbours to the east, and probably nearly all the countries of Asia were equally corrupt. Are we, in the present enlightened age, to continue to believe that Almighty God ordered the debasement of His chosen people by such an injunction as He is reported to have given to Moses in Numbers xxxi. ? In his interesting lectures on Jewish history, Dean Stanley wisely avoids any direct reference to the war against Midian. With his usual literary skill, he puts before his hearers the case of the Gentile prophet Balaam ; but they are not allowed to share his thoughts on the following red pages in Biblical history. His friend, the Bishop of Natal, is, however, less reticent. This is how Dr. Colenso comments on the incidents set forth in the above chapter :—“ But how thankful we must be that we are no longer obliged to believe, as a matter of fact, of vital consequence to our eternal hope, each separate statement contained in the Pentateuch, such, for instance, as the story related in N. xxxi.—where we are told that a force of 12,000 Israelites slew *all* the males of the Midianites, took captive *all* the females and children, seized *all* their cattle and flocks (72,000 oxen, 61,000 asses, 675,000 sheep), and *all* their goods, and ‘burnt *all* their cities and *all* their goodly castles,’ without the loss of a single man,—and then, by command of Moses, butchered in cold blood all women and children except—

“ ‘All the women-children, who have not known a man by lying with him,’ v. 18.

“ These last they were to ‘keep alive for them—

selves.' They amounted to 32,000, *v.* 35, mostly, we must suppose, under the age of sixteen or eighteen. We may fairly reckon that there were as many more under the age of forty, and half as many more above forty, making altogether 80,000 females, of whom, according to the story, Moses ordered 48,000 to be killed, besides (say) 20,000 young boys. The tragedy of Cawnpore, where 300 were butchered, would sink into nothing, compared with such a massacre, if, indeed, we were required to believe it. And these 48,000 females must have represented 48,000 men, all of whom, in that case, we must also believe to have been killed, their property pillaged, their castles demolished, and towns destroyed, by 12,000 Israelites, who, in addition, must have carried off 100,000 captives (more than eight persons to each man) and driven before them 808,000 head of cattle (more than sixty-seven for each man), and all without the loss of a single man! How is it possible to quote the Bible as in any way condemning slavery, when we read here, *v.* 40, of 'Jehovah's tribute' of slaves, thirty-two persons, who were given to Eleazar the Priest, while three-hundred-and-twenty were given to the Levites, *v.* 46, 47?"

Is it not high time to discontinue teaching the young people of our land that this history of blood and rapine is "Holy Scripture"? Not that we intend here to imply that such passages as we have just considered are selected for the instruction of children. But, if we eliminate the bloody deeds of the Israelites as untrustworthy, what right have we to teach the residue, as it is taught now, as the "Word of God"? There are signs that the Books of Moses, of Joshua, and of Judges, were all written at the same period, and probably by

the same school, if not by the same man. It is thought that Samuel may have been largely interested, and possibly have written part and superintended the collation of the whole. Be that as it may, when we are discussing their Divine origin or sanction, the whole of these books must stand or fall together: if one book or one chapter is cast aside, the credit of the rest will be seriously impaired.

What reason is there for imagining that the legends of the Bible have more truth in them than those related elsewhere? Why should the legendary era which commenced with Adam end with the mission of the apostles? For fifteen hundred years after the death of the last of the apostles, legends of so-called miracles were rife in Europe, and many of them were, *primâ facie*, quite as worthy of credence as those which are recorded in the Scriptures. Even within the period covered by the Old Testament, the Churches do not agree amongst themselves as to what miracles shall be believed.

In *The History of the Destruction of Bel and the Dragon*, one of the canonical books of the Roman Church, but which is excluded from the canon of the Protestant Church, there is an interesting anecdote worthy of a place in the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*. It runs as follows:—"Now there was in Jewry a prophet, called Habbacuc, who had made pottage, and had broken bread in a bowl, and was going into the field, for to bring it to the reapers. But the angel of the Lord said unto Habbacuc, Go, carry the dinner that thou hast into Babylon unto Daniel, who is in the lion's den. And Habbacuc said, Lord, I never saw Babylon; neither do I know where the den is. Then the angel of the Lord took him by the crown,

and bare him by the hair of his head, and through the vehemency of his spirit set him in Babylon over the den. And Habbacuc cried, saying, O Daniel, Daniel, take the dinner which God hath sent thee. And Daniel said, Thou hast remembered me, O God: neither hast thou forsaken them that seek thee and love thee. So Daniel arose and did eat: and the angel of the Lord set Habbacuc in his own place again immediately."

One division of Christian priests have decided that the above story is inspired—the Word of God: another that it is *not*; and that it is to be separated from the rest of the book of Daniel which *is* the Word of God. Pilate might well exclaim, "What is truth?"

As to the New Testament, the four Gospels were selected in the early days of the Church from a great number of others. They may contain certain passages which give a fairly true account of what was said and done by Jesus Christ. It can be assumed that any passage which is common to the three synoptics, or to two of the synoptics and the gospel of St. John, is respectable evidence; but when this is not the case, it is well to suspend judgment as to the reliability of the record, unless, as in the gospel of St. Luke, we read a parable or a saying which is so much in harmony with the character and genius of Christ set forth in the common-stock gospel, as to carry conviction of its genuineness. We have a right to judge of the value of evidence in matters referring to the ministry of Christ just as much as we have in any matter of ordinary daily importance. Now, what is evidence worth in the present day on any important subject? Let us take, for example, the Boer war. Not only do Englishmen and Boers give entirely opposite accounts

of the origin of that struggle, but the English accounts differ widely amongst themselves, and the Boer accounts also. Take the battles, Colenso for instance. The Boer account is widely different from the account given by the British : two Boers give different accounts ; and any two British officers, separated on that fatal day by the distance of only one mile, will give quite different narratives of the operations. We have never yet, and probably never will, have a true account of the disaster of Stormberg from the time the troops set out in the evening to their return in diminished numbers the next day. Who is there bold enough to say that he can state accurately what happened in the action when De la Rey captured Lord Methuen? As to the final fights at Pardeburg on the days before surrender, the account given by the Canadians and by the Royal Engineers who were nearest to the Boer defences, is as wide asunder as the poles. Even in our law courts, it often requires days of patient investigation, by men whose life training has been that of weighing evidence, to arrive at the truth. Imagination plays havoc with even educated witnesses : its influence amounts to real delusion in uneducated witnesses. Where there is no motive to deceive, two men who have positively seen an act take place will give diametrically opposite accounts of what they saw. And this in the twentieth century! How must it have been in the first century ; when there were no reporters ; there was no press ; and the witnesses were uneducated men, who took upon themselves the task of recording what they had heard and seen, not at the time, nor even within a reasonable interval, but from thirty to sixty years after the death of the Hero of their narratives? To this objection the

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Churches reply, Jesus Christ promised the writers inspiration (St. John xiv. 26). "But the comforter *even* the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." This promise, supposing that it was made as here recorded, might cover the narrative of Matthew, Mark (who wrote at the dictation of Peter)—and possibly (it is much disputed) John—but it cannot affect the narrative of Luke who was not an apostle; and, as far as we know, did not associate with them, did not witness the events he records, nor, indeed, did ever see the Christ.

But what would be the effect on Christian testimony if St. Luke's narrative had not been one of the four selected gospels? In the first place, there would be no evidence for the Ascension; and, if the miracle of the Ascension were taken away, the evidence for the Resurrection would be seriously impaired: again, if the narrative of the walk to Emmaus, the shadowy appearance of Christ to the eleven, and His eating broiled fish to satisfy them of his materiality, were eliminated, the evidence of the Resurrection would be poor indeed. As it is, supported by the gospel of St. Luke, the evidence of the appearances of Christ after death is extremely weak, and would not be accepted if subjected to the critical acumen of the present age which is applied to matters of every-day importance.

These views are put forward with diffidence: not that the writer has any doubts as to the decision he has felt himself obliged to come to, but because he is well aware that many distinguished laymen have satisfied themselves of the truth of the resurrection and ascension of Christ. How they have done this,

is, to the writer, a mystery; but they have done so. Mr. A. J. Balfour could never have written his "Provisional Unification" unless he felt assured that the gospel authors, Luke included, were correct in all the essential elements of the story. After writing on the problem of the mystery of Evil, he says: "And this faith is possessed by those who vividly realise the Christian form of Theism. For they worship One Who is no remote contriver of a universe to whose ills He is indifferent. If they suffer, did He not on their account suffer also? If suffering falls not always on the most guilty, was He not innocent? Shall they cry aloud that the world is ill-designed for their convenience, when He for their sakes subjected Himself to its conditions? It is true that beliefs like these do not in any narrow sense resolve our doubts nor provide us with explanations. But they give us something better than many explanations. For they minister, or rather the Reality behind them ministers, to one of our deepest ethical needs: to a need which, far from showing signs of diminution, seems to grow with the growth of civilisation, and to touch us ever more keenly as the hardness of an earlier time dissolves away" (*The Foundations of Belief*, page 354).

As has been mentioned in previous pages, the gospel of Mark (derived from Peter) is the most reliable, and in all probability the earliest of the editions of the common-stock narrative. It is the most rugged and the most devoid of literary effort: it is the shortest, and it has on the face of it the most honest and genuine appearance. Matthew's narrative ranks next in veracity. Luke's gospel, or more properly his open letter to his noble friend Theophilus,

has distinct evidence of literary aspiration, and shows a faculty for poetical rendering of miracle, parable, and discourse. It is much longer than the other two synoptics, if the prophecies are excluded from Matthew; and it contains a number of facts which are not to be found elsewhere. Scarcely anything is known of the author, except that he also wrote the "Acts of the Apostles," that, owing to the influence of his friend, he enjoyed the privilege of a better issue of his narrative, and that he was the physician and companion of St. Paul.

It is worth noticing that, of the fifteen Mysteries of the Roman Catholic Rosary of the Blessed Virgin, the first five "Joyful Mysteries" all depend upon Luke alone; also two of the last five "Glorious Mysteries." For two of the last five, namely, the "Assumption of the Mother of Christ into Heaven" and "Her Coronation above all angels and saints," there is no Scriptural authority whatever. Six mysteries only, out of fifteen, have the authority of more than one gospel. It is also worthy of note that the most obscure parables, those of the "Unjust Steward" and the "Unjust Judge," are related only by Luke. At the same time, it is not to be ignored that two of the most characteristic parables, those which indicate the keenest appreciation of the nature of Christ, are also found only in Luke, the "Pharisee and the Publican" and the "Prodigal Son." It was to be expected that Luke, himself a man of good education, and working under the influence of the gifted St. Paul, would bring to its greatest perfection of style the triple tradition. It was also to be expected that, as neither he nor his master was an eye-witness of what took place, there would be errors in his narrative.

His second work, "The Acts of the Apostles," is probably far more accurate than his gospel, since his master, though not a disciple of Christ, was the principal actor in the story. We can fancy the enthusiastic Luke embarking upon a life of Jesus, preparatory to his narrative of St. Paul where he would feel more certain of his facts; and gathering such details as were available from the aged missionary, both men doing their best to render the relation complete, but both suffering under the disadvantage of not having been present when the events took place. For many years St. Paul was not on good terms with St. Peter, and he probably learnt but little from him.

Since serious doubt has been cast, by the eminent scholars who revised the New Testament on both sides of the Atlantic, on the last ten verses of Mark's gospel, the evidence of Christ having ascended into heaven rests solely upon the historian Luke, who was not present; and his story of the appearance of the angel (Acts i. 10, 11) rather confirms our doubts. If dealing with a circumstance outside the domain of religion, we should not consider the evidence worth any more than that of the hundreds of people in Ireland during the nineteenth century who, from time to time, have asserted in the most solemn manner that they have seen the Virgin Mary, St. Joseph and other celebrities, or that of Father Ignatius who made the following statement in the Westminster Town Hall on May 5th, 1885:—"On September 15th, 1880, we were in the monastery porch [Llanthony]. The boys were standing on the front steps; I was standing on the top step; one brother was on my left, and another brother on my right. Two farmers were behind in the back of the porch, and a gentleman visitor was a little behind me

to the right. I suggested that we should sing three 'Hail Marys' in honour of each person of the blessed Trinity. We began a 'Hail Mary' in honour of God the Father. Between the 'Hail Marys' we, all of us, expressed our amazement at some very curious flashings of light, which we saw in all directions in the meadow, like the outlines of figures. That was the impression I had.....I then said, 'Let us sing a "Hail Mary" in honour of the blessed Virgin herself'; and we began to chant the fourth 'Hail Mary.' Directly we began to do so I saw a great circle of light flash out over the whole heavens, taking in the mountains, the trees, the ruined house, the enclosure, the monastery, the gates and everything; the light flashed upon our feet, upon the steps, and upon the buildings; and from that one great circle of light small circles bulged out, and, in the centre of the circles, stood a gigantic figure of a human being, with hands uplifted, standing sideways. In the distance this gigantic figure appeared to be about sixty feet in height; but as it descended it took the ordinary size of a human being. At the moment it struck me that a dark appearance over the head of the figure was hair, not a veil; but I am convinced from comparing notes with the others, and also from other reasons, that it was a veil which I saw over the head."

The earnest and learned St. Paul was but a missionary, of a high type indeed, but very far from infallible; and deriving his fame principally on account of the darkness of the age in which he lived. His epileptic vision loses its superhuman character when light is thrown upon it by medical science of to-day. His personality, his superior intellect, and his

enthusiasm are sufficient to account for his amazing influence amongst those for whom he laboured. His mistaken expectations, notably that of the near approach of the end of the world, are sufficient to show the absence in him of any special spiritual inspiration. If inspiration be defined as intuitive perception of what is best for the age, he undoubtedly had the gift, but it has been conferred with equal abundance upon many hundreds of men before his time and since. There is nothing to show that he was endowed with any special grace, or that he was superior to Xavier, Livingstone, Hannington, and many other men who have spent their lives for the good of others.

Miracles are no proof either of the Divinity of Christ or of the Divine inspiration of Paul. A miracle can only be defined as an incident, or the performance of an act, which has been, hitherto, unknown to human experience. The Victorian era was prolific in miracles: and there is every probability that the twentieth century will see many applications of natural laws which, at the present moment, are not understood, and are foreign to human experience; and which would now be unhesitatingly pronounced to be miracles, were it not that the word is out of use because we have been warned by the discoveries of the past to distrust the limits of our intellectual horizon.

It is true that the feeding of the four thousand, the feeding of the five thousand, and the sudden disappearances of Christ when He was in imminent danger of His life, are occurrences that we cannot explain; but, are there not countless things on the earth that we cannot explain? It is said that some of the fakirs in India have the power of dematerialising themselves, or, at any rate, of making people who

are present believe that they have disappeared. That Jesus Christ possessed unusual powers—powers which ordinary mortals do not possess—may be conceded. The incident of the healing of the woman who had had an issue of blood twelve years shows this to have been the case (Mark v. 30). It is one of the best guaranteed incidents in the common-stock gospel, and indicates clearly that Jesus did possess within Himself a magnetic or electric power of healing which has never been possessed in the same degree, or in anything like the same degree, by any other man who has ever lived. Signs are not wanting that the magnetic or electric power in man will be largely made use of soon for healing the sick, but the time has not yet come when a patient can receive benefit from touching the clothes of the physician, however skilful the latter may be in the art of suggestion by hypnotism.

The followers of Christ claimed far more on His behalf than He ever claimed for Himself. His various declarations that He was sent by God, that He was one with God, and that He would return to God, do not necessarily mean that He felt Himself to be co-equal with God. Interpreted in the imagery of the day, they certainly imply that He felt within Him a superlative degree of the Spirit of the Almighty, and arrogated to Himself a right to speak in the name of God. In that sense He was the Son. In that sense He might declare "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," "Before Abraham was I am." But He distinctly acknowledges His limitations, and does not refer to His alleged miraculous birth—"No man knoweth, not even the Son, but the Father." His prayer in Gethsemane testifies to His feelings of

dependence upon the Almighty Will, and shows that He was uncertain as to what was about to happen.

Nor was He omniscient. Gifted, indeed, with astounding powers of prophecy, far beyond the powers of the Seers of His race, He could predict the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, but not the time of the end of the world. If there is one of His utterances more certain than another to be correctly recorded, it is the prophecy of His second coming. It is to be found in almost identical language in all three of the synoptic gospels, and is stated positively as to take place immediately after the destruction of the Holy City, which occurred A.D. 70 (see Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., Luke xxi., Daniel ix. 26, 27). The abomination of desolation, here spoken of, can have no other interpretation than the presence of the foreign invader in the Temple. As is well known, Titus would have spared the Temple; but his soldiers, in the flush of victory, got out of hand after a very trying siege, and destroyed it against his orders. Not one stone was left upon another, and the Roman Eagles were planted in the Holy of Holies. The prediction of Christ as to the wars culminating in the destruction of the Temple was amply fulfilled, but He was entirely mistaken in the prophecy of His second coming.

But this was not His only prophecy of the end of the world (see Matt. xvi. 28, Mark ix. 1, Luke ix. 27): "Verily I say unto you, There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." These prophecies of the end of the world are not mentioned in the gospel according to St. John, for a good reason. It is difficult to read the last gospel

without being impressed with the belief that it was inspired by the youngest disciple, if he did not actually write it. The allusions to the "disciple whom Jesus loved," who is never named, almost prove its source; though the style is so different to Revelation that a doubt must always remain as to the two books being written by the same hand. Perhaps the gospel was written by a pupil or pupils at the end of John's life, or soon after his death. It was certainly the last to appear, and, at the time it was completed, John, if still alive, was probably the only remaining disciple. The above prophecies, which might appear to Mark and Matthew as yet to be fulfilled in a few years, could not so have appeared to the aged John. His principal theme was the Divinity, and consequent infallibility, of his Master. The records of these predictions would assuredly not assist his object, and, therefore, he omitted them.

In the two principal synoptic Gospels, statements are put into the mouth of Christ at Gethsemane which are contradictory. Mark represents Christ as saying in one sentence, "Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough; the hour is come; behold the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going; behold he that betrayeth me is at hand." The version of Matthew is almost the same. It is not at all probable that Christ said anything so absurd as this, "Sleep on, Get up!" contradictory commands in one breath. Luke, the ornate, appears to see the force of this. His version runs: "Why sleep ye? arise and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. While he yet spake....." This historian is careful not to allow his account to be injured by an obvious slip in the triple tradition.

The whole account of the actions and words of Christ in the garden is open to the charge of imposture. Who was there present to report the prayers, or exhortations, or exclamations of the sufferer? The disciples were, confessedly, asleep: the angel, whose appearance throws a captivating finish over the scene, is mentioned only by the historian who has least claim to be believed. Luke was certainly not in the garden. There was no opportunity for any communication with Christ after this event, for He was a close prisoner. Who could have given any account at all?

So with the temptation in the wilderness of Judæa! Nobody but Christ and Satan are represented to have been present; but the narrative is found in all the synoptic Gospels. Who could have recorded the incidents? Christ Himself? It is nowhere stated that He told His disciples.

Such points as these justify grave doubts as to the fidelity of the original tradition which existed before the Gospels were written. It is not safe to trust implicitly to the common-stock gospel; that is, the account agreed to by all three of the synoptic writers. As to Luke, we believe some of the incidents which he alone records simply because there appear to have been people present who may have informed him, and because they harmonise completely with the character of Jesus Christ. In the "Prodigal Son" we recognise a touch which was surely possessed by no ordinary mortal; and a moral which is consistent with all the actions and words of the Teacher, as related in the common-stock gospel. But in the "Unjust Steward" we can detect the thoughts of an ordinary Jew; and we reject the parable, because its purport is alien to the character and teaching of the supposed

Speaker ; and, also, because it is not supported by the other synoptics.

Applying, then, the ordinary standards of evidence to the history of Christ, the length of time before the historians began to write, the obvious slips in the original tradition which they edited, their capacity for the task, their relation of events to which by their own showing there were no witnesses, their contradictions, and their manifest desire to prove the Godhead of their Hero, which they showed unmistakeable signs of disbelieving during the time they were His intimate companions, we feel bound to be sceptical as to His Divinity ; the more so, because the four gospels handed down to us are few in proportion to the many once extant, and selected with reference to establishing the very attribute in question.

Nothing is more curious in the evolution of religion than the sacred character given to the surgical operation of circumcision, unless it is the placid manner in which this ancient rite is talked of openly by ministers of the Church before congregations, and school classes, composed of persons of both sexes and of all ages. Circumcision is a very useful operation, a great aid to health ; and many medical men of the present day advocate its universal application. The benefit of it was apparently discovered by Abraham, who promptly turned it into a Divine command. Later on, when Moses wished to enforce certain sanitary laws upon his followers, he adopted the same course (see Leviticus). It is as if one said in the present day, "And the Lord said unto King Edward VII., All thy people shall be vaccinated." It is one of the theories of the Church that the rite of circumcision was dropped to

make place for baptism under the new dispensation. We believe there is not a word of Scripture to sustain this view: it is a pure myth! From the time of Abraham, to the present day amongst western peoples, every good instinct, and, in the Israelitish day, many bad ones, have been attributed to a personal God; first to the God of one man, Abraham; then to the God of the family; next to the God of a nation; then to a God of a world; and now we are arriving slowly at the more reasonable view of attributing all good to a God of the universe.

When the human race has reached a true conception of a God of the universe, which it is very far from doing at present, then—and not till then—will there be any legitimate hope for *finality* in religion. There is no sign in the Gospels that Christ ever alluded to any portion of matter outside the “world”; and there is some evidence that, by this term, He did not include the whole earth, but only that part of it which comprised a large portion of Asia, and the countries bordering on the Mediterranean sea. He did not speak of the stars. Yet, at that time, they were subjects of study; indeed, long before His birth, the periods of the planets had been ascertained with a fair degree of accuracy, and a great deal was known of the constellations. Never once did he touch upon the relations of the Father to other worlds besides our own. These are some of the evidences of His limitations. If gifted with omniscience, He would have been aware that, not many hundreds of miles distant, astronomers were engaged in recording the movements of the planets and constellations. Their labours must have been known to the better-educated Jews in Palestine. Had Christ known anything of the heavens,

is it likely that He would have neglected to draw lessons in His inimitable manner from the pictures which presented themselves nightly before the gaze of Himself and His companions, of the starry host? Not a word escaped Him to indicate that he was aware of any other interest to Himself, or to the Father who sent Him, than the narrow confines of the world in which He lived.

Among the many delusions for which the Christian Church is responsible is one that appears to have no excuse. It is that Mary of Magdala was a bad woman. Hospitals have been named after her on the supposition that she was a penitent prostitute. For the legend there is no evidence whatever, in the Bible, or out of it.

The question of Divine interference in the affairs of individuals and of nations which is intimately associated with that of prayer, is a very difficult one, and one which is not likely to be satisfactorily solved for many ages. One or two of the foremost scientific men of the day believe that an active directive power is at work in Nature; in other words, that law is not invariable; and that the power usually called "Providence" does interfere from time to time to alter the course of affairs from that which it would take if left to biological development. It seems difficult to understand how this can really be the case. To use a homely proverb, "What is one man's food is another man's poison"; and the prayers of a man, or of a nation, cannot be answered without affecting other men or other nations. Let us take the case of India for example: some thousands of good people appeal to the Almighty that famines shall cease in that

country. We will suppose their prayer favourably answered; what would be the result? In about a hundred years the population would become so enormous that, in certain districts, it would be impossible to find food for half the inhabitants, and famine on a very large scale would be the result. The chances are that in two hundred years we should not be able to rule India. Every person who has studied the effects of the rapid increase of population knows that famine, pestilence, seismic phenomena, floods, and devastating storms are a benefit to the race because they destroy the weaker members of the community, and keep down the population within manageable limits. If it were not for infanticide, opium smoking, and catastrophes such as those mentioned above, what would the population of China come to, and who could withstand it? These considerations do not prevent us from trying to alleviate the evils of famine and pestilence in India; our humanity would suffer if we stood still and made no effort to mitigate the sufferings of individuals. But we know all the time that our feeble efforts are of no avail, and that Nature inexorably decrees that the weak must die in order that the strong may live and breed. We also know that, if all the children at present in the world lived to mature age and married; if every pair had only one child of each sex—and so on—in a few hundred years this earth would be unfit to live in. It is improbable that prayer by any individual, or collection of individuals, can affect any material purpose. The suppliant is so ignorant as to what is best in the end; the interests of nations and of individuals are so correlated; we are so blind as to cause and effect; it is perhaps well that it is so. How many millions of

men have lived to rejoice that their prayers have not been answered?

On the other hand, there is undoubtedly a very strong feeling in the minds of millions of educated, intelligent people that they are being directed in all the actions of their lives; and there is some *prima facie* evidence of interference in the affairs of nations, all without solicitation. Events so unexpected as the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne of England, the death of the Prince Imperial of France, the restoration of the balance of the sexes in nations where great numbers of men have been killed in war (*see* Appendix), the means by which populations are controlled in numbers: these, and many other events, might be adduced as reasons for believing in a supernatural directive power at work in the world.

Individual prayer for guidance in daily life, and for strength to resist temptation, no doubt does much good to the believer, but it is probably not in the manner the priests suppose. The attitude of devotion, the earnest spoken wishes for what he requires, the contemplation of past misdeeds, and heartfelt requests for strength to amend, are all signs of a *bona-fide* resolve to lead a better life: the effect of the devotions on the mind is to strengthen the resolve and soothe the nerves. The suppliant consequently leaves his church, or his room, in better fettle to continue his battle with the world. Temptation assails him: he has his recent prayers in mind; it would be inconsistent to fall now! His self-respect would be lessened, for has he not but only a few minutes ago resolved to get the better of his sin? Is he to throw up the sponge so soon? No! A hundred times, No! He resists. The very fact of resisting once gives him

new power. All this is possible without any special grace having been conferred upon the sinner in response to prayer. In fact, the psychical effect upon a man who has knelt down and prayed to be enabled to resist sin is very similar, but probably greater, than if he signed a pledge. He has done something to show his resolve; to act contrary to it is humiliating weakness; he therefore adheres to his resolve.

The clergy in this country are a useful class. They stand between the well-to-do and the poor, administering the alms of the former, and making life much easier for the latter than it would be if they were left to their own devices. Many of them are self-denying, patient, industrious men, stinting themselves for the benefit of those around them, doing their utmost by their sympathy to alleviate distress and to show struggling Poverty how to live. Where they confine their efforts to this, they are invaluable. If they only leave dogma alone, and limit their teaching to the simple essentials of right living and the duty of man to his neighbour, drawing their lessons from the better-authenticated facts established in the Bible, they can be, and are, a boon to their district; and, indirectly, a considerable factor in the general contentment of the country. Most useful are those simple souls, generally to be found in country parishes and the slums of cities, who have swallowed the Articles of the Church in faith, are happy and contented in their belief, and pure in their lives; and whose daily round is to visit the ignorant families of the labouring man, and to preach simple sermons twice on every Sunday. A commentary made up during the first half of last century, and a Bible dictionary or

encyclopædia of the same antiquity, is all they need to compose their innocent discourses. Darwin and Huxley are not to be found upon their shelves, and they never see a *Fortnightly* or *Nineteenth Century* magazine. To them both Old and New Testaments contain the inspired Word of God.

But there is a large proportion of the clergy of the Church of England (they probably amount to nearly one-half; and the number will increase as the present century advances) who have taken holy orders with their minds well open to the latest discoveries in modern science, and the latest developments in modern thought; who read the Articles from their pulpits with mental reservations and the tongue in the cheek; and who are fully aware of the weakness of the theological position. These men are under no delusion. Their higher education has led them to distrust the archaic account of the Creation, the Fall, and the various legendary stories in the Old Testament. They, also, do their duty by the poor, and they are of use in a way; but they are sailing under false colours, and acting a part which, sooner or later, must tell upon their personal characters.

There are also some hundreds of parsons who have entered the Church more than twenty years ago honestly believing all her doctrines, but who have afterwards studied, and found out many errors of their previous belief. Many smother their doubts—not a difficult feat—and take care never to open a magazine or a book which contains any suspicion of the Higher Criticism: these gentlemen would read Dr. Wallace's article on "Man's Place in the Universe," and perhaps quote it in a sermon; but they would refuse to read Professor Turner's reply. Others who cannot quell

their doubts remain, and continue to teach dogma which has long ceased to rivet their belief. Robert Elsmere is excellent in fiction; but we have very few, if any, Robert Elsmeres in the Church. The minister whose soul has parted company with the Articles, the "Fall," and the "Divinity," now stops in his rectory. To turn out is to forfeit his position in society. Possibly he has a family, and he requires the income; in any case, it is to his disadvantage to go, and therefore he does *not* go.

Though the parsons do a great deal of good among the poor, they are the greatest opponents to progress in religious thought. Bound by the Articles and their ordination vows, none but the boldest express doubt, even of the accuracy of the Old Testament. They hold a brief for orthodoxy. The bishops are afraid to give away a single point in Bible or Prayer Book, being apparently apprehensive that any concession will give occasion to unlettered men to doubt the whole; a policy which, if persisted in, will only hasten the final catastrophe. As far as we know, in this year of 1903, the only dignitary of the Church of England who has sanctioned the discontinuance of the recitation of the so-called Athanasian Creed is the Dean of Westminster. If change comes, it will not apparently be from within the Church. It will be forced from without, through the influence of writers such as the late Samuel Laing, Edward Clodd, Sir Henry Thompson, and other laymen who feel themselves unable to be silent under the strain of sacerdotal conservatism. The number of clergymen who make themselves acquainted with the progress of the science of astronomy is very small. Probably not one in a hundred has ever examined Mr. Isaac Roberts' photo-

graphs of the stars and nebulæ, or pondered over the mysteries of the Milky Way. Is it possible for any man to teach his fellow men of the wonders of God's works if he has not made himself acquainted with the constitution of the heavens? How can mortals gain any adequate idea of their impotence, their insignificance, their helplessness, if they do not recognise, or attempt to recognise, their place in the general scheme? Let clergymen of the Established Church listen to the words of one of their most trusted leaders, the Bishop of London, uttered in May this year: "He welcomed light from every quarter, and the exercise of the reason was a proper part of the analytic faculty.....Some knowledge of astronomy was a great help to belief, for a study of the stars led the mind to think of God. He must, however, caution them also with regard to the imagination. His greatest obstacle to faith was the smallness of the earth compared with the vastness of the universe. It had been difficult to believe that the great work of the Incarnation had taken place upon a small planet." Here we have a distinguished bishop candidly facing the great problem; and we anxiously look for what is to come next. How has he surmounted this obstacle to faith? "But this difficulty had been shown to be due to a trick of the imagination. They did not judge of importance by size; it was not the size of the arena, but the greatness of the act, that had to be considered." Observe, the Churchman is determined to smother the doubt—"it is due to a trick of the imagination"! He does not blind his eyes to the facts brought before him with regard to the illimitable universe; but against the facts he hurls the evidence of the Gospels. He welcomes the exercise of the

“analytical faculty,” and recommends it to the use of all men and women; and yet he distrusts the use of it in himself when he weighs the evidence of the Evangelists and St. Paul. Is it wrong to say that reform in Church teaching cannot possibly come from within?

When dealing with “Beliefs, Formulas, and Realities,” Mr. Balfour makes the following remarks: “However profound may be our ignorance of our ignorance, at least we should realise that to describe (when using language strictly) any scheme of belief as wholly false which has even imperfectly met the needs of mankind, is the height of arrogance; and to claim for any beliefs which we happen to approve that they are wholly true, is the height of absurdity” (p. 270).

Again: “Nowhere else—neither in our knowledge of ourselves, nor in our knowledge of each other, nor in our knowledge of the material world, nor in our knowledge of God, is there any belief which is more than an approximation, any method which is free from flaw, any result not tainted with error” (p. 271).

And again: “The conviction that there are Christian verities which, once secured for the human race, cannot by any lapse of time be rendered obsolete is one which no Church would willingly abandon. Yet the fact that theological thought follows the laws which govern the evolution of all other thought, that it changes from age to age, largely as regards the relative emphasis given to its various elements, not inconsiderably as regards the substance of those elements themselves, is a fact written legibly across the pages of ecclesiastical history” (p. 272 *Foundations of Belief: Being Notes Introductory to the Subject of Theology*).

The student of Theology who intends to enter the

Church of Rome or the Church of England, and wishes to do so with an unclouded mind, had much better leave this book severely alone. "No finality" is the keynote throughout; and that is the very doctrine which both Churches deny. They refuse to have anything to do with "Provisional Unifications." To them, *Jesus is God*; Sin would not have come into the world but for the disobedience of Adam. The man who takes holy orders having any doubt of the everlasting permanence of either of these two beliefs (to say nothing of others) is a hypocrite and a liar.

The argument mentioned in a previous chapter for the Divine nature of Christ, used by Canon Liddon, is as follows: "Either Christ was what He represented Himself to be—Divine—or He was beside Himself, or He was an impostor." Why, we ask, should we be bound to either of these alternatives? In the first place, we are by no means sure that Christ did represent Himself to be what His historians report; His utterances identifying Himself with the "Father" are capable of two interpretations. What did he say when "there ran one to him, kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" He replied, "Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, *even God*" (Mark x. 17-19). The version of Matthew is somewhat different, but the reply distinctly indicates an expression of limitation of powers: "Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good....." This answer to the young man can hardly be said to encourage the view that Christ identified Himself with Almighty God, or even that He assumed the Divine position. In the second place,

even supposing that he did, on one or two occasions, use lofty and mysterious expressions, which, by those around, were taken to mean that He was One with the Father, there is no ground for saying that He was out of His mind. He may have felt Himself so elevated above the rest of mankind as to give Him the sensation of inspiration of the Divine Spirit to such a degree as to render Him certain (for the time) that He was identified with God. A great and sinless enthusiast may surely go a little beyond his rights without being pronounced insane. Lastly, a certain elevation of spirit, raising the personal feeling of identity, is not imposture. To be an impostor one must be conscious of deceit, and this was emphatically not the case. Buddha was not an impostor, nor was Mahommed. Both may have been mistaken in their egoism, and the latter was an epileptic; but both honestly believed they were what they represented themselves to be.

The service of the Church of England is much enhanced by music. A great deal of Art has been brought to bear to render the ritual more popular, especially in the use of Hymns which appear to increase the general spirit of devotion. In the Non-conformist churches and revivalist meetings, hymns appear to be indispensable: they were a great feature of the Moody and Sankey meetings. It must be confessed, however, that many of the verses of the hymns are sad nonsense. Take the book of "Hymns Ancient and Modern." Among many of singular beauty, there are some which can only excite a smile. One of these is 499:—

" On the Resurrection morning
Soul and body meet again ;

No more sorrow, no more weeping,
no more pain !”

“ Here awhile they must be parted,
And the flesh its Sabbath keep,
Waiting in a holy stillness,
wrapt in sleep.”

“ For awhile the tired body
Lies with feet toward the morn ;
Till the last and brightest Easter
day be born.”

“ Soul and body reunited
Thenceforth nothing shall divide,
Waking up in Christ's own likeness,
satisfied.”

“ On that happy Easter morning
All the graves their dead restore ;
Father, sister, child, and Mother,
meet once more.”

The tune to which this hymn is usually sung is most popular ; and the hymn itself is responded to by all congregations with the greatest heartiness. It occurs to few people to reflect upon the words. It must be remembered that this is no ancient hymn ; it is one of the modern compositions, and is probably not twenty years old. Those who sing it are joyfully shouting their belief that the body which is laid in the ground is that which will arise at the last day : the corpse is tired or tired ; it is keeping its Sabbath ! Tired it certainly is ; so tired that so far from its ever being able to meet anybody, in, say thirty or forty millions of years' time, it will have disappeared altogether in less than one thousand years ; quite possibly in two hundred years even the bones and skull will have turned to dust.

A few years ago it was possible for a person entering the main gate of Portsmouth dockyard on a calm

Sunday morning to hear the crew of the depôt ship *Duke of Wellington*, nearly a mile distant, singing the hymns of the Church service. The stentorian voices of the blue-jackets could be heard above all other sounds bellowing out some choice refrain, such as Hymn 300, where the last line of each verse is specially dwelt upon—"Crown-n Him," "Crown-n-n Him-m-m," "Crown-n-n-n Him-m-m" "Lord of all-l." As for the meaning of these words not one man cared a scrap. The tune was good, and every voice joined in with hearty goodwill. Each man was sorry when the last chorus came to an end. The exercise of his lungs did him good: he felt better for it. It was not religion, but it soothed him, and put him into a better frame of mind than he was in before he opened his mouth. The truculent seaman (and a few still exist) was a different man at the conclusion of the service to what he was at the beginning; he no longer felt like striking the ship's corporal, or giving a back answer to the captain of his part of the ship; and this change, which was a real change, likely to last a day at least, arose from a judicious chaplain choosing a simple hymn with a pretty tune and a good rousing termination to each verse.

The effect of their hymn tunes was well calculated by Moody and Sankey, and was a large feature in their success. Every man or woman likes to hear their own voice; few mind how long the hymn is, or what the words are, provided the tune is good. After having relieved themselves in this way they may be more ready to listen to the appeals of the preacher; but in most cases there is but little worship or devotion in the singing itself.

In selecting hymns to be sung during periods of the Church service, the clergy are wise ; but the effect of the Sunday services on themselves is not always a good one. It is bad for any man to talk twice in one day, for twenty minutes, without fear of being criticised or contradicted. In the pulpit the parson can say whatever he likes ; he can even talk politics, and very frequently does. During the progress of the Education Bill of 1902 through its various stages it was constantly referred to from pulpits all over the country. Many thousands of people in the different congregations who were attached to their church and even to their Sunday schools, felt, strongly, that this Bill was one which would have the effect of delaying the happy day when the Bible would be taught rationally as history, and not, as now in the denominational schools, as if it were the inspired Word of God. They saw a new lease of life given to archaic methods, and a check to the progress of the Board-school system. The parsons knew of this feeling among their parishioners, but they could not, or would not, conceal their satisfaction and triumph. They were quite safe ; no interruption was to be feared. But it was a mistake ; bad for them to be so tolerated, and injurious to their characters. The only man the present writer has heard of who gave expression to his feelings during a sermon was the old Duke of Wellington, and the occasion was worthy of it. The preacher was urging upon his hearers the iniquity of the British Government in not forcing the Christian religion upon the nations of India, then under the rule of the Company. This was too much for the Duke. He rose in his seat, lifted his hand to stop the preacher, and said, " Sir, if that was attempted, England would lose India in a week," and

resumed his seat. We have no doubt that the interruption did the parson a great deal of good ; but it is probable that this burst of righteous indignation would have been much resented by the congregation if the objector had been any less distinguished a person than the Duke of Wellington.

During the recent war there were many strange utterances from the pulpits, urging its vigorous prosecution for the sake of the natives, who could, it was alleged, only be brought to Christianity under the British rule. No doubt the war was necessary and unavoidable for many reasons; but that particular one was certainly not in the contemplation of the Government, and ought not to have been put forward by Christian ministers who are the professional interpreters of the Sermon on the Mount, and the supposed disciples of Him who denounced all war. There is a growing disinclination among educated men to sit still for half an hour to listen to erroneous statements made by clergy who ought to confine themselves strictly to the essentials of their religion. Last year a popular incumbent of a well-known church in the North-west of London was deploring from the pulpit the lukewarmness of the people in not subscribing more freely to a well-known fund. To illustrate the wealth of the British nation, he referred to the applications for the 3 per cent. Transvaal Loan of 30 millions, which amounted to forty times the sum required. And he assumed in his sermon that this sum, actually 1,174 millions, was ready in the city to be handed over. Had the preacher taken any business man of his flock into his confidence when writing his sermon, he would have learnt that all the money required to be paid in on application for allotment

was 3 per cent. of the amount applied for, and was covered by the comparatively modest sum of 35 millions. The excess of applications indicated no extraordinary wealth; in fact, it indicated nothing except a keen desire to possess an investment which could be sold a few days after allotment for a profit of one or two per cent. This is an instance of how the clergy flounder when they meander away from their own department. Hundreds of people left that church under a wrong impression; and it is possible the preacher believes to this day that the enormous sum above mentioned was ready in London to be handed over directly the arrangements for the loan were complete.

Whether there is a world around us of which our senses are not cognisant is a problem which has exercised many gifted minds, and it is one of increasing interest. One fact during the last century was established, "what is seen hath not been made of things which do appear" (Hebrews xi. 3). The smallest speck of matter which it is possible to see under the most powerful microscope is composed of no less than two millions of molecules, and these molecules are made up of atoms which recent scientific discovery declares can be still further subdivided. To us, a molecule is not visible, still less an atom or an electron. The "seen" is made of things "which do not appear."

The energy which the planets receive from the sun is the minutest fraction of what is projected elsewhere. What does this energy which misses the planets do? It is repugnant to our ideas of the economy of the universe that it should be wasted on what we call, for

want of a better word, Space. Owing to our peculiar organs of sight, and the other senses, the energy of the sun is received by us as light, heat, electricity. It is reasonable to suppose that the great energy of the sun is doing work somewhere around us in a region which we are incapable of seeing on account of our very limited vision.

A book called *The Unseen Universe*, written by Professors Balfour Stewart and Tait, deals with this interesting problem. Certainly, there is nothing inherently improbable in the idea. Just as certain animals are extremely sensitive to the ultra-violet rays of the spectrum which do not affect our coarser human senses, so there may be denizens of a world around us with whom our faculties are not yet in touch. That which we call Space is not an empty void, we know very well; for the energy of the sun is conveyed to us, and it could not be conveyed without a medium. That medium must be frictionless; and it must be imponderable and uniformly consistent. Small bodies are flying through it in all directions, and frequently fall on the earth's atmosphere: some are large enough to strike the earth as solid masses of stone. What else there may be we know not. But we know that our earth is composed of complicated particles of matter which to us are invisible in their simple condition, and we are cognisant of a vast stream of energy which, so far as we at present know, is doing no work—a state of affairs which appears to be inconsistent with the general principles which govern the universe.

The transcendental idea, that we have no absolute knowledge of material objects, only of our sense

impressions regarding them, cannot be disproved ; but there are one or two considerations that may be urged which render the theory highly improbable. Light, of course, is a sense impression. For all we know to the contrary, the orbs of heaven are revolving and travelling at enormous speeds in pitch darkness. To a human being who has eyes—*i.e.*, the apparatus for receiving the energy of the sun—there is what he calls “light”: to the man who has not the necessary apparatus, a man born blind, there is none. Now, it is a curious fact that the impressions and ideas of a blind man respecting material things, and also his processes of thought, are not very different from those of the man who can see. A blind man gets about somehow, he cannot say how, and some get about so cleverly that if a stranger who did not know of their infirmity were to watch them walking, without being able to see their eyes, they would think they possessed the power of sight. A blindfolded man is a helpless creature, but not a *bonâ fide* blind man. Now, if a blind man and a man who is not blind form similar concepts of matter and motion, it rather points to the fact that matter is a thing-in-itself, and not merely a sensory delusion of the man who can see.

Again, if we were all only under the pleasing delusion that we were real people and real bodies, and eyes looking at real tangible things, it is extremely improbable that we should agree so well in our sense perceptions. It would be more than likely that we should differ ; what would appear to one man to be a tree might, to another, be a corkscrew, and so on. At any rate, even if the majority agreed, there would be occasional freaks. Then, if *thought only* exists, as Davy imagined, how are we to account for the discovery

of new matter in the universe? Two men in different countries, unknown to each other, set to work to discover the reasons of the perturbations of a planet. The amount of eccentricity of the planet is known; and that is about the only phenomenal element in the problem that is known. The two men, unacquainted with one another, come to the conclusion that this eccentricity is caused by another planet far beyond; they each undertake a stupendous mathematical calculation; and they arrive nearly on the same day at the same result. Both triumphantly point to a certain spot in the heavens, and declare, "the reason for the disturbance is to be found in a new body of matter which you will find *there*. Nothing is in sight to them. But other people point their telescopes to the spot, and lo! there is a new planet of immense size. Surely this is evidence, though, perhaps, not positive proof, that the matter found, in this case the planet Neptune, is a thing-in-itself, and that all the discoverers are real people.

If the transcendental idea were correct, we could hardly calculate upon the actions of our fellow creatures. But, as a matter of fact, we *can* do so. All are actuated by similar springs of impulse. There are, of course, innumerable variations; but, in the main, we may calculate upon certain effects being produced by certain actions. Freaks only to be accounted for by different kinds of sense perceptions other than those which we ourselves possess, are unknown; and what is more, we can trace the development of sense perception from lower forms: we can go back to the lower mammalia, to the reptiles, the birds, and the fishes, which are as different as it is possible to be from our own structure.

There is another point to be noted in this connection which has hardly received enough attention. The eye of man is so constituted that, if the matter of the brain faithfully recorded the impression on the retina, he ought to see every object topsy-turvy ; but owing to a faculty of the brain concerning the nature of which we are at present entirely ignorant, which transposes, in effect, the rays from the object for the second time, he sees things as they are. No man has yet been born, who was able to see at all, who looked upon the world as through the eye piece of an inverting telescope. This is surely evidence that the sense perception is very real, and not subject to the eccentricities we should expect if the material and mechanical part of man were not a noumenon.

But when we come to the question of Free Will there is a difficulty. A conviction is growing in force among philosophers, that no such indeterminate force exists. The universal reign of Law is not disturbed by any such uncertain factor. Prophecy, or second sight, or whatever we choose to call the gift of looking into the future, which certainly exists, could not be exercised at all if there was any outside force which governed the actions of individuals. Actions are governed by the balance of scales, and a man will do a certain thing, or refrain from doing it, after weighing within himself the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed act. The weights are such as cannot be altered, for they represent his desires at the existing moment ; and his desires are due to his heredity, environment, and education. There is no independent force outside of his constitution which obliges him to act differently to the balance of his

desires. If he has the brain, the education, and the hereditary inclination to desire the good, the chances are that the balance of his desires will weigh down the right side of the scale; if he has been reared in the back slums, is the offspring of bad parents, has had little or no education, and is surrounded by vice, the probabilities are in favour of his desire for present gratification overcoming the desire for future good, and the scales will go the wrong way. If the balance between the scales is called "Free Will," it is an abuse of language, for it is not free: it is not independent of the natural action of the brain. Wickedness is really nothing else but sheer stupidity, the inability to desire what is best. If it is alleged that many men, accepted by the world as very clever, are often wicked, we can only rejoin that they may be ever so wise in certain directions, but in others they are simply stupid. We say stupid advisedly. Is not a man stupid who deliberately damages his offspring? Nothing is more certain than this: that no man who indulged in vice of certain descriptions was ever a father of children with good abilities. It is a law of Nature. We do not say that the converse is true—that every man who has not indulged in vice has had children sound and healthy, and with good abilities: the mother may be deficient in stamina or brain power; many other factors may be introduced; there may be inherited infirmities of all sorts. What is asserted here is, that no man who has deliberately led a vicious, immoral life has ever had children who made their permanent mark in the world in any profession. That the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation is a natural law. To the ignorant Israelites this law was put into the form of a command

from Jehovah : it was useless for Moses to give his followers scientific reasons for such an injunction. But it is nothing more or less than a law of Nature, and is as certain in its operation as is the revolution of the earth upon its axis.

Civilisation, which includes the duty of man to his neighbour, has been the main factor in the progress of the human race. Christianity has ever been its most helpful ally. Great as are the crimes which have been committed in the name of Jesus, the illuminating doctrines preached by Him, some of them strikingly original, have had a more than counterbalancing effect upon the lives of men. Those laymen whose desires and consequent actions have been influenced by His teaching have ever been brilliant examples ; for the balance of their desires has led to the most altruistic life. What was it in General Gordon that stirred the civilised world so deeply ? His piety ? It was seldom very apparent, and those who were most intimately acquainted with him when he led the " Ever Victorious " army say that at times his language bordered upon the profane. His habits ? Gordon was not a total abstainer, nor did he despise luxury at intervals, if it gave no extra trouble to those around him. His temper ? Hardly ! He could be roused to absolute ferocity if he suspected treachery or underhand dealing ; witness his chase of Li Hung Chang after the murder of the Wangs, when the former only saved his life by hiding under the cargo of a junk. His soldierly qualities ? They were not particularly conspicuous. Enthusiasm, energy, and dauntless courage were there ; but few contemporaries could work with him ; he was plain spoken and even

insubordinate; and his death was largely due to splendid disobedience of orders which he had drafted himself. No! these were not the qualities which made his name a household word in England. It was his *altruism*. Gordon was one of the most unselfish beings who have lived since the days of Xavier. Riches were to him absolute dross. Promotion, honours, and the estimation of society were to this noble mind nothing at all. His only ambition was to be of use to mankind. It was all one to him whether a Chinaman, an Indian ryot, an English street arab, or the hunted fellah of the Soudan needed his services; they were given freely. No thought of personal comfort, social ties, or the opinion of those who had the power to lift him to rank or influence, diverted him from his purpose. And the end of this life, so much out of harmony with the average aspirations of the age in which he lived, was appropriate. He laid down his life for his friend.

To the youth of this country, no monuments are so instructive as the bare-headed officer of the Royal Engineers in Trafalgar Square with the walking stick under his arm; and the Egyptian pasha on the camel, in front of the Institute at Chatham. The art of modern sculpture has never been exercised with such happy effect as in these two figures of the hero of Khartoum.

To sum up the conclusion of the whole matter.

Jesus Christ was a man, specially endowed with altruistic conceptions of a superlative order, and gifted with certain powers which at present we are not able to fully understand. His death was the inevitable

result of His lofty, uncompromising style of instruction, involving as it did the denunciation of the leaders of the religion prevailing at the time, and his honest assumption of an authority which His sinless nature conceived to be specially conferred upon Him by the Eternal Spirit of the universe. He probably never went so far as to identify himself directly with the Almighty; but his disciples, who forsook Him in His supreme trial, after his death gave Him a supernatural character which He did not specifically claim Himself, and which He did not possess.

His miraculous birth, His resurrection, and His ascension did not take place as stated. These reports are due to the uncontrolled enthusiasm of His followers in an age when marvels were easily credited. The evidence adduced is too feeble to be entertained if put forward in support of any of the ordinary affairs of the world.

The three synoptic gospels are editions of one popular tradition, which was probably oral, but may have been written soon after the death of Christ, and which has not been preserved. Where the three agree, the original tradition may be clearly traced, and is, in its main narrative, probably true, allowing for Eastern imagery and the prevailing bias towards the supernatural.

St. John's gospel was written either at the dictation of the youngest disciple, or under his immediate supervision or influence.

St. Luke's gospel, where it does not agree with the gospels of St. Mark and St. Matthew, must be read with caution, as he was not a disciple or apostle, and does not profess to write at the dictation of either; but some of the parables and incidents recorded only

by him have, in themselves, indications of a genuine record.

St. Paul was mistaken in his belief of a heavenly vision, but suffered from an attack of epilepsy an hour or two before his arrival at Damascus. His delusion proved to be of great use, by directing his attention to missionary work which became of supreme value to the world. His epistles were written before the four Gospels. They do not include any mention of the miraculous birth of Christ, or of His miracles.

The history of Abraham and his descendants is strongly impregnated with fabulous legends. The Israelitish chiefs issued their commands in the name of Jehovah, believing that they would thus ensure more prompt obedience. The attention which the Jewish nation has attracted in the world is chiefly due to the preservation of its literature by the seers of the race, and to the remarkable prophecies of those seers, who were able to foretell events, but not to the extent claimed by modern theology.

The art of prophecy or second sight was not confined to the Israelites, and has existed to this day.

The sciences of astronomy, astrophysics, and biology have received so much impetus from improvements in machinery, lens construction, photography, and chemistry that our knowledge of the universe and the processes of life on the earth has been extensively enlarged during the last century; and the time has now come to recast our conceptions of religion, which have not changed in their main features since the death of St. Paul.

The Bible should be taught and read as history, and not as the inspired Word of God.

The Book of Common Prayer should be remodelled

to suit our present intellectual development; the priests should not be ordained unless they can show that they possess a knowledge of the facts of astronomy and astrophysics.

The erroneous teaching of children as to the origin of sin, the Fall, the miraculous creation of woman from man, the existence of the Devil, and other fables, should at once cease.

The finality of the Christian religion is a myth. Like all other religions, and like all other things in the world, it will undergo changes as our knowledge increases.

The priests throughout Europe and America are losing their hold on the people for two reasons:—

1. Higher education has shown the masses that the Bible cannot be specially inspired, as it is full of childish legends, contradictions, and erroneous statements.

2. The masses are beginning to perceive that the priests are trying to impose upon them dogmas which they do not themselves believe.

There is some evidence for an unseen universe around us; none that mortals have been able to communicate with its inhabitants, if such there be. Though there is abundant evidence that man's psychic individuality has been able to project itself to great distances just before death, there is scarcely any for the ego revealing its existence after death. The evidence for the continuance of life beyond the grave is feeble and unconvincing. If such a life is before us, it will probably not be such as the ministers of religion lead us to expect. We are rather inclined to agree with Solomon:—

“ That which hath been is that which shall be; and that which hath been done is that which shall be done:

and there is no new thing under the sun.....There is no remembrance of the former *generations* ; neither shall there be any remembrance of the latter *generations* that are to come, among those that shall come after."

Considering that the will of man—*i.e.*, the balance of his desires—is not free in the true sense of the word, no credit is due to him if he lives a righteous life, and no blame can be attributed to him if he is full of wickedness. But society can put pressure upon the evil-doer to influence the balance of his desires ; and when it is evident that no pressure will effect the object, he can be removed. The logical defence of our system of hanging for the crime of murder is that we thus effectually prevent the recurrence of the crime : if allowed to live, the homicide may kill his gaoler. It is doubtful whether the preservation of the life of a burglar who has been convicted, say ten times, is wise. The breeding and inter-breeding of criminals is distinctly inimical to all society, and will, sooner or later, have to be legislated for ; but this will not be possible until laws are passed to restrict the immigration of certain classes of aliens, and prevent England being, as hitherto, the home of the refuse population of other countries in Europe.

It is probable that this century will see some remarkable changes in our modes of thought. The time cannot be far distant when the Western peoples, at any rate, will be actuated, not by visionary promises of rewards and punishments in another shadowy existence, but solely by their duty one to another on the substantial earth which is their present and only known abode ; and when the welfare of the race will universally receive higher consideration than the life or fortunes of the individual.

APPENDIX

Note.—The Franco-German War commenced in July, 1870, and lasted eleven months; the triumphal entry into Berlin taking place on June 16th, 1871.

The number of Germans killed in battle, and who died of disease during the campaign, and afterwards from wounds and other effects of the war, amounted altogether to about a quarter of a million of men.

But in the four years 1871–74 there were about a quarter of a million more marriages than the average; and in the six years 1872–77 the excess of children born over the normal was nearly one million.

The proportion of the sexes was soon completely restored. In 1900 there were 100 men to 103 women, in the entire population of the Empire. In England and Wales the proportion is 100 : 107.

Notwithstanding a very large emigration, the population of Germany increased fifteen millions between 1871 and 1900. As the majority of the emigrants were men, the above equality between the sexes is remarkable.

The phenomenon of the restoration of the population of a vigorous nation after war is well shown, in its earlier stages, in the German Census, 1900, page 86,* Vol. I., 1903.

Year born.	Born alive.	Numbers which survived to the years			
		1880.	1885.	1890.	1900.
1870	1,569,206	967,543	981,128	905,006	842,181
1871	1,414,248	852,884	824,790	790,361	783,411
1872	1,626,087	1,045,623	1,009,056	977,842	906,716
Totals	4,609,491	2,866,050 a	2,764,969 b	2,673,209 c	2,481,258 d

Living in the year.	Percentage of a, b, c, d.		
	Born 1870.	Born 1871.	Born 1872.
1880	83.8	29.7	36.5
1885	83.7	29.8	36.5
1890	83.8	29.6	36.6
1900	83.9	29.6	36.6

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