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PREFACE.

I^N response to numerous demands from the public the third volume of the Present Day Series is issued sooner than was previously intended. It contains another addition to the branch of the Series devoted to the discussion of the Non-theistic systems of the day. Three new branches have been entered on, viz., the relations of Science and revelation, the discussion of the authorship and credibility of the Books of Scripture, and Comparative Religion. The names of the writers, who are none of them novices in their departments, are a sufficient guarantee for the adequate discussion of the topics entrusted to them, and the ever-deepening interest manifested in the Series, and the ever-increasing circulation, sufficiently attest the appreciation of this enterprise of the Society felt by the public. Testimonies from many quarters continue to be received, expressing this appreciation.

January, 1884.

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THE
AGE AND ORIGIN OF MAN
GEOLOGICALLY CONSIDERED.

BY
S. R. PATTISON, ESQ., F.G.S.,
AND
DR. FRIEDRICH PFAFF,
Professor of Natural Science in the University of Erlangen,

AUTHOR OF

"SCHÖPFUNGSGESCHICHTE MIT BESONDERER BERÜCKSICHTIGUNG DES BIBLISCHEN
SCHÖPFUNGSBERICHTES" (The History of Creation, with Special Reference
to the Biblical Account of the Creation).



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:
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164, PICCADILLY.

Argument of the Tract.

HISTORY is silent concerning the earliest traces of human handicraft. There is a chasm of unknown breadth between the palæolithic and the historic period. The earliest traces of man are post glacial. After man's appearance much disturbance of soil took place. The earliest cave deposits belong to the epoch of the gravels. In the gravels and brick-earth stone tools first appear. A law of development from the rude flint implements to the polished stone age cannot be proved. Many thousands of years are not required to account for the degeneracy of man from a state of comparative civilization. The facts do not require more than seven or eight thousand years backward from the present for the antiquity of man. This conclusion agrees with the facts of history, and is not in conflict with the chronology of Scripture. The tendency of modern discovery is ever to reduce the pre-historic period. By a survey of the measurements of the skulls of various races and a comparison between the oldest men known to us and now living men, it is shown that man appeared suddenly, in all essential respects the same as the man of to-day. The total absence of proof of any transition from the man to the ape is pointed out, and sufficiency and consistency of the Scriptural account of man is shown.

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THE AGE AND ORIGIN OF MAN.



I.

THE AGE OF MAN.

By S. R. PATTISON, ESQ., F.G.S.



1.—THE QUESTION STATED.



THE recent soil of England, or "made ground," in which the relics of our predecessors lie buried, shows successive occupation of the surface by Kelt and Saxon, Norman and English. We can assign, from contemporary history, dates to everything which we find in it. This can also be done around the shores of the Mediterranean, and in more remote Babylonia, Assyria, and Egypt. But in turning up the gravel below the "made ground," or raking out the bottom of caves, we discover mysterious traces of human handicraft respecting which history is absolutely silent. We find rough stone tools, so buried as to show that those who fabricated and

Historic period.

Traces of pre-historic man.

used them lived prior to all other monuments, prior to ordinary history, prior even to the legendary period of our annalists. As the oldest known indications of man on the earth they possess for us a powerful and unique interest, far beyond their mere claims on our curiosity as articles of early art.

Date of the earliest monuments.

We can fix within a few centuries the date of the earliest inscribed monuments; and then by adding four or five hundred years to this, in order to allow for the antecedents of the state of things which they represent, we get an approximate date for the origin of the historical period back beyond the days of Abraham. With regard, however, to the antecedent period, brought to light by the flint implements, we are utterly at a loss, so far as written records go.

No written records of antecedent period.

There is a chasm of unknown breadth between the time of the old implements (palæolithic) and the historic period; in the beginning of the latter we find in Western Europe smooth stone implements (neolithic, new stone) associated with pottery and relics, to which we can ascribe an antiquity of 4000 years at furthest.

The problem to be solved.

The problem to be solved is the age of the preceding gravels with palæolithic implements, which must determine the epoch of man's first appearance, where they occur.

It only adds to the mysteries surrounding the matter, to be told first, that the gravel containing

these implements also contains the remains of animals now extinct, and secondly, that they are found beneath the soil, not only over Europe, but in the East. The Somme valley in France, and the Thames banks in England, are merely representative cases of a state of things which appears to have been very general at one time, before history begins.

Scripture does not appear to throw any light on this subject, unless we find it in the few words which disclose the universal moral decadence of mankind before the flood.¹ It was not within the declared scope of revelation to give this information.

Not the scope of Scripture to throw light on the subject.

In order to measure the difficulty, and give some hints for its solution, we must now refer to its geological conditions.

2.—GEOLOGY

THE geological term for the accumulations of soil during historical time is "recent." These have been spread over the land by the wear of the solid materials, through the agency of causes still in operation, at present rates of action.

Recent accumulations of soil.

The underlying strata are classified by geologists, in the descending scale, as quaternary, tertiary, secondary, and primary. With the last two we have nothing to do in the present inquiry, nor with

Underlying strata.

¹ "And the earth was filled with violence; . . . all flesh had corrupted His way upon the earth."—*Gen.* vi. 11.

the tertiary, except to observe that in its uppermost division, called the pliocene, we discover for the first time, as we ascend, the existence of the great groups of mammalian animals, with some forms of which, in the stratum above, man is found associated.¹

Up to this time it is demonstrable that the surroundings were unfitted for the human race, one proof of which is, that no trace of cereal plants has been found in the tertiary strata. When we come up to the quaternary, a great number of animals previously unknown appear; and with these, late in the series, in the gravels and caves, appear the mysterious tokens of the presence of man, the summit and crown of life on this earth.

Tokens of
the presence
of man in
the gravels
and caves of
the
quaternary
period.

The gravel in which these discoveries are made is not spread evenly over the surface, but occurs only in patches and beds, principally along the sides of wide valleys, and above the level of the streams in their neighbourhood. It is evident, on the slightest inspection, that the gravel, whilst it was being laid down, and since, has been subjected

¹ "Nor in the succeeding pliocene age can we expect to find man upon the earth, because of the very few living species of placental mammals then alive. The evidence brought forward by Professor Capellini, in favour of pliocene man in Italy, seems both to me and to Dr. Evans unsatisfactory, and that advanced by Professor Whitney in support of the existence of pliocene man in North America, cannot in my opinion be maintained. It is not until we arrive at the succeeding stage, or the pleistocene, when living species of mammalia begin to abound, that we meet with indisputable traces of the presence of man on the earth."—*Professor Boyd Dawkins, B. Association, 1882.*

to rushes of water, which have occasionally brought down sand; and to intervals of quiet, during which fine mud was deposited which became loam or brick-earth when dry, so that layers of river shells, layers of land shells, and bones of land animals once living on adjacent surfaces, are now found lying in the brick-earth and gravels.

Recurring for a moment to the earlier part of the quaternary, we find the presence of ice, covering a great part of England, more than half of Russia, all Scandinavia, Prussia, North Germany, and a large extent of North America. This was the glacial epoch, of the duration of which there is no chronological evidence, nor any evidence of what may have been the condition of other regions at the same time.

The glacial epoch.

The effects of the land ice of this period are to be seen in the rubble heaps and banks which dot and diversify our landscapes; and the long banks of ancient mud in the south of Scotland equally represent the action of the icebergs of the old icy sea. Can we get any evidence on our subject from these sources? We believe not; for although the great majority of cases of the occurrence of implements in the gravel are undoubtedly post-glacial, yet some instances show the prevalence or near neighbourhood of glacial conditions, but these may have been local only, and therefore afford us no assistance in the present inquiry.

The effects of the land ice.

No evidence from these sources.

Implement
gravels post
glacial.

The most recent investigators into the age of the implement gravels in the east of England (which are obviously of the same general epoch as those of the Thames and Somme) have come to the conclusion that they are post glacial. We are told that in the valleys of the Lark in Norfolk, Little Ouse, and others, whilst great antiquity must be assigned to the implements, the evidence, thus far, fairly interpreted, will not allow us to assign to any of the beds containing them a greater age than those usually classed as quaternary or post glacial. Professor Blake also, a well-known careful geologist, says, that so far as his own investigations have gone, he considers that there is no reliable evidence of any flint-implement-bearing bed in the east of England being of greater antiquity than that generally known as the post-glacial period.¹

Effects of
ice.

Taking the full prevalence of the glacial epoch as a base-line, we find that the ice which radiated from the high lands, and the icebergs which streamed from the Northern Sea, have left records in lines of polished and striated rocks and scooped vallies, and lake-basins, and mud-banks, and confused stone-heaps. As local glaciers melted away, the whole land became submerged, and a fresh surface was moulded by retreating waters, and rivers; and amidst the growth of trees and plants

Moulding of
a fresh
surface.

¹ *Geological Magazine*, January, 1863, p. 38.

of existing species, man now suddenly appears in these parts as a hunter and cave-dweller.

Man's appearance as a hunter and cave-dweller.

At this time the gravel-beds and caves reveal to us the existence of two kinds of gigantic elephant, two species of rhinoceros, the Auvergne bear, the sabre-toothed lion, deer, hippopotamus, and other animals mostly now extinct, with oxen, stags, and red-deer, of still living species.

Contemporary animals.

The climate became ameliorated towards the end of the quaternary ; the reindeer, which had roamed down as far as Spain, retreated northwards.

When we speak of the glacial epoch, it must be remembered that this does not imply a period of universal ice. The geology of Central Asia is yet but little known with regard to the period in question. It is quite possible that the countries beyond the range of Arctic conditions may contemporaneously have been the scene of some of the events of early history, for aught we know. The tribes which wandered and hunted along the edges of the great ice-cap and over the plains of the Western world, and over Greece and India, may have been the offshoots of a previous comparative civilization which obtained in some more favoured spot.

Events beyond the range of Arctic conditions.

But the world was not yet at rest. After the advent of man, as shown by geology, the surface was, at least in these Western parts, subjected to much turbulence and violent action. The soil where the quaternary gravels are now found, was

Disturbances of the soil after the advent of man.

Effects
of the
disturbance
and violent
action.

first lifted up, and then depressed, and traversed by streams larger and swifter than the existing rivers, though in the same direction. In the former period, the waters tore up the surface, and filled the valleys with gravels. In the latter, the valleys were excavated, and the gravel re-sorted, and interspersed with sand and mud. The formation of river terraces shows that both these movements were accompanied by long periods of repose.

The bearing
of this on
the question
of man's
age.

Man, in England, preceded this, the last great physical revolution; and the date and duration of the latter, if discoverable, will go far to give us that of his antiquity.

The implement gravel is of the same age as the sand and mud in which the mammoth is found, with parts of the body well preserved, in icy clay, in Siberia. Mammoth tusks are so numerous along the shores of the Arctic Sea as to have formed for several centuries a valuable article of commerce.

To the epoch of the gravels belong also the earliest of the cave deposits. The caves at that time were at the level of the streams on whose sides they range, but now they are at varying heights above them.

3.—THE FLINT IMPLEMENTS.

The
appearance
of stone
tools.

It is in the gravels and brick-earth, the graves of the great mammals, and in the lowest floors of the caves, that stone tools, adapted equally for cutting, digging, or striking, appear.

The most numerous of these are shaped fragments of the pebbles themselves, or of stones obtainable hard by. They have been struck with other stones, so as to produce cutting edges and a symmetrical form; most of them show that they have been used, and some have their edges blunted by having been rolled along with the gravel. They have been abandoned or dropped, and then covered by subsequent inundations.

How their cutting edges and symmetrical form have been produced.

Dr. John Evans, in his standard work on *The Ancient Stone Implements of Great Britain*, published in 1872, records discoveries of these remains in six caves and fifty-four gravel banks in England and Wales. The number of such discoveries has at least been doubled since that date, and foreign localities are still more numerous. Public and private museums are everywhere displaying these shaped flints amongst the articles which appeal to curiosity and interest. They have been found in Spain, Italy, Greece, Algeria, Upper and Lower Egypt (it is said in the conglomerate slabs of which the tombs of the kings are built), Palestine, India, and even in North America; all substantially of the same type, lying under similar conditions, of the same geological age, and apparently testifying of the same social epoch. They occur beyond the bounds of our ordinary history, and denote a community of character over an area startling from its extent. It is as though

Discoveries in the caves and gravel banks in England and Wales.

Also in other countries.

Their significance.

the world had at one time passed through a hunting or predatory stage, as regards man and the mammals, interrupted by a watery catastrophe.

The tools indisputably the works of ancient man.

Doubtless some collectors of these implements have been deceived by the similarity of accidental chips to artificial forms, and have classed among the latter some of the former. The unwary have been imposed upon by counterfeit originals, which have been readily struck out to supply the demand. But these sources of error are easily unmasked and allowed for, and do not affect the conclusions which scientific men have drawn from an immense number of undoubtedly valid specimens. It cannot be for a moment disputed that the great majority of the tools are veritable works of ancient man.

The Crayford palæolithic tool factory.

At Crayford, where there are the evidences of a palæolithic tool factory, the shape of the implements shows that they have been used for cutting, for digging, and for hammering. The bones of mammoth and rhinoceros in the same deposit, may be the relics of creatures slain and dressed for food with these implements thus ready at hand.

Materials used.

Although flint is the best material for stone cutlery, yet every variety of quartzose or hard stone has been used. Whilst there are no polished stones amongst the palæolithic implements, there are numerous unpolished ones accompanying those

of the neolithic age, or even down to recent times. Stone being commonly at hand, and presenting or taking a cutting edge, would of course be adapted and used by all people in proportion to the difficulty of obtaining metal, and exclusively in the absence of the latter.

There is a general resemblance between all the flint tools, yet each district has its fashion, so to speak. The eye soon learns to distinguish between the almond-shaped and the spear-shaped, between the St. Acheul type and the Hoxne type. So too there is a great difference in the finish of tools from various places. At Clapton, in a succession of similar beds, the latest are the best finished. The French archaeologists have elevated these differences into characteristics of progression during tens of thousands of years, without any shadow of proof, and against all probability.

It is a fact that up to the present time no human bones have been found in the beds containing the tools, though there are abundant bones, teeth, tusks, and horns of animals. The reply that human bones decay quickly is not satisfactory, as other mammalian fragments are preserved in the same circumstances. We must confess ignorance, and be content to wait. In spite of this we are bound to consider the fact as established, that before the historic period there was an age, quite unrecorded in writing, during which man existed, and which,

General
resemblance
and variety
of fashion.

The
conclusions
of French
archæo-
logists from
the
differences
baseless.

No human
bones found
with the
tools.

Ignorance
must be
confessed.

Man existed in our country for an unrecorded period terminated by rushes of fresh water and changes of land level.

at least so far as our country is concerned, terminated by rushes of fresh water and changes of land level.

4.—TIME.

Man lived on the surface and left stone tools before the uppermost gravels were laid down.

It is clear that once upon a time, before the uppermost gravels were laid down, the soil then forming the surface was trodden by man, who made, used, and left stone tools of a special type.

These stones deposited where we now find them by rushes of water.

Secondly, there was a time when by repeated rushes of water, these worked stones were carried forward with pebbles washed out of the surface chalk, and deposited by floods, with sand, gravel, or mud, where we now find them.

The force and duration of this action.

It is equally clear that the last-mentioned action must have been of sufficient force and long duration to have scooped out or enlarged many existing valleys, to have tranquilly deposited sediment in some places, and in others to have allowed the accumulation of sand amongst which are remains of molluscan creatures which lived and died there, and to allow for successive occupancy or resort by numerous tribes of large animals, and by man. But the effects of the denudation in excavating and widening valleys are far too considerable to have been produced by the feeble causes now in operation: the disruption and displacement of strata demands

the excavation and widening of valleys cannot have been produced by forces now in operation.

of flint action, and the wide-spread gravels point to floods far more powerful than the present streams could furnish. Hence time is not the only element to be considered.

Time not the only element to be considered.

The great difference in construing the foregoing facts in their bearing on time arises from the opposite opinions held by advocates of rival schools of geology. The one, following Lyell, holding that these effects were produced in the same manner and at the same rates of time as similar effects are at the present, estimate the time required for wearing down river beds into valleys, and for depositing gravel and loam, by scores of thousands of years; whereas others, seeing in the records of the past positive proofs of violence, and fuller and swifter actions of force, maintain the probability of a far shorter duration, and put forward the sufficiency for all purposes of about eight thousand years from the present time. A third section of geologists, comprising many of the chief scientists of the day, decline to assign any date in years for the antiquity of man; affirming that the facts are not yet ripe for any such determination. Professor Prestwich, writing of the geological changes since the deposition of the flint implements in the Somme valley, says,

Various theories.

"All these phenomena indicate long periods of time. I do not, however, find that we are yet in a position to measure that time, or even to make an approximate estimate respecting it,

Professor Prestwich.

That we must greatly extend our present chronology with respect to the first existence of man appears inevitable ; but that we should count by hundreds of thousands of years is, I am convinced, in the present state of the inquiry, unsafe and premature."¹

The speedy
obliteration
of surface
changes.

It is, however, surprising to find how soon the settled course of nature obliterates all marks of such surface changes as the condition of the gravels and brick-earth indicate. The estuaries around our south-eastern coast, which have been filled up in historical times, some within the last seven hundred years, to a height of thirty feet from their sea-level, by the gradual accumulation of soil, now look like solid earth, in no way differing from the far older land adjoining. The harbours out of which our Plantagenet kings sailed are now firm well-timbered land. The sea-channel through which the Romans sailed on their course to the Thames, at Thanet, is now a puny fresh-water ditch, with banks apparently as old as the hills. In Bede's days, in the ninth century, it was a sea-channel three furlongs wide.

The palæolithic changes, save the one disturbance when the strata were raised and broken, and the Straits of Dover formed, and the cave-cliffs raised up, and wide valleys re-excavated, do not display any phenomena requiring longer

¹ "Theoretical Considerations on the Drift containing Implements," etc. *Philosophical Transactions* (Royal Society), 1862

time than about a thousand years. We have then to assign some time for the disturbances referred to, and we make allowance for this in proposing less than another thousand years.

The time required for the palæolithic changes.

We have already observed that most of the implement gravels overlie the glacial débris. We may cite as a typical instance one which occurs in Swabia, and is related by the explorer, Mr. Fraas. A settlement of the primitive population was discovered at Schüssenried. A hole had been dug in the glacier débris, and the remains of their meals, sweepings, and implements that were broken or had become useless were cast into it. The first particularly excite our interest, for they enable us to determine what was the prey of those primitive inhabitants. The bones of the reindeer preponderate, the number of them is so great that Fraas believes that he is justified in concluding that hundreds of them had been slain. The bones of a bear, probably not different from our *Ursus Arcticus*, occur, but are rare. There were also found bones of a glutton, and other animals belonging to the colder regions, and of a horse—of species now living. All these bones lie thickly embedded in moss, to which they are indebted for their good state of preservation, and which itself was well preserved, and proved to be either of high northern species, or of those found near the snow line in the Alps.

Discovery at Schüssenried.

All the implements that were found were of stone, particularly flint, or of horn and bone. The first kind, of which six hundred specimens were collected, must have been manufactured on the spot, as appears from the occurrence of splinters. Many hard Alpine stones were gathered from the glacier débris. The smaller fine implements were chiefly made from reindeers' horns. The absence of every trace of pottery, as well as the rather rough form of the implements, renders it, according to Fraas, in the highest degree probable that the settlement in question is one of the very earliest, and it was formed here at the end of the glacial period. Hence the cold climate, which is evidenced by the remains, would easily be accounted for.

The settlement at Schüllessenried one of the earliest.

Were it not for the unmistakable proofs, from changes of level, of a great physical disturbance, we might content ourselves with the conclusion that the rude flint implements were the first stage of the art of barbarians, succeeding generations of whom, after years of practice, developed further skill in the fabrications of the polished stone age. But the sequence of events has been so strangely interrupted by physical catastrophe, that we cannot lay down any such law of development, for there appears to be an absolute break, and no bridge has been discovered between the first and the second

¹ "Theol. plements," *et.* We may surmise that the men who had rough tools, and had been driven back by

floods and earth movements, or their successors, may have returned later on, with improved fashions in stone; and in after years, again, may have acquired by intercourse with more favoured countries, the use of metals, the fabrication of pottery, and other tokens of civilization, but of this we have no evidence.

Suggestions.

It has been contended that the progress of man from the state of comparative civilization which we may, from Scripture, infer to have been his first condition, to that of a savage of the stone age, or *vice versa*, would inevitably require a lapse of very many thousand years; but the observations of modern travellers do not support this view, and in confirmation of this we may cite the following instance: Baron Nordenskiöld, in his narrative of his stay among the inhabitants of the shores of the Arctic Sea, near Behrings Straits states that two people of different race and language, placed under similar conditions of climates and food supply, rapidly converge into common features and character, and notices the quick absorption into the mass of any foreign element casually introduced. He also adds the important conclusion from his observations, that the changes which can be ascertained to have taken place historically, are changes not of progression, but of decadence. He even considers that the lost Danes, who are known to have colonized Green-

The degeneracy of man rapid.

Nordenskiöld's observations in the Arctic regions.

The Danish colonists of Greenland of the eighth century have become the Eskimo of to-day.

land in the eighth century, of whom nothing has been heard since 1406, have been converted into Eskimo, and thus all traces of them have disappeared. He says, "A single century of complete separation from Europe would be sufficient to carry out thoroughly this alteration of the present European population of Greenland; and by the end of that period, the traditions of Danish rule would be very obscure in that land."¹

We may conclude with Dr. Southall, that "the palæolithic hunters of the Somme valley did not *originate* in that inhospitable climate, but moved into Europe from some more genial region."²

The distribution of the tools affords no help in framing a chronology.

The extent of the area over which the tools are found, does not give us much help in constructing a chronology, for gravel beds, unlike the older strata, are not continuous on their level, but constantly interrupted, and are also varying in thickness and in the nature of their materials. The difficulty of framing any general system of succession appears to be almost insuperable. Most of the smaller gravel beds have been disturbed, re-sorted, and re-distributed by water, more than once, as their contents show. Hence the opportunity offered for the most widely differing computations of age and duration. It is precisely similar with Egyptian chronology.

Computations of age and duration very various.

¹ *Voyage of the Vega*, Vol. II., p. 544.

² *Epoch of the Mammoth*, p. 315.

There are certain dynasties about which learned men are in doubt whether they were successive or contemporaneous. Each chronologist stretches or contracts these missing links as suits his own theory.

Analogy of Egyptian chronology.

5.—CONCLUSION.

Mons. Gabriel de Mortillet, Professor of Pre-historic Anthropology in Paris, in his work just published,¹ deduces from similar but more extended data of the kind we have given above, the astounding conclusion that man appeared on the earth 230,000 years ago! *i.e.*, he adds to the 6000 years of actual history 224,000 pre-historic years,—years of stone implements, years of a progress which might more fitly be termed stagnation. This great *terra incognita* is by him peopled with an imaginary race of men beginning before the glacial epoch, continuing in southern climes whilst it lasted, returning without improvement, living on French and German soil for 50,000 years, progressing so slowly as to learn nothing but a slight improvement in stone tools, being from generation to generation fishers and hunters only, knowing nothing of agriculture, living without domesticated animals, without any religious ideas! Such a phase of humanity is absolutely inconceivable. It is entirely inconsistent

M. de Mortillet's calculations.

His representations inconceivable

¹ *La Préhistorique Antiquité de l'Homme.* Paris, 1883.

with all that we are, and all that we know. After the endurance of this forlorn companionship with the beasts for nearly 200,000 years, he says that man became an artist, *i.e.*, he learnt to scratch outlines on ivory and bone! He goes on to say that a few thousand years after this, there was a movement of the world's population, the eastern tribes having acquired some religiosity, some knowledge of art and political life, invaded the west, and gave a new character to the mixed race which resulted from the irruption of the civilized community into the territory of our savage but simple forefathers in these western parts. Surely all this may be fiction, "may be poetry," but it is neither science nor philosophy. The assumption of the almost-infinitely slow succession of about a myriad generations of shivering savages is too grotesque to be dealt with seriously, had it not had the advantage of annunciation by one of the foremost of the archæologists of France. Well may M. Mortillet close his book, as he does, with the sage reflection: "But the pre-historic is a new science, far, very far, from having said its last word." We can only add,—very far indeed!

M. de Mortillet's assumptions too grotesque for serious treatment.

How far the human period goes back.

With regard to time, we must again call attention to the fact that the human period has certainly extended backwards into the time when some of the great animals of which written history gives no account, were living on the earth.

The mammoth, for instance, must have been known to the cave-dwellers in France, as carvings of its form on ivory and bone have been found, although legend and history are alike ignorant of its existence. Indeed, the mammoth has left more numerous traces in quaternary deposits than any other animal. Its bones and teeth are found scattered on the uplands, where they must have fallen before the valleys were re-excavated, and on the banks and levels of streams, partly brought down by the rivers and partly buried on the land they occupied whilst living. The mammoth became extinct in Siberia within very late quaternary times, if not within the historic period; but we are not furnished with any date assignable to the undoubted fact of its contemporaneity with the first men in England. We cannot tell how long they lived together.

The mammoth known to the cave-dwellers in France.

It became extinct in late quaternary times, if not within the historic period.

Historians of the older school invariably commenced their works with preliminary fables, the length of which was in proportion to the writers estimate of the importance of his subject. Geologists have taken similar license; but the scientific imagination has laws, and one of these is expressed in the principle that a sufficient cause is reason enough. We have to deal with the duration of a long watery epoch, succeeding a long icy one, and with the occurrence, after the appearance of man, of a series of physical changes of surface, resulting

The license taken by geologists.

Conflicting conclusions of geologists.

in the present condition of things. As there is no secular time-record available, we can only reckon by the events; and although many, perhaps the majority of geologists, studying the earth alone, would be of opinion that these events may have occupied somewhat more than eight thousand years, yet other geologists from the same facts may arrive at a different conclusion. If, therefore, from any other science or study, we have reason to believe that the race of men has existed only about eight thousand years, it is impossible for geological science at present to confute or disprove it.

Other than geological evidence valid.

Three stages in the quaternary.

Can we put the case affirmatively? We have made out three stages in the quaternary, disregarding the boulder-clay as any index of time. The first when man appeared; second, when he was displaced by floods; thirdly, when he lived and worked on the present surface. Now, naturalists bring down the close of the glacial period far into quaternary times, for they point out that there are no palæolithic implements found in Scandinavia, though neolithic tools abound, whence it is inferred that this district was then under the ice and uninhabitable, and continued so until the neolithic age. The neolithic age is estimated to have occurred here about 4000 or 5000 years ago,¹ so that the latest work of the glacial epoch vanished not earlier

The neolithic age.

¹ Worsaae fixes its close in Denmark at about 2500 years ago. *Primeval Antiquities*, p. 135.

than this. If we assign any reasonable duration before this to the prior palæolithic age, including the period of physical disturbance and of man's antecedent resort here, we arrive at seven or eight thousand years backward from the present, and no more. If this computation is well grounded, it at least dissipates all visions of fabulous antiquity.

The paleolithic age carries us back only seven or eight thousand years from the present time.

We may be allowed to mention that neither the calculations of astronomy, nor the inductions of ethnology, afford us any certain aid in this inquiry at present.¹

It will be satisfactory to place together such few elements as we possess from history concerning the earliest dates. Babylonian authorities (a brick-record of Nabonidus²) carry the annals of that kingdom to B.C. 3800,—the epoch of the great Sargina, supposed to have lived within a few generations of the Flood, which the same records pourtray. Egyptian discoveries carry us up no higher³—say 6000 years from the present time. We therefore assume this to be the extreme duration and antiquity of what we may term the historic period. This includes the neolithic age in

Historical evidence.

Babylonian chronology.

Egyptian chronology.

¹ See Boyd Dawkins. Address at Southampton, *Nature*, August 31st, 1882.

² See Sir H. C. Rawlinson's letter to the *Athenæum*, Dec. 9, 1882.

³ Vide R. S. Poole. *The Cities of Egypt*, 1882. But Mr. Poole says:—"The chronology of Ancient Egypt is as yet undetermined, the best authorities differing by many centuries."

Europe and America; includes the epoch of the cromlechs and stone circles; includes the era of the pre-historic cities on the site of Mycenæ and Troy; includes, of course, all antiquity save the palæolithic age.

Biblical
chronologies.

The Bible, in the first chapters of the Book of Genesis, declares a limit to the antiquity of man, but does not undertake to fix it. The only materials which it offers for the calculation are genealogies given for purposes of pedigree, and evidently not chronologically complete.¹ As was to be expected,

Various
authorities.

different writers have from these given very different computations of time. According to the construction adopted in the Septuagint, the creation of man occurred 7517 years ago; according to Dr. Hales 7294; according to the Vulgate 6067; according to Bishop Ussher 5967. Secular history, as we have seen, goes back nearly 6000 years, so that the interval between that and the Creation seems to require some extension of the ordinary chronology, to allow for the immediate antecedents of secular history and for the whole palæolithic period. If for these, and the first

Extension of
ordinary
chronology
required.

¹ "From the Call of Abraham it is possible to construct a chronology that cannot be far wrong. . . . Previously to that date all is uncertain, and while in a religious point of view we have everything that we want, it is as impossible to construct a scientific chronology of the world from the records in Genesis as it is to construct from those same records a scientific geology or astronomy."—*The Dean of Canterbury, O. T. Commentary*, p. 9.

human period recorded in the Book of Genesis, we allow 2000 years, we get a term of about 8000 years as warranted by deductions from history, geology, and Scripture. If further geological evidence should at any time require it, we might without violence to the Scripture commence our chronology a few years earlier still. With geological records of great uncertainty, and written records declared to be incomplete for this purpose, we submit that it is sufficient for us to show a near approximation between science and Scripture, and to express the conviction, founded on actual facts, that the more geology is studied and its facts ascertained, the closer does this approximation become; already this is the case in the judgment of some leading geologists, for undoubtedly the tendency of modern observation and discovery has been to bring down and modernize the mammalian and prehistoric epochs.

Sufficient to show a near approximation between science and Scripture.

The tendency of modern discovery to modernize the date of the prehistoric epochs.

Finally, the matter stands thus,—the exact age of man on the earth is not ascertainable by science, but science shows to us a number of converging probabilities which point to his first appearance along with great animals about eight thousand years ago, and certainly not in indefinite ages before that.

The final conclusion.

Geology, standing beside the most ancient works of man, hitherto discovered by it, interprets them as belonging to a race of savages. We know, however, too little about them to come to any such

Conclusion that primitive man was savage unwarranted.

The discoveries of ethnology.

conclusion; but if this were so, we are warranted in saying that these were not the first men; they must have had ancestors more civilized than themselves, for the science of ethnology assures us of this. It discovers, amongst the very oldest monuments open to its examination, vestiges of language and manners which must have come from antecedent culture. Like rounded pebbles in a conglomerate rock, these worn fragments are foreign to their surroundings. On this important point we may quote the testimony of Professor Max Müller, who says:

Professor Max Müller's testimony.

"What do we know of savage tribes beyond the last chapter of their history? Do we ever get an insight into their antecedents? Can we understand, what after all is everywhere the most important and the most instructive lesson to learn, how they have come to be what they are? . . . Their language proves, indeed, that these so-called heathens, with their complicated systems of mythology, their artificial customs, their unintelligible whims and savageries, are not the creatures of to-day or yesterday. Unless we admit a special creation for these savages, they must be as old as the Hindus, the Greeks and Romans, as old as we ourselves. . . . They may have passed through ever so many vicissitudes, and what we consider as primitive may be, for all we know, a relapse into savagery, or a corruption of something that was more rational and intelligible in former stages."¹

Geology has not shown to us any traces of the first men.

We are thus led to infer that geology has not yet shown to us any traces of the first men. It may enlarge its field and continue its search for these. This science, so far as it has gone, appears

¹ *India*, by F. Max Müller, 1883.

to find its first specimens of humanity in a rude decivilized condition. It discovers, at present, nothing whatever of his antecedents. But the facts which it brings before us correspond with the known sacred and profane history concerning the alas, too early condition of our race. Our science has no key to the higher mysteries of man's nature, being "of the earth, earthy,"—it leaves us in the region of the shadow of death—with, however, the natural conviction that there must be light elsewhere. Nor is this expectation disappointed, for we read "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord *hath spoken!*" The overture to *Paradise Lost* takes up and repeats the strain—

Its facts correspond with history concerning the condition of our race.

It has no key to the higher mysteries of man's nature.

It leaves us with the conviction that there must be light elsewhere, which is not disappointed.

"Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat."

II.

THE ORIGIN OF MAN.¹

By DR. FRIEDRICH PFAFF.



AN answer has been given in the first part of this Tract to the question, "When did man appear on the earth?" We shall now turn to the second question, "How did man arise, what was his origin?" We shall see whether natural science can furnish us with an answer to it. As this is a question relating to a fact that occurred in the most remote past, it is clear that it cannot have been observed by any student of nature; and every impartial and unbiassed observer will at once confess that his science will not enable him to give any certain answer to the question, "How did the first man, the first animal, the first plant, arise?" Hypotheses only can be advanced whose probability must be tested by the facts; and every hypothesis is at once to be rejected, if only one single fact contradicts it.

Can science tell us what the origin of man was?

Hypotheses must be tested by facts.

¹ Translated by permission from the German, with additions approved by Professor Pfaff.

That many such hypotheses have been advanced concerning the rise of man, by philosophers and students of natural science, is very intelligible. Men are always prone to outrun their knowledge with hypotheses. Sometimes on a right path, and sometimes on a wrong one. They are always attempting to get behind and beyond the facts. All these hypotheses and theories with respect to the rise of man can be reduced to two. One says, Man appeared at a definite time, perfect and entire, there was a first man possessing all the essential characteristics of the now living man. The other maintains that it is nonsense to speak of a first man, for there never has been one. What we call man has been gradually developed from an ape-like animal, through numberless intermediate steps, as the last member of a series extending over many millions of years.

All hypotheses can be resolved into two.

There is no other hypothesis, essentially different from these two theories, conceivable, and in so far the task of the student of nature in testing them is a simple and easy one. The two views, furthermore, lead us to expect such essentially different facts to present themselves to our observation, that the scientific proof for the correctness of the one or the other must admit of being brought clearly and decidedly forward. As the latter assumes a constant, still persisting, progressive development of all living creatures, including man, it follows

None other conceivable.

The points
to be
investigated.

clearly, according to it, that the most ancient men in this chain of development must have taken a middle position between the man to-day and the man nearest to the animal; must have stood much nearer to the animal than modern man. This clears the way for us to put both theories to the proof. In order to decide which is the correct one, we must investigate first of all (1) the relation of the oldest men known to us in respect to their constitution, physical as well as intellectual, to those now living. (2) Their relation to the highest animals which we know—the apes. Let us consider first what we know about the physical constitution of the primitive population. The very numerous excavations which have been undertaken in the last ten or fifteen years, and the not less numerous researches in the caves have furnished us in this respect with such abundant material that we are well informed concerning the physical constitution of those ancient men.

The
structure of
the skull.

It is the structure of the skull that first claims our attention. For, without doubt, the brain is the organ which is the seat of all the intellectual capacities of man; hence, even in earlier times, the form and size of the skull, which fits on to the brain, was regarded as furnishing the means of forming an intellectual estimate of the higher animals, as well as of the various races of men. The one fact that the capacity of the brain

of the smallest man, even of a child, far exceeds that of the largest ape, plainly indicates the importance of this organ in judging of intellectual endowments. Proceeding from the universally valid principle, that higher intellectual capacities are connected with a more capacious brain and certain proportions of the skull, great efforts have been made of late to discover marks, partly in the relative size, partly in the relative form of the skull, which would render a classification of men not only into definite races possible, but also fix their relative rank according to their intellectual capacities, their place in a higher or lower grade.

The importance of the brain in judging of intellectual endowments.

The comparison and accurate measurement of the skulls of the most diverse people and tribes have shown in the clearest manner how uncertain these efforts must turn out to be, for the more all races have been gradually drawn into the area of the investigation, the more clearly do two facts become apparent, namely:—

(1.) There is no single mark to be found which is or ever was the exclusive property of one race, even though certain relations of form and size are more frequently found in some races than in others.

The facts that emerge from the comparison and accurate measurement of the skulls of various peoples and tribes,

(2.) It is in the highest degree hazardous to attempt to draw a definite conclusion with respect to the intellectual capacities of a race of people from the capacity of the cavity of the skull alone, in addition to which there is the fact that in every

people the relative size varies so much, that the boundary lines between the several races are thereby completely obliterated.

The relation of the length of the skull to the breadth one of the most important marks of difference between races.

Of late, the relation of the length of the skull to its breadth has been recognized to be one of the most characteristic marks of difference between different races; and according to it, dolichocephals or long skulls, mesocephals or medium skulls, and brachycephals or short skulls, have been distinguished. In order to be able easily to compare the relations of the breadth to the length in different races, it has been agreed not to quote the absolute measure of both, which often varies, but to accept 100 as the length of all skulls, be they large or small, and then to determine what percentage of the length, the breadth, which is always smaller than the length, amounts to. This proportion is called the index of breadth.

The method of comparison adopted.

The classification of skulls.

The skulls with an index of breadth of from 70-74 are called dolichocephal; those with an index of from 75-79 are called mesocephal, or orthocephal; and those in which it amounts to 80 and more, brachycephal. Others accept the sub-dolichocephals and sub-brachycephals as intermediate stages between dolichocephals and mesocephals, and between mesocephals and brachycephals respectively.

In like manner, the height of the skull in proportion to the greatest length (the height measured from the border of the hole of the

occiput to the highest point of the skull) has been designated the index of height. This varies less than the index of breadth, but still between 70 and 82. A closer consideration of the different races now living will show us how indecisive this division is. To take, for example, the Germanic stock, we find, on an average, the index of breadth among the Scandinavians at 75; among the English at 76; among Holsteiners at 77; in Breisgau at 80. Schiller's skull shows an index of breadth even of 82. The proportions vary in a still greater degree among the Malays. The Maoris, in New Zealand, show one of 73; the Tahitians of 75; the inhabitants of Sumatra show 77; the people of Java, 79; the Madurese at last 82. In almost all countries representatives for these three kinds of skulls are found side by side.

The index of height and its variations.

The average index of skull among various races.

In relation to the second point, the estimate of the volume of the skull for the purpose of judging of the intellectual capacities, we shall content ourselves likewise with the quotation of some figures. If we compare the estimates of the volumes of the skulls of different people, it will, of course, be shown that many among them have a very decidedly smaller volume of skull than others. But it does not always stand in a direct proportion throughout to the intellectual endowment and development; notwithstanding, as regards these qualities, the French certainly are in the highest

The volume of the skull in relation to the intellectual capacities.

Dr. J. B.
Davis's
measure-
ments.

rank of mankind, and yet, according to the measurements of Dr. J. Barnard Davis,¹ who had more extensive materials at command than any other craniologist, the internal capacity of the skull among the French,—88·4 cubic inches, is perceptibly smaller than that of the Polynesians generally, which even among many Papuans and Alfuras of the lowest grade amounts to 89·7 and 89 cubic inches. The average of all European races is 92·3; the average of the Asiatic people amounts to 87·1; of the African, 86; the lowest of all, the Bushmen, show an average of 77·8 cubic inches.

As we have been able hitherto to base our estimate of the volume of the skull among those races that are less accessible to Europeans only on a measurement of a few skulls, we cannot determine accurately whether we have already obtained a right average figure from these; and we must determine the limits within which the capacity of the skull, even among Europeans, may vary. Davis describes a Roman skull with a volume only of 62, and an Irish skull with a volume of 124·2 cubic inches, so that, according to this, the minimum and maximum are equally removed from the average.

Limits of
variation
among
Europeans.

Having made these necessary preliminary ob-

¹ Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London for the year 1868. Contributions for determining the weight of the brain in different races of men, by Joseph Barnard Davis, M.D.

servations, I would proceed to a consideration of the oldest skulls of the pre-historic period. And first of all, as regards the form of these skulls. We find among them dolichocephalous and brachycephalous skulls, belonging very probably to two different races, of which the dolichocephalous agree in all characteristics with the now living Basques; while the brachycephalous as having entered later, are the Kelts, in single cave-graves and mounds, often only of one kind, but sometimes also both mixed together in one burial-place. The index of breadth varies from 71·0 to 81·1 in numerous skulls of the stone period found in English tombs and caves.

The oldest pre-historic skulls.

In French burial-mounds it varies from 70·2 and 85·7 in the equally numerous skulls of the stone age that have been found. The index of height in the same skulls varies from 71·0 to 84·8, and this great variation occurs even in skulls from one and the same cave, namely, the cave of Perthi-Chwaren, in Wales.

Of greater importance for the question before us is the volume of these old skulls. With reference to this a startling fact comes to light, that most of these old skulls, belonging to the stone period, are above rather than below the average of the brain of the now living men in volume. We have an accurate direct determination of the capacity of few of these, partly, fragmentary skulls. We obtain, however, figures well adapted for the com-

The skulls of the stone period above rather than below the average of the now living men.

parison of the contents of the skull, if we add the measures for the height, breadth, and length of every skull, and compare the resulting figures together, inasmuch as the form of the different skulls being, in general, pretty much the same, these figures give us a correct representation of the capacity of the different skulls, just as well as the quotation of the three chief dimensions of similarly formed vessels renders a judgment of their greater or smaller capacity possible.

Average measurements of various skulls of the stone age.

If we calculate the measures for the height, breadth, and length, in inches, for the single skulls, or, with more abundant material, the average measurements of several skulls, and add them together, we obtain the following sums :

1. Old northern skulls of the stone age 18·877 in.
2. Average of 48 skulls of the same period from England 18·858 „
3. Average of 7 skulls of the same period from Wales 18·649 „
4. Average of 36 skulls of the stone age from France 18·220 „

The average of the now living Europeans is 18·579; of Hottentots, 17·795.

Conclusion from size of the skull.

We see very clearly from all this, that the size of the brain of the oldest populations known to us

is not such as to permit us to place them on a lower level than that of the now living inhabitants of the earth.

It has recently been asserted by Dr. Grant Allen,¹ that one of the most ancient skulls, hitherto described,

Dr. Grant Allen on the Neanderthal skull.

“the Neanderthal skull, possesses large bosses on the forehead, strikingly suggestive of those which give the gorilla its peculiarly fierce appearance ;”

and that

“no other human skull presents so utterly bestial a type as the Neanderthal fragment. If ones cut a female gorilla skull in the same fashion the resemblance is truly astonishing, and we may say the only human feature in the skull is the size ;”

but Professor Owen wholly contradicts this and says :

Professor Owen on the same.

“I have to state that the super-orbital ridge is but little more prominent than in certain human skulls of both higher and lower races, and of both the existing and cave-dwelling periods. In the human ‘skull’ in question, the mid-line traced backward from the super-orbital ridge runs along a smooth track. In the gorilla a ridge is raised from along the major part of that track to increase the surface giving attachment to the biting muscles. In the Neanderthal individual, as in the rest of mankind, the corresponding muscles do not extend their origins to the upper surface of the cranium, but stop short at the ‘temples,’ whence our ‘biting muscles’ are called ‘temporal,’ as the side-bones of the skull to which they are attached are also the ‘temporal bones ;”

and further says :

“As far as my experience has reached, there is no skull of any Quadrumanous species, from the gorilla and chimpanzee to the

¹ *Fortnightly Review*, 1882.

The differences between the highest ape and the lowest man.

baboon, which exhibits differences on which specific and generic distinctions are founded, so great, so marked, as are to be seen, in the comparison of the highest ape with the lowest man."

He adds that

"the modification of man's upper limbs for the endless variety, nicety, and perfection of their application, in fulfilment of the behests of his correspondingly developed brain, testify to the same conclusion. The corresponding degrees of modification of the human lower limbs, to which he owes his upright attitude and his distinct character, combine and concur in raising the group so characterised above and beyond the apes."¹

Dr. Grant Allen on the Cave-men.

Dr. Grant Allen states

"that the Cave-men probably had lower foreheads, with high bosses, like the Neanderthal skull, and big canine teeth, like the Naulette jaw."²

Professor Owen on cave specimens.

But Professor Owen, on the contrary, says that

"the human lower jaw, so defined from a Belgian cave, which I have carefully examined, gives no evidence of a canine tooth of a size indicative of one in the upper jaw, necessitating such vacancies in the lower series of teeth which the apes present. There is no such vacancy, nor any evidence of a 'big canine tooth' in that cave specimen. And, with respect to cave specimens in general, the zoological characters of the race of men they represent must be founded on the rule, not on an exception, to their cranial features. Those which I obtained from the cavern at Bruniquel, and which are now exhibited in the Museum of Natural History, were disinterred under circumstances more satisfactorily determining their contemporaneity with the extinct quadrupeds those cave-men killed and devoured, than in any other spelæan retreat which I have explored. They show neither 'lower foreheads' nor 'higher bosses' than do the skulls of existing races of mankind."³

¹ *Longman's Magazine*, No. 1.

² *Fortnightly Review*, September, p. 321.

³ *Longman's Magazine*, No. 1.

Of the countries beyond Europe that are connected with the old world we know nothing respecting their primitive population as yet, save that in India, as well as Palestine, stone implements of the same form and make have been found in the old alluvial deposits of the rivers, as the oldest European ones, but no skulls. We may therefore assume a similar constitution and a similar state of culture for these aboriginal inhabitants of Asia. In any case we must grant that we have no fact before us which would permit us to accept the conclusion that the oldest inhabitants of the earth, of whom we have, as yet, any information, were not on the same level as the majority of the now living population. In short, according to their physical constitution, the oldest men of whom we have information were not nearer to the brutes than those now living. The longer the interval of time placed between our times and the so-called palæolithic men, the more ominous and destructive for the theory of the gradual development of man from the animal kingdom is the result stated, seeing that the older we regard man in general to be, according to the theory of a ceaseless progressive development of all living creatures, it is incomprehensible how no perceptible advance has taken place in those long periods; nay, more, how it can be shown that there has been in part a retrogression. And the question is justly put

The . . . primitive population of Asia.

The oldest men we know not nearer to the brutes than the now living ones.

The question put to the supporters of the theory of development.

to the supporters of this theory: "If in the hundreds of thousands of years which you accept between the rise of palæolithic men and our own day, a greater distance of man from the brute is not demonstrable, (the most ancient man was just as far removed from the brute as the now living man,) what reasonable ground can be advanced for believing that man has been developed from the brute, and has receded further and further from it by infinitely small steps?" What right has any one to assume a constant progress, when the observation of thousands of years, within the historic period of mankind, furnishes no proof of advance?

But perhaps we are justified in regarding those ancient men as nearer to the brutes, from what we know of their intellectual endowment, their mode of life, and their culture? Let us here again realize the facts which may enable us to give an answer to this question.

The life of the most ancient men.

What we know certainly of the oldest men in this respect is extremely little. They lived chiefly by the chase; and at the beginning had only implements of stone and horn, and not of metal; the stones were prepared according to plan, with an object: they had axes, spears, and the earliest pile dwellers had bows and arrows, as well as needles. The extent of the débris in their cave dwellings, and still more the great pile-buildings,

show us that they formed communities that lasted for a long period. The representations, moreover, of the mammoth, the reindeer, the horse, executed with much fidelity to nature on ivory made from a mammoth tooth, or reindeer horn, or on hard slate, of the oldest, the so-called palæolithic period, that have been found in great numbers, and whose value is in no wise depreciated by the fact mentioned above, that some have imitated them, and issued the counterfeits as genuine, testify to their artistic sense, and no small proficiency in art.

Their artistic sense.

“The most clever sculptor of modern times,” says Mr. Boyd Dawkins,¹ of these works, “would probably not succeed very much better, if his graver were a splinter of flint, and stone and bone were the materials to be engraved.”

This is all we know of the life of those old people of the chase, who were not wholly ignorant of agriculture. We can draw no further conclusion from the data than that they were not far advanced in technical knowledge, and led a hard life, devoted chiefly to the acquisition of the means of living, and were on a low platform of culture. But that is far from sufficient to enable us to form a judgment concerning the condition of their intellectual life, their intellectual endowment; but this is precisely what we require to know, if

Conclusion from what we know.

¹ *Cave-hunting*, p. 344.

we would decide whether that primitive population was nearer to the brute than the present one. If we candidly face the question, we must confess that even if we could certainly conclude that their outward life closely resembled the life of our so-called savages, we should not be justified, without further information, in regarding them as in the same stage of intellectual development. Those primitive people had certainly little technical and scientific knowledge. But the measure of knowledge alone does not justify us in undertaking the classification of a man, if we would indicate his rank in relation to the brute.

Knowledge
and
intellectual
capacity.

It is a universally known fact that the sum of the knowledge of mankind increases continually, but that intellectual capacity does not increase with it. It may appear to a superficial observer to be a very insignificant amount of progress when a child has learnt to speak, if he compares it with the enrichment of his knowledge by a few years' subsequent attendance at school; but one of deeper insight, having regard to the physical antecedents, would not so readily express a decided opinion on the subject, whether the performances of earliest childhood, or those of later childhood and youth, represent more actual intellectual labour. So we are only too much disposed to regard the first technical discoveries, the preparation of the first tools, as something very light, easy, and betraying little

intellectual capacity; and yet all the essential qualities that distinguish the action of man consciously directed to a purpose, and having regard to the future, from the unconscious action of the brutes, were displayed by the first men in the preparation of implements intended for a definite purpose, and in making which they had no models to guide them. If we would institute a comparison between the first men and their circumstances, and men now living, in order to form an accurate judgment as to their intellectual faculty, it is not correct to say that the most ancient are to the present men as the brute is to man, but as the child to the grown-up man.

The most ancient men are to the present as the child to the man.

When we investigate the place of a man in relation to this question, whether he is ruder and nearer to the brutes than others, we discriminate not only the intellectual side, the acquisitions and insight, but also the moral qualities. Involuntarily we always put his moral worth into the balance in our estimate of a man. Nay, more, I believe it would be difficult for any of us decidedly to say in the first instance, on any occasion, on what we should lay greater weight in estimating the stage to which we should assign a man, whether on his intellectual endowments or on his moral qualities. The consideration that we deny the last wholly to the brutes, while we concede a certain measure of intelligence to them, and that

Moral qualities affect our estimate of men.

We know nothing of the moral and religious state of the mammoth hunters.

according to this these moral qualities furnish a more essential mark of distinction between men and brutes than those intellectual ones, will make our decision anything but an easy one. Now, it is in any case quite certain that we know nothing at all about the moral condition and religious ideas of those ancient mammoth hunters; we may make conjectures about them, as has been abundantly done; but when we test these conjectures, which often flatly contradict each other, we find that they have their foundation in certain theories of the way and manner in which the course of development of modern man has taken place, which those who advance them, and hold them to be true, have originated for themselves, and apply to those ancient peoples.

The argument of the Tract confined to facts.

However interesting such theories may be, we do not believe ourselves to be at liberty to discuss them in this Tract, because we wish to confine ourselves exclusively to the facts of natural history, which furnish us with the only firm standing ground for the discussion of the question before us, as long as no positive and certain laws concerning the development of single peoples, or of the different races, have been discovered.

The state of the question.

Accordingly, the matter stands thus: As regards the physical constitution of the primitive population, what we know of their bodily frame, above all, of their skull, does not give us the very least right to place them on a lower grade, nearer to the

brutes than the majority of the races of people now living. As regards their capabilities and mode of life, the facts furnish us with no data which enable us to look upon them as not of the same origin as the men of to-day; and with respect to their moral condition, we know next to nothing of it; and as "from nothing nothing comes," we can say nothing at all on the subject. We must, therefore, conclude from our researches, until other facts are before us, that man appeared suddenly; and the oldest men that we find are as perfect and complete as those now living.

The conclusions from the facts.

But perhaps some may say, though the necessary intermediate steps from above downwards certainly fail, they exist from below upwards, from the brute to the man. That this is not the case will be frankly acknowledged even by the supporters of this theory of development, if they are not blinded by their belief in the infallibility of their doctrine. Nowhere, in the older deposits, is an ape to be found that approximates more closely to man, or a man that approximates more closely to an ape, or perhaps a man at all. The same gulf which is found to-day between man and the ape, goes back with undiminished breadth and depth to the tertiary period. This fact alone is sufficient to make its untenableness clear to every one who is not penetrated by the conviction of the infallibility of the theory of the gradual transmutation and pro-

An undiminished gulf between the ape and the man.

Back to the tertiary period

gressive development of all organized creatures. This theory tolerates nothing permanent, nothing stationary.

No approximation between the ape and the man since the end of the ice period.

If, however, we now find one of the most man-like apes (gibbon), in the tertiary period, and this species is still in the same low grade, and side by side with it at the end of the ice period, man is found in the same high grade as to-day, the ape not having approximated more nearly to the man, and modern man not having become further removed from the ape than the first man, everyone who is in a position to draw a right conclusion can infer that the facts contradict a theory of constant progressive development, and ceaselessly increasing variation from generation to generation, as sharply as it is possible to do, inasmuch as, instead of such variability, invariability enduring for thousands of years unmistakably appears in many kinds of plants and animals.

The brains of the ape and the man compared.

How wide the gulf is which separates the ape from the man we can best conclude from the figures we have relating to the size of their respective brains. According to M. Vogt, the greatest of all apes, the gorilla, has a brain of 30.51 cubic inches; while the medium size, in the case of the largest brains of the Australian natives, who stand lowest on the list of races in respect to the size of the brain, amounts to 99.35 cubic inches; the chimpanzee and ourangoutang

have a brain of still smaller size, in the males from 25·45 to 27·34 cubic inches. The brain of the apes most like man, therefore, does not amount to quite a third of the brain of the lowest races of men; it is not half the size of the brain of a new-born child.

If, however, we regard ourselves as better able to judge of the significance of these figures by the differences that are found among men, and take the average for the different races of men furnished by Dr. Davis as a basis,¹ we find that the average size of the largest European skulls is 111·99 cubic inches; that of the Australian, 99·35 cubic inches: the difference between the two, representing the maximum and the minimum, is therefore 111·99—99·35, or 12·64 cubic inches; while the difference between Australians and the gorilla is found to be 99·35—30·51, or 68·84 cubic inches.

The differences among men.

From these figures the value of the oft-repeated assertion that the difference between the highest and the lowest races of men is not less than between men and the highest apes, may be estimated.

The advocates of the theory of the descent of man from the brute assure us we shall find such missing links in Asia, where stone implements have been discovered like those found in Europe, but nothing that indicated a lower or remoter stage of

Will the missing links be found in Asia?

¹ *Thesaurus Craniorum*. Catalogue of the skulls of the various races of man in the collection of Joseph Barnard Davis, M.D., F.S.A. London, 1867.

Incon-
sistency of
the
advocates of
the theory of
develop-
ment.

mankind. Here may be the place to point out how completely contradictory it is, in connection with this theory of development, for its promoters to point always to Asia as the starting point of the human race. For long before the rise of a creature that deserves the name of man in Europe, as well as in Asia, constant development had, according to their theory, worked up the animal kingdom to the ape. Hence, there is not the least ground, according to this theory, for believing that the primitive European was not developed in Western Europe, or that Asia only should be favoured with this result, for, as Darwin says, natural selection, "daily and hourly throughout the whole world and at all times, is busy with the variation and perfecting of every organic creature." According to this theory, these missing links between apes, or the common ancestor of apes, and man, must be found in Europe as well as in Asia, if man has this origin.

Natural
history alone
the stand-
point of the
inquiry.

The foregoing discussions have sought to answer the question of the age and origin of man, so far as it can be answered from the standpoint of natural history alone, as far as it is capable of treatment as a question of natural science. In this, as in all the problems of natural science, the important matter is to collect and set forth facts which furnish us with a conclusion when and how this event, which we may conveniently describe as the

rise of man, occurred. All conjectures or theories on the subject must be tested by these facts; and we dare not regard any as admissible which contradict the facts.

Now we have ascertained the following facts, as the foregoing inquiries prove:—

The facts ascertained.

1. The age of man is small, extending only to a few thousand years.

2. Man appeared suddenly: the most ancient man known to us is not essentially different from the now living man.

3. Transitions from the ape to the man, or the man to the ape, are nowhere found.

If we compare the two theories mentioned above as the only conceivable ones as to the origin of man, we find that the first, which maintains the sudden appearance of man as a perfect being, is in accordance with all the facts; while the second, which maintains the gradual formation of man from the animal kingdom, by an interminable number of intermediate stages in endlessly long periods of time, comes into most decided collision with the facts in all its utterances. If the advocates of this theory contend that facts favourable to it will one day be discovered, we will not quarrel with them about their faith; only they must not demand the acceptance of their theory by any one until the

Comparison of the two theories.

The theory of development in conflict with the facts.

discovery takes place, and in so far they should do honour to the truth by acknowledging that the facts hitherto ascertained render their theory an impossible one for all who render homage to the principle on which alone useful progress in natural science is possible, viz., that without disparagement to any possible later discoveries, only that can be accepted as true which corresponds to known facts, by no means can that which contradicts them be admitted.

Acceptance of the theory on the ground of the probable future discovery of facts in proof cannot be claimed.

Whoever desires credence for such a theory, because he believes that the facts that favour it will one day be forthcoming, has *ipso facto* abandoned the ground of natural science, in which faith should not be demanded, least of all with reference to subjects that are accessible to our knowledge, and concerning which, as in the question before us, facts enough are already known that lead us not only to a quite decided but to an entirely opposite conclusion.

The Scriptural account of man true.

The conclusion we are led to is that the scriptural account of man, which is one and self-consistent, is true; that God made man in His own image, fitted for fellowship with Himself, and favoured with it; in a state from which man has fallen, but to which restoration is possible through Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person.

Why we accept it.

This account of man we accept by faith, because it is revealed by God, is supported by adequate evidence, solves the otherwise insoluble problems

not only of science and history, but of inward experience, and meets our deepest need. We believe there was a first man, from whom all other men are descended, who was the first head of the human race,—that there is a second Man in whom God is incarnate, who is the source of undying hope to all who become united to Him.

What we believe.

Where science forsakes us, revelation meets us with an account of man's origin, state, and destiny, which is adequate and coherent, which explains all the facts, and commends itself alike to the reason and the conscience; and the more it is sifted and examined, the more well-founded and irrefragable does it prove to be.

Revelation meets us where science forsakes us.



THE
RISE AND DECLINE
OF
ISLAM.

BY

SIR WILLIAM MUIR, K.C.S.I.,
LL.D., D.C.L.

(Formerly Lieut.-Governor of the North-West Provinces of India.)

AUTHOR OF

*"The Life of Mahomet;" "Annals of the Early Caliphate;" "The Coran: Its
Composition and Teaching, and the Testimony it bears to the Holy Scriptures;"*

*"The Apology of Al Kindy" (with an Essay on its age and authorship read
before the Royal Asiatic Society), &c.*



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:

56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHVARD; AND
164, PICCADILLY.

Argument of the Tract.

THE progress of Islam was slow until Mahomet cast aside the precepts of toleration, and adopted an aggressive, militant policy. Then it became rapid. The motives which animated the armies of Islam were mixed—material and spiritual. Without the truths contained in the system, success would have been impossible, but neither without the sword would the religion have been planted in Arabia, nor beyond. The alternatives offered to conquered peoples were Islam, the Sword, or Tribute. The drawbacks and attractions of the system are examined. The former were not such as to deter men of the world from embracing the faith. The sexual indulgences sanctioned by it are such as to make Islam “the Easy way.”

The spread of Islam was stayed whenever military success was checked. The Faith was meant for Arabia and not for the world, hence it is constitutionally incapable of change or development. The degradation of woman hinders the growth of freedom and civilization under it.

Christianity is contrasted in the means used for its propagation, the methods it employed in grappling with and overcoming the evils that it found existing in the world, in the relations it established between the sexes, in its teaching with regard to the respective duties of the civil and spiritual powers, and, above all, in its redeeming character, and then the conclusion come to that Christianity is Divine in its origin.

THE RISE AND DECLINE OF ISLAM.



AMONGST the religions of the earth, Islam must take the precedence in the rapidity and force with which it spread. Within a very short time from its planting in Arabia, the new faith had subdued great and populous provinces. In half a dozen years, counting from the death of the founder, the religion prevailed throughout Arabia, Syria, Persia, and Egypt; and before the close of the century, it ruled supreme over the greater part of the vast populations from Gibraltar to the Oxus, from the Black Sea to the river Indus.

Islam pre-
eminent in
its rapid
spread.

In comparison with this grand outburst, the first efforts of Christianity were, to the outward eye, faint and feeble; and its extension so gradual, that what the Mahometan religion achieved in ten or twenty years, it took the faith of Jesus long centuries to accomplish.

Propagation
far quicker
than of
Christianity

The object of these few pages is, *first*, to inquire briefly into the causes which led to the marvellous rapidity of the first movement of Islam; *secondly*, to consider the reasons which eventually stayed its advance; and, *lastly*, to ascertain why Mahometan

Object of the
Tract.

countries have kept so far in the rear of other lands in respect of intellectual and social progress. In short, the question is, how it was that, Pallas-like, the Faith sprang, ready armed, from the ground, conquering and to conquer; and why, the weapons dropping from its grasp, Islam began to lose its pristine vigour, and finally relapsed into inactivity.

I.

THE RAPID SPREAD OF ISLAM.

Two periods
in the
mission of
Mahomet.

THE personal ministry of Mahomet divides itself into two distinct periods. First, his life at Mecca, as a preacher and a prophet. Second, his life at Medîna, as a prophet and a king.

I. Ministry
at Mecca;
A. D. 603-622.

It is only in the first of these periods that Islam at all runs parallel with Christianity. The great body of his fellow-citizens rejected the ministry of Mahomet, and bitterly opposed his claims. His efforts at Mecca were, therefore, confined to teaching and preaching, and to the publishing of the earlier "Suras" or chapters of his "Revelation." After some thirteen years spent thus, his converts, to the number of about a hundred and fifty men and women, were forced by the persecution of the Coreish (the ruling tribe at Mecca, from which Mahomet was descended), to quit their native city and emigrate to Medîna.¹ Some fifty more

¹ See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 138. Smith and Elder.

had previously fled from Mecca for the same cause, and found refuge at the court of the Negus, or king of Abyssinia; and there were already a small company of followers amongst the citizens of Medina. At the utmost, therefore, the number of disciples gained over by the simple resort to teaching and preaching, did not, during the first twelve years of Mahomet's ministry, exceed a few hundreds. It is true that the soil at Mecca was stubborn and (unlike that of Judæa) wholly unprepared. The cause also, at times, became the object of sustained and violent opposition. Even so much of success was consequently, under the peculiar circumstances, remarkable. But it was by no means singular. The progress fell far short of that made by Christianity during the corresponding period of its existence,¹ and indeed by many reformers who have been the preachers of a new faith. It gave no promise whatever of the marvellous spectacle that was about to follow.

Success at Mecca limited.

Having escaped from Mecca, and found a new and congenial home in Medina, Mahomet was not long in changing his front. At Mecca, surrounded by enemies, he taught toleration. He was simply the preacher commissioned to deliver a message, and bidden to leave the responsibility with his Master and his hearers. He might argue with the

II. Change of policy at Medina, A.D. 622-632.

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 172, where the results are compared.

Arabia
converted
from
Medina at
the point of
the sword.

disputants, but it must be "in a way most mild and gracious;" for "in religion" (such was his teaching before he reached Medîna) "there should be neither violence nor constraint."¹ At Medina the precepts of toleration were quickly cast aside, and his whole policy reversed. No sooner did Mahomet begin to be recognized and obeyed as the chief of Medina, than he proceeded to attack the Jewish tribes settled in the neighbourhood, because they refused to acknowledge his claims and believe in him as a prophet foretold in their Scriptures; two of these tribes were exiled, and the third exterminated in cold blood. In the second year after the Hegira, or flight from Mecca (the period from which the Mahometan era dates), he began to plunder the caravans of the Coreish, which passed near to Medina on their mercantile journeys between Arabia and Syria. So popular did the cause of the now militant and marauding prophet speedily become amongst the citizens of Medina and the tribes around, that after many battles fought with varying success, he was able, in the eighth year of the Hegira, to re-enter his native city at the head of ten thousand armed followers. Thenceforward, success was assured. None dared to oppose his pretensions. And before his death, in the eleventh year of the Hegira, all Arabia, from Bâb-el-Mandeb and Omân to the confines of the Syrian desert,

A. D. 623.

A. D. 630.

A. D. 632.

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 341; Sura II. 257; xxix. 46.

was forced to submit to the supreme authority of the now kingly prophet, and to recognize the faith and obligations of Islam.¹

This *Islām*, so called from its demanding the entire "surrender" of the believer to the will and service of God, is based on the recognition of Mahomet as a prophet foretold in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures,—the last and greatest of the prophets. On him descended the Corân, from time to time, an immediate revelation from the Almighty. Idolatry and Polytheism are with iconoclastic zeal denounced as sins of the deepest dye; while the unity of the Deity is proclaimed as the grand and cardinal doctrine of the Faith. Divine providence pervades the minutest concerns of life; and predestination is taught in its most naked form. Yet prayer is enjoined as both meritorious and effective; and at five stated times every day must it be specially performed. The duties generally of the moral law are enforced, though an evil laxity is given in the matter of polygamy and divorce. Tithes are demanded as alms for the poor. A fast during the month of Ramzan must be kept throughout the whole of every day; and the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca,—an ancient institution, the rites of which were now

Religion of
Mahomet
described.

¹ The only exceptions were the Jews of Kheibar and the Christians of Najran, who were permitted to continue in the profession of their faith. They were, however, forced by Omar to quit the peninsula, which thenceforward remained exclusively Mahometan.

"Islam" is a synonym for the Mussulman faith. Its original meaning is "surrender" of oneself to God.

divested of their heathenish accompaniments,—maintained. The existence of angels and devils is taught; and heaven and hell are depicted in material colours,—the one of sensuous pleasure, the other of bodily torment. Finally, the resurrection, judgment, and retribution of good and evil, are set forth in great detail. Such was the creed—*there is no god but the LORD, and MAHOMET is his prophet*—to which Arabia now became obedient.

Arabia
apostatizes:
but is
speedily
reconquered
and
reclaimed,
A. D. 633.

But immediately on the death of Mahomet, the entire Peninsula relapsed into apostasy. Medina and Mecca remained faithful; but everywhere else the land seethed with rebellion. Some tribes joined the “false prophets,” of whom four had arisen in different parts of Arabia; some relapsed into their ancient heathenism; while others proposed a compromise,—they would observe the stated times of prayer, but would be excused the tithe. Everywhere was rampant anarchy. The apostate tribes attacked Medina, but were repulsed by the brave old Caliph Abu Bekr, who refused to abate one jot or tittle, as the successor of Mahomet, of the obligations of Islam. Eleven columns were sent forth, under as many leaders, trained in the warlike school of Mahomet. These fought their way step by step successfully; and thus, mainly through the wisdom and firmness of Abu Bekr, and the valour and genius of Khâlid, “the Sword of God,” the

Arab tribes, one by one, were overcome, and forced back into their allegiance and the profession of Islam. The re-conquest of Arabia, and re-imposition of Mahometanism as the national faith, which it took a whole year to accomplish, is thus described by an Arabian author, who wrote at the close of the second century of the Mahometan era :

After his decease, there remained not one of the followers of the Prophet that did not apostatize, saving only a small company of his "Companions" and kinsfolk, who hoped thus to secure the government to themselves. Hereupon, Abu Bekr displayed marvellous skill, energy, and address, so that the power passed into his hands. . . . And thus he persevered until the apostate tribes were all brought back to their allegiance, some by kindly treatment, persuasion, and craft; some through terror and fear of the sword; and others by the prospect of power and wealth, as well as by the lusts and pleasures of this life. And so it came to pass that all the Bedouin tribes were in the end converted outwardly, but not from inward conviction.¹

The temper of the tribes, thus reclaimed by force of arms, was at the first strained and sullen. But the scene soon changed. Suddenly the whole peninsula was shaken, and the people, seized with a burning zeal, issued forth to plant the new faith in other lands. It happened on this wise.

The Arabs thus reclaimed were, at the first, sullen.

The columns sent from Medîna to reduce the rebellious tribes to the north-west on the Gulf of Ayla, and to the north-east on the Persian Gulf, came at once into collision with the Christian Bedouins of Syria on the one hand, and with those

Roused by war cry, they issue from the peninsula, A.D. 634, et seq.

¹ *Apology of Al Kindy, the Christian*, p. 18. Smith & Elder, 1882. This remarkable Apologist will be noticed further below.

The oppos-
ing forces.

of Mesopotamia on the other. These, again, were immediately supported by the neighbouring forces of the Roman and Persian empires, whose vassals respectively they were. And so, before many months, Abu Bekr found his generals opposed by great and imposing armies on either side. He was, in fact, waging mortal combat, at one and the same moment, with the Kaiser and the Chosroes, the Byzantine emperor and the great king of Persia. The risk was imminent, and an appeal went forth for help to meet the danger. The battle-cry resounded from one end of Arabia to the other, and electrified the land. Levy after levy, *en masse*, started up at the call from every quarter of the Peninsula; and the Bedouin tribes, as bees from their hive, streamed forth in swarms, animated by the prospect of conquest, plunder, and captive damsels; or, if slain in battle, by the still more coveted prize of the "Martyr" in the material paradise of Mahomet. With a military ardour and new-born zeal in which carnal and spiritual aspirations were strangely blended, the Arabs rushed forth to the field, like the war-horse of Job, "that smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains and the shouting." Sullen constraint was in a moment transformed into an absolute devotion and fiery resolve to spread the faith. The Arab warrior became the Missionary of Islam.

Arab
enthusiasm.

It was now the care of Omar, the second Caliph or Ruler of the new-born empire, to establish a system whereby the spirit militant, called into existence with such force and fervour, might be rendered permanent. The entire Arabian people was subsidized. The surplus revenues, which, in rapidly increasing volume, began to flow from the conquered lands into the Moslem treasuries, were to the last farthing distributed among the soldiers of Arabian descent. The whole nation was enrolled, and the name of every warrior entered upon the roster of Islam. Forbidden to settle anywhere, and relieved from all other work, the Arab hordes became, in fact, a standing army threatening the world. Great bodies of armed men were kept thus ever mobilized, separate and in readiness for new enterprise.

Arabs, a military body, subsidized and mobilized by Omar.

The change which came over the policy of the Founder of the faith at Medîna, and paved the way for this marvellous system of world-wide rapine and conversion to Islam, is thus described by a thoughtful and sagacious writer:—

Mission of Islam described by Fairbairn.

. . . Medina was fatal to the higher capabilities of Islam. Mahomet became then a king ; his religion was incorporated in a State that had to struggle for its life in the fashion familiar to the rough-handed sons of the desert. The Prophet was turned into the legislator and commander ; his revelations were now laws, and now military orders and manifestoes. The mission of Islam became one that only the sword could accomplish, robbery of the infidel became meritorious, and conquest the supreme duty it owed to the world. . . .

The religion which lived an unprospering and precarious life, so long as it depended on the prophetic word alone, became an aggressive and victorious power, so soon as it was embodied in a State,¹

And by
von Kremer.

Another learned and impartial authority tells us:

The Mussulman power under the first four Caliphs was nothing but a grand religio-political association of Arab tribes for universal plunder and conquest under the holy banner of Islam, and the watch-word "There is no God but THE LORD, and МАНОМЕТ is His Apostle." On pretext of spreading the only true religion, the Arabs swallowed up fair provinces lying all around; and, driving a profitable business, enriched themselves simultaneously in a worldly sense.²

Religious
merit of
"fighting in
the ways of
the Lord."

The motives which nerved the armies of Islam were a strange combination of the lower instincts of nature with the higher aspirations of the spirit. To engage in the Holy War was the rarest and most blessed of all religious virtues, and conferred on the combatant a special merit; and side by side with it lay the bright prospect of spoil and female slaves, conquest and glory. "Mount thy horse," said Osâma ibn Zeid to Abu Bekr as he accompanied the Syrian army a little way on its march out of Medîna. "Nay," replied the Caliph, "I will not ride; but I will walk, and soil my feet a little space in the ways of the Lord. Verily, every footstep in the ways of the Lord is equal in merit to manifold good works, and wipeth away a

¹ Principal Fairbairn: "The Primitive Polity of Islam," *Contemporary Review*, December, 1882, pp. 866, 867.

² Herr von Kremer, *Culturgeschichte des Orients*, unter den Chalifen, vol. I., p. 383.

multitude of sins.”¹ And of the “Martyrs,” those who fell in these crusading campaigns, Mahomet thus described the blessed state:—

Think not, in any wise, of those killed in the ways of the Lord, as if they were dead. Yea, they are alive, and are nourished with their Lord, exulting in that which God hath given them of His favour, and rejoicing in behalf of those who have not yet joined them, but are following after. No terror afflicteth them, neither are they grieved.—*Sura III.*

The material fruits of their victories raised the Arabs at once from being the needy inhabitants of a stony sterile soil, where, with difficulty, they eked out a hardy subsistence, to be the masters of rich and luxuriant lands flowing with milk and honey. After one of his great victories on the plains of Chaldæa, Khâlid called together his troops, flushed with conquest, and lost in wonder at the exuberance around them, and thus addressed them: “Ye see the riches of the land. Its paths drop fatness and plenty, so that the fruits of the earth are scattered abroad, even as stones are in Arabia. If but as a provision for this present life, it were worth our while to fight for these fair fields, and banish care and penury for ever from us.” Such were the aspirations dear to the heart of every Arab warrior. Again, after the battle of Jalôla, a few years later, the treasure and spoil of the Persian monarch, captured by the victors, was valued at thirty

Material
fruits of
Moslem
crusade.

¹ *Annals of the Early Caliphate*, p. 9. Smith & Elder, 1833.

million of dirhems (about a million sterling). The royal fifth (the Crown share of the booty) was sent as usual to Medîna, under charge of Ziâd, who, in the presence of the Caliph Omar, harangued the citizens in a glowing description of what had been won in Persia, fertile lands, rich cities, and endless spoil, beside captive maids and princesses.

Rich booty
taken in the
capital of
Persia,
A.D. 637.

In relating the capture of Medâin (the ancient Ctesiphon), tradition revels in the untold wealth which fell into the hands of Sad, the conqueror, and his followers. Besides millions of treasure, there was endless store of gold and silver vessels, rich vestments, and rare and precious things. The Arabs gazed bewildered at the tiara, brocaded vestments, jewelled armour, and splendid surroundings of the throne. They tell of a camel of silver, life-size, with a rider of gold, and of a golden horse with emeralds for teeth, the neck set with rubies, the trappings of gold. And we may read in Gibbon of the marvellous banqueting carpet, representing a garden, the ground of wrought gold, the walks of silver, the meadows of emeralds, rivulets of pearls, and flowers and fruits of diamonds, rubies, and rare gems. The precious metals lost their conventional value, gold was parted with for its weight in silver; and so on.¹

It is the virtue of Islam that it recognizes a

¹ Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, chapter LI.; and *Annals of the Early Caliphate*, p. 184.

special Providence, seeing the hand of God, as in everything, so pre-eminently also in victory. When Sad, therefore, had established himself in the palace of the Chosroes, he was not forgetful to render thanks in a Service of praise. One of the princely mansions was turned for the moment into a temple, and there, followed by his troops, he ascribed the victory to the Lord of Hosts. The lesson accompanying the prayers, was taken from a Sura (or chapter of the Corân) which speaks of Pharaoh and his riders being overwhelmed in the Red Sea, and contains this passage, held to be peculiarly appropriate to the occasion:—

Success in battle ascribed to divine aid.

How many Gardens and Fountains did they leave behind,
And Fields of corn, and fair Dwelling-places,
And pleasant things which they enjoyed!
Even thus have We made another people to inherit the same.¹

Such as fell in the conflict were called Martyrs; a halo of glory surrounded them, and special joys awaited them even on the battle-field. And so it came to pass that the warriors of Islam had an unearthly longing for the crown of martyrdom. The Caliph Omar was inconsolable at the loss of his brother, Zeid, who fell in the fatal "Garden of Death," at the battle of Yemâma: "Thou art returned home," he said to his son, Abdallah, "safe and sound, and Zeid is dead. Wherefore wast not thou slain before him? I

"Martyrdom" in the field coveted by Moslem crusaders

Ibid; and *Sura XLIV. v. 25. We, that is, the Lord.*

The Moslem
crown of
martyrdom.

wish not to see thy face." "Father," answered Abdallah, "he asked for the crown of martyrdom, and the Lord granted it. I strove after the same, but it was not given unto me."¹ It was the proud boast of the Saracens in their summons to the craven Greeks and Persians, that "they loved death more than their foes loved life." Familiar with the pictures drawn in the Corân of the beautiful "Houries" of Paradise,² the Saracens believed that immediate fruition on the field of battle was the martyr's special prize. We are told of a Moslem soldier, fourscore years of age, who, seeing a comrade fall by his side, cried out, "O Paradise! how close art thou beneath the arrow's point and the falchion's flash! O Hâshim! even now I see heaven opened, and black-eyed maidens all bridally attired, clasping thee in their fond embrace." And shouting thus, the aged warrior, fired again with the ardour of youth, rushed upon the enemy, and met the envied fate. For those who survived there was the less ethereal but closer prospect of Persian, Greek, or

¹ *Annals of the Early Caliphate*, p. 46.

² See, e.g., *Sura lxxviii.*; "Verily for the Pious, there is a blissful abode: gardens and vineyards; and damsels with swelling bosoms, of a fitting age; and a full cup. Lovely large-eyed girls, like pearls hidden in their shells, a reward for that which the faithful shall have wrought. Verily We have created them of a rare creation, virgins, young and fascinating. . . . Modest damsels averting their eyes, whom no man shall have known before, nor any Jinn," etc.

The reader will not fail to be struck by the materialistic character of Mahomet's Paradise.

Coptic women, both maids and matrons, who, on "being taken captive by their right hand," were forthwith, according to the Corân, without stint of number, at the conqueror's will and pleasure. These, immediately they were made prisoners, might (according to the example of Mahomet himself at Kheibar) be carried off without further ceremony to the victor's tent; and in this respect the Saracens certainly were nothing loth to execute upon the heathen the judgment written in their law. So strangely was religious fanaticism fed and fostered in the Moslem camp by incentives irresistible to the Arab;—fight and foray, the spoil of war and captive charms.

The courage of the troops was stimulated by the divine promises of victory, which were read (and on like occasions still are read) at the head of each column drawn up for battle. Thus, on the field of Câdesiyya, which decided the fate of Persia, the Sura *Jehâd*, with the stirring tale of the thousand angels that fought on the Prophet's side at Bedr was recited, and such texts as these:—

Stir up the faithful unto battle. If there be twenty stedfast among you, they shall put two hundred to flight of the unbelievers, and a hundred shall put to flight a thousand. Victory is from the Lord. He is mighty and wise. I the Lord will cast terror into the hearts of the infidels. Strike off their heads and their fingers' ends. Beware lest ye turn your back

Martial passages from Coran recited on field of battle.

A.D. 635.

in battle. Verily, he that turneth his back shall draw down upon himself the wrath of God. His abode shall be hell fire; an evil journey thither. And we are told that on the recital of these verses "the heart of the people was refreshed, and their eyes lightened, and they felt the tranquillity that ensueth thereupon." Three days they fought, and on the morning of the fourth, returning with unabated vigour to the charge, they scattered to the winds the vast host of Persia.¹

**Defeat of
Byzantine
army on the
Yermûk,
A.D. 634.**

Nor was it otherwise in the great battle of the Yermûk, which laid Syria at the feet of the Arabs. The virgin vigour of the Saracens was fired by a wild fanatical zeal "to fight in the ways of the Lord," obtaining thus heavenly merit and a worldly prize—the spoil of Syria and its fair maidens ravished from their homes; or should they fall by the sword, the black-eyed houries waiting for them on the field of battle. "Of warriors nerved by this strange combination of earth and heaven, of the flesh and of the spirit, of the incentives at once of faith and rapine, of fanatical devotion to the Prophet and deathless passion for the sex, ten might chase a hundred half-hearted Romans: The forty thousand Moslems were stronger far than the two hundred and forty thousand of the enemy." The combat lasted for weeks;

¹ See *Sura Jehâd*. Also *Annals of the Early Caliphate*, p. 167, et seq.

but at the last the Byzantine force was utterly routed, and thousands hurled in wild confusion over the beetling cliffs of the Yermûk, into the yawning chasm of Wacûsa. ¹

Such, then, was the nature of the Moslem propaganda, such the agency by which the faith was spread, and such the motives at once material and spiritual, by which its martial Missionaries were inspired. No wonder that the effete empires of Rome and Persia recoiled and quivered at the shock, and that province after province quickly fell under the sway of Islam. It is far from my intention to imply that the truths set forth by the new faith had nothing to do with its success. On the contrary, it may well be admitted that but for those truths success might have been impossible. The grand enunciation of the Divine Unity, and the duty of an absolute submission to the same; the recognition of a special Providence reaching to the minutest details of life; the inculcation of prayer and other religious duties; the establishment of a code in which the leading principles of morality are enforced; and the acknowledgment of previous revelation in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, told not only on the idolaters of Arabia and the Fire-worshippers of Persia, but on Jews and Samaritans, and the followers of a debased and priest-ridden Christianity. All this

Islam
planted by
aid of
material
force.

is true; but it is still not the less true that without the sword, Islam would never have been planted even in Arabia, much less ever have spread to the countries beyond. The weapons of its warfare were "carnal," material, and earthly; and by them it conquered.

Alternatives offered to the conquered nations: Islam, the Sword, or Tribute.

The pressure brought to bear on the inhabitants of the countries overrun by Saracen arms was of the most stringent character. They were offered the triple alternative—ISLAM, the SWORD or TRIBUTE. The first brought immediate relief. Acceptance of the faith not only stayed the enemy's hand, and conferred immunity from the perils of war, but associated the convert with his conquerors in the common brotherhood and in all the privileges of Islam.

Acceptance of Islam, immediate relief from the sword.

Reading the story of the spread of Islam, we are constantly told of this and that enemy, that "being beaten, he *believed* and embraced the faith." Take as an example of an every-day occurrence, the story of Hormuzân. A Persian prince of high rank long maintained a border warfare against the Moslems. At last he was taken prisoner, and sent in chains to Medina. As he was conducted into the Great Mosque, Omar exclaimed, "Blessed be the Lord, that hath humbled this man and the like of him!" He bade them disrobe the prisoner, and clothe him in sack-cloth. Then, whip in hand, he upbraided him for

his oft-repeated attacks and treachery. Hormuzân made as if fain to reply ; then gasping, like one faint from thirst, he begged for water to drink. "Give it him," said the Caliph, "and let him drink in peace." "Nay," cried the wretched captive, trembling, "I fear to drink, lest some one slay me unawares." "Thy life is safe," said Omar, "until thou hast drunk the water up." The words were no sooner said than Hormuzân emptied the vessel on the ground. "I wanted not the water," he said, "but quarter, and thou hast given it me." "Liar!" cried Omar, angrily, "thy life is forfeit."—"But not," interposed the bystanders, "until he drink the water up." "Strange," said Omar, "the fellow hath deceived me; and yet I cannot spare the life of one who hath slain so many noble Moslems. I swear that thou shalt not gain by thy deceit, unless thou wilt forthwith embrace Islam." Upon that, "*believing*, he made profession of the true faith upon the spot;" and thenceforth, residing at Medina, he received a pension of the highest grade.¹

On the other hand, for those who held to their ancestral faith, there was no escape from the second or the third alternative. If they would avoid the sword, or having wielded it were beaten, they must become tributary. Moreover, the payment of tribute is not the only condition enjoined by the Corân.

Tribute and
humiliation.

¹ See *Annals, etc.*, p. 253.

Disabilities
imposed on
Jews and
Christians.

“Fight against them (the Jews and Christians) until they pay tribute with the hand, *and are humbled.*”¹ The command fell on willing ears. An ample interpretation was given to it. And so it came to pass that, though Jews and Christians were, on the payment of tribute, tolerated in the profession of their ancestral faith, they were yet subjected (and still are subjected) to severe humiliation. The nature and extent of the degradation to which they were brought down, and the strength of the inducement to purchase exemption and the equality of civil rights, by surrendering their religion, may be learned from the provisions which were embodied in the Code named *The Ordinance of Omar*, which has been more or less enforced from the earliest times. Besides the tribute and various other imposts levied from the “People of the Book,”² and the duty of receiving Moslem travellers quartered upon them, the dress of both sexes must be distinguished by broad stripes of yellow. They are forbidden to appear on horseback, and if mounted on a mule or ass, their stirrups must be of wood, and their saddles known by knobs of the same material. Their graves must not rise above the level of the soil, and the devil’s mark is placed upon the lintel of their doors. Their children must be taught by

¹ *Sura ix.* v. 30.

² So Jews and Christians as possessing the Bible are named in the Corân.

Moslem masters, and the race, however able or well qualified, proscribed from any office of high emolument or trust. Besides the churches spared at the time of conquest, no new building can be erected for the purposes of worship; nor can free entrance into their holy places at pleasure be refused to the Moslem. No cross must remain in view outside, nor any church bells be rung. They must refrain from processions in the street at Easter, and other solemnities; and from anything, in short, whether by outward symbol, word, or deed, which could be construed into rivalry, or competition with the ruling faith. Such was the so-called *Code of Omar*. Enforced with less or greater stringency, according to the intolerance and caprice of the day, by different dynasties, it was, and (however much relaxed in certain countries), it still remains, the law of Islam. One must admire the rare tenacity of the Christian faith, which, with but scanty light and hope, held its ground through weary ages of insult and depression, and still survives to see the dawning of a brighter day.¹

Such, then, was the hostile attitude of Islam militant in its early days; such the pressure brought to bear on conquered lands for its acceptance; and such the disabilities imposed upon recusant Jews and Christians. On the one hand, rapine,

Continuing inducements in times of peace.

¹ See *Annals*, etc., p. 213.

plunder, slavery, tribute, civil disability; on the other, security, peace, and honour. We need not be surprised that, under such constraint, conquered peoples succumbed before Islam. Nor were the temporal inducements to conversion confined to the period during which the Saracens were engaged in spreading Islam by force of arms. Let us come down a couple of centuries from the time of Mahomet, and take the reign of the tolerant and liberal-minded Sovereign, Al Mamûn.

Amongst the philosophers of all creeds whom that great Caliph gathered around him at Baghdad, was a noble Arab of the Nestorian faith, descended from the kingly tribe of the Beni Kinda, and hence called *Al Kindy*. A friend of this Eastern Christian, himself a member of the Royal family, invited Al Kindy to embrace Islam in an epistle enlarging on the distinguished rank which, in virtue of his descent, he would (if a true believer) occupy at court, and the other privileges, spiritual and material, social and conjugal, which he would enjoy. In reply, the Christian wrote an Apology of singular eloquence and power, throwing a flood of light on the worldly inducements which, even at that comparatively late period, abounded in a Moslem state to promote conversion to Islam. Thus Al Mâmûn himself, in a speech delivered before his council,

Evidence of
Al Kindy in
second
century of
Hegira,
A. D. 830.

characterizes certain of his courtiers accused as secret adherents of the Zoroastrian faith :—

Speech of
Al Mâmûn.

Though professing Islam, they are free from the same. This they do to be seen of me ; while their convictions, I am well aware, are just the opposite of that which they profess. They belong to a class which embrace Islam, not from any love of this our Faith, but thinking thereby to gain access to Our court, and share in the honour, wealth, and power of the Realm. They have no inward persuasion of that which they outwardly profess.¹

Again, speaking of the various classes brought over to Islam by sordid and unworthy motives, Al Kindy says :—

Converts
from sordid
motives.

Moreover, there are the idolatrous races,—Magians and Jews, —low people aspiring by the profession of Islam to raise themselves to riches and power, and to form alliances with the families of the learned and honourable. There are, besides, hypocritical men of the world, who in this way obtain indulgences in the matter of marriage and concubinage which are forbidden to them by the Christian faith. Then we have the dissolute class given over wholly to the lusts of the flesh. And lastly, there are those who by this means obtain a more secure and easy livelihood.²

Before leaving this part of our subject, it may be opportune to quote a few more passages from Al Kindy, in which he contrasts the inducements that, under the military and political predominance of Islam, promoted its rapid spread, and the opposite conditions under which Christianity made progress, slow indeed comparatively,

Al Kindy
contrasts the
Christian
confessor
with the
Moslem
"martyr."

¹ *The Apology of Al Kindy*, written at the court of Al Mâmûn A.H. 215 (A.D. 830), with an Essay on its age and authorship, p. xiii. Smith & Elder, 1832.

² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

The
Christian
Confessor
and the
Moslem
Martyr.

but sure and steady. First, he compares the Christian confessor with the Moslem "Martyr:"—

I marvel much, he says, that ye call those *Martyrs* that fall in war. Thou hast read, no doubt, in history of the followers of Christ put to death in the persecutions of the kings of Persia and elsewhere. Say, now, which are the more worthy to be called martyrs,—these, or thy fellows that fall fighting for the world and the power thereof? How diverse were the barbarities and kinds of death inflicted on the Christian confessors! The more they were slain, the more rapidly spread the faith; in place of one sprang up a hundred. On a certain occasion, when a great multitude had been put to death, one at court said to the king, "The number of them increaseth, instead of as thou thinkest diminishing." "How can that be?" exclaimed the king. "But yesterday," replied the courtier, "thou didst put such and such a one to death, and lo, there were converted double that number; and the people say that a man appeared to the confessors from heaven strengthening them in their last moments." Whereupon the king himself was converted. In those days men thought not their lives dear unto them. Some were transfixed while yet alive; others had their limbs cut off one after another; some were cast to the wild beasts, and others burned in the fire. Such continued long to be the fate of the Christian confessors. No parallel is found thereto in any other religion; and all was endured with constancy and even with joy. One smiled in the midst of his great suffering. "Was it cold water," they asked, "that was brought unto thee?" "No," answered the sufferer, "it was one like a youth that stood by me and anointed my wounds; and that made me smile, for the pain forthwith departed."

Now tell me seriously, my Friend, which of the two hath the best claim to be called a *Martyr*, "slain in the ways of the Lord"; he who surrendereth his life rather than renounce his faith; who, when it is said,—Fall down and worship the sun and moon, or the idols of silver and gold, work of men's hands, instead of the true God,—refuseth, choosing rather to give up life, abandon wealth, and forego even wife and family; or he that goeth forth, ravaging and laying waste, plundering and spoiling, slaying the men, carrying away their children into captivity, and ravishing their wives and maidens in his unlawful embrace, and then shall call it "Jehâd in the ways of the Lord!"

. . . And not content therewith, instead of humbling thyself before the Lord, and seeking pardon for the crime, thou sayest of such a one slain in the war that "he hath earned Paradise," and thou namest him "a Martyr in the ways of the Lord"!¹

And again, contrasting the spread of Islam, "its rattling quiver and its glittering sword," with the silent progress of Christianity, our Apologist, after dwelling on the teaching and the miracles of the Apostles, writes:—

Al Kindy's contrast of the spread of Islam with the spread of Christianity.

They published their message by means of these miracles; and thus great and powerful kings and philosophers and learned men and judges of the earth hearkened unto them, without the lash or rod, with neither sword nor spear, nor the advantages of birth or "Helpers;"²—with no wisdom of this world, or eloquence or power of language, or subtlety of reason; with no worldly inducement, nor yet again with any relaxation of the moral law, but simply at the voice of truth enforced by miracles beyond the power of man to show. And so there came over to them the kings and great ones of the earth. And the philosophers abandoned their systems, with all their wisdom and learning, and betook them to a saintly life, giving up the delights of this world together with their old-established usages, and became followers of a company of poor men, fishers and publicans, who had neither name nor rank, nor any claim other than that they were obedient to the command of the Messiah—He that gave them power to do such wonderful works.³

And yet once more, comparing the Apostles with the military chiefs of Islam, Al Kindy proceeds:—

The Apostles compared with the chiefs of Islam.

After the descent of the Holy Ghost and the gift of tongues, the apostles separated each to the country to which he was called. They wrote out in every tongue the Holy Gospel, and

¹ *Apology*, p. 47, et. seq.

² Alluding to the "*Ansâr*," or martial "Helpers" of Mahomet at Medina. Throughout, the Apologist, it will be observed, is drawing a contrast with the means used for the spread of Islam.

³ *Apology*, p. 16.

the story and teaching of Christ, at the dictation of the Holy Ghost. So the nations drew near unto them, believing their testimony; and giving up the world and their false beliefs, they embraced the Christian faith as soon as ever the dawn of truth, and the light of the good tidings, broke in upon them. Distinguishing the true from the false, and error from the right direction, they embraced the Gospel and held it fast without doubt or wavering, when they saw the wonderful works and signs of the apostles, and their lives and conversation set after the holy and beautiful example of our Saviour, the traces whereof remain even unto the present day. . . . How different this from the life of thy Master (Mahomet) and his Companions, who ceased not to go forth in battle and rapine, to smite with the sword, to seize the little ones, and ravish the wives and maidens, plundering and laying waste, and carrying the people into captivity. And thus they continue unto this present day, inciting men to these evil deeds, even as it is told of Omar the Caliph. "If one amongst you," said he, "hath a heathen neighbour, and is in need, let him seize and sell him." And many such things they say and teach. Look now at the lives of Simon and Paul, who went about healing the sick and raising the dead, by the name of Christ our Lord; and mark the contrast.¹

Such are the conclusions of a native of Chaldaea.

Such are the reflections of one who lived at a Mahometan Court, and who, moreover,—flourishing as he did a thousand years ago,—was sufficiently near the early spread of Islam to be able to contrast what he saw, and heard, and read, of the causes of its success with those of the Gospel, and had the courage to confess the same.

Hindrances or inducements inherent in the faith itself.

Apart, now, from the outward and extraneous aids given to Islam by the sword and by the civil arm, I will inquire, for a moment, what natural effect the teaching of Islam itself had in attracting

or repelling mankind. I do not now speak of any power contained in the truths it inculcated to convert to Islam by the rousing and quickening of spiritual impulses; for that lies beyond my present purpose,—which is, to inquire whether there is not in material causes and secular motives enough in themselves to account for success. I speak rather of the effect of the indulgences granted by Islam, on the one hand, as calculated to attract; and of the restraints imposed and sacrifices required, on the other, as calculated to repel. How far, in fact, did there exist inducements or hindrances to its adoption inherent in the religion itself?

What may be regarded as the most constant and irksome of the obligations of Islam is the duty of prayer, which must be observed at stated intervals, five times every day, with the contingent ceremony of lustration. The rite consists of certain forms and passages to be repeated with prescribed series of prostrations and genuflexions. These must be repeated at the right times,—but anywhere, in the house or by the wayside, as well as in the Mosque; and the ordinance is obligatory in whatever state of mind the worshipper may be, or however occupied. As the appointed hour comes round, the Moslem is bound to turn aside to pray,—so much so that in Central Asia we read of the police driving the backward worshipper by the lash to discharge the duty. Thus, with the

Require-
ments of
Islam;
Prayer.

mass of Mussulmans, the obligation becomes a mere formal ceremony, and one sees it performed anywhere and everywhere by the whole people, like any social custom, as a matter of course. No doubt, there are exceptions; but with the multitude it does not involve the irksomeness of a spiritual service, and so it sits lightly on high and low. The Friday prayers should as a rule be attended in the Mosque; but neither need there be much devotion there; and once performed the rest of the day is free for pleasure or for business.¹ The prohibition of wine is a restriction which was severely felt in the early days of the faith; but it was not long before the universal sentiment (though eluded in some quarters) supported it. The embargo upon games of chance was certainly unpopular; and the prohibition of the receipt of interest was also an important limitation, tending as it did to shackle the freedom of mercantile speculation; but they have been partially evaded on various pretexts. The Fast throughout the month of Ramzân was a severer test; but even this lasts only during the day; and at night from sunset till dawn, all restrictions are withdrawn, not only

Prohibition
of wine,
games of
chance, and
usury.

Fast of
Ramzân.

¹ I am not here comparing the value of these observances with those of other religions. I am inquiring only how far the obligations of Islam may be held to involve hardship or sacrifice such as might have retarded the progress of Islam by rendering it on its first introduction unpopular.

in respect of food, but of all otherwise lawful gratifications.¹

There is nothing, therefore, in the requirements and ordinances of Islam, excepting the Fast, that is very irksome to humanity, or which, as involving any material sacrifice, or the renunciation of the pleasures or indulgences of life, should lead a man of the world to hesitate in embracing the new faith.

Little that is unpopular in these ordinances.

On the other hand, the license allowed by the Coran between the sexes,—at least, in favour of the male sex,—is so wide, that for such as have the means and the desire to take advantage of it, there need be no limit whatever to sexual indulgence. It is true that adultery is punishable by death, and fornication with stripes. But then the Coran gives the believer permission to have four wives at a time. And he may exchange them; that is, he may divorce them at pleasure, taking others in their stead.² And, as if this were not license enough, the divine law permits the believer to consort with all female slaves whom he may be the master of,—such, namely, as have been taken in war, or have been acquired by gift or purchase. These he may receive into his harem instead of wives, or in addition to them; and without any limit of number or restraint whatever, he is at liberty to cohabit with them.

Indulgences allowed in the matter of wives and concubines.

¹ See *Sura* II., v. 88.

² *Sura*, iv. 18. "Exchange" is the word used in the Corân.

Polygamy,
concubinage,
and divorce.
Practice at
the rise of
Islam.

A few instances taken at random will enable the reader to judge how the indulgences thus allowed by the religion were taken advantage of in the early days of Islam. In the great plague which devastated Syria seven years after the Prophet's death, Khâlid, the Sword of God, lost *forty* sons. Abdal Rahmân, one of the "Companions" of Mahomet, had issue by sixteen wives, not counting slave-girls.¹ Moghîra ibn Shoba, another "Companion," and Governor of Kûfa and Bussorah, had in his harem eighty consorts, free and servile. Coming closer to the Prophet's household, we find that Mahomet himself at one period had in his harem no fewer than nine wives, and two slave-girls. Of his grandson Hasan, we read that his vagrant passion gained for him the unenviable soubriquet of *The Divorcer*; for it was only by continually divorcing his consorts that he could harmonize his craving for fresh nuptials with the requirements of the divine law, which limited the number of his free wives to four. We are told that, as a matter of simple caprice, he exercised the power of divorce seventy (according to other traditions ninety) times. When the leading men complained to Aly of the licentious practice of his son, his only reply was, that the remedy lay in their own hands, of refusing Hasan their daughters alto-

¹ Each of his widows had 100,000 golden pieces left her. *Life of Mahomet*, p. 171.

gether.¹ Such are the material inducements,—the “works of the flesh,” which Islam makes lawful to its votaries, and which promoted thus its early spread.

Descending now to modern times, we still find that this sexual license is taken advantage of more or less in different countries and conditions of society. The following examples are simply meant as showing to what excess it is possible for the believer to carry these indulgences, *under the sanction of his religion*. Of the Malays in Penang it was written not very long ago: “Young men of thirty to thirty-five years of age may be met with who have had from fifteen to twenty wives, and children by several of them. These women have been divorced, married others, and had children by them.” Regarding Egypt, Lane tells us: “I have heard of men who have been in the habit of marrying a new wife almost every month.”² Burkhardt speaks of an Arab, forty-five years old, who had had fifty wives, “so that he must have divorced two wives and married two fresh ones on the average every year.” And not to go further

Practice in modern times.

The Malays of Penang.

Lane's testimony concerning Egypt.

¹ “These divorced wives were irrespective of his concubines or slave-girls, upon the number and variety of whom there was no limit or check whatever.”—*Annals*, p. 418.

² Lane adds, “There are many men in this country who, in the course of ten years, have married as many as twenty, thirty, or more wives; and women not far advanced in age have been wives to a dozen or more husbands successively.” Note, that all this is entirely within the religious sanction.

than the sacred city of Mecca, the late reigning Princess of Bhopâl in Central India, herself an orthodox follower of the Prophet, after making the pilgrimage of the Holy places, writes thus :—

The Princess
of Bhopâl's
account of
Mecca.

Women frequently contract as many as ten marriages, and those who have only been married twice are few in number. If a woman sees her husband growing old, or if she happen to admire anyone else, she goes to the Shereef (the spiritual and civil head of the holy city); and after having settled the matter with him, she puts away her husband, and takes to herself another, who is perhaps young, good-looking, and rich. In this way a marriage seldom lasts more than a year or two.

And of slave-girls, the same high and impartial authority, still writing of the Holy city and of her fellow Moslems, tells us :—

Some of the women (African and Georgian girls) are taken in marriage; and after that, on being sold again, they receive from their masters a divorce, and are sold in their houses,—that is to say, they are sent to the purchaser from their master's house on receipt of payment, and are not exposed for sale in the slave-market. They are only *married* when purchased for the first time. . . . When the poorer people buy (female) slaves they keep them for themselves, and change them every year as one would replace old things by new; but the women who have children are not sold.¹

Islam
sanctions a
license
between the
sexes which
Christianity
forbids.

What I desire to make clear is the fact that such things may be practised *with the sanction* of the Scripture which the Moslem holds to be

¹ *Pilgrimage to Mecca*, by Her Highness the reigning Begum of Bhopal; translated by Mrs. W. Osborne, 1870, pp. 82, 88. Slave-girls cannot be *married* until freed by their master. What Her Highness tells us of women *divorcing* their husbands, is of course entirely *ultra vires*, and shows how the laxity of conjugal relations allowed to the male sex has extended itself to the female also, and that in a city where, if anywhere, we should have expected to find the law observed.

divine, and that these same indulgences have from the first existed as inducements which helped materially to forward the spread of the faith. I am very far, indeed, from implying that excessive indulgence in polygamy is the universal state of Moslem society. Happily this is not the case. There are not only individuals, but tribes and districts, which, either from custom or preference, voluntarily restrict the license given them in the Corân; while the natural influence of the family, even in Moslem countries, has an antiseptic tendency that often itself tends greatly to neutralise the evil.¹ Nor am I seeking to institute any contrast between the morals at large of Moslem countries and the rest of the world. If Christian nations are (as with shame it must be confessed) in some strata of society immoral, it is in the teeth of their Divine law. And the restrictions of that law are calculated, and in the early days of Christianity did tend, in point of fact, to deter men, devoted to the indulgences of the flesh, from em-

The laws of Christianity deter men from fleshly indulgences.

¹ In India, for example, there are Mahometan races among whom monogamy, as a rule, prevails by custom, and individuals exercising their right of polygamy are looked upon with disfavour. On the other hand, we meet occasionally with men who aver that rather against their will (as they will sometimes rather ambiguously say) they have been forced by custom or family influence to add by polygamy to their domestic burdens. In Mahometan countries, however, when we hear of a man confining himself to one wife, it does not necessarily follow that he has no slaves or concubines in his harem. I may remark that slave-girls have by Mahometan laws no conjugal rights whatever; but are like playthings at the absolute discretion of their master.

bracing the faith.¹ The religion of Mahomet, on the other hand, gives direct sanction to the sexual indulgences we have been speaking of. Thus it panders to the lower instincts of humanity, and makes its spread the easier. In direct opposition to the precepts of Christianity, it "makes provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." Hence Islam has been well called by its own votaries the *Easy Way*. Once more, to quote Al Kindy:—

Islam the
"Easy
way."

Thou invitest me (says our Apologist to his Friend) into the "Easy way of faith and practice." Alas, alas! for our Saviour in the Gospel telleth us, "When ye have done all that ye are commanded, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have but done that which was commanded us." Where then is our merit! The same Lord Jesus saith, "How strait is the road which leadeth unto life, and how few they be that walk therein! How wide the gate that leadeth to destruction, and how many there be that go in thereat!" Different this, my Friend, from the comforts of thy wide and easy gate, and the facilities for enjoying, as thou wouldst have me, the pleasures offered by thy faith in wives and damsels!²

¹ The case of the Corinthian offender is much in point, as showing how the strict discipline of the Church must have availed to make Christianity unpopular with the mere worldling.

² *Apology*, p. 51. I repeat that, in the remarks I have made under this head, no comparison is sought to be drawn betwixt the morality of nominally Christian and Moslem peoples. On this subject I may be allowed to quote from what I have said elsewhere: "The Moslem advocate will urge . . . the social evil as the necessary result of inexorable monogamy. The Corán not only denounces any illicit laxity between the sexes in the severest terms, but exposes the transgressor to condign punishment. For this reason, and because the conditions of what is licit are so accommodating and wide, a certain negative virtue (it can hardly be called continence or chastity) pervades Mahometan society, in contrast with which the gross and systematic immorality in certain parts of every European community may be regarded by the Christian with shame and confusion. In

Laxity
among
nominal
Christians;

II.

WHY THE SPREAD OF ISLAM WAS STAYED.

HAVING thus traced the rapid early spread of Islam to its proper source, I proceed to the remaining topics, namely, the causes which have checked its further extension, and those likewise which have depressed the followers of this religion in the scale of civilization. I shall take the former first,—just remarking here in respect of the latter, that the depression of Islam is itself one of the causes which retard the expansion of the faith.

Islam stationary in area, and in civilization retrograde.

As the first spread of Islam was due to the sword, so when the sword was sheathed Islam ceased to spread. The apostles and missionaries of Islam were, as we have seen, the martial tribes of

The Arabs ceased, in second century, to be a crusading force.

a purely Mahometan land, however low may be the general level of moral feeling, the still lower depths of fallen humanity are unknown. The "social evil," and intemperance, prevalent in Christian lands, are the strongest weapons in the armoury of Islam. We point, and justly, to the higher morality and civilization of those who do observe the precepts of the Gospel, to the stricter unity and virtue which cement the family, and to the elevation of the sex; but in vain, while the example of our great cities, and too often of our representatives abroad, belies the argument. And yet the argument is sound. For, in proportion as Christianity exercises her legitimate influence, vice and intemperance will wane and vanish, and the higher morality pervade the whole body; whereas in Islam the deteriorating influences of polygamy, divorce, and concubinage, have been stereotyped for all time."—*The Coran: its Composition and Teaching, and the Testimony it bears to the Holy Scriptures*, p. 60.

Vanishes in proportion as Christianity exercises proper influence

Arabia; that is to say, the grand military force organized by Omar, and by him launched upon the surrounding nations. Gorged with the plunder of the world, these began, after a time, to settle on their lees, and to mingle with the ordinary population. So soon as this came to pass, they lost the fiery zeal which at the first had made them irresistible. By the second and third centuries, the Arabs had disappeared as the standing army of the Caliphate, or, in other words, as a body set apart for the dissemination of the faith. The crusading spirit, indeed, ever and anon burst forth,—and it still bursts forth, as opportunity offers,—simply for the reason that this spirit pervades the Corân, and is ingrained in the creed. But with the special agency created and maintained during the first ages for the spread of Islam, the incentive of crusade ceased as a distinctive missionary spring of action, and degenerated into the common lust of conquest which we meet with in the world at large.

With
cessation of
conquest,
Islam ceased
to spread.

The extension of Islam depending upon military success, stopped wherever that was checked. The religion advanced or retired, speaking broadly, as the armed predominance made head or retroceded. Thus the tide of Moslem victory, rushing along the coast of Africa, extinguished the seats of European civilization on the Mediterranean, overwhelmed Spain, and was rapidly advancing north, when the onward wave was stemmed at Tours;

and so with the arms, the faith also, of Islam was driven back into Spain, and bounded by the Pyrenees. So likewise, the hold which the religion seized both of Spain and Sicily came to an end with Mussulman defeat. It is true that when once long and firmly rooted, as in India and China, Islam may survive the loss of military power, and even flourish. But it is equally true, that in no single country has Islam been planted, nor has it anywhere materially spread, saving under the banner of the Crescent, or the political ascendancy of some neighbouring state. Accordingly, we find that, excepting some barbarous zones in Africa which have been raised thereby a step above the grovelling level of fetishism, the faith has in modern times made no advance worth mentioning.¹ From the Jewish and Christian religions there has

¹ Much loose assertion has been made regarding the progress of Islam in Africa; but I have found no proof of it apart from armed, political, or trading influence, dogged too often by the slave trade;—to a great extent a social rather than a religious movement, and raising the fetiah tribes (haply without intemperance) into a somewhat higher stage of semi-barbarism. I have met nothing which would touch the argument in the text. The following is the testimony of Dr. Koelle, the best possible witness on the subject:

Alleged
progress of
Islam in
Africa.

“It is true, the Mohammedan nations in the interior of Africa, namely, the Bornuese, Mandengas, Pulas, etc., invited by the weak and defenceless condition of the surrounding negro tribes, still occasionally make conquests, and after subduing a tribe of Pagans, by almost exterminating its male population, and committing the most horrible atrocities, impose upon those that remain the creed of Islam; but keeping in view the whole of the Mohammedan world, this fitful activity reminds one only of those green branches sometimes seen on trees, already, and for long, decayed at the core from age.”—*Food for Reflection*, p. 37.

(again speaking broadly) been no secession whatever to Islam since the wave of Saracen victory was stayed, excepting by the force of arms. Even in the palmy days of the Abbasside Caliphs, our Apologist could challenge his adversary to produce a single conversion otherwise than by reason of some powerful material inducement. Here is his testimony:—

Al Kindy's challenge to produce a Christian convert to Islam apart from material inducements.

Now tell me, hast thou ever seen, my Friend (the Lord be gracious unto thee !) or ever heard, of a single person of sound mind—any one of learning and experience, and acquainted with the Scriptures—renouncing Christianity otherwise than for some worldly object to be reached only through thy religion, or for some gratification withheld by the faith of Jesus? Thou wilt find none. For, excepting the tempted ones, all continue steadfast in their faith, secure under our most Gracious Sovereign, in the profession of their own religion.¹

III.

LOW POSITION OF ISLAM IN THE SCALE OF CIVILIZATION.

Social and intellectual depression.

I PASS on to consider why Mahometan nations occupy so low a position, halting as almost everywhere they do in the march of social and intellectual development.

Islam intended for the Arabs.

The reason is not far to find. Islam was meant for Arabia, not for the world;—for the Arabs of the seventh century, not for the Arabs of all time; and being such, and nothing more, its claim of

¹ *Apology*, p. 34.

divine origin renders change or development impossible. It has within itself neither the germ of natural growth, nor the lively spring of adaptation. Mahomet declared himself a prophet to the Arabs;¹ and however much in his later days he may have contemplated the reformation of other religions beyond the Peninsula, or the further spread of his own (which is doubtful), still the rites and ceremonies, the customs and the laws enjoined upon his people, were suitable (if suitable at all) for the Arabs of that day, and in many respects for them alone. Again, the code containing these injunctions, social and ceremonial, as well as doctrinal and didactic, is embodied with every particularity of detail, as part of the divine law, in the Corân; and so defying, as sacrilege, all human touch, it stands unalterable for ever. From the stiff and rigid shroud in which it is thus swathed, the religion of Mahomet cannot emerge. It has no plastic power beyond that exercised in its earliest days. Hardened now and inelastic, it can neither adapt itself, nor yet shape its votaries, nor even suffer them to shape themselves, to the varying circumstances, the wants and developments of mankind.

Wants the
faculty of
adaptation.

We may judge of the local and inflexible character of the faith from one or two of its ceremonies. To perform the pilgrimage to Mecca and Mount

Local
ceremonies:
Pilgrimage.

¹ *Annals*, pp. 61, 224.

Fast of
Ramzân.

Arafât, with the slaying of victims at Mina, and the worship of the Káaba, is an ordinance obligatory (with the condition only that they have the means) on all believers, who are bound to make the journey even from the furthest ends of the earth;—an ordinance intelligible enough in a local worship, but unmeaning and impracticable when required of a world-wide religion. The same may be said of the Fast of Ramzân. It is prescribed in the Corân to be observed by all with undeviating strictness, during the whole day, from earliest dawn till sunset, throughout the month, with specified exemptions for the sick, and penalties for every occasion on which it is broken. The command, imposed thus with an iron rule on male and female, young and old, operates with excessive inequality in different seasons, lands, and climates. However suitable to countries near the equator, where the variations of day and night are immaterial, the Fast becomes intolerable to those who are far removed either towards the north or the south; and, still closer to the poles, where night merges into day, and day into night, impracticable. Again, with the lunar year (itself an institution divinely imposed), the month of Ramzân travels in the third of a century from month to month over the whole cycle of a year. The Fast was established at a time when Ramzân fell in winter, and the change of season was probably not foreseen

by the Prophet. But the result is one which, under some conditions of time and place, involves the greatest hardship. For, when the Fast comes round to summer, the trial in a sultry climate, like that of the burning Indian plains, of passing the whole day without a morsel of bread or a drop of water, becomes to many the occasion of intense suffering. Such is the effect of the Arabian legislator's attempt at circumstantial legislation in matters of religious ceremonial.

Nearly the same is the case with all the religious obligations of Islam, prayer, lustration, etc. But although the minuteness of detail with which these are enjoined, tends towards that jejune and formal worship which we witness everywhere in Moslem lands, still there is nothing in these observances themselves which (religion apart) should lower the social condition of Mahometan populations, and prevent their emerging from that normal state of semi-barbarism and uncivilized depression in which we find all Moslem peoples. For the cause of this we must look elsewhere; and it may be recognized, without doubt, in the relations established by the Corân between the sexes. Polygamy, divorce, servile concubinage, and the veil, are at the root of Moslem decadence.

Political and social depression owing to relations between the sexes.

In respect of married life, the condition allotted by the Corân to woman is that of an inferior dependent creature, destined only for the service

Depression of the female sex.

of her master, liable to be cast adrift without the assignment of a single reason, or the notice of a single hour. While the husband possesses the power of divorce, absolute, immediate, unquestioned, no privilege of a corresponding nature has been reserved for the wife. She hangs on, however unwilling, neglected, or superseded, the perpetual slave of her lord, if such be his will. When actually divorced, she can, indeed, claim her dower, —her *hire*, as it is called in the too plain language of the Corân; but the knowledge that the wife can make this claim is at the best a miserable security against capricious taste; and in the case of bondmaids even that imperfect check is wanting. The power of divorce is not the only power that may be exercised by the tyrannical husband. Authority to *confine* and to *beat* his wives is distinctly vested in his discretion.¹ “Thus restrained, secluded, degraded, the mere minister of enjoyment, liable at the caprice or passion of the moment to be turned adrift, it would be hard to say that the position of a wife was improved by the code of Mahomet.”² Even if the privilege of divorce and marital tyranny be not exercised, the knowledge of its existence as a potential right must tend to abate the self-respect, and in like degree to weaken the influence of the sex, impairing thus the ameliorating and civilizing power which she was meant to exercise

Divorce.

¹ *Sura* iv. v. 33.

² *Life of Mahomet*, p. 348.

upon mankind. And the evil has been stereotyped by the Corân for all time.

I must quote one more passage from Principal Fairbairn on the lowering influence of Moslem domestic life :

Principal Fairbairn on home life under Islam.

The god of Mohammed . . . "spares the sins the Arab loves. A religion that does not purify the home cannot regenerate the race ; one that depraves the home is certain to deprave humanity. Motherhood is to be sacred if manhood is to be honourable. Spoil the wife of sanctity, and for the man the sanctities of life have perished. And so it has been with Islam. It has reformed and lifted savage tribes ; it has deprived and barbarised civilized nations. At the root of its fairest culture, a worm has ever lived that has caused its blossoms soon to wither and die. Were Mahomet the hope of man, then his state were hopeless ; before him could only be retrogression, tyranny, and despair."¹

Still worse is the influence of servile concubinage. The following is the evidence of a shrewd and able observer in the East :

Demoralizing influence of servile concubinage.

All Zenâna life must be bad for men at all stages of their existence. . . . In youth, it must be ruin to be petted and spoiled by a company of submissive slave-girls. In manhood, it is no less an evil that when a man enters into private life, his affections should be put up to auction among foolish, fond competitors full of mutual jealousies and slanders. We are not left entirely to conjecture as to the effect of female influence on home life, when it is exerted under these unenlightened and demoralizing conditions. That is, plainly, an element lying at the root of all the most important features that differentiate progress from stagnation.²

Such are the institutions which gnaw at the root of Islam, and prevent the growth of freedom and

Deteriorating influence of relations established between the sexes.

¹ *The City of God*, p. 97. Hodder & Stoughton, 1883.

² *The Turks in India*, by H. G. Keene, c.s.r. Allen & Company, 1879.

civilization. "By these the unity of the household is fatally broken, and the purity and virtue of the family tie weakened; the vigour of the dominant classes is sapped; the body politic becomes weak and languid, excepting for intrigue; and the throne itself liable to fall a prey to a doubtful or contested succession,"¹—contested by the progeny of the various rivals crowded into the royal harem. From the palace downwards polygamy and servile concubinage lower the moral tone, loosen the ties of domestic life, and hopelessly depress the people.

The Veil.

Nor is the Veil—albeit under the circumstances a necessary precaution—less detrimental, though in a different way, to the interests of Moslem society. This strange custom owes its origin to the Prophet's jealous temperament. It is forbidden in the Corân for women to appear unveiled before any member of the other sex, with the exception of certain near relatives of specified propinquity.² And this law, coupled with other restrictions of the kind, has led to the imposition of the *Boorka* or *Purdah* (the dress which conceals the person, and the veil), and to the greater or less seclusion of the Harem and Zenâna.

¹ *Annals*, etc., p. 457.

² See *Sura* XXIV. v. 32. The excepted relations are: "Husbands, fathers, husbands' fathers, sons, husbands' sons, brothers, brothers' sons, sisters' sons, the captives which their right hands possess, such men as attend them and have no need of women, or children below the age of puberty."

This ordinance, and the practices flowing from it, must survive, more or less, so long as the Corân remains the rule of faith. It may appear, at first sight, a mere negative evil,—a social custom comparatively harmless; but in truth it has a more debilitating effect upon the Moslem race perhaps than anything else, for by it *Woman is totally withdrawn from her proper place in the social circle.* She may, indeed, in the comparatively laxer license of some lands, be seen fitting along the streets or driving in her carriage; but, even so, it is like one belonging to another world,—veiled, shrouded, and cut off from intercourse with those around her. Free only in the retirement of her own secluded apartments, she is altogether shut out from her legitimate sphere in the duties and enjoyments of life. But the blight on the sex itself, from this unnatural regulation, sad as it is, must be regarded as a minor evil. The mischief extends beyond her. The tone and framework of society, as it came from the Maker's hands, are altered, damaged, and deteriorated. From the veil there flows this double injury. The bright, refining, softening influence of woman is withdrawn from the outer world; and social life, wanting the gracious influences of the female sex, becomes, as we see throughout Moslem lands, forced, hard, unnatural, and morose. Moreover, the Mahometan nations, for all purposes of common elevation, and for all

Society
vitiating by
the
withdrawal
of the
female sex.

Mahometan
society thus
truncated,
incapable of
progress.

The defects
of Moham-
medan
society.

efforts of philanthropy and liberty, are (as they live in public and beyond the inner recesses of their homes) but a truncated and imperfect exhibition of humanity. They are wanting in one of its constituent parts, the better half, the humanizing and the softening element. And it would be against the nature of things to suppose that the body thus shorn and mutilated, can possess in itself the virtue and power of progress, reform, and elevation. The link connecting the family with social and public life is detached, and so neither is *en rapport*, as it should be, with the other. Reforms fail to find entrance into the family, or to penetrate the domestic soil, where alone they could take root, grow into the national mind, live and be perpetuated. Under such conditions the seeds of civilization refuse to germinate. No real growth is possible in free and useful institutions, nor any permanent and healthy force in those great movements which elsewhere tend to uplift the masses and elevate mankind. There may, it is true, be some advance, from time to time, in science and in material prosperity; but the social groundwork for the same is wanting, and the people surely relapse into the semi-barbarism forced upon them by an ordinance which is opposed to the best instincts of humanity. Sustained progress becomes impossible. Such is the outcome of an attempt to improve upon nature, and banish Woman, the

help-meet of man, from the position assigned by God to her in the world.

At the same time I am not prepared to say that in view of the laxity of the conjugal relations inherent in the institutions of Islam, some such social check as that of the Veil (apart from the power to confine and castigate) is not needed for the repression of license and the maintenance of outward decency. There is too much reason to apprehend that free social intercourse might otherwise be dangerous to morality under the code of Mahomet, and with the example before men and women of the early worthies of Islam. So long as the sentiments and habits of the Moslem world remain as they are, some remedial or preventive measure of the kind seems indispensable. But the peculiarity of the Mussulman polity, as we have seen, is such that the sexual laws and institutions which call for restrictions of the kind, as founded on the Corân are incapable of change; they must co-exist with the faith itself, and last while it lasts. So long, then, as this polity prevails, the depression of woman, as well as her exclusion from the social circle, must injure the health and vitality of the body politic, impair its purity and grace, paralyze vigour, retard progress in the direction of freedom, philanthropy, and moral elevation, and generally perpetuate the normal state of Mahometan peoples, as one of semi-barbarism.

Yet the Veil
necessary
under
existing cir-
cumstances.

Recapitulation.

To recapitulate, we have seen :—

First. That Islam was propagated mainly by the sword. With the tide of conquest the religion went forward; where conquest was arrested it made no advance beyond; and at the withdrawal of the Moslem arms the faith also commonly retired.

Second. The inducements, whether material or spiritual, to embrace Islam, have proved insufficient of themselves (speaking broadly) to spread the faith, in the absence of the sword, and without the influence of the political or secular arm.

Third. The ordinances of Islam, those especially having respect to the female sex, have induced an inherent weakness, which depresses the social system, and retards its progress.

Contrast
with
Christianity.

If the reader should have followed me in the argument by which these conclusions have been reached, the contrast with the Christian faith has no doubt been suggesting itself at each successive step.

Christianity
not
propagated
by force.

Christianity, as Al Kindy has so forcibly put it, gained a firm footing in the world without the sword, and without any aid whatever from the secular arm. So far from having the countenance of the State, it triumphed in spite of opposition, persecution, and discouragement. "My kingdom," said Jesus, "is not of this world. If My kingdom

were of this world, then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is My kingdom not from hence. . . For this end came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth My voice.”¹

The religion itself, in its early days, offered no worldly attractions or indulgences. It was not, like Islam, an “Easy way.” Whether in withdrawal from social observances deeply tainted with idolatry, the refusal to participate in sacrificial ceremonies insisted on by the rulers, or in the renunciation of indulgences inconsistent with a saintly life, the Christian profession required self-denial at every step.

Nor by
worldly in-
ducements

But otherwise the teaching of Christianity nowhere interfered with the civil institutions of the countries into which it penetrated, or with any social customs or practices that were not in themselves immoral or idolatrous. It did not, indeed, neglect to guide the Christian life. But it did so by the enunciation of principles and rules of wide and far-reaching application. These, no less than the injunctions of the Corân, served amply for the exigencies of the day. But they have done a vast deal more. They have proved themselves capable of adaptation to the most advanced stages of social development and intellectual elevation. And

Adaptive
principles
and plastic
faculty of
Christianity.

¹ John xviii. 36, 37.

what is infinitely more, it may be claimed for the lessons embodied in the Gospel that they have been themselves promotive, if indeed they have not been the immediate cause, of all the most important reforms and philanthropies that now prevail in Christendom. The principles thus laid down contained germs endowed with the power of life and growth which, expanding and flourishing, slowly it may be, but surely, have at the last borne the fruits we see.

Examples:
Slavery.

Take, for example, the institution of Slavery. It prevailed in the Roman Empire at the introduction of Christianity, as it did in Arabia at the rise of Islam. In the Moslem code, as we have seen, the practice has been perpetuated. Slavery must be held permissible so long as the Corân is taken to be the rule of faith. The divine sanction thus impressed upon the institution, and the closeness with which by law and custom it intermingles with social and domestic life, make it impossible for any Mahometan people to impugn slavery as contrary to sound morality, or for any body of loyal believers to advocate its abolition upon the ground of principle. There are, moreover, so many privileges and gratifications accruing to the higher classes from its maintenance, that (excepting under the strong pressure of European diplomacy) no sincere and hearty effort can be expected from the Moslem race in the suppression of the inhuman traffic, the

horrors of which, as pursued by Moslem slave-traders, their Prophet would have been the first to denounce. Look now at the wisdom with which the Gospel treats the institution. It is nowhere in so many words proscribed, for that would, under the circumstances, have led to the abnegation of relative duties and the disruption of society. It is accepted as a prevailing institution recognized by the civil powers. However desirable freedom might be, slavery was not inconsistent with the Christian profession:—"Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather." The duty of obedience to his master is enjoined upon the slave, and the duty of mildness and urbanity towards his slave is enjoined upon the master. But with all this was laid the seed which grew into emancipation. "*Our Father*" gave the keynote of freedom. "Ye are *all* the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." "There is neither . . . bond nor free, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." "He that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman." The converted slave is to be received "not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved." The seed has borne its proper harvest. Late in time, no doubt, but by a sure and certain development, the grand truth of the equality of the human race, and the right of every man and woman to freedom of thought, and (within reasonable

1 Cor. vii. 21.

Gal. iii. 26,
28.

1 Cor. vii.
22.

Philemon 16.

limit of law) to freedom of action, has triumphed; and it has triumphed through the spirit and the precepts inculcated by the gospel eighteen hundred years ago.

Relations
between the
sexes.

Nor is it otherwise with the relations established between the sexes. Polygamy, divorce, and concubinage with bondmaids, have been perpetuated, as we have seen, by Islam for all time; and the ordinances connected therewith have given rise, in the laborious task of defining the conditions and limits of what is lawful, to a mass of prurient casuistry defiling the books of Mahometan law. Contrast with this our Saviour's words, "*He which made them at the*

Matt. xix. 4.

beginning made them male and female. . . What therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder." From which simple utterance have resulted monogamy, and (in the absence of adultery) the indissolubility of the marriage bond.

1 Cor. vii. 3.

While in respect of conjugal duties we have such large, but sufficiently intelligible, commands as "to render due benevolence,"—whereby, while the obligations of the marriage state are maintained, Christianity is saved from the impurities which, in expounding the ordinances of Mahomet, surround the sexual ethics of Islam, and cast so foul a stain upon its literature.

Elevation of
woman.

Take, again, the place of woman in the world. We need no injunction of the veil or the harem. As the temples of the Holy Ghost, the body is to

be kept undefiled, and every one is "to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour." Men are to treat "the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity." Women are to "adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety." These, and such like, maxims embrace the whole moral fitness of the several relations and duties which they define. They are adapted for all ages of time, and for all conditions of men. They are capable of being taken by every individual for personal guidance, according to his own sense of propriety, and they can be accommodated by society at large with a due reference to the habits and customs of the day. The attempt of Mahomet to lay down, with circumstantial minuteness, the position of the female sex, the veiling of her person, and her withdrawal from the gaze of man, has resulted in seclusion and degradation; while the spirit of the gospel, and injunctions like that of "giving honour to the wife as to the weaker vessel," have borne the fruit of woman's elevation, and have raised her to the position of influence, honour, and equality, which (notwithstanding the marital superiority of the husband in the ideal of the Christian family) she now occupies in the social scale.

In the type of Mussulman government, which (though not laid down in the Corân) is founded upon the spirit of the Faith and the precedent of the

1 Thes. iv. 4.

1 Tim. v. 2.

1 Tim. ii. 9.

1 Peter iii. 7.

Relations
with the
State.

Prophet, the civil is indissolubly blended with the spiritual authority, to the detriment of religious liberty and political progress. The *Ameer*, or commander of the faithful, should, as in the early times, so also in all ages be, the *Imám*, or religious chief; and as such he should preside at the weekly Cathedral service. It is not a case of the Church being subject to the State, or the State being subject to the Church. Here (as we used to see in the Papal domains) the Church is the State, and the State the Church. They both are one. And in this, we have another cause of the backwardness and depression of Mahometan society. Since the abolition of the temporal power in Italy, we have nowhere in Christian lands any such theocratic union of Cæsar and the Church, so that secular and religious advance is left more or less unhampered. Whereas in Islam, the hierarchichopolitical constitution has hopelessly welded the secular arm with the spiritual in one common sceptre, to the furthering of despotism, and elimination of the popular voice from its proper place in the concerns of State.

Christianity
leaves
humanity
free to
expand.

And so, throughout the whole range of political, religious, social and domestic relations, the attempt made by the founder of Islam to provide for all contingencies, and to fix everything beforehand by rigid rule and scale, has availed to cramp and benumb the free activities of life, and to

paralyze the natural efforts of society at healthy growth, expansion, and reform. As an author already quoted has so well put it: "*The Corán has frozen Mahometan thought; to obey it is to abandon progress.*"¹

Writers have indeed been found who, dwelling upon the benefits conferred by Islam on idolatrous and savage nations, have gone so far as to hold that the religion of Mahomet may in consequence be suited to certain portions of mankind,—as if the faith of Jesus might peaceably divide with it the world. But surely to acquiesce in a system which reduces the people to a dead level of social depression, despotism, and semi-barbarism, would be abhorrent from the first principles of philanthropy. With the believer, who holds the gospel to be "Good tidings of great joy, *which shall be to all people,*" such a notion is on higher grounds untenable; but even in view of purely secular considerations it is not only untenable, but altogether unintelligible. As I have said elsewhere:—

Is Islam
suitable for
any nation?

Luke ii. 10.

The eclipse in the East, which still sheds its blight on the ancient seats of Jerome and Chrysostom, and shrouds in darkness the once bright and famous Sees of Cyprian and Augustine, has been disastrous everywhere to liberty and progress, equally as it has been to Christianity. And it is only as that eclipse shall pass away, and the Sun of Righteousness again shine forth, that we can look to the nations now dominated by Islam sharing with us those secondary but precious fruits of Divine teaching. Then with the higher and enduring blessings which our faith

¹ Dr. Fairbairn, *Contemporary Review*, p. 865.

bestows, but not till then, we may hope that there will follow likewise in their wake freedom and progress, and all that tends to elevate the human race.¹

No sacrifice
for sin, or
redemptive
grace.

Although with the view of placing the argument on independent ground, I have refrained from touching the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, and the inestimable benefits which flow to mankind therefrom, I may be excused, before I conclude, if I add a word regarding them. The followers of Mahomet have no knowledge of God as a *Father*; still less have they knowledge of Him as "*Our Father*,"—the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. They acknowledge, indeed, that Jesus was a true prophet sent of God; but they deny His crucifixion and death, and they know nothing of the power of His resurrection. To those who have found redemption and peace, in these the grand and distinctive truths of the Christian faith, it may be allowed to mourn over the lands in which the light of the Gospel has been quenched, and these blessings blotted out, by the material forces of Islam; where, together with civilization and liberty, Christianity has given place to gross darkness, and it is as if now "there were no more sacrifice for sins." We may, and we do, look forward with earnest expectation to the day when knowledge of salvation shall be given to these

¹ *The Early Caliphate and Rise of Islam*, being the Rede Lecture for 1881, delivered before the University of Cambridge, p. 28.

nations "by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Luke i.
77-79.

But even apart from these, the special blessings of Christianity, I ask, which now, of the two faiths, bears, in its birth and growth, the mark of a Divine hand, and which the human stamp? Which looks likest the handiwork of the God of Nature who "hath laid the measures of the earth," and "hath stretched the line upon it," but not the less with an ever-varying adaptation to time and place? and which the artificial imitation?

Contrast
between
Divine and
human
work.

Job xxxviii.
5.

"As a Reformer, Mahomet did indeed advance his people to a certain point; but as a Prophet he left them fixed immovably at that point for all time to come. As there can be no return, so neither can there be any progress. The tree is of artificial planting. Instead of containing within itself the germ of growth and adaptation to the various requirements of time, and clime, and circumstance, expanding with the genial sunshine and the rain from heaven, it remains the same forced and stunted thing as when first planted twelve centuries ago."¹

Islam.

Such is Islam. Now what is Christianity? Listen to the prophetic words of the Founder Himself, who compares it to the works of NATURE:—

Christianity.
Christianity
compared by
Christ to
the works
of Nature.

"So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;

Mark iv. 26,
27, 28.

"And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

"For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself: first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

¹ The Corân, etc., p. 65.

And again:—

Mark iv. 30,
31, 32.

"Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God, or with what comparison shall we compare it ?

"It is like a grain of mustard seed, which when it is sown in the earth, is less than all seeds that be in the earth ;

"But when it is sown, it groweth up and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches, so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it."

Islam the
work of
man :
Christianity
the work of
God.

Which is *Nature*, and which is *Art*, let the reader judge. Which bears the impress of man's hand, and which that of Him who "is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working?"

In fine, of the Arabian it may be said :

"Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

But of Christ,—

Psalms lxxii.
17, 8, 18, 19.

"His name shall endure for ever. His name shall be continued as long as the sun. And men shall be blessed in Him ; all nations shall call Him blessed.

"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

"Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be His glorious name for ever ; and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen."



THE MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP

AND

CREDIBILITY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

BY THE

VERY REV. R. PAYNE-SMITH, D.D.

(Dean of Canterbury.)

AUTHOR OF

"PROPHECY, A PREPARATION FOR CHRIST (*Bampton Lecture*, 1869);"
"THE AUTHENTICITY AND MESSIANIC INTERPRETATION OF THE PROPHECIES OF
ISAIAH VINDICATED," "COMMENTARY ON THE PROPHET JEREMIAH"
(*SPEAKER'S COMMENTARY*), ETC.



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:

56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
164, PICCADILLY.

Argument of the Tract.

THE author first shows that the writer of the Pentateuch displays an exact knowledge of the customs and topography of Chaldea, Canaan, Egypt, and the Desert of the Wandering, (in all which countries our knowledge has of late been greatly increased by the decyphering of cuneiform and Egyptian inscriptions, and by the work of the Ordnance Survey of the Wilderness and of the Palestine Exploration Fund, with the result in all cases of confirming the Biblical narrative); and that Moses alone possessed this vast and accurate knowledge. He next shows that the position of the tribe of Levi was so inferior to that of the rest in all worldly advantages that it is inconceivable that they should have submitted to it unless they had in compensation religious and spiritual prerogatives. He also gives reasons for the partial observance of the Mosaic Law in Palestine; and proves that its promulgation would have been impossible at any and every period after the conquest. Finally, he combats the theory that though the Pentateuch was Mosaic, the three legal codes contained in it were of late and varying dates, by showing that it is destitute of proof and contrary to facts.

THE MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP

AND

CREDIBILITY OF THE PENTATEUCH.



THE question of the authorship of the Books of the Old Testament is usually one of secondary importance until we reach the prophetic writings. Even of all the Old Testament Scriptures we may say that as regards our faith little depends upon their human origin. For if they are what they claim to be, they are a message from God to our souls. Many, of course, deny this claim; it is, they say, a thing impossible. God never has, and never could, speak to man. But if He has spoken to man—and for believing this there are many valid reasons—no books have so manifest a claim to be His words as those of the Bible. Their human authorship, therefore, sinks into insignificance compared with the momentous question whether they are a revelation of God's will to man. And it is worth observing that the writers themselves attached no value to the part they had taken in the

The Books of the Old Testament a message from God to our souls.

The human authorship a matter of comparative insignificance.

The authors of the sacred books do not obtrude themselves.

matter. There is no pride of authorship about them. They usually make no reference to themselves, but are solely occupied with the great message which they were commissioned to bear.

The art of writing in its infancy when they were written.

No doubt one reason of this reticence on the part of the writers is the extreme antiquity of the Scriptures. The earlier books were composed when the art of writing was in its infancy, when writing materials were of the simplest kind, and when but few persons could either make records of events, or read them when recorded. And it is a well-established law of the Holy Scriptures that in their outward form they were subject to the conditions of the times when they were written.

The Bible a book of miracle.

The Bible is a book of miracle, in which from time to time, at rare and distant intervals, God suspends the ordinary course of nature for some special purpose, as a "sign" to men. For this is the correct translation of the word used in the Old and New Testaments to express these extraordinary interpositions of God's power. But there is never anything magical in the Bible, and the writers of its many books are never lifted out of the moral and mental state of things among which they lived; nor are their intellectual endowments or physical qualities changed. Jeremiah naturally possessed no gift of genius, or skill in oratory; inspiration did not give them. He did possess high moral qualities, and these, sanctified by God's Spirit,

The writers not lifted out of the state of things in which they lived.

Their moral and other qualities sanctified.

made him one of the foremost of the prophets. St. Paul was subject apparently to a physical infirmity which compelled him to dictate his epistles to a scribe. There is naturally in them the vivacity of style usual in spoken discourses, but with the usual drawback, that the logical connexion is mental, and that to understand them we must study the course of St. Paul's thoughts.

In the Old Testament many of our modern difficulties arise from the demand, unconsciously often made, that everything should be in accordance with nineteenth century advancement. But the gift of inspiration, and the watchful care of the Spirit that in the historical books the subjects selected and the method of treating them should be for the edification of the Church, did not raise the writers above the conditions of their own times. And in this matter of authorship we find, when we turn to the *Records of the Past*,¹ translated from Egyptian, Ninevite, and Babylonian sources, that the writers seldom refer to themselves. The older books of the Bible follow the same rule, in which nevertheless we recognize something providential. For it ought to lead us to think more of Him whose word it is, than of the human hand which wrote it.

The source of many modern difficulties.

In course of time an interest gradually grew up in this question, and we find in the uninspired

The growth of interest in the question of the human authorship.

¹ Translated by Birch, Rawlinson, Sayce, and others. London.

Importance of the question of the human authorship of the Book of Isaiah and of the Pentateuch.

Modern criticism makes the most of the difficulties found in the Pentateuch.

The whole Pentateuch ascribed to Moses.

The veracity of Holy Scripture involved in the Mosaic authorship.

headings prefixed to a large number of the Psalms, an attempt made to settle their date and authorship. And occasionally the matter has become one of large importance, because of the course of modern criticism. It is a question of great value in our days, whether the Book of Isaiah is an anthology made up of fragments, culled from lost works composed by numerous writers, or the composition of one man. And so with the Pentateuch. Modern criticism has made the most of all the difficulties necessarily found in connexion with a book of such extreme antiquity. It has used these difficulties to discredit the book, and even to tear it to pieces, and assign the fragments to a host of nameless persons. But though Moses himself followed the same impersonal manner as was usual with all primitive writers, yet there is in Exodus xxiv. 4 the assertion that Moses wrote all the laws at that time given, and, as we think, in the Book of Deuteronomy words which ascribe to him the whole Pentateuch. If this interpretation be correct, it becomes no mere archæological question, as might be that of the authorship of the Books of Judges or of Samuel. The veracity of Holy Scripture is at stake; and besides this, the authorship of Moses, for which there is ample proof, gives a solid foundation for the genuineness of all the Old Testament Scriptures. If there be strong and

abundant evidence for this conclusion, most of the remaining difficulties, debated so warmly, sink into minor importance.

Let me first state what is the testimony of the Pentateuch itself as to its authorship. We find, then, in Deuteronomy xxxi. 24-27, the statement that "when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, Moses commanded the Levites which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. For I know thy rebellion," etc. Now, we must not conceal the fact that great diversity of opinion exists as to the meaning of "the words of this law." Some commentators consider that it refers only to the Book of Deuteronomy, and point out in support of their view that the reason alleged for thus giving the Israelites the words of the law in writing, is the fact that they had always been so rebellious in their conduct, and had so resisted the introduction of the Mosaic institutions among them. And, undeniably, it is the case that the more kindly and social side of the Mosaic law is pointed out in the Book of Deuteronomy, and the effort made to commend it to the affections of the people. It is equally the case that, until the return from the exile at Babylon, the Israelites

The testimony of the Pentateuch to its authorship.

Diversity of opinion as to the meaning of "the words of this law."

were by no means zealous for their law, and gave it at most a half-hearted obedience. Again, other commentators consider that it was only such a summary of the law as the kings were commanded to copy out each for himself (Deut. xvii. 18); or such a summary as was to be written very plainly upon stones covered with plaister, set up on Mount Ebal, and which also is called, "all the words of this law" (xxvii. 3). Finally, others hold that Deuteronomy was strictly no part of the law. For it consists of addresses made to Israel when, at the end of their forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, they were finally mustered for the conquest of Palestine. During a large portion of this long period the mass of the people had been dispersed throughout the wilderness, then a comparatively well-watered land, occupied with the pasturing of their herds. But as the time drew near for the conquest of Canaan, Moses gathered them to him at his head-quarters at Kadesh (Num. xx. 1; xxxiii. 36), and naturally recapitulated to them the chief points of their law, and tried to commend it to their allegiance.

Deuteronomy a recapitulation of the chief points of the law.

Facts corroborative of this view.

In support of this, which seems the most probable view, we must further point out that Moses renewed the covenant with the people, when on their march they had reached the borders of the land of Moab (Deut. xxix. 1). And nothing could be more probable and reasonable than such a pro-

ceeding. For the generation had passed away with whom the covenant had been made in Horeb, and for the mass of the people dispersed far and wide in the wilderness, the Mosaic law had practically been in abeyance. It was intended for the Israelites when settled in a land of their own, and until then it was impossible to keep it. Thus they were not even circumcised (Josh. v. 5), and offered no sacrifices (Amos v. 25). These addresses, therefore, of which the Book of Deuteronomy consists, were of the highest practical value and usefulness, but were not the law. They were intended to bring back the hearts of the people to the law, to renew their acquaintance with it, and to prepare the way for its observance when, upon the conquest of Canaan, the time had come for practising it.

The purpose of the Mosaic law.

The practical value and intention of the addresses in Deuteronomy.

Very probably, like the Song of Moses in chap. xxxii., and his blessing in chap. xxxiii., the three addresses were left in separate documents, and placed together after his death. The use of the word "book," Hebrew *sepher*, in chap. xxxi. 24, 26, implies that the material employed was some preparation of the skins of animals, and Herodotus tells us that the Phœnicians were the first to employ skins in this way (Herod. v. 58). As he adds that many barbarous tribes still used such skins, it is evident that they were but roughly prepared, and were unworthy of the name of parchment, which was first invented at Pergamos, many ages

Materials used in writing.

after this time. As we find a Hittite town, assigned after the conquest to the tribe of Judah, called Kirjath-Sepher (Josh. xv. 15), we gather that the Hittites were versed in the art of thus preparing skins; and with this agrees the fact that the Khita or Hittites constantly appear in Egyptian monuments, long before and during the age of Moses, as accomplished scribes. Moses would have no difficulty in obtaining this writing material, or even the knowledge of the method of preparing it, which must have been brought to Egypt by many members of this nation. There is therefore no difficulty in the command given to Moses, to write a memorial of events in the *sepher*, the skin on which a record was kept by him of events (Exod. xvii. 14); nor in the halting places of the Israelites being registered in a similar way (Numb. xxxiii. 2). For, however simple and primitive may have been the writing materials elsewhere spoken of (Deut. xxvii. 2, 3), Moses possessed in the skins of animals an abundant and convenient article; and prepared even as they were for the covering of the ark, for which they were made capable of taking a dye (Exod. xxxix. 34), they would not be unfit for writing upon, especially as the ink was thick and glutinous, and painted upon the skin with a reed.

Moses had the means of writing.

The addresses contained in Deuteronomy probably left by Moses as separate documents.

Most probably, therefore, the addresses which form the Book of Deuteronomy, and which were spoken to the people at the very close of Moses'

life, were left by him as separate documents, each written on its own roll of skin. And in a similar manner the Song of Moses, and the Blessing of the Tribes, both of which were probably written by Moses during the long halt at Kadesh, would each be copied upon a skin by itself.

The Song of Moses and the Blessing of the Tribes also separate

Now, the first thirty chapters of Deuteronomy consist of these three addresses, placed one after another; but, beginning at chap. xxxi., we have a history of the last days of the great legislator's life, written, as the manuscripts of the Syriac version assert, by Joshua. The tradition is at least probable, though really it matters little who wrote this narrative; but it does not profess to have been written by Moses, and chap. xxxiv. could not have been so written. Chaps. xxxii. and xxxiii. contain the two hymns, which attest the greatness of Moses as a poet, and chap. xxxiv. gives the history of his death. Now, any one who will carefully consider the nature of the contents of the Book of Deuteronomy as thus pointed out, will see that "the words of this law" would be the four first books of the Pentateuch; and though we thus divide them into four books, the Jews did not do so until late times. The Pentateuch with them was one undivided whole. For to what Moses left behind him was immediately added the Book of Deuteronomy, written equally by his hand, except the historical xxxi. and xxxiv. chapters, but not

Joshua probably wrote the account of the last days of Moses.

"The words of this law" were the first four books of the Pentateuch.

The Pentateuch with the Jews an undivided whole.

strictly forming the Book of the Law, though many legal enactments are recapitulated in it. And the assertion that Moses himself wrote the law, and commanded his autograph copy to be laid up by the side of the ark, is made not by Moses himself, which would have been contrary to the customs of those primitive times, but by those who obediently carried out his command, and who as being charged with this duty would also gather his final addresses together, and complete the record by the history of their leader's last acts and of his death.

The antecedent assumption of the Mosaic authorship founded on the nature of its contents.

Having thus cleared the ground, we will next proceed to show that the antecedent presumption is in favour of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, not merely because of the tradition in its favour, and the external authority which might be adduced, but because of the nature of its contents. No book of the Bible covers so vast a field, either of time or of country. Confining ourselves to the latter point, we find the cradle of the human race placed in Babylonia, and at length we are able to compare the Biblical narrative with legends and tales, wonderfully preserved there unto this day. From the regions watered by the Euphrates we next are led with Abraham to the uplands of Canaan, whence the history takes us into Egypt at repeated intervals; and finally, we accompany the Israelites during a wandering of forty years in

the deserts of Sinai. It is a peculiar privilege of the days in which we live that our knowledge of all these countries is greatly increased by the decipherment of writings of vast antiquity, which had long remained hidden from human sight under the mounds which mark the sites of the ruined cities of Assyria. We are no longer dependent upon stories and traditions narrated to us by Greek travellers in Babylonia of a comparatively late date, but have in our museums, inscribed on cylinders and tablets of clay, the literature of the nations who of old inhabited these ancient lands. Some of these documents are said by Mr. Sayce (*Chaldean Genesis*, p. 24), to be far older than the time of Abraham; while in addition to them we possess translations of writings in the language of Accad (*Gen. x. 10*), made at a time when that town was passing out of memory, for the libraries of Assyrian kings, and which, even in this form, are themselves anterior to the Christian era by six or seven centuries.

These writings are, as a rule, childishly polytheistic and full of fable, but it is remarkable that they cover much the same ground as the earlier narratives of the Book of Genesis. Thus we have legends of Creation, of the Paradise, of the Tree of Life, of the Flood, of the Tower of Babel; and moreover, from Senkereh, the ancient Larsa, there has been brought and deposited in the British

Great increase of our knowledge of all the countries referred to in the Pentateuch.

The generally childish and fabulous character of the writings that have been discovered.

Museum a historical cylinder, supposed to belong to the eighteenth century before our era, in which are detailed the exploits of Kudur-Mabuk, a king of Elam, who carried his conquering arms not only into Babylonia but into Palestine, and to the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. By this document extraordinary light is thrown upon the history of Chedorlaomer (Kudur-Lagomar), who was apparently his successor, and who invaded Canaan to replace upon the nations there the yoke of Kudur-Mabuk. But the interest for us lies in the close parallelism between these old Chaldean legends and the first few chapters of the Book of Genesis. Now it was not until very late in their history that the Jews, by the conquests of Nebuchadnezzar, were once again brought into contact with the Chaldeans; and naturally we find in the writings of Ezekiel, the prophet of that period, an intimate acquaintance with Chaldean symbolism. But though the assertion has been made, that the code of law found in the Book of Leviticus belongs to the time of Ezekiel, it would be futile to attempt to bring down the age of the Pentateuch generally to this date. For the Chaldean legends, long before this had become hopelessly debased, and it would have been impossible to divest them of their mythology, and frame from them a narrative so grand, and even scientifically correct, though written in popular language, as the history

The close parallelism between the old Chaldean legends and the first chapters of Genesis.

The legends utterly debased before the Jews were again brought into connection with Chaldea.

of creation. We know, moreover, that confessedly most of the Pentateuch then existed much as we have it now; and considerable portions of the Book of Ezekiel are occupied with enactments which were either to explain or to supersede the Levitical law. Especially he described a new arrangement of the territory of Palestine, in which the Levites were no longer to be left without their share of the country; but while the priests had the land immediately round the temple, they were to have a broad region lying between the portion of the priests and that assigned to the tribe of Judah. But if the attempt would be hopeless to assign these early chapters of Genesis to the time of Ezekiel, there is absolutely no one but Moses who could have penned them.

Most of the Pentateuch then existed as we have it now.

Only Moses could have penned them.

For they are an integral portion of a consistent narrative of which the one object is the growth of the family of Abraham into a nation. The history finds Abraham dwelling among these Chaldeans, and himself of their stock. The primary purpose of the previous chapters is to give us Abraham's genealogy, and to show that he was the direct representative of Shem, and through him of Seth, the son of Adam, to whom belonged by divine decree the right of primogeniture. And with this right of primogeniture certain promises are bound up, which explain the reason of Abraham's call, and the purpose for which his descendants were

The purpose of the narrative.

to be formed into a separate people. It was perfectly natural, and even necessary, for Moses, when tracing Israel's origin and growth, to carry the history of their progenitor back to the very first. But who besides Moses could have traced it through a series of what had degenerated into Chaldean fables? Nor are there any remains of this genealogy in the legends as we now find them.

The Mosaic
authorship
explains
everything.

Accept the Mosaic authorship, and all falls easily into its place. Abraham, the highest born of the whole Semitic stock, is described as dwelling at Ur, a large and wealthy town, the chief seaport upon the Persian Gulf, though now left far inland by the deposit of the silt brought down by the Euphrates from the highlands of Armenia. The place was originally peopled by the Accadians, a race descended from Japheth, and who are proved by the large remains of their literature to have been a wealthy, learned, and highly civilized people. The cuneiform method of writing seems to have been their invention, and clay their ordinary, though by no means their only writing material. Papyrus¹ was used by them at a very early date; and so common was the use of writing, that all the ordinary transactions of business were carefully recorded, and numerous tablets in our museums refer to matters of the most insignificant kind.

But when Abraham appears they had already

¹ *Journal Bibl. Archæol.* i. 144; iii. 430.

been conquered by the Chaldeans, a Semitic race of the same family as Abraham himself. And in process of time, not only Abraham, but his father Terah, and a powerful section of the clan of Eber, leave Ur, and settle in Haran, a town on the ordinary route to Palestine, and through which Kudur-Mabuk must have passed on his way to the conquest of that country, at the very time when Terah and his sons were dwelling there. Now, why did Terah and his family leave Ur? The reason distinctly was a religious one,¹ and no reasonable doubt can be cast upon the assertion that the difference between Abraham and the Chaldees lay in his being a worshipper of one God, while they worshipped many. Nor can we find any explanation of the monotheism of Abraham and his clan so simple and reasonable as that given by his possession of such histories as those contained in the earlier chapters of Genesis. The sublime narrative of creation, setting it forth as the work of one God, who commanded only and it was done, would alone have been a powerful preservative against the belief in a motley crowd of deities. Even in the Babylonian legend of creation, we still find traces of this grand conception in the statement that there was a time when the gods² had not been called into being. This sounds very much like a faint echo of the

The migration of Terah and his clan.

The reason of it religious.

The explanation of the monotheism of Abraham to be found in his possession of the primitive histories.

¹ Gen. xii. 1; xv. 7.

² *Chald. Gen.*, p. 56.

• Abraham the natural depository of the Divinely given knowledge of the antediluvian and patriarchal world.

The documents possessed and used by Moses.

The pure faith propagated by Abraham and his brethren.

Residence at Haran became impossible by reason of prevailing idolatry.

opening words of Genesis, that "in the beginning God made the heaven and the earth." Abraham, as the direct representative of Shem, would be the natural depository of whatever knowledge God had given either to the antediluvian or the patriarchal world. And this knowledge, carefully guarded and preserved as a most precious deposit, would account for the pure faith of Abraham and the family to which he belonged. These documents Moses would use under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit; but it would have been impossible for any one, without miraculous intervention, to pen narratives which run so exactly alongside the Chaldean legends, unless he had possessed the records, of which the legends are the debased form.

It is evident from their literature that not only the Accadians, but their Chaldean conquerors at Ur, were idolaters, though probably retaining vestiges of a purer creed. And Abraham¹ and his brethren would certainly endeavour to propagate—at all events among their Semitic kinsmen—the nobler faith which they had inherited. Nor would such an effort be altogether without success. But we gather from the departure of Terah and his family from wealthy and civilized Ur to a place so exposed to danger as Haran, that finally it became impossible for them to continue there. They could not join in idolatrous worship; probably,

¹ Compare Gen. xviii. 19; xxxv. 2, 3.

too, they were teachers and active propagators of tenets destructive of the religions around them. There were attractions, moreover, for their own dependents, and even for themselves (Josh. xxiv. 2), in the rites and ceremonies, the feasts and holy days of the people among whom they dwelt. And so God called them away to regions where the purity of their faith would no longer be imperilled.

The Divine call to leave it.

In the departure of Terah from Ur, we have the dividing line of these legends. Abraham carried them with him first to Haran, and then to Canaan in their pure form. At Ur and in Chaldea they degenerated into puerile fables. Inscribed even on tablets of clay they would not be cumbrous to carry. Abraham was at the head of a powerful clan, and carried large wealth with him. While at Haran Terah and his family seem to have engaged in trade,¹ for which the place was admirably suited, and at Ur they had lived among a people too advanced in civilization for them to be indifferent to knowledge. But we have seen that though clay was the cheapest, yet that other more costly writing materials were in use, and Abraham, when abandoning so much for religious reasons, would carry with him as a prized possession the records of his faith, especially as they belonged to him as being, in the direct line of primogeniture, the representative of the priesthood of Shem.

The migration from Ur the dividing line of the traditions.

The pure form retained by Abraham.

At Ur they degenerated into fables.

¹ Gen. xii. 5.

The preservation of the records.

Their preservation from this time to the age of Moses was a matter of course, and he would make such use of them and of other patriarchal records as was dictated to him by the guidance of the Spirit of God. But their continued preservation until late times would be most improbable. Even if carried into the wilderness and laid up with the ark at Shiloh, they would scarcely have escaped destruction at the hands of the Philistines. Samuel would no doubt save all that he could. Many a record of former days was probably rescued by him; but even if he had rescued these old memorials, that which next follows agrees with the authorship of Moses, but negatives the idea that Samuel could have compiled the Pentateuch.

Abraham's wandering life, and his life in Egypt.

For we are next brought into contact partly with the life of a wandering Arab sheik and partly with Egypt. Now, the customs of life change so little in the East that the ideas and principles which underlie the conduct of Abraham and his successors are much the same as those of an Arab tribe in the present day. They are described with the most thorough fidelity, but it is the exact knowledge of Egypt which claims Moses as the writer of those portions of Genesis and Exodus which belong to that country. Moses in the Egyptian narratives given in the Book of Genesis still seems to have had written records before him. The whole of Genesis is arranged in a series of "books of generations,"

The descriptions of life and the underlying principles of Abraham's conduct thoroughly faithful and true to Eastern life to-day.

The arrangement of Genesis.

or genealogical narratives. Moses, of course, would have possessed the materials for these histories, but again their preservation to later times would have been difficult; and we can see no reason why Genesis should have been thus arranged in a series of genealogies except the fact that when Moses became the ruler of Israel, all the archives of the race came to be at his disposal. Oriental nations generally attach great importance to genealogies, and carefully record them; but there was more than mere tribal pride that required that Israel's genealogy should be faithfully preserved. Everywhere in the Bible there is the most careful preparation for the genealogy of our Lord.

The only sufficient reason for it.

Nothing, too, was more natural than that the man who had been the head and leader in Israel's exodus from Egypt, and whose office it was to form it into a nation, should give its history from the very first. He was brought up in all the learning of the Egyptians, he lived in a great crisis of his people's history, he had himself been the prime mover in noble deeds, and whatever archives and documents existed belonging to the race, would be in his custody. He had abundant leisure in the wilderness at Kadesh, and we can well imagine the interest with which he would study the wonderful records of the past. No man had such a call upon him to show who Israel was, and what were the covenant rights of the race, as the

Natural that Moses, the leader of the Exodus, should write the history.

No one had such a call to write the history as Moses.

hero who was leading them to Canaan to win those rights by the sword. He had to justify their war of conquest; he had to ennoble the people, and teach them who and what they were; and he had to make them worthy to fulfil the high destiny of a family in whom, as he taught, all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. Never had man such a call upon him to write the origins of a nation as Moses, and no one can read the Pentateuch without feeling that Israel's mission and holy calling, and the blessing contained within it for all mankind were motives strong and urgent and all-constraining and ever-present in the writer's mind.

Moses the actor as well as writer, from Exodus to the end of the Pentateuch.

Egypt and the Desert of Sinai.

Points confirmatory of the Mosaic authorship.

From Exodus to the end of the Pentateuch we have done with generations, family records and patriarchal memorials, and Moses is the great actor, and as we believe the narrator also. And here we have two regions, Egypt and the Desert of Sinai. Now, not only is all that is told us of Egypt confirmed by our largely-increased knowledge of the country, but there are special points strongly confirmatory of the view that the writer of the Exodus had a personal acquaintance with the land. Thus the plagues of Egypt are found generally to be based upon natural phenomena, happening usually at long intervals, but which came with intensified force one after another, blow upon blow, until Egypt was crushed by them; while finally the

smiting of the firstborn was a proof that they were no mere natural phenomena, but the manifestation of God's presence in judgment. But this knowledge of Egypt and Egyptian customs and phenomena is now generally granted. There are indeed still points where there is room for rival theories. There is not an absolute agreement as to the Pharaoh in whose days Joseph was taken down into Egypt, nor as to the route followed by Israel at its departure. But the limits of diversity of opinion are being rapidly narrowed; and as regards the route, the difficulty mainly arises from the changes in the land wrought naturally during the space of three thousand years.

The writer's knowledge of Egypt generally granted

Divergence of view on some points.

As regards the wilderness of Sinai the case used to be different. It was supposed that the history of the wanderings of Israel there was at variance with the topography of the country. Even Professor Robertson Smith says that "the Pentateuch displays an exact topographical knowledge of Canaan, but by no means so exact a knowledge of the wilderness of the wandering."¹ The testimony of the late Professor Palmer does not confirm this verdict. Famous for his knowledge of Arabic, which he spoke like a native, and of which language he was the Lord Almoner's Reader at Cambridge, he had traversed the country in every direction, and finally had taken part in

The difference between Professor Robertson Smith and Professor Palmer, touching the knowledge displayed in the Pentateuch of the Wilderness of the Wandering.

¹ *Old Test. in Jewish Church*, p. 324.

Professor
Palmer's
testimony.

the systematic labours of the Ordnance Survey of Sinai and the Palestine Exploration Fund. Of the general results of that survey, he says that "the investigators of the Sinai Expedition materially confirm and elucidate the history of the Exodus."¹ So also as regards Sinai, of which Professor Robertson Smith states that "geographers are unable to assign its site with certainty, because the narrative has none of that topographical colour which the story of an eye-witness is sure to possess,"² Mr. Palmer affirms just the reverse. "We have seen," he says, "how in the case of Sinai physical facts accord with the inspired account;" and again, "We are able not only to trace out a route by which the children of Israel could have journeyed, but also to show its identity with that so concisely but graphically laid down in the Pentateuch. We have seen, moreover, that it leads to a mountain answering in every respect to the description of the Mountain of the Law: the chain of topographical evidence is complete, and the maps and sections may henceforth be confidently left to tell their own tale."³ Finally, at the end of the second volume, he says, "The truth of the narrative of the Exodus has been of late years continually called in question; but I have purposely abstained from discussing any of these

¹ *The Desert of the Exodus*, i. 279.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 277, 279.

objections because I believe that geographical facts form the best answer to them all.”¹

Now, if we put all these things together, they form a strong argument for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and they cover pretty nearly every part of it. It is easy to criticise and contradict details, but the combination of topographical correctness, and exact knowledge of manners and customs in four distinct and dissimilar regions forms a very convincing argument. And what deserves careful attention is, that the argument is strengthened by each increase of our knowledge. The careful survey of the wilderness of the wandering, carried out by Government officials would have disproved the Mosaic account if it had been a late production, written anywhere else than on the spot. So our increased knowledge of Egypt would have detected numerous glaring inaccuracies had the history been written by one dwelling in Palestine. Finally, the discovery of these Chaldean legends seems decisive as to the fact that the author must have had Chaldean materials before him, and apparently at a time when they were not debased and degraded by the introduction of the puerile polytheism which now forms so large a portion of their contents. Now, supposing that some nameless person could have

Details may be criticised, but the combination of the various lines of evidence forms a strong argument for the Mosaic authorship.

¹ *The Desert of the Exodus*, Vol. II., 530.

Only Moses could have traced the origin and growth of Israel from Paradise on the Euphrates to the conquest of Canaan.

accomplished one portion of the task, who but Moses could have traced the origin and growth of Israel as a nation from the Paradise of Adam on the Euphrates to the moment when it was finally mustered for the conquest of Canaan? Moses did combine the varied materials and knowledge necessary for the work, but besides Moses there is no one.

The "Higher Criticism" on the Pentateuch.

Its conclusions concerning the three codes.

But it is confidently put forward as a result proved by the "Higher Criticism," that the Pentateuch is an aggregation of legislation of various periods, all called Mosaic because springing from Mosaic origins: and especially that three codes may be separated from the rest, namely, that in Exodus xx. to xxiv., briefly recapitulated in chapter xxxiv; that in Deut. xii. to xxvi; and that in Lev. xvii. to xxvi., with scattered additions throughout the Books of Leviticus and Numbers. The first is often styled the Covenant-code, and is assigned to the age of Jehoshaphat; the second, or Deuteronomic, also called the people's code, is ascribed to the age of Josiah; while the Levitical or priestly code, is supposed to be later in date than the prophecy of Ezekiel, which is regarded as preparatory to it, and to have been incorporated in the Pentateuch about the time of the return from exile.

In opposition to these startling conclusions we venture to think that there is still abundant reason

to believe in the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch as a whole. In a book so ancient there may be not only interpolations, but additions made to complete genealogies, and to bring the information down to later times. Notes also, and additions placed in the margin, may have been inserted by copyists in the text. We cannot suppose that a book of such immense antiquity has undergone none of those perils to which we know that the manuscripts of the New Testament have been subjected. But we also know that we have the text substantially such as it was in the days of Ezra, and we hope now to give reasons for believing that it is not an aggregation of legislation of various dates, but was written during the wanderings in the wilderness.

Despite these conclusions there is abundant reason for believing in the Mosaic authorship. Interpolations, etc.

We grant that it has never been arranged in an orderly manner, but this is in favour of the Mosaic authorship. In Palestine the national code would have been digested and made uniform. The Pentateuch, after the close of the narrative of the Exodus, seems to have been written from time to time as occasion called for it. Inscribed on separate skins the various portions were independent of one another, and often a considerable time elapsed between the writing of one portion and that of another. Nearly forty years passed between the writing of the covenant-code in Exodus and the popular-code in Deuteronomy, and the purpose of

The non-arrangement of the material in an orderly manner an argument for the Mosaic authorship.

The difficulty at the root of the critical theories.

the two was entirely distinct. But we must grant the difficulty which is at the root of these theories, namely, that the Mosaic legislation never was put thoroughly into practice, either in the times of the Judges or of the Kings. For this we shall give reasons hereafter; but in spite of this it has been shown in a convincing manner that the Levitical law underlies the whole of the Old Testament.¹ And this argument is made even the more convincing by the fact that it is never obtruded upon our attention; nor are continual appeals made to it. The Jewish nation did not yield a ready obedience to the Mosaic institutions, and the charge brought by the law-giver against the people, that they had been rebellious and of a stiff-neck during his lifetime, proved, as he expected, true after his death (Deut. xxxi. 27).

The law not carried out in its entirety till the time of Ezra.

Until the time of Ezra there never was a hearty attempt to carry out the law in its entirety, though David did much towards popularizing some of its enactments, while in others he acted independently of it.

The reason of this fact.

The reason of this is not far to seek. It was caused not so much by the absence of manuscripts—for this want is atoned for in many nations by the cultivation of the memory—as by the political

¹ See Hengstenberg on *Genuineness of Pentateuch*, translated by Ryland. Clark, Edinburgh, 1847. Bishop Browne's *Speaker's Commentary*, Introduction to Pentateuch, etc.

constitution of the Israelites. The conquered land was divided among twelve of the tribes, which were left each to manage for itself. The only attempt made to bind them together by any form of federation was the command that at the three great festivals they should go to worship at the place where the ark was deposited (Exod. xxiii. 17). Now, as even in the time of Samuel, the great restorer of Israel, the ark was left almost unnoticed at Kirjath-Jearim for twenty years (1 Sam. vii. 2), it is plain that few, except perhaps Levites, had attached much importance to this ordinance. Each tribe lived independently of the rest, and the natural result was that state of anarchy (Judg. xxi. 25) described in the Book of Judges, during which the people were struggling for very existence; and in no case was the yoke of an invader cast off by the combination of the whole race. It was always a local effort, led by a local patriot, with the aid of two or three tribes at most, which set the suffering district free from foreign oppression.

The political constitution of the Israelites.

Another very important consideration must be added. Throughout the country a large number of the original inhabitants of the land remained (Judges ii. 2, 3), and apparently occupied posts of vantage, like the Jebusites, who still retained the stronghold of Zion (2 Sam. v. 7), until David's time. Besides these the Israelites were accompanied by a "mixed multitude," or rabble of strangers and

The presence of many of the original inhabitants of the land.

The "mixed multitude" in Israel.

The survival of local superstitions and worships.

Local sanctuaries, high places, etc., winked at.

Disintegration of Israel after the days of Joshua and the elders who survived him.

The consequent degradation of the people.

foreigners (Exod. xii. 38), and the mass of the people were themselves debased by the slavery which they had endured in Egypt. In this we find the explanation of the fact that most of the superstitions and the local worships lived on in spite of the Mosaic law. Even the Christian church was content to adopt a number of heathen customs, and endeavour to give a purer colour to them, to the real loss of holiness and spirituality. Just the same thing went on in Israel (Judges ii. 12, 13), only with more determined course, because the resisting forces were weaker. And hence local sanctuaries, sacrifices at places unauthorized by the law, worship at high places, and other similar customs were for many centuries winked at. The state of the people was such that even good men were content to try to graft a purer worship upon these old Canaanite practices than entirely abolish them. And when, after the days of Joshua and the elders who survived him, a lax generation grew up, and the tribe of Ephraim, in whose territory the ark was deposited, became unpopular because of its overbearing ways, each tribe was sure to prefer a local place of worship to one not merely remote but uncongenial to its members.

The inevitable result of this disintegration of Israel was the degradation of the people. Slowly, but surely, they sank down from the state of civilization which had existed in the time of

Joshua, until literature ceased, and the art of writing became a mystery known only at Shiloh. The priests and Levites continued their official duties by rote, offering the sacrifices as they had seen them offered by their fathers. But where life is a daily struggle for existence, knowledge and refinement soon pass away. The Israelites during this period were like the dwellers in the backwoods of America, and would retain no more knowledge of their religion than the emigrants retain of the special doctrines of Christianity. There was still a strong element of piety among them, and of trust in Jehovah, but all knowledge of the enactments of their law was fast dying out.

Now, we find in the Pentateuch that Moses had not intended to leave the nation in this disjointed condition. On the contrary, he had made a very remarkable provision for the maintenance of its religion, and the preservation thereby of its unity. The tribe to which he himself belonged, and which was consequently then the most favoured tribe, instead of being placed in a commanding position, as was the case with Ephraim, was dispersed throughout the land. It had no separate territory, no tribal government, and was even made dependent upon the good will of the other tribes; for there was no legal method of enforcing payment of tithes and offerings; and when Jeroboam wanted to get rid of the Levites, and took very

The disjointed condition contrary to the purpose of Moses.

The provision made by Moses in the Levitical institution for the maintenance of religion and the preservation of unity.

The position of the tribe of Levi one of political inferiority but of high religious privilege and importance.

summary measures for depriving them of their exclusive privileges, the nation generally acquiesced (1 Kings xii. 16-33). Even Moses, while requiring that the Levites should be regarded everywhere as a resident magistracy, yet foresaw their probable poverty (Deut. xxi. 5, and xiv. 27, 29). Nevertheless, though, politically and as regards property, their position was one of manifest inferiority, yet it is described as a reward (Exod. xxxii. 26-29). The few towns given them were mere homesteads, and insufficient for their maintenance. They were too scattered to wield any physical power, or maintain themselves by war. Yet, if Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, and his laws inspired from above, the position of the Levites was most grand and honourable. For it was one of high social rank and great religious importance. Vulgar minds prefer material advantages. Those accorded by Moses to his tribesmen were moral and religious, and as we read the words of his blessing in Deut. xxxiii. 8-11, we feel that he regarded their position himself as one of exceptional privilege.

The number of males among the Levites represented as smaller than in other tribes.

But let us leave Moses out of the question, because in reasoning we must assume nothing, and consider facts which cannot fairly be denied. Confining ourselves therefore to the Levites, we find that their males are represented as amounting to twenty-two thousand. They were thus far fewer

in number than any of the other tribes, but for this there is a very probable explanation. In every other case the males "from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war," were counted, and thus it would include all slaves and dependents who were circumcised, according to the rule given in Gen. xiv. 14; xvii. 12, and who would form a considerable proportion of the retinue of the great landowners. We even find whole clans not of Israelitish blood incorporated into other tribes: thus Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, seems to have been an Edomite; but was counted with all his people as the adopted descendant of Hezron. Such additions must largely have swelled the numbers of other tribes; but of the Levites only those were counted who were eligible to "keep the charge of the sanctuary;" and as the stern command was given to put to death "the stranger that cometh nigh" (Num. iii. 38), it plainly follows that only such Levites as were members of the tribe by right of birth were included in the numbering. Very probably the descendants of those who formed the household of Levi when he went down into Egypt would be counted, and all who were formally members of the tribe; but none who were only dependents, or who had lately joined themselves to their number.

Explanation
of this fact.

Foreign
elements in
other tribes

Only the
Levites
eligible for
the charge
of the
sanctuary
counted.

We find, therefore, a difference represented as already existing in the status of the Levites at the

The different status of the Levites existed two years after the exodus.

The Levitical law must have been enacted at the beginning of the wanderings in the wilderness.

Religious feeling and confidence in the loyalty of the other tribes must have actuated them.

numbering of the tribes at the beginning of the second year after the exodus from Egypt. And subsequently, upon the conquest of Canaan, this difference is perpetuated, and they are excluded from all share in the conquered lands. We find, moreover, that this exclusion, so fatal to their political influence, and their tribal independence, is represented as a high privilege (Exod. xxxii. 29) granted for devotion to Jehovah's service; though originally, and most correctly, if we regard only their temporal position, it is described as a punishment (Gen. xlix. 7). How, then, is this to be explained? I can see no other answer than that the Levitical law in its main particulars was enacted at the very beginning of the long wandering in the wilderness, and seemed so securely established, and held so high a place in the estimation of the people, that it was regarded as an enviable position to be its ministers. The Levites were parting with the substance. They were content to go without lands, were forfeiting their political importance, abandoning their right of self-government, were making themselves powerless in war, and accepting instead a life of dependence upon gifts and offerings. Not only must the religious feeling have been uppermost in their minds, but they must have been assured of the firm attachment of the other tribes to the Mosaic institutions before it would have been possible for them to commit such an act of

self-abnegation. They must have felt sure that the visits thrice in each year to the place wherever the ark was set up (Exodus xxxiv. 23) would be made, and the offerings duly brought, or they would not have abandoned so much to take in its stead so shadowy an endowment.

Moses must often have thought over the vital question, of what would be the best form of government for the people when established in Palestine. The form he actually selected, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, was one that made piety and religion essential for its maintenance, while he evidently regarded with dislike the kingly form, which then almost universally prevailed. Probably he had seen in Egypt reasons enough for his aversion, and had suffered deeply in person. He had seen, too, there all those abuses of despotic power which he describes so graphically, and which some critics suppose refer to the practices of Solomon's court, as if that king did more than imitate Egyptian practices. And yet he must have been aware that monarchy was the political constitution which would best ensure the independence of the people, and give them strength for war. For it alone would combine the scattered forces of the tribes, and compel them to act in concert. Deliberately he put this aside, with the feeling nevertheless that the people sooner or later would demand it. What he chose was what he thought would conduce most

The form of government selected to be set up in Palestine.

The kingly form set aside.

Distrust of
kings
justified.

to the moral and religious advancement of Israel. Probably he had counted too largely upon the influence which the Levites would exercise; but this, even when supplemented by that of the prophets, who certainly did not fail in activity or zeal, proved politically insufficient. But the distrust of kings entertained by Moses was fully justified. Jeroboam, as we have seen, swept the Levites away. Even Saul, the first king, made the race of Aaron feel his power; and though David and most of his descendants were friendly to priests and Levites, yet they never attempted to carry out the law in all its enactments. Many of them even disliked it, and Manasseh did his best to uproot it. The reason of this no doubt was that the law of Moses made the priest with the Urim and Thummim superior to the king; and many of the early prophets actually compelled the kings to obey them. The intention of Moses had apparently been to make the race of Aaron the real rulers of the people, with the Levites as their ministers. Their influence was to be mainly moral, and unhappily there was a want of means of making that influence sufficiently felt. The occasional visit to the central seat of the ark was not enough; nor do the Levites seem to have realized the importance of their duties. Samuel added the prophetic schools, but they too were not enough. Finally, the synagogue was formed; and when a place of worship was provided

Want of
means to
make the
Levitical
influence
adequately
felt.

in every town and village, and the Scriptures read there every Sabbath day, Israel became true to its law, and the times of ignorance and rebellion passed away. Unhappily, with the mass of the people, formalism then took the place of the heathenism too common before; while the Sadducees retained the old indifference to all that was best in the Mosaic law.

Supplementary institutions.

The spread of formalism.

Alike the patriotism, the self-denial, and the purposes sought by Moses are intelligible, if he were a real man, but the history is most improbable if he were a mythical hero. He might have made his own son his successor in the chieftainship: as a matter of fact he passes him by, and chooses instead Joshua, a young noble of the race of Ephraim. On the conquest of Canaan, Joshua received large landed estates, but for the sons of Moses there was nothing more than their share of the Levitical offerings. Even the headship of the tribe of Levi belonged to Aaron, the elder brother of Moses; and upon him and his descendants the high priesthood was conferred. They did consequently hold a grand position; but as for Moses himself, in 1 Chron. vi., after he has been barely mentioned, his race entirely drops out of the genealogy, while the family of Aaron is carefully described. All this is full of meaning typically, and finds its explanation in New Testament truths; but to these I must not refer, as they lie outside

The conduct of Moses unintelligible if he were a mythical hero.

Typical significance.

The
priesthood
permanent
and
hereditary,
but not the
office held
by Moses.

the argument. I only point out the facts as given in the narrative, that while Moses conferred the spiritual power on Aaron, and provided for its permanent continuance, he took diligent care that his own kingly office (Deut. xxxiii. 5), should neither be permanent nor hereditary. Yet hereditary rights were not unknown. The princes of each tribe were hereditary. The heads of the "fathers' houses" were hereditary, and in times of emergency their power became considerable. We gather from the words of Gideon (Judges vi. 15) that it was to them that the people looked for help. Yet Moses had impressed upon the nation so deep a dislike of the despotic power of kings, that Gideon resolutely refused that office when pressed upon him by the people after the defeat of Midian (Judges viii. 22, 23), and when already it was becoming manifest that the nation did need some central authority to bind it together, and give it security against foreign aggression.

A dislike of
despotic
kingly power
impressed
upon the
people.

The purpose
of Moses
with
reference to
the national
life in
Canaan.

The purpose which Moses was led to form was that after the conquest of Canaan the people should live in a state of patriarchal simplicity and of peace. He deliberately refused them that which would have made them strong for war; and Joshua, after the conclusion of the war, was to be merely a great landowner. There was to be no tyranny or despotism at home, and no aggression upon the neighbouring people. The theocracy is the most

perfect of ideal governments, but it requires a high state of morality in the people, great faith in God, and the maintenance of a manly spirit of patriotism throughout the nation. It was the want of this which caused its failure. There was not much feeling of fellowship among the tribes. Judah, which was to have been Israel's mainstay in war, kept aloof. Ephraim, the tribe which held the central position, while claiming the leadership, did little for the rest, and was disliked by them. Nowhere was there any strong sense of allegiance to Jehovah as their king; and we do not find that the Levites were either particularly active or successful in keeping alive in the hearts of the people a warm love for the Mosaic law. And yet, if in its external fortunes the political constitution of Moses was not successful; if Israel's existence was a troubled one, with but few periods of golden sunshine, nevertheless it accomplished its higher and spiritual work. It produced a very heroic national life, and one ever struggling onwards. Had Israel enjoyed a larger degree of ease and prosperity and security, it would not have accomplished its work for God so well. No sooner even did it attain unto empire under David, than, after a short era of earthly glory, the Divine Providence rent it into two petty kingdoms. When built up again by the piety of Ezra and Nehemiah, the conquests of Alexander placed in its neighbourhood states too powerful

Why the
theocracy
failed.

The work it
actually ac-
complished.

Gentile
supremacy.

The pheno-
mena of
Jewish
history.

The purpose
of the
Mosaic law.

Conclusion
from the
facts
surveyed.

Features of
the natural
life
described
in the
Pentateuch.

for it to be able to cope with them. The empire of the world was given to Assyrians and Persians, Greeks and Romans. The Jews were chosen for an entirely different purpose; and to this very day they set before us the same phenomenon that has ever marked their history, of a continued and permanent existence under temporal circumstances of a most adverse character. And we believe that the law of Moses was given for the sake of Israel's spiritual development, and that it fully accomplished its divine purpose.

We have examined, then, the facts as given in the history, and also inquired into the conduct, the purpose, and views of Moses in the establishment of the Levitical law, and have seen what were the influences to which he trusted for its maintenance. And we venture to say that at no time, except when they were just entering upon the conquest of Canaan, would such a state of things as we have described have been possible. We find in the Pentateuch a striving after an ideal perfection, and the expectation that, after taking possession of the promised land, the people would lead a peaceful life, blessed with a pure morality, high spiritual privileges, security from without, and self-restraint and respect for the rights of others at home. But the sole means used by the lawgiver are moral. Dispersed among the tribes, the Levites are to maintain among them the living power of religion; and for

its protection Israel must trust in God, who, if it is faithful to His service, will use supernatural means in its behalf. We find Isaiah picturing again such an ideal of earthly perfection in chaps. xi. and lxxv. There is the same longing, the same aspiration in the Christian Church. It would be untrue to say that Christianity has failed because the general state of Christendom falls so far short of the ideal proposed. Equally untrue is it to speak of the Mosaic law as a failure, because it too never realized its high expectations. Then as now it was a high privilege for God's people to have a noble ideal of faith and duty set before them, and in all the worthier members of the nation there was a continual striving to reach the high standard proposed. The difference between the two dispensations is, that Christianity, being intended for all mankind, enacts great principles, which each country is to embody in laws and institutions, according to the requirements of time and place. The Levitical law was for one small nation in one small corner of the world, and intended to last only until another prophet should come invested with powers similar to those of Moses (Deut. xviii. 15). In its higher object the Mosaic law was not unsuccessful. The ideal state of things which it proposed was rather a goal after which the nation was to struggle, than a thing capable of actual realization. The great objects, as we Christians

Similar features in the Christian Church.

Differences between Christianity and the Mosaic law.

The higher object of the Mosaic law accomplished.

The threefold object of the Levitical law.

believe, of the Levitical law were, first of all, to prepare the way for the advent of the Messiah; secondly, to keep alive in the hearts of Israel the expectation of His coming; and thirdly, to give proof of His nature and office now that He has come.

The non-earthly objects of the Mosaic law proved by the Levitical arrangements.

I mention this not as any part of the argument to those outside the faith, but because many who believe might be distressed on finding that Moses proposed the establishment of a state of things on earth which never came to pass. Had the objects of the Mosaic law been earthly, it would be hard to understand how their lawgiver could have left the Israelites without any provision for their security from external attack; or how he could have trusted to the distribution of the Levites into forty-eight towns, four in each tribe, for the maintenance of that high state of piety and morality which actually existed during the days of Joshua, and the elders who had been brought under Moses' personal influence. But this seems to me an unassailable proof that Moses was the author of the Levitical law; for when would such an arrangement have been possible except just at the time when the people were entering upon the conquest of Canaan?

Only Moses could have been the author of the law.

It could not have been a post-exilian invention.

Gainsayers cannot say that this description was an invention of the priests and Levites after the return from Babylon, to bolster up their excessive claims. For if those claims had not had a very

solid foundation, the descendants of David would not have abstained so meekly from all attempts to re-establish the royal power. But besides this, we find that the Samaritans, who were very hostile to the Jews on many religious points, accepted the Pentateuch as their national law. The Samaritan characters are the old letters used by the Jews before the captivity, and resemble those found on the Moabite stone, and in the inscription lately discovered in the subterranean channel cut through the rock to convey the waters of Siloam into Jerusalem. We find them still used on the coins of the Asmonean princes of Judea, and it is probable that it was only gradually that the present Hebrew alphabet took the place of the old style of writing, and that the manuscripts used by Ezra were written in the same characters as have been retained in the Samaritan Pentateuch to this day. Now, not only did the Samaritans acknowledge the authority of the Pentateuch, but they attest its antiquity by the fact that its language was so obsolete that they could not understand it, and that consequently they were obliged to have a translation of it made for common use.

Acceptance
of the
Pentateuch
by the
Samaritans.

The
Samaritan
translation,
a proof of its
antiquity.

The same was the case with the Jews (Neh. viii. 8); for at Babylon they had learned to speak an Aramaic dialect, already in general use in Palestine before; for Jeremiah often employs it. Parts of Ezra and Daniel are in this tongue, and

among the Ten Tribes it seems to have generally prevailed, and must further have been strangely corrupted in Samaria by the admixture of the languages spoken by the motley tribes which the Assyrians planted in the land (2 Kings xvii. 24). It is a remarkable fact that Hebrew thus became virtually an obsolete language during the captivity, and that the Jews, in order to understand it, made for themselves a translation, called the Chaldee Targum or Paraphrase, and that the Samaritans likewise had a Targum of their own. Now, it is absolutely incredible that Jews and Samaritans should both alike have accepted as their national law a book written in an obsolete language, unless that book had come down to them from ancient times as one of acknowledged authority.

The Jews of the captivity required a translation.

The antiquity and acknowledged authority of the book proved by its acceptance by Jews and Samaritans.

The Samaritans did not accept any other book of the Old Testament as authoritative. It was therefore no common-place act, nor one done without discrimination. Moreover, the Pentateuch bore hardly upon them. The first priest of the temple on Mount Gerizim was a grandson of Eliashib, the high priest at Jerusalem, chased by Nehemiah from his office in the Jewish temple for marrying a daughter of Sanballat, the governor of Samaria (Neh. xiii. 28; Josephus *Antiq.* xi. 7, 2), in disobedience to the command given in Deut. vii. 3. Others had been expelled with him, and yet no one ventured to dispute the authority of

the book, the decrees of which were being carried out so rigorously against themselves. We can account for this in no other way than by the fact that they found the Pentateuch in existence when they were compelled to settle in Samaria, and revered as their law by the old inhabitants of the land. It is utterly beyond belief that they should have accepted it from their rivals in Jerusalem. Yet in their land Jeroboam had stripped the Levites of their privileges, had admitted any one without distinction to the priesthood, and had gone so entirely counter to the Mosaic law that priests and Levites and even pious laymen had withdrawn from his dominions, and migrated to Judea, that they might worship according to their ancient faith (2 Chron. xi. 13-17).¹

The authority of the book recognized by the Samaritans even when its decrees were executed against themselves.

Now, had there been a succession of kings like Jeroboam, it would have been well-nigh impossible for the Pentateuch to have retained its authority in Israel. Gradually it would have been rooted out. Equally impossible would have been the

¹ The time when the Pentateuch was received by the people of Samaria as their national law is much discussed, and is by no means certain. See Nutt, *Samaritan Targum, with Introduction*. 1874. But the facts are admitted, that it was received by them as authoritative; that it contains readings different from both the Hebrew and the Septuagint texts; that it was translated into their patois, and fragments of their version are gradually accumulating in our libraries; and that it bore so hardly upon the Samaritans and upon the first high priest of their temple on Mount Gerizim, that they would scarcely have accepted it had not its authority been incontestable.

Observance
of many
Mosaic
precepts in
the kingdom
of Samaria
referred to
in the
prophecies
of Hosea,
Joel, and
Amos.

Elijah and
Elisha.

Their
influence.

Its limits.

remarkable fact that in the short compass of the books of Hosea, Joel, and Amos, all of them prophets to the Ten Tribes, a very large number of minute precepts of the Mosaic law are incidentally referred to as then observed in the kingdom of Samaria.¹ But when we turn to the history we find all this explained. After the overthrow of priests and Levites in Israel, there was a remarkable outburst there of prophetic activity. Elijah, the most energetic of the prophets, even wrought an entire recovery in the national faith by his contest with Ahab on Mount Carmel (1 Kings xviii. 39), and in spite of that king's hostility to Jehovah, and the more bitter and persecuting hatred of Jezebel, brought back the Ten Tribes to their ancient creed. And as we find him in his last journey, before his translation, occupied in visiting the schools of the prophets, it is evident that he had called them again into existence; and the life of his successor Elisha was spent in fostering and tending them. So great was the influence of these men that they placed Jehu upon the throne; and though he did less than they desired, yet he and his dynasty gave at least a nominal allegiance to Jehovah. He did not overthrow the rival worship at Bethel and Dan, nor restore the Levites to their old place; but the prophets were free to exercise their

¹ For a list of such passages see the article on the Pentateuch in Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.

influence, and the Mosaic law was more or less the law of the land. It would probably have been very difficult to have re-established the Aaronic priesthood, and to have restored to the Levites their cities and lands. Even after the interval of a very few years, Charles II. made no attempt to give back to the heirs of those who had suffered for his father their forfeited estates. Nearly a century had passed away since Jero-boam drove the Levites from their homes, and other rights had grown valid in the meanwhile. But, as the writings of the three prophets attest, the Levitical law was observed; and in the schools of the prophets copies of the law would be made, and large portions of it learnt by heart by the scholars.

The Mosaic law partially established.

Really we learn a great deal from the history of Jehu and his successors; for they are condemned for allowing the continuance in the ten tribes of that state of things which had generally existed in earlier days. It must, indeed, be granted, that the ark at Jerusalem, and the service in the temple there, held a higher place in the national estimation than had been attached to the sanctuary at Shiloh; and the local sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan¹ were more directly rivals to it. Still there are many indica-

Improved state of matters under Jehu and his successors.

¹ The history of this sanctuary is very remarkable. The manner of its foundation is described again and again as a fact illustrating the utter lawlessness of the times (Judg. xvii. 6; xviii. 1); nevertheless we find that so great was the value

Prophetic expectations from Jehu only partially fulfilled.

tions that when the prophets placed Jehu on the throne, they had hoped for a more complete restoration of the Mosaic law than was actually effected. For Jehu succumbed to the old influences, and while forbidding the service of any God but Jehovah, yet did not feel himself strong enough to interfere with the popular manner of worship.

The history from Jeroboam to the fall of the northern kingdom proves the genuineness of the Mosaic law.

Thus the history of the times, from Jeroboam to the fall of the northern kingdom, forbids the belief that the Mosaic law could have been an invention or forgery of the period between the disruption of the kingdom and the exile in Babylon; for it was acknowledged in both portions of the divided kingdom as their national code, though in neither Israel nor Judah was it carried out in the spirit of loyal obedience. In Israel, the kings from Jeroboam to Ahab were its foes, yet it remained so strong in influence that upon it rested the mighty power exercised by the prophets. Subsequently, alike Samaritans and Jews attest its existence as a document of great antiquity at the period of the return from captivity; and it is not merely impro-

attached to the presence of a Levite that the having one within the gates was regarded as a surety that Jehovah would grant the family prosperity. What makes the occurrence more remarkable is that this Levite was a descendant of Moses, the inserted *n* making the name Manasseh, being in the Hebrew written over the word (Judg. xviii. 30).

bable, but impossible, that they would either of them have accepted from the other a law which demanded of them an unconditional obedience, unless its claims were of the highest kind. When, then, we may ask, could it have been enacted, if not by Moses previously to the conquest of Canaan?

Any other date for the Pentateuch than the conquest of Canaan is impossible.

Certainly not in the times of the Judges. The state of things was then anarchical; and turbulence, foreign oppression, and internal weakness prevailed.

It could not have been written in the time of the Judges.

Once indeed the tribes combined to destroy Benjamin, and that for a wrong done to a Levite; but the fact to be explained is that the Levites were left without possessions, and yet given a position regarded as one of great honour. No war or revolt could have accomplished so strange an arrangement. And when we come to the age of Samuel, we find him supplementing the institution of priests and Levites by an entirely fresh organization. He does not revive a central sanctuary, with the tabernacle and ark as the symbol of the Divine Presence, such as had existed at Shiloh in his own youthful days. On the contrary, he leaves the ark at the house of a private person, where it remained until the days of David (2 Sam. vi. 2). The reason of this is to be found in the preference given by Samuel to the moral as compared with the ritual teaching of the law (1 Sam. xv. 22). It was not then to the ark but to his schools that this great reformer looked for the

Nor in the time of Samuel.

Samuel preferred the moral to the ritual teaching of the law.

No preference given to the priests and Levites in the schools founded by Samuel.

The schools not founded on the Pentateuch.

Their origin.

They met a want.

The preservation of the Old Testament Scriptures due to them.

restoration of Israel; and he gave no preference in them to priests and Levites. They were open to all, and wrought wonders in rapidly raising the mental and moral state of the people. But there is nothing in the Pentateuch on which they are founded. That was the title-deed of the nation to Palestine, and contained an account of the institutions by which the national life was to be maintained: but Samuel's schools found in them no authorization, and nothing on which to ground their existence. Probably they grew out of an attempt made by Samuel, to teach to a few young men lodged in booths in the Naioth, or meadows near his home at Ramah, the arts of reading and writing which he had himself learned at Shiloh. He had probably felt the need of young and active men to assist him in his undertakings, and began to train such as came to his hand. And the institution grew and filled up a great want; and there can be little doubt that to the schools of the prophets we owe the preservation of the Old Testament Scriptures. But Samuel never attempted to restore the Levitical law, nor to confine himself within its limits. He found the nation on the very verge of ruin (1 Sam. xiii. 19, 20); and while the ark was hidden away at Kirjath-Jearim, and the Philistines were the dominant power, he was labouring steadily to bring back the people to the worship of Jehovah; but his main object throughout was

the restoration of moral purity and personal holiness (*ibid.* xii. 14-25). As soon as they were ready to put away their Baalim and Ashtoreth (*ibid.* vii. 4), he openly threw off the Philistine yoke, and became the civil governor, acting as judge, especially in the central part, where the Benjamites dwelt. Saul completed the work of Israel's independence, and at first greatly honoured the priests of Aaron's line (*ibid.* xiv. 3). But neither by Samuel nor by Saul was any attempt made to establish the law of Moses thoroughly, though each did something towards its better observance. But had it been a forgery by Samuel or even a compilation from documents rescued from Shiloh, it would have borne more directly upon the circumstances of the time, and the attempt would have been made to carry it out more fully. This was not done; and we cannot see that either Samuel or Saul at any time possessed either the power, or had the wish to invest the Levites with exceptional privileges; or that the Levites would have given up their lands and tribal possessions and independence in order that they might be dispersed throughout the country, for the purpose of maintaining by moral influence, institutions lately invented. What Samuel really did was to supplement the influence of the Levites, which had proved insufficient to save the nation from decay, by a new organization of young men of any tribe, taught to

Samuel's main object the restoration of moral purity and personal holiness.

Had Samuel forged or compiled the Pentateuch it would have borne more directly on the times and been more fully carried out.

Samuel supplemented the influence of the Levites.

read the law and love it; but made even more earnest as regards its moral exactments than its ritual observances (1 Sam. xv. 22).

David could not have established the Levitical institutions.

David alone remains, a monarch undeniably of great power, and thoroughly in earnest in his love for the Mosaic law, and especially for that most important principle of having a central sanctuary which the people should regularly visit, and whither they should bring their offerings. Though not permitted to build the temple because of his constant wars, in which certainly he had violated the Mosaic ideal of Israel's national existence, he made great preparations for it, and especially he distributed the priests into their courses, and arranged the musical services of the sanctuary. Confessedly the position of priest and Levite was made by him one of great honour, and I could quite imagine men giving up their farms to hold such distinguished positions. What is inconceivable is that he should have taken a whole tribe, and that no trace should remain of such a revolutionary measure as the dispossessing them of their property to make them thus ministers of religion. Surely some geographical vestiges would remain to indicate their former location, and there would have been long discontent at the driving of the inhabitants away from forty-eight towns to give them to this tribe thus suddenly metamorphosed.

No geographical traces of his setting apart the tribe, as there could not fail to have been had he done it.

We find the influence of Samuel's schools on

the services of the sanctuary. For the sons of Jeduthun are said to "prophesy with a harp." So it is said that Asaph and others "prophesied according to the commandment of the king" (1 Chron. xxv. 2, 3), that is, played music. Samuel had made great use of religious music in his schools, and minstrelsy was hence called prophesying. David, therefore, would have found in the prophets men capable of playing with instruments, and already partly trained for his use; but we can see no possibility that a whole tribe accustomed to other occupations would have been fit for his purposes. The only feasible explanation is that they had from the days of Moses been set apart for God's service, and that the king submitted to institutions which he found in existence.

So also David distinguished the descendants of Aaron from the rest, though the distinction between priest and Levite is said by the higher criticism to belong to the last, or Levitical law-code. The history gives the pathetic account of Eli's death; the horrible cruelty of Saul to the priests at Nob; the flight of Abiathar to David, and the long friendship between the two. Is all this a baseless invention? If not—and no sane man could suppose that these narratives had absolutely no foundation—if then, they have any truth in them, even though they be but popular tales, then the race of Aaron was dominant at a

The influence of Samuel's schools traceable in David's action.

The Levites must have been set apart by Moses.

The facts of David's history inconsistent with the view that the distinction between priest and Levite was of very late origin.

The Mosaic
origin
explains
everything.

central sanctuary, placed in the territory of powerful Ephraim, and the Levites were a tribe to whom no possessions had been given, but who were dispersed among the rest. If this was done by Moses, all is natural. It was a most enviable position if it were secure; and it would only be secure if the law was so firmly established in the hearts of the people as to be certain of being established in Canaan as soon as the conquest was complete. The people were rebellious and of a stiff neck, but the history describes them as obedient to the law during the days of Joshua and of the elders who had known Moses. The command of Moses could easily be carried out in Joshua's days, for the Levites would readily accept, and the people willingly concede, the exceptional place assigned them. At no other time was it possible, or even conceivable.

No other
theory can
explain the
facts.

We have, then, in the circumstances of the Levites a strong proof that the institutions of Moses date from the conquest of Canaan. At no subsequent period could the Levites have been so separated from the rest. And at no subsequent time could the Pentateuch have been written. Not under the kings, or it would have put more favourably the merits of a form of government which had rescued Israel from the depths of internal weakness and decay, and given it strength and empire. Not by Samuel, or it would have been

made more suited to his times, and given more direct aid to his reformatations. Not under the anarchy of the Judges. For the ideal state contemplated in the Pentateuch of a people strong in faith and pure in morality, living under the direct protection of Jehovah, was the very reverse of the miserable reality.

This general argument might suffice for our purpose, but a few words may still seem desirable with respect to the three codes, of which we are assured by the disciples of the higher criticism that they are proved by internal evidence to belong to a late period in Jewish history.

The three codes.

Now, in the code contained in Exod. xx.—xxiv., we have brief commands upon a few necessary matters, such as would have been useful certainly for Jehoshaphat's judges, but of which many were equally necessary in the wilderness, and all would have been required on taking possession of the Promised Land. Neither priests nor Levites are mentioned in it, nor any religious matters except the Sabbath, the Sabbatical year, and the appearing before Jehovah at the three great feasts. But bound up with it are promises of supernatural aid in the subjugation of the nations in Canaan, and the words of Exod. xxiii. 20—33 could have been written only in the wilderness, unless the whole be a deliberate forgery. Moreover, if the proof that a law was not kept be proof that it was not enacted,

The contents of the code in Exodus xx.—xxiv.

The non-observance no proof of the non-enactment of a law.

The Sabbatical year enacted by it never kept.

The Deuteronomic code could not have grown up in Manasseh's time.

Jeremiah could not have written it.

then this code no more came into existence in the days of Jehoshaphat than in those of Moses. For the Sabbatical year never was kept at any time whatsoever, and apparently no more by Ezra than by Samuel or David, even though the seventy years of exile were regarded as a punishment for disobedience to this law. But no great stress is laid upon this code, and of far more importance is the code in Deuteronomy, said to have been incorporated in the Mosaic legislation, early in the reign of Josiah. Now, first, there is here an antecedent improbability; for the argument supposes that this code grew up during the dark days of Manasseh, when that king, with fanatic zeal, did his cruel utmost to destroy priest and prophet, and to root out the religion of Jehovah. There used to be a short way out of this difficulty by assuming that Jeremiah, was the author of Deuteronomy; but this theory is abandoned. Not only is it granted that the style of Deuteronomy is classical, while that of Jeremiah is debased by the presence in it of numerous Aramaic forms, but also that very much in the book was utterly distasteful to the priests at Jerusalem,¹ and that Josiah, earnest as he was, could not therefore carry it into practice. Undoubtedly the language both of the Book of Jeremiah and of those of the Kings is coloured by the

¹ See Robertson Smith's *Old Testament in Jewish Church*, p. 354.

thoughts and the phraseology of Deuteronomy ; but this is the result of the deep impression made by the discovery of the book, and we are told that this impression was made, not by the code, but by the threats contained in other parts of Deuteronomy, because all pious men felt that they must be near their fulfilment.

The Book of Jeremiah coloured by the thoughts and language of Deuteronomy.

But how could a feeling, reaching almost to terror (2 Kings xxii. 11, 13), have been created by a "legal fiction," which grew up when the whole religion of Jehovah was proscribed, and which had no author? Legal fictions get into codes of law by the general consent of lawyers for convenience sake, and because they have been forms long known and used. Usually they were facts first, and came to be fictions by being retained when the facts had changed. Moreover, are we to suppose that Hilkiah and Ahikam, and the other priests and princes mentioned in 2 Kings xxii. 14, were men so devoid of understanding as to be imposed upon by a recent forgery, and take it for a document many centuries old?

The priests and princes of Josiah's time could not have been imposed on by a recent forgery.

But it is said that Deuteronomy was not observed until the days of Josiah, and therefore could not have existed. Let us form a judgment upon this argument by one very remarkable fact. The Israelites kept the Passover once only in the wilderness (Num. ix. 5) ; they did not keep it again until the rite of circumcision had been renewed at Gilgal (Josh v. 10), and henceforward the Passover drops

Argument from non-observance refuted.

entirely out of sight until the reign of Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 21). It does not follow that it never was kept, nor does silence prove that other Mosaic institutions were not kept, though probably in a careless and occasional manner. But if thus the Passover, which is an integral part of the history in Exodus, and anterior in its founding to all the laws, was so neglected, the assertion that Deuteronomy did not exist, because it, too, was neglected, rests evidently upon a basis too weak to give us any confidence in its stability.

Adaptation
of Deuteronomy
to the time
anterior to
the conquest
of Canaan.

There is also much in Deuteronomy which belonged to the time just anterior to the conquest of Canaan; much admirably adapted to win the affections of the people for their law; and it is only by laying stress on detached particulars that it can be pressed down to a late date. But I must hasten to the third, and to my mind the most extraordinary conclusion of Reuss¹ and his followers, namely, that the priest-code, contained in the middle books of the Pentateuch, was subsequent to the Deuteronomic code, and came into existence in the period between Ezekiel and Ezra.

Reuss's
theory of the
date of the
priest-code.

By this theory we are asked to believe that the tribe of Levi was at an early date deprived of all share of the conquered country, and placed in a dependent and inferior position, though it was the

¹ First promulgated in his article on "Judenthum," in Ersch & Grüber's *Encyclopædia* in 1833.

lawgiver's own tribe, while the Levitical law, which gave it compensation, was enacted only after a lapse of some hundreds of years.

We are asked also to believe that the Book of Ezekiel is a sort of tentative programme standing half-way between the Deuteronomic code and the Levitical, which latter was a scheme for thorough sacerdotal supremacy, palmed off at the return from exile. Yet the royal house of David accepted this new legislation without a struggle, and alike Jews and Samaritans acknowledged it, though an utterly modern creation, as the undoubted law of their ancestors in olden time.

Its demand
on our
belief.

We are asked also to believe that the Temple preceded the Tabernacle. It was natural for the mind of Ezekiel in exile to revert to the thought of the temple at Jerusalem, and to connect with it his reform, and his picture of Israel's future. It is incredible that Ezra, or any priest similarly in exile, should have built his scheme of priestly rule upon the tabernacle, and the incidents of the life of wanderers in the wilderness. These Levitical laws all point to the wilderness as the home of Israel at the time when they were framed, and this gives strong internal evidence for their genuineness. If framed at Babylon, in a region the very opposite in all respects of the wilderness, they must have betrayed their falsity: but the higher critics detect no traces of this inevitable result.

The theory
incredible.

The higher criticism taxes faith more than the old belief which it repudiates.

It is difficult to believe all this, and generally we find that the disciples of the higher criticism tax our faith infinitely more than the old belief did which they pronounce incredible. But there is one other thing even more difficult; for we are required to believe that the spiritual teaching of the prophets preceded the ritual teaching of the law.

Isaiah.

Isaiah, at a time when, as the result of Hezekiah's restoration of the temple services, its courts were thronged with worshippers, pronounced all Levitical observances to be an abomination, if offered without purity of heart (Isa. i. 13). Jeremiah,

Jeremiah.

deeply impressed with the teaching of the Book of Deuteronomy, yet regarded the temple as almost a hindrance in his way (Jer. vii. 4); and instead of the Mosaic covenant made at the time when "God took Israel by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt," longed for a new covenant written on men's hearts (chap. xxxi. 31-34). Ezekiel,

Ezekiel.

while explaining and modifying many Mosaic enactments, yet has no desire for the restoration of the Levitical ritual, but looks forward to a new covenant to replace that of Moses (Ezek. xxxvii. 21-28; and xxxvi. 26). Now these two prophets especially influenced the minds of the exiles at Babylon. Their repentance there was emphatically Jeremiah's work. The prophets, moreover, formed a learned, a numerous, and a powerful class. They were too men thoroughly in earnest. Yet we are

The prophetic class.

asked to believe that their teaching was entirely put aside, and that they quietly acquiesced in this surrender of the work of centuries.

Incredible that their teaching was set aside.

Let us take but a single point. The Levitical theory of the Atonement is most precious when regarded as prefiguring the sacrifice of Christ. Its value lies in its typical teaching. But until the substance was revealed in Christ it was insufficient, and psalmist and prophet alike pronounced it so, and longed for something better to cleanse the heart and conscience than the blood of bulls and goats. And yet we are to believe that prophet and psalmist come first, and the Levitical sacrifice afterwards.

The true value of the Levitical theory of the Atonement.

And herein, perhaps, lies the solution of the difficulty which the higher criticism endeavours to remove. The Mosaic law was not strictly kept, and holy and inspired men laboured less zealously than we might have expected for its observance; partly because the political condition of Israel forbade; partly because it was above the moral state of the people, and was intended gradually to raise and elevate them; but chiefly because it was prophetic. Its great use was for future times. And so placed first, with the prophets to build upon it a teaching full of spiritual longings, and leading onwards to Christ, all is in its place. The temple ritual was replete with typical truth, and this the prophets partly unfolded, and so prepared for its

The solution of the problem which the higher criticism fails to solve.

The Mosaic law prophetic.

Personal holiness the first lesson of the prophets.

The expectation of a better covenant their second lesson.

The three codes Mosaic.

Their differences explained.

full realization in Christ. But their first lesson, from Samuel onward, was that personal holiness must come before ritual. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice." And their next lesson was that of hope and the confident expectation of the revelation of a better covenant, which should be written on men's hearts, and which could take away sin. But to reverse this, and suppose that the Levitical theory took form after the uprising of the prophetic schools, and could be inserted in the Pentateuch without stern resistance on the part of the prophets; and to imagine that the change in men's hearts wrought at Babylon by the teaching of Jeremiah, ended in the invention of an elaborate code, framed on the idea of life in the wilderness, and of a moveable tabernacle, all this is incredible; and until stronger arguments have been brought forward in proof, we must respectfully withhold our assent, and continue to believe that all three codes were the work of Moses, and differ chiefly because they were promulgated at different times, and give different aspects of a legislation that was prophetic in its main and most precious teaching.

THE
AUTHENTICITY
OF THE
FOUR GOSPELS.

BY
HENRY WACE, B.D., D.D.

PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S, PREACHER OF LINCOLN'S INN, PROFESSOR OF
ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY IN KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON, CHAPLAIN
TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

AUTHOR OF

"Christianity and Morality" (Boyle Lectures); *"The Foundations of Faith"*
(Bampton Lectures); *"The Gospel and its Witnesses,"* etc.



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:
56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
164, PICCADILLY.

Argument of the Tract.

THE evidence furnished by the opening passage of the Acts of the Apostles to the authorship of the third Gospel, the internal evidence of the Acts to the personality of the author and the various circumstances which identify him as St. Luke are pointed out. The medical language which permeates both the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles is shown to confirm this conclusion. The admissions of M. Renan with reference to St. Luke's authorship of the books are adduced, and the value of them as embodying the conclusions of a hostile witness is indicated. St. Luke is shown to have had ample opportunities of instituting inquiries into the truth of the facts which he records, and a comparison between him and Tacitus as historians in this respect is instituted. The establishment of the authenticity of St. Luke's writings is shown to obviate practically the objections to the other three Gospels. Those Gospels are proved however to rest on sufficient evidence. The value of M. Renan's conclusions as invalidating the force of the objections of sceptical criticism is pointed out, and the admissions of distinguished negative critics are quoted with reference to their fundamental objection to the authenticity of the Gospels, namely, the fact that the writers record supernatural events.

THE
AUTHENTICITY OF THE FOUR GOSPELS.



THIS is a question which during the present century has been discussed with the most intense eagerness. Perhaps there is no other on which such an amount of critical labour has been bestowed, or which in its various aspects has occasioned so much excitement. The controversy began at the latter part of the last century; it was brought to a crisis, which aroused anxiety throughout Europe, by the publication in the year 1835 of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*. His criticism was succeeded by that of the Tübingen school, founded by Baur. The challenges thus offered to the faith of the Church were met by numerous and able theologians both in Germany and in this country; and every point in the argument has been contested with the utmost keenness. The prolonged and vehement character of this contest is certainly not disproportioned to its importance. Nothing can be of more consequence to Christians than to know whether they have good reason for their belief

The eagerness with which the question has been discussed.

The beginning of the controversy.

The importance of the controversy

The Gospels not the sole grounds of our faith.

that in the four Gospels they possess four faithful records of the life, the teaching, the death, and the resurrection of their Lord and Master. We are by no means, indeed, entirely dependent on those records for the grounds of our faith, since the Epistles of St. Paul, even if they stood alone, would afford strong testimony to the main facts respecting our Lord which are asserted in the Christian Creed.

They alone afford us full information respecting our Lord's character and work.

But the Gospels alone afford us full information respecting our Lord's character and work ; and they must ever be regarded as the most precious and important of testimonies to His claims.

The chief positions of scepticism are overthrown if they are trustworthy.

It is this, indeed, which has led the sceptics and unbelievers of this century to direct such persistent and fierce attacks upon the Gospels. It has been felt that if they are trustworthy records of what our Lord said and did, the chief positions for which sceptics have contended are at once overthrown. Christ Himself bears witness in those Gospels to His own claims, to His supernatural powers, to all that Christians believe respecting Him. In fact, all cardinal questions of religion are practically answered if the Gospels can be trusted. Our Lord there bears overwhelming testimony to the existence and character of God, to the fact that we are now under God's government, and shall hereafter be judged by Him, and to the truth that He Himself can alone save us from our sins and their consequences. Accordingly, the simple facts of the

All the cardinal questions of religion practically answered if they are trustworthy.

Gospel history were from the earliest moment the sum and substance of the Apostles' preaching. In the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we have a record of St. Peter's first address to a Gentile audience; and it is like a brief summary of one of our Gospels. He tells Cornelius "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil; for God was with Him . . . whom they slew and hanged on a tree; Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly; . . . and He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." Such has ever been in substance the message of the Gospel. The chief question which has exercised the minds of men in our own time is whether the four records we possess of that Gospel can be relied upon.

The facts of Gospel history the sum and substance of the Apostles' preaching.

Can the Gospels be relied upon?

Now, if we wish to know whether any narrative or statement which we cannot ourselves verify is true, the first question to be asked is, On whose authority does it rest? Is it reported to us by persons who had the means of knowing the facts, and whose accounts can be trusted? If such accounts were written by contemporaries who

Were the writers well informed and trustworthy?

either themselves witnessed the events narrated, or who were intimately associated with such eye-witnesses, we have the highest kind of evidence which in historical matters is possible. It will be necessary of course to inquire further into the honesty and good judgment of such writers; but the first and most important inquiry must be whether their evidence is that of contemporaries. This accordingly is the point which has been chiefly challenged by writers who wish to discredit the trustworthiness of the Gospels; and it is the main question to which we shall address ourselves.

By whom
were the
Gospels
written, and
when?

By whom were the Gospels written, and when? If there is good reason to believe that they were written by Apostles or intimate friends of Apostles, the main objections which have been raised to their credibility within this century will at once fall to the ground.

The case a
very simple
one.

Now, notwithstanding the elaborate character of the controversies which have been raised respecting this question, it will be found that the case can after all be very simply stated. It might be supposed, from the manner in which the problem is generally discussed by opponents of the Christian faith, that some elaborate and far-fetched argument is necessary in order to vindicate the received belief respecting the Gospels. There could not be a greater misapprehension. It is the case of our opponents that is marked by these characteristics;

our own is perfectly straightforward and simple. The four Gospels bear upon their title-pages, as we should now say, the statement that they were written by St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John. That is the way in which, from the earliest date, the words, "according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John," were understood. No suspicion can be shown to have been entertained by any writer of the first few centuries that these inscriptions had any other meaning, or that the meaning thus implied was untrue. Now, if in our own day a book appears with a name purporting to be that of the author on the title-page, and not a single doubt is expressed during his own lifetime or the lifetime of any of his friends as to the fact of his having written it, who would doubt that he had done so?

The Gospels attributed to St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John.

No doubt entertained as to the authorship in the first few centuries.

It is not merely with respect to modern books that this principle is acted upon; it is equally adopted with respect to ancient books. The works of Sophocles or Thucydides bear their names; and as the authorship was never doubted in ancient times, we accept it still, unless positive external or internal objections to the contrary can be adduced. But the burden of proof lies on those who urge such objections. If certain books have borne the names of certain authors unquestioned for centuries, we have a right to demand very cogent evidence from those who would have us reject this constant

The burden of proof lies on objectors

The question is, Why should we not receive the primitive and accepted belief?

consent. In short, from the first moment they are heard of, these four books were accepted as the work of the writers whose names they bear. The question is not why should we believe that they were written by those persons; but why should we not believe it?

What the Gospels say for themselves.

But this is only a preliminary step. The most natural and the fairest course is to inquire, in the first place, what the Gospels say for themselves. It is reasonable to allow a witness to speak for himself before we listen to any evidence in opposition to him. Now it so happens that, although the authors of the four Gospels are singularly reticent respecting themselves, two at least of them have incidentally afforded us indications which, in the opinion of all critics, are extremely significant of their individuality and of their positions. This is peculiarly the case in respect to the Gospel of St. Luke; and it will be found the simplest introduction to this part of our subject, if we begin by considering the books which are attributed to him. For in this case we start with the advantage that we have two books on which to base our judgment, instead of one. The book of the Acts of the Apostles opens by a reference to a former book by the same author, and that reference, combined with internal evidence, leaves no practical doubt that this book was the Gospel according to St. Luke. "The former treatise have

The writings of St. Luke.

The Book of the Acts of the Apostles refers to the Gospel by the same writer.

I made, O Theophilus," says the writer, "of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up." But the Gospel according to St. Luke treats of the subject thus defined, and it is similarly addressed to Theophilus. It is moreover generally recognized, even by some of the chief rationalistic critics to whom reference will subsequently be made, that the two treatises are marked by a singular unity of style, idiom, and thought, that one mind conceived the two books, and one hand wrote them. If we can determine who was the author of one of them, we know the author of the other.

It is addressed to the same person.

The style of the two books is the same.

Now, the authorship of the Acts of the Apostles is revealed by one of those pieces of incidental evidence which, in a matter of this kind, are sometimes more convincing than direct statements. In the 16th chapter the writer is describing one of the journeys of St. Paul, and at first he speaks of St. Paul and his companions in the third person. Thus, in the 6th verse, he says "Now when *they* had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia . . . after *they* were come to Mysia, *they* assayed to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not." A vision appeared to Paul in the night bidding him go over to Macedonia; and here the writer suddenly changes his expression, and begins to speak in the first person. In the 10th verse he proceeds, "And after he had seen

Internal evidence of authorship in the Acts of the Apostles.

Connection
of the
author of the
Acts of the
Apostles
with St.
Paul.

the vision, immediately *we* endeavoured to go into Macedonia." It is natural to conclude that at this point the writer joined St. Paul's company. He proceeds with him to Philippi; but appears to have remained there when St. Paul passed on to Amphipolis, as he resumes the third person at the commencement of chapter xvii. But in the 5th verse of chapter xx., where it is described how St. Paul again passed through Philippi when going through Macedonia on his final journey to Jerusalem, the writer begins again to speak of what "we" did. From that time he speaks as though he were constantly in St. Paul's company. He arrived at Jerusalem with him, and was received with him by St. James (xxi. 17, 18); and when St. Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea was terminated by his appeal to Cæsar, the writer accompanies him on his voyage, suffered shipwreck with him, and arrived with him at Rome (xxviii. 16).

References
in St. Paul's
Epistles to
his
companion.

Now from some references in St. Paul's Epistles, there remains no practical doubt who was the person thus associated with St. Paul. In Col. iv. 14, St. Paul sends a salutation from "Luke, the beloved physician;" in 2 Tim. iv. 11, he says, "only Luke is with me;" and at the end of the letter to Philemon, the salutation of Luke is added, among others, to that of St. Paul. St. Luke therefore was an intimate companion of the Apostle; and there is no other known companion to whom the

circumstances mentioned in the Acts are appropriate. Thus the internal evidence which is furnished by the third Gospel, by the Acts of the Apostles, and by St. Paul's Epistles, is in complete harmony with the tradition that St. Luke was the author of both the Gospel and the Acts. A further piece of very striking internal evidence has been added within the last year. St. Paul speaks of Luke as a physician, and it had already been observed that the descriptions of our Lord's miracles of healing in the third Gospel bear traces of the hand and eye of a medical observer. But an Irish scholar, the Rev. Dr. Hobart, published last year a full investigation of what he describes as *The Medical Language of St. Luke*,¹ and he points out the following facts: that we find running throughout the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles a number of words which were either distinctly medical terms, or commonly employed in medical language; that we find a constant use of the same compounds of simple words which the medical writers employ, and that these are for the most part peculiar to this author, or that he makes more frequent use of them than the other New Testament writers; that he alone uses the special medical terms for the distribution of nourishment, blood, nerves, etc., through the body, as well as the medical terms for

The evidence of the Acts of the Apostles and St. Paul's Epistles in harmony with the tradition that St. Luke wrote the third Gospel and the Acts.

The evidence from the use of medical language.

¹ *The Medical Language of St. Luke*, by the Rev. W. K. Hobart, I.L.D. London, 1882.

'stimulation,' and to denote an intermittent or a failing pulse; that there are some words confined to St. Luke and the medical authors in the sense which they bear in his writings; and that the medical style of St. Luke accounts for the very frequent and peculiar use made by him of some words which were habitually employed, and were indeed almost indispensable, in the vocabulary of a physician. This peculiar phraseology, moreover, permeates the entire extent of the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, and thus adds a strong evidence of the integrity of those writings.

Medical language permeates the whole of the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.

Here, then, we have the ancient tradition that St. Luke, the companion of St. Paul, wrote our third Gospel corroborated by various convergent evidences of a very striking character. Now, it is only reasonable to ask that before evidence of this consistent nature is rejected, very clear objections to its validity should be established. No doubt the evidence is in the main circumstantial, and not demonstrative, and it is conceivable therefore that it might be refuted by counter evidence, or by strong objections based on its internal inconsistency. But it is important to observe that the burden of disproof is on the side of the objector; and he ought to be able to make out at least as clear a case on the other side before we can be asked to abandon conclusions which have such a weight of traditional and circumstantial evidence in their

The circumstantial character of the evidence.

Counter evidence should be equally clear and strong.

favour. This being premised, we proceed to inquire to what the objections amount.

It fortunately happens that this inquiry may be very briefly satisfied. It would be equally tedious and unsatisfactory to pursue in detail the innumerable doubts which critics have urged on this subject. But if we are able to adduce a practically impartial estimate of the value of all these objections—an estimate not made by a believing theologian, but by a sceptical critic, who entirely rejects the main teaching of the Gospels as Christians believe it—in short, by one who is in every sense of the word an outside observer, we may feel satisfied that we are in possession of a fair measure of the force of the objections. Such an independent witness we can call upon in the person of M. Renan. The general character of his views respecting our Lord is well known. He entirely disbelieves in any miraculous occurrences, and assumes that whatever reports we have of them, in any historic document whatever, must by some means or other be explained away. He is, therefore, for our purposes, of even more value than a strictly impartial witness. He is a hostile witness; he is prejudiced beforehand against the literal trustworthiness of a document which contains accounts of miracles, and it would be an assistance to his argument if it could be shown that such a document was not the work of a person who had had access to contemporary evidence.

The
testimony
of M. Renan

M. Renan a
hostile
witness.

What, then, is the testimony of M. Renan? It will be found in the Preface to his *Vie de Jésus*, 15th edition, p. xlvi. The passage substantially corresponds to that portion of our argument which has hitherto occupied our attention. He says:—

M. Renan's admissions.

“It is known that each of the four Gospels bears at its head the name of a personage known either in the apostolic history or in the evangelical history itself. It is clear that if these titles are correct, these Gospels, without ceasing to be partly legendary, assume a high value, since they enable us to go back to the half century which followed the life of Jesus, and even, in two cases, to eye-witnesses of his actions.”

The reader will here notice M. Renan's position. He considers that parts of the Gospels must under any circumstances be regarded as legendary, and therefore, as we have observed, he cannot be prejudiced against criticism which would assign them to authors of a late date. But he proceeds—

The character and authorship of St. Luke's Gospel.

“As to Luke, doubt is scarcely possible. The Gospel of St. Luke is a regular composition, founded upon earlier documents. It is the work of an author who chooses, curtails, combines. The author of this Gospel is certainly the same as the author of the Acts of the Apostles. Now, the author of the Acts seems to be a companion of St. Paul,—a character which accords completely with St. Luke. I know that more than one objection may be opposed to this reasoning; but one thing at all events is beyond doubt, namely, that the author of the third Gospel and of the Acts is a man who belonged to the second apostolic generation; and this suffices for our purpose. The date of this Gospel, moreover, may be determined with sufficient precision by considerations drawn from the book itself. The twenty-first chapter of St. Luke, which is inseparable from the rest of the work, was certainly written after the siege of Jerusalem, but not long after. We are, therefore, here on solid ground, for we are dealing with a work proceeding entirely from the same hand, and possessing the most complete unity.”

Now, M. Renan's opinions as to the exact date of St. Luke's Gospel, whether a few years before, or a few years after the siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and his prejudice respecting the legendary character of some of the narratives in the Gospel are clearly separable from his critical judgment as to the person by whom the Acts of the Apostles and the third Gospel were written. If he allows that those two books were written by a companion of St. Paul, who, beyond any reasonable doubt, was St. Luke, we may form our own opinions as to the conclusions to be deduced from this admission. But it may be important to observe that the admission has been supported by M. Renan's further investigations, as expressed in his subsequent volume on *The Apostles*. In the Preface to that volume he discusses fully the nature and value of the narrative contained in the Acts of the Apostles, and he pronounces the following decided opinions as to the authorship of that book, and its connection with the Gospel of St. Luke (p. x., *sq.*) —

M. Renan's critical judgment as to authorship separable from his opinions and prejudices on other points.

His discussion on the Acts of the Apostles.

“One point which is beyond question is that the Acts are by the same author as the third Gospel, and are a continuation of that Gospel. One need not stop to prove this proposition, which has never been seriously contested. The prefaces at the commencement of each work, the dedication of each to Theophilus, the perfect resemblance of style and of ideas furnish on this point abundant demonstrations.

The Acts of the Apostles a continuation of the third Gospel.

“A second proposition, which has not the same certainty, but which may, however, be regarded as extremely probable, is that the author of the Acts is a disciple of Paul, who accompanied him for a considerable part of his travels.”

The author of the Acts a disciple and companion of St. Paul.

The argument from the author's use of the pronoun "we" in the Acts of the Apostles.

At a first glance, M. Renan observes, this proposition appears indubitable, from the fact that the author, on so many occasions, uses the pronoun "we," indicating that on those occasions he was one of the apostolic band by whom St. Paul was accompanied. "One may even be astonished that a proposition apparently so evident should have found persons to contest it." He notices, however, the difficulties which have been raised on the point, and then proceeds as follows (p. xiv.)—

"Must we be checked by these objections? I think not; and I persist in believing that the person who finally prepared the Acts is really the disciple of Paul, who says 'we' in the last chapters. All difficulties, however insoluble they may appear, ought to be, if not dismissed, at least held in suspense, by an argument so decisive as that which results from the use of this word 'we.'"

Manuscript evidence and tradition combine in assigning the third Gospel to St. Luke.

He then observes that MSS. and tradition combine in assigning the third Gospel to a certain Luke, and that it is scarcely conceivable that a name in other respects obscure should have been attributed to so important a work for any other reason than that it was the name of the real author. Luke, he says, had no place in tradition, in legend or in history when these two treatises were ascribed to him. M. Renan concludes in the following words:

"We think, therefore, that the author of the third Gospel and of the Acts is in all reality Luke, the disciple of Paul."

M. Renan's conclusion.

Now let the import of these expressions of opinion be duly weighed. Of course M. Renan's

judgments are not to be regarded as affording in themselves any adequate basis for our acceptance of the authenticity of the chief books of the New Testament. The Acts of the Apostles and the four Gospels bear on their face certain positive claims, on the faith of which they have been accepted in all ages of the Church, and they do not appeal, in the first instance, to the authority of any modern critic. But though M. Renan would be a very unsatisfactory witness to rely upon for the purpose of positive testimony to the Gospels, it will be acknowledged that his estimates of the value of modern critical objections to those sacred books have all the weight of the admissions of a hostile witness. No one doubts his perfect familiarity with the whole range of the criticism represented by such names as Strauss and Baur, and no one questions his disposition to give full weight to every objection which that criticism can urge. Even without assuming that he is prejudiced on either one side or the other, it will be admitted on all hands that he is more favourably disposed than otherwise to such criticism as we have to meet. When, therefore, with this full knowledge of the literature of the subject, such a writer comes to the conclusion that the criticism in question has entirely failed to make good its case on a point like that of the authorship of St. Luke's Gospel, we are at least justified in concluding that critical objec-

The value of M. Renan's judgments.

They have the weight of the admissions of a hostile witness.

M. Renan
no adequate
witness to
the Gospels,
but a
significant
witness to
the value of
modern
critical
objections to
them.

tions do not possess the weight which unbelievers or sceptics are wont to assign to them. M. Renan, in a word, is no adequate witness to the Gospels; but he is a very significant witness as to the value of modern critical objections to them.

To illustrate our meaning, let us take a definite example. Less than four years ago the author of the work entitled *Supernatural Religion*, published what he described as his "complete edition," which he had carefully revised throughout. This work was received with great acclamation by the chief literary representatives of sceptical opinions, and its statements were widely quoted as embodying the final results of impartial criticism. In its first edition the author had maintained that there was no evidence of our present third Gospel being in existence before the time when Marcion the heretic, who flourished about the year 140, put forth a Gospel to suit his peculiar views. The author of *Supernatural Religion* maintained through several editions that Marcion's Gospel was the original, and that our third Gospel was expanded from it. This view, however, he has been compelled to abandon by the researches of Dr. Sanday; and he now admits "that our third Synoptic existed in Marcion's time;" so that we find evidence of its existence "about the year 140, and it may of course be inferred that it must have been composed at least some time before that date."

opinio

Admission
of the
author of
*Supernatural
Religion*.

M. Renan's
conclusion.

This is not the only point, as we shall see, on which this writer had to abandon positions which he had asserted with the utmost assurance. But although thus compelled to surrender an important point in his argument, he still asserts (vol. III., p. 39) that "there is no evidence whatever that this Luke had been a travelling companion of Paul, or that he ever wrote a line concerning him or had composed a Gospel." We are further told (p. 50) that "a very large mass of the ablest critics have concluded that the 'WE' sections were not composed by the author of the rest of the Acts . . . and that the general writer of the work, and consequently of the third Gospel, was not Luke at all."

His
confident
assertions.

Still more positively it is laid down that—

"a careful study of the contents of the Acts cannot, we think, leave any doubt that the work could not have been written by any companion or intimate friend of the Apostle Paul."

Such language would naturally lead the reader to suppose that there was a substantial agreement of independent critics in favour of these conclusions, and that none but uncritical supporters of "traditional" views adhered to the old beliefs. But we have called a witness whose admissions on this point have an unimpeachable value, to prove that criticism has established no such negative conclusions. In the face of it all, M. Renan "persists in believing" that the Acts were written, in the form we now possess them, by a companion of

Negative
conclusions
not
established.

St. Paul, and that this companion was no other than St. Luke, who was also the writer of the third Gospel. We are justified, in view of this testimony, in concluding that the critical objections are not only destitute of any such positive, scientific, and convincing character as is sometimes claimed for them, but that such weight as they possess is entirely counterbalanced by other critical considerations. In other words, there is nothing left in respect of the third Gospel to weigh against the positive testimony of all ancient authorities, and that testimony therefore has every claim to be accepted.

The positive testimony in respect of the third Gospel has every claim to be accepted.

We have thus arrived at this conclusion,—that the third Gospel was really written, in the form in which we now possess it, by St. Luke, the companion of St. Paul in several of his journeys, and particularly on his last visit to Jerusalem and in his subsequent journey to Rome. Now this one point being established, it will be found that all serious objections to the belief of the Church respecting the authenticity of the other Gospels are practically obviated. For it follows that the claim put forward in the preface to the third Gospel is completely justified. St. Luke was not indeed himself an eye-witness of our Lord's life on earth; but he claims to have had "perfect understanding of all things from the very first;" or, as the Revisers render the phrase, to have

The objections to the authenticity of the other Gospels are practically obviated by the establishment of St. Luke's authorship of the third.

“traced the course of all things accurately from the very first.” St. Paul, in his intercourse with the Apostles, must have been fully informed of the teaching and the acts of our Lord during His ministry, and through St. Paul, St. Luke must have been similarly cognisant of them. But in his visit with St. Paul to Jerusalem, St. Luke himself must have been in communication with other Apostles, as well as with many other disciples of our Lord who had “compained with them all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them.” That visit to Jerusalem was about twenty-five years after the crucifixion, when those who had been the actual contemporaries of our Lord were from fifty to sixty years of age, in full possession of their faculties, with their memory still clear and their judgment vigorous. St. Luke must have had abundant opportunities in such company of following up, as he says he did, everything from the very first. “Many,” he says, had already taken in hand to set forth in order a narrative of the same facts “even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word.” These written narratives he was in a position to test, to complete, and to arrange in better order, by personal inquiry of the same or other “eye-witnesses and ministers of the word.” If, therefore, he was a faithful historian, that which he has recorded for

The sources of St. Luke's knowledge of our Lord's life.

The date of his visit to Jerusalem.

His opportunities of verifying the written narratives existing.

His evidence
was at first
hand.

us is the sifted and well-arranged testimony of eye-witnesses : it is the result of a mass of evidence at first hand.

Comparison
of the
evidence of
St. Luke's
Gospel with
the evidence
on which we
believe the
Annals of
Tacitus.

Now we may well ask whether any better ground for our belief than this could well have been afforded us. All the evidence we can obtain, with respect to the great mass of historical events, is the account of them by some historian who lived at or near the time of their occurrence, and who had reports of them either at first or second hand. This, for instance, is the evidence on which we believe the *Annals* of Tacitus. He was born somewhat before the year 60 A.D., and narrates the history of the years from A.D. 14-68, of which the first forty were before he was born. He was not, therefore, a contemporary of the greater part of the events he narrates, while St. Luke was. But like St. Luke, he had opportunities of ascertaining the facts from eye-witnesses, and as his writings produce the impression that he was a truthful person, of sound judgment, we accept his testimony.

The
guarantees
of a
historian's
trustworthi-
ness.

But it must be observed that for the greater part of the narratives in Tacitus we have no such guarantee as is afforded us by the facts above established respecting St. Luke. What is the utmost guarantee of truth that we could expect from any historian? Surely that, being a contemporary of the events he narrates, he should visit the country and the very spots in which they

are alleged to have occurred, that he should be acquainted with reports of them already committed to writing, that he should be well acquainted with many persons who actually witnessed them, that he should possess the full confidence of such persons, and that he should take pains to make a thorough inquiry into the facts. Very few historians indeed have had the opportunity of fulfilling these requirements. Tacitus, for instance, had no such opportunities for a great part of the events he narrates. But St. Luke had those opportunities in the fullest degree, and he assures us simply and straightforwardly in the preface to his Gospel that he made a diligent use of them. The result of such considerations is that in St. Luke's Gospel we possess an account of our Lord's birth, ministry, passion, and resurrection, which embodies the harmonious evidence of eye-witnesses, and which preserves for us the best contemporary evidence which was attainable.

St. Luke fulfilled the necessary requirements.

His Gospel preserves for us the best attainable contemporary evidence.

But it will readily be seen that if the authenticity and credibility of one Gospel is thus clearly established, the inquiry which remains respecting the authenticity and credibility of the other three is immensely simplified. With respect, at least, to the first two Gospels there would seem to remain no sufficient reason why any sceptical critic should trouble himself to dispute their authenticity. For it is unquestionable that they tell substantially the

No sufficient reason remains for disputing the authenticity of the two first Gospels.

Difficulties
in detail.

same story as is told in the third Gospel. There are indeed some points of detail on which it has been found difficult to harmonize them. It is unnecessary for our present argument to discuss these minor difficulties. They are of importance in respect to the relation of the Gospels to one another, and they have also important bearings upon the question of the character of the inspiration which Christians believe was vouchsafed to the writers. But, at the very utmost, they amount to no more than the discrepancies which, as we are reminded every day by discussions respecting the biographies of men recently deceased, continually arise between the accounts of truthful contemporaries and eye-witnesses. We are not here admitting that such apparent discrepancies in the Gospels are real. We only say that, even if they exist, they are of such a minor character as not to affect materially the substantial harmony of the narratives, or to impair their general trustworthiness. But from this it follows that if any one of the first three Gospels was written by a contemporary, and is a record of contemporary evidence, both the others might be. If criticism can adduce no sufficient reason why the third Gospel should not be, as it purports to be, written by St. Luke, it can hardly be worth its while to expend much subtlety in disputing the tradition that the first Gospel was written by St. Matthew,

Apparent
discrepan-
cies do not
affect the
substantial
harmony or
general
trustworthi-
ness of the
Gospels.

and the second by St. Mark. St. Luke's Gospel, we have seen, is a record of the accounts current among Apostles and contemporaries of our Lord respecting His ministry. Consequently, it is only to be expected that other records written by members of the same company, at about the same period, should be substantially of the same character. One positive piece of evidence suffices to outweigh any number of mere doubts and objections. In view of what has been said, we are forced to the conclusion that the story told by St. Luke is the story which was harmoniously told by the contemporaries of our Lord in Palestine. If so, there is at least no reason arising out of the story itself why St. Matthew and St. Mark should not have written the two Gospels attributed to them.

Other contemporary records likely to be substantially similar to St. Luke.

But of course in the interests of the Christian faith, and for the purposes of Christian instruction, it is of the highest interest and importance to know whether the objections which have been raised against the authenticity of the Gospels attributed to St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. John can be sustained; and with respect to the two former Gospels this question may be dealt with even more simply and briefly than in the case of St. Luke. Here again, it is only reasonable to start from the uniform tradition of the earliest ages on the subject. As is said by Holtzmann,¹ a rationalistic critic,

But it is important to examine objections to the other Gospels.

¹ *Die Synoptischen Evangelien*, p. 359.

Holtzmann's admission about St. Matthew. "The first canonical Gospel was entirely and unanimously attributed by the ancient Church to the Apostle Matthew."

As the same critic observes, this is the more remarkable, since there is nothing in what is otherwise known of Matthew to account for the first Gospel being attributed to him (p. 360):—

"That the early Church must have had some ground in facts for referring the first Gospel to this name must seem the more probable, since, with this exception, the person of Matthew is entirely in the background in the history of the apostolic age."

Presumptive evidence of the authorship of the first Gospel.

In other words there was no reason why it should have been believed that St. Matthew wrote the Gospel except that he did write it; and therefore, as has been urged before, the tradition has, on the face of it, a claim to be believed in the absence of evidence to the contrary. But, in the first place, there is positive evidence to the fact that St. Matthew did write a work of the general character of our Gospel. There is one valuable piece of early Christian testimony preserved to us respecting the authorship of the two first Gospels. It is contained in a fragment of a work by Papias, who was Bishop of Hierapolis, in Asia Minor, in the first half of the second century, and who was a hearer of the Apostle St. John. It is natural that we should have but little discussion of the authorship of the New Testament writings in early times, if they were really genuine. Christians in such case would accept them without hesitation; and it

The testimony of Papias.

would be only as time went on, and heresies arose, or the Church came into conflict with heathen culture, that doubts on this subject would be raised. The evidence of Papias is therefore particularly welcome, and it has been scrutinized, by believers and unbelievers alike, with the utmost keenness. With respect to St. Matthew, he is quoted by Eusebius (Hist. Eccl. iii. 39), as saying that

“Matthew composed the Oracles in the Hebrew tongue, and each one interpreted them as he could.”

His testimony has reference to the whole Gospel.

There has been much dispute as to the exact meaning of the term “oracles,” here used. Some writers have endeavoured to make out that it is only applicable to sayings or discourses; and that consequently the work by St. Matthew which was known to Papias can only have been a collection of our Lord’s sayings, and cannot have been a narrative of His ministry, like our present Gospel. Even if this restricted interpretation of the word could be maintained, it would be evidently pressing the argument too far to assume that such a collection excluded all narratives of facts; but it has been conclusively shown that the word bears no such narrow meaning. It is the same word as is used by St. Paul when he says (Rom. iii. 1) that the Jews had the keeping of the oracles of God, by which he evidently means the Old Testament Scriptures as a whole, including the narrative books. At the utmost, the fact that St. Matthew reports with special prominence and

It includes the narratives as well as the discourses.

Two facts to start with concerning St. Matthew's Gospel.

fulness several of our Lord's discourses would be sufficient to answer the meaning of such an expression. Thus we have two positive facts from which to start—the one, the fact that our first Gospel was uniformly attributed to St. Matthew from the earliest times; the other, the express statement of a disciple of St. John that St. Matthew wrote a work of this kind. Whether St. Matthew, besides writing the original Gospel in Hebrew, subsequently translated it himself into Greek, or whether our present Gospel is another work of the same kind which the Apostle also wrote, are secondary points. From these two facts it is reasonable to accept our first Gospel as St. Matthew's work, in the absence of decisive critical objections. Before considering the value of such objections, we will next inquire what positive evidence we have respecting the Gospel of St. Mark.

The conclusion from the facts specified.

The second Gospel unanimously attributed to St. Mark in the early centuries.

Here again, there is absolute unanimity in the belief of the earliest times. No doubt was expressed for long centuries as to the truth of the title which attributed the second Gospel to St. Mark. This person is generally acknowledged to be the same as the "John, whose surname was Mark," mentioned several times in the Acts of the Apostles, as well as in the Epistles of St. Paul and St. Peter. He was the cousin of Barnabas, and is called by St. Peter (1 Pet. v. 13), "My son," perhaps as having been converted by him. His mother

was the Mary in whose house in Jerusalem the Christians are described as meeting in the earliest days after the foundation of the Church (Acts xii. 12). He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey; and though there was a temporary separation between him and St. Paul, he is afterwards mentioned by that apostle as one of his most valued attendants. At another time, as we have seen, he was with St. Peter, and Papias tells us that he acted as St. Peter's interpreter. He was, therefore, at least as much as St. Luke, in a position to ascertain the truth respecting our Lord's ministry. In his case also the tradition of antiquity is supported by the evidence of Papias. That writer related that "the elder," who was either St. John the Apostle or a presbyter contemporary with the Apostle, gave him the following account:—

St. Mark the companion of Paul and Barnabas.

St. Mark the interpreter of St. Peter.

"Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately everything that he remembered, without however recording in order what was either said or done by Christ. For neither did he hear the Lord, nor did he follow Him; but, afterwards, as I said, [attended] Peter, who adapted his instructions to the needs [of his hearers], but had no design of giving a connected account of the Lord's oracles [or discourses]. So, then, Mark made no mistake, while he thus wrote down some things, as he remembered them; for he made it his one care not to omit anything that he heard, or to set down any false statement therein."¹

The testimony of Papias concerning St. Mark.

¹ We have availed ourselves of Bishop Lightfoot's translations, given in his article on "Papias," in the *Contemporary Review* for August, 1875.

Appeal to
M. Renan.

Now, if these statements of Papias apply to our present Gospels, they furnish invaluable evidence as to their early date and as to their authorship. Once more we will ask M. Renan to tell us how far in his opinion the criticism by which this applicability is disputed has made out its case. In his Preface to his *Life of Jesus* (p. li.), after reciting the testimony of Papias, he says,—

“It is certain that these two descriptions correspond well enough to the general physiognomy of the two books, now called ‘The Gospel according to Matthew,’ and ‘The Gospel according to Mark,’—the first being characterized by its long discourses; the second being specially anecdotic, much more exact than the first in the details, brief to the extent of dryness, poor in discourses, and but ill put together.”

His conclusions respecting additions to St. Matthew's and St. Mark's Gospels unwarranted.

This surely is sufficient for practical purposes; and considering the slightness of the account of Papias, such a general correspondence as is here admitted would seem as much as could be required. M. Renan, however, goes on to lay upon Papias's words that undue stress already noticed, and to argue that the work of St. Matthew which Papias had before him can only have contained discourses, and that therefore subsequent additions must have been made to it, out of which our present Gospel has arisen; while, on the other hand, additions have been made to the original St. Mark, in order to supply its omissions, and to make it more like St. Matthew's work. Of any such revision of the original forms of these two Gospels there is not a single trace

of external evidence, nor does M. Renan pretend to produce any; and the best means of estimating the weight to be attached to such a suggestion is afforded by further conclusions expressed by himself. As the result of his inquiries into the value of the four Gospels he expresses himself as follows:

No external evidence of such revision.

“To sum up, I admit the four canonical Gospels as serious documents. All go back to the age which followed the death of Jesus. But their historical value is very diverse. St. Matthew evidently deserves peculiar confidence for the discourses. Here are ‘the oracles,’ the very notes taken while the memory of the instruction of Jesus was living and definite. A kind of flashing brightness at once sweet and terrible, a Divine force, if I may so say, underlines these words, detaches them from the context, and renders them easily recognisable by the critic” (p. lxxx.).

The value of the Four Gospels according to M. Renan.

St. Matthew deserves ‘une confiance hors ligne’ for our Lord’s discourses.

Now, we ask with what reason it can be maintained that a Gospel like that of St. Matthew deserves “peculiar confidence” in its most characteristic and most vital elements, but that this confidence is at once to be withdrawn from it wherever a critic like M. Renan fails to appreciate the importance or the vividness of its observations. If a witness comes into court, and is found to be absolutely trustworthy in a vital and characteristic portion of his evidence, would it be deemed reasonable to say that he is not to be believed in the other part of his evidence because you do not like it, or do not understand it? Let us take a particular instance. That from which M. Renan and all sceptical critics shrink in the Gospel narratives is, as we shall have further occasion to observe, their mira-

The miraculous element in the Gospel narrative offends M. Renan and sceptical critics generally.

The miraculous narratives in the 8th and 9th chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel.

culous element. Now, the eighth and ninth chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel contain a record of ten of our Lord's miracles, and these are one half of the whole number recorded by that Evangelist. But this record of all these works of supernatural power and mercy immediately follows the Sermon on the Mount. In the three chapters preceding this miraculous record, St. Matthew has preserved to us, with a vividness and force of which the most sceptical are sensible, a long discourse by our Lord of the most momentous import, which is universally felt to embody some of his most characteristic teaching. Now, is it not a strange paradox to suppose that in a record which is marked, as almost all admit, by a substantial unity of design, we should pass immediately from such teaching as that of the Sermon on the Mount to a similarly long narrative of wholly untrustworthy reminiscences? In the one passage, we are surrounded with a blaze of moral and spiritual light, piercing to the very thoughts and intents of the heart, burning up all falsehood in word or deed, all hypocrisy and unreality; and in the next passage we are asked to believe that we find ourselves in an atmosphere of illusion, credulity, and uncertainty. Such a transition from absolute light—light undimmed, unobscured by a single shadow, unperverted by a single false colour, may well be regarded as inconceivable. But it is the same throughout the Gospels. Many of our Lord's most

Following the Sermon on the Mount in a record marked by unity of design they must be trustworthy.

precious sayings are inseparably bound up with His miracles, arise out of them, and point their lessons. The two are indissolubly united; and the Sermon on the Mount is thus itself the best guarantee for the miraculous narratives which immediately follow it.

The words and acts of our Lord inseparably connected.

See *The Gospel and its Witnesses* by the author of this Tract, Lecture V.

In short, when M. Renan allows that Papias's language corresponds "very fairly" (*assez bien*) to our present Gospel of St. Matthew, and that the discourses, at all events, in that Gospel deserve "peculiar confidence," he at any rate justifies us in concluding that criticism can make out no such case against the authenticity and credibility of the book as deserves to be put in the balance against the unanimous external evidence in its favour. But with respect to the Gospel of St. Mark, his admissions are even more striking and decisive.

No case made out against the authenticity and credibility of St. Matthew's Gospel.

"The Gospel of St. Mark," he says (p. lxxxii.), "is the one of the three first which has remained the most ancient, the most original, and to which the least of later additions have been made. The details of fact possess in St. Mark a definiteness which we seek in vain in the other Evangelists. He is fond of reporting certain sayings of our Lord in Syro-Chaldaic. He is full of minute observations, proceeding, beyond doubt, from an eye-witness. There is nothing to conflict with the supposition that this eye-witness, who had evidently followed Jesus, who had loved Him and watched Him in close intimacy, and who had preserved a vivid image of Him, was the Apostle Peter himself, as Papias has it."

What is this but to say that criticism has failed to establish any valid objections against the traditional belief of the Church, that the Gospel of

Nor against St. Mark's authorship of the second Gospel.

St. Mark is the book of which Papias spoke as having been written by St. Mark from the narratives of St. Peter, and that it contains the very reminiscences of that apostle ?

General estimate of the value of modern critical objections to the authenticity of the Gospels.

Let us, then, consider what is the general result of this review of the evidence for our first three Gospels, and of the validity of modern critical objections, as estimated by the most famous sceptical critic of our generation. M. Renan, with all these objections before him, being as well qualified by his learning as any scholar, whether in this country or abroad, to judge of such criticism, and being necessarily predisposed by his disbelief of Christian truths in favour of objections against the credibility of the sacred writings, nevertheless finds himself obliged to come to the conclusion that the old traditions respecting the first three Gospels are at least substantially true. He admits that all four Gospels were written in the age following the death of our Lord, and therefore while many of His contemporaries were living ; he admits that the third Gospel, as well as the Acts of the Apostles, were written in their present form by St. Luke, who was St. Paul's intimate companion, and who visited Jerusalem with him ; he admits that the discourses of our Lord, at all events, in the first Gospel were recorded by St. Matthew, one of the twelve Apostles, and that they deserve to be accepted with peculiar confidence ; and he further admits that the second

Summary of M. Renan's admissions.

Gospel was in substance written by St. Mark, that it is the most original, in its present form, of the three, that it bears numerous marks of the reminiscences of an eye-witness, and that there is nothing to lead us to doubt the ancient tradition that this eye-witness was St. Peter himself.

In short, this is the result of modern criticism as represented by M. Renan : that in St. Matthew we have our Lord's teaching recorded by an Apostle himself ; in St. Mark we have the vivid reminiscences of another Apostle, who was one of the three most intimate with our Lord ; and that in St. Luke we have the mature and deliberate record of a cultivated writer, who, being a physician, was also trained in habits of observation, after a careful inquiry from contemporaries, amidst the very scenes where the events he records were transacted. We repeat that we do not rest these facts respecting the first three Gospels on M. Renan's investigations. They stand, in the first instance, on the direct evidence of historic tradition, by which the authorship of all other books is determined. But we appeal to M. Renan as affording abundant proof that modern criticism has produced no arguments sufficient to counterbalance, or even seriously to affect, this evidence.

Results of modern criticism as represented by M. Renan

The facts he admits rest on the direct evidence of historic tradition, but his admissions show that modern criticism has not shaken the evidence.

We now turn to the Gospel of St. John ; and vehement as has been the controversy on this subject, the case in favour of its authenticity

The evidence of the authorship of the fourth Gospel.

admits of being more simply and decisively stated than even the case of the first three Gospels. In the first place, the primary evidence to its authorship is peculiarly definite and direct. Irenæus, who became Bishop of Lyons about 177 A.D. was a pupil of a famous disciple of St. John, Polycarp, who died as a martyr in the year 155 or 156. Irenæus tells us, in a letter of remonstrance he wrote to a fellow-pupil, Florinus, who had lapsed into heresy, how vividly he remembered Polycarp's instructions and conversation:

The testimony of Irenæus.

“I distinctly remember,” he says, “the incidents of that time better than events of recent occurrence; for the lessons received in childhood, growing with the growth of the soul, become identified with it; so that I can describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, and his goings out and his comings in, and his manner of life, and his personal appearance, and the discourses which he held before the people, and how he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their words. And whatsoever things he had heard from them about the Lord, and about His miracles, and about His teaching, Polycarp, as having received them from eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, would relate altogether in accordance with the Scriptures.” (*Euseb. Hist. Eccl.*, v. 20.)

By the Scriptures he meant the Gospels.

In order to appreciate what this involves, we must ask what Irenæus meant by the “Scriptures.” Of course the expression must refer to those portions of the Scriptures which narrate the life of our Lord, and Irenæus has stated in a memorable passage what these records were. In the third book of his great work on *The Refutation*

and Overthrow of Knowledge falsely so-called, he relates briefly, says Bishop Lightfoot:¹

"the circumstances under which the four Gospels were written. He points out that the writings of the Evangelists arose directly from the oral Gospel of the apostles. He shows that the traditional teaching of the apostles has been preserved by a direct succession of elders, which in the principal churches can be traced man by man, and he asserts that this teaching accords entirely with the evangelical and apostolical writings. He maintains on the other hand, that the doctrine of the heretics was of comparatively recent growth. He assumes throughout, not only that our four Canonical Gospels alone were acknowledged in the Church in his own time, but that this had been so from the beginning. His antagonists indeed accepted these same Gospels, paying especial deference to the Fourth Evangelist; and accordingly he argues with them on this basis. But they also super-added other writings, to which they appealed, while heretics of a different type, as Marcion for instance, adopted some one Gospel to the exclusion of all others. He therefore urges not only that four Gospels alone have been handed down from the beginning, but that in the nature of things there could not be more nor less than four. There are four regions of the world, and four principal winds; and the Church therefore, as destined to be conterminous with the world, must be supported by four Gospels, as four pillars. The Word again is represented as seated on the cherubim, who are described by Ezekiel as four living creatures, each different from the other. These symbolize the four Evangelists, with their several characteristics. The predominance of the number four again appears in another way. There are four general covenants—of Noah, of Abraham, of Moses, of Christ. It is therefore an act of audacious folly to increase or diminish the number of the Gospels. As there is fitness and order in all the other works of God, so also we may expect to find it in the case of the Gospel."

Bishop Lightfoot's summary of the testimony of Irenæus.

The passage thus summarized by the present learned Bishop of Durham is to be found in the first eleven chapters of the third book of the work

¹ *Contemporary Review* for August, 1876, p. 413.

of Irenæus just mentioned, and its immense significance for the purpose of our argument will readily be perceived. The four Gospels we now possess constituted, in the view of Irenæus, an essential part of "the Scriptures." The reasons he gives for the necessity of their being four in number may be fanciful, but they are adduced in order to explain what he represents as a fact. He appeals, however, to Polycarp's authority, and his view therefore respecting the four Gospels must be in harmony with what he had learnt at Polycarp's feet. The conclusion, therefore, cannot fairly be avoided that Polycarp himself, St. John's own disciple, knew and recognized all four Gospels, not only those of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, but that which was attributed to his own master, St. John. When Irenæus tells us that Polycarp used to describe "his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord;" and that "whatsoever things he had heard from them about the Lord and about His miracles and about His teaching," he would relate "altogether in accordance with the Scriptures," he tells us nothing less than that what Polycarp had heard from John, and from the rest who had seen the Lord, was in complete agreement with our present Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John. That Irenæus used precisely the same Gospels as are now in our

Irenæus
appeals to
Polycarp.

The four
Gospels
known to
and
recognized
by Polycarp.

Irenæus used
the same
Gospels as
are now in
our pos-
session.

possession is disputed by no one; and these very books he says are in full agreement with what he heard from Polycarp, and Polycarp heard from St. John.

These Gospels agree with what he heard from Polycarp and what Polycarp heard from St. John.

Now, this testimony to the first three Gospels is of immense weight, for it gives at all events the sanction of Polycarp, and goes far to give the sanction and recognition of St. John himself, to those three books. But with respect to the Gospel of St. John it would seem overwhelming. The one point upon which Polycarp was specially qualified to bear testimony to Irenæus, and on which he did bear testimony, was the teaching of St. John, and that Apostle's account of our Lord's words and works. If, then, St. John was not the author of the fourth Gospel, is it conceivable that Irenæus should not only have been ignorant of the fact, but that he should have treated that Gospel as part of "the Scriptures," and have declared that it was in entire conformity with what he had heard from his aged master? If the Gospel was by St. John, it must have been written before the year 100, and it must have been in circulation in Asia Minor at the time when Irenæus was a disciple of Polycarp. The book must have been in their hands, and Polycarp certainly must have known whether or not it was the work of his own master. We have therefore the declared and solemn evidence of a man whom

Irenæus could not have treated the fourth Gospel as part of the Scriptures if St. John had not written it.

The date of St. John's Gospel.

No doubt of St. John's authorship is expressed in early times by anyone who knew the facts.

we may call the spiritual and literary grandchild of St. John, with the implied evidence of St. John's own child in the faith, to the fact that that Apostle was the author of the fourth Gospel. We have only to add that in early times no doubt respecting St. John's authorship is expressed by any writer who was in any way likely to be acquainted with the facts; and it may be confidently asked whether more direct and positive testimony to the authorship of an ancient work could be obtained or desired?

It would need an enormous, preponderance of critical difficulties to justify the rejection of such evidence. We are asked to doubt the very eyes and ears, the very mind and heart, of two of the best witnesses in all Christian antiquity; and what are the objections on the strength of which this demand is made upon us? We take M. Renan once more as a fair exponent of the force which these critical objections possess, and we are content to ask him to what they amount. The result will be scarcely credible to many readers; but they may easily verify for themselves what we say. He practically confesses that every objection is insufficient except one; and what is that? Simply that in M. Renan's opinion the discourses of our Lord recorded by St. John are

M. Renan's one insuperable difficulty is the discourses of our Lord recorded by St. John.

"pretentious tirades, heavy, badly written, making but little appeal to the moral sense." (Introd. to *Vie de Jésus*, p. lxi.)

This extraordinary opinion, which will need no refutation for most English readers, remains M. Renan's sole substantial ground for rejecting St. John's authorship. At the end of a long appendix he concludes that there are only two alternatives:

"Either the author of the fourth Gospel was a disciple of Jesus, an intimate disciple, and from the most early period; or else the author, for the purpose of giving himself authority, has employed an artifice which he has maintained from the beginning of the book to the end, with the view of making it believed that he was a witness in as good a position as possible for narrating the truth of the facts" (p. 537, 15th edition).

The only alternatives according to M. Renan.

In other words, as M. Renan goes on to admit, the author is either St. John, or he is a liar.

"There is no question here of legends, the creation of the multitude, for which no person in particular is responsible. A man who, to procure credence to what he narrates, deceives the public not only respecting his name, but still more with respect to the value of his testimony, is not a writer of legends, he is a forger" (p. 538).

M. Renan fully admits the difficulty of such an alternative, and confesses as the result of all this discussion that

The difficulty of such an alternative.

"at a first glance it seems that the most natural hypothesis is to admit that all these writings—the Gospel and the three Epistles—are really the work of John, the son of Zebedee."

Why does not he accept this "natural hypothesis"? He mentions, first, one or two objections which are of no real weight, and which have been given up by other rationalistic writers—such as that the Greek in which the fourth Gospel is written is very different

The Greek of the fourth Gospel really an argument in favour of St. John's authorship.

from the Palestinian Greek of the other books of the New Testament. But this, as has been often observed, is a strong argument in favour of St. John's authorship; for if he lived for thirty years, from A.D. 70-100, in so thoroughly Greek a city as Ephesus, he would be likely to acquire a purer Greek style than any of his fellow-apostles. M. Renan falls back, as his main objection, on his dislike to the discourses in the fourth Gospel.

M. Renan's dislike to the discourses his main objection.

"The ideas, above all, are of an order entirely different from those in the other books of the New Testament. We are here in full Philonian, and almost Gnostic metaphysic. The discourses of Jesus as reported by this pretended witness, this intimate disciple, are false, often insipid, and impossible."

The general character of the narrative, according to him, in favour of St. John's authorship.

That is all. As to the general character of the narrative in itself, it is all in favour of St. John's authorship:—

"Considered in itself, the narrative of the material circumstances of the life of our Lord, as furnished by the fourth evangelist, is superior in point of verisimilitude to the narrative of the other three Gospels" (p. 536).

M. Renan notices elsewhere the little traits of precision in the story: "It was the sixth hour;" "it was night;" "the servant's name was Malchus;" "they had made a fire of coals, for it was cold;" "the coat was without seam;" and he speaks of characteristics which are

"inexplicable on the supposition that our Gospel was nothing more than a theological thesis without historical value, but which are intelligible if we see in them the reminiscences of an old man" (p. lxviii).

There is, in a word, a mass of internal as well as external evidence in support of the belief of Irenæus and Polycarp on this subject; but it is all to be thrown aside simply because M. Renan cannot endure the exquisite discourses which the fourth Gospel records!

Such is the weakness of the objections which criticism is able to adduce against the genuineness of the Gospel of St. John, according to the testimony of the most famous sceptic of modern times. The truth is that, as was stated last year by Dr. Bernhard Weiss, one of the most learned scholars of Germany, the disciples of Baur, the founder of the Tübingen school, have been compelled

The weakness of the objections against the genuineness of St. John's Gospel.

“step by step to concede one after another of the testimonies against which he contended. Every new discovery since his time . . . has positively refuted contentions of criticism which had long been obstinately maintained.” (*Leben Jesu*, i., 92.)

One of these recent discoveries is perhaps worth mention. Tatian, the disciple of Justin Martyr, was said by tradition to have prepared a harmony of our four Gospels, called the Diatessaron. Of course if he did, the four Gospels must have been of recognized authority in his own time and in that of his master, a consideration which alone would take us back to the first half of the second century. Accordingly, writers like the author of *Supernatural Religion* were at great pains to maintain that there was no sufficient evidence of

Tatian's Diatessaron.

The author of *Supernatural Religion* denies that Tatian wrote any such work.

Tatian having written any such harmony at all; and more than this, that

“it is obvious there is no evidence of any value connecting Tatian’s Gospel with those in our canon” (vol ii., p. 157, 1879).

At the very time these words were published, only four years ago, a work by an eminent Christian father had been recovered, which is regarded by the general assent of German scholars as a commentary on Tatian’s Diatessaron; and hence even sceptical critics now generally admit that Tatian did weave into one harmony the very four Gospels which we now possess. In short, as M. Renan is acute enough to perceive and candid enough to admit, all the external critical objections against the authenticity of our four Gospels have successively broken down more or less fatally; and there remains no other objection to be made to them than that some critics cannot understand or account for them.

Some readers may perhaps be disposed to think that the last sentence involves a rather harsh judgment, and it is a statement we should not make unless, as we shall observe in conclusion, it were made by the critics themselves. It would be natural to ask, at the close of such an inquiry as this, how it is that if the critical objections against the Gospels are so baseless, they should have been maintained with such persistency by scholars so learned and so earnest as those who have been the leaders of the negative schools in Germany for the

Most sceptical critics now admit that Tatian did prepare a harmony of the four Gospels which we possess.

The reason of the persistency of negative criticism in face of the evidence in favour of the Gospels.

last fifty years. It is only to be explained on one supposition, and that is that they started with a prejudice against the truth of the Gospel narratives, and they were concerned at almost any cost to justify their disbelief. Again we say that this is a charge we should not have ventured to advance except on their own confession and avowal; but as the avowal has been made by them, again and again, it is equally necessary and just that they should be held to the consequences of it.

The avowals
of sceptics.

It will be sufficient on this point to quote the testimony of Dr. Karl Hase, one of the most venerable scholars of Germany, whose *Life of Jesus*, published more than fifty years ago, was the first work of the kind, who represents on the whole a decidedly rationalistic view, and who has lately reviewed the whole course of the controversy in his *History of Jesus*, published in 1876. He there (p. 124) says that the novelty of the mode of treatment adopted by himself, and by Strauss and his successors was that the chief writers of this school laboured in all earnestness, and with all the resources of science, "to represent a purely human life, founded on purely human writings." That is, they started from the supposition that our Lord's life was purely human, and therefore could have had nothing miraculous about it. Their avowed object therefore was, by some means or other, to explain away the miraculous narratives

Their mode
of treatment
according to
Dr. Karl
Hase.

Everything supernatural must be explained away.

Strauss' theory.

Baur's theory.

contained in the Gospels. Strauss expressed this prejudice in the plainest language by saying that "that which could not have happened did not happen;" and consequently the problem for the critic was to explain how four writers like the authors of our Gospels came to say with such circumstantiality that things which could not have happened did happen. His explanation was that the stories of the Gospels grew up as myths, embodying certain religious and political ideas which were then afloat. That explanation was given up as inadequate, even by his immediate successor, Baur. But Baur started from the same prejudice, and set himself a similar task. The theory which he and his followers maintained was that the Gospels were very late productions, which had been written with the specific "tendency" or purpose of maintaining special views—Petrine, Pauline, or Johannine—of the principles of Christianity. They invented ingenious combinations for this purpose; but as Dr. Haase, who admires them, though he differs from them, observes

"the uncertainty of a negative result was exhibited in this case also; and for Baur also the decisive reason is the marvellous and impossible character of the contents of the Gospels" (p. 143).

So Baur himself said (*Canon. Gospels*, p. 530) that

Baur's main argument for the later origin of our Gospels.

"the capital argument for the later origin of our Gospels remains always this—that each of them for itself, and still more all of them together, represent so much in the life of Jesus in a manner in which in reality it never could have happened."

Thus, says Dr. Hase,

"The criticism of the Gospels comes back to the criticism of the Gospel history; . . . and the question arises, whether the Gospels do really relate what is so impossible!"

Dr. Hase thinks that the sacred narratives can after all be explained away into something natural and ordinary, only magnified by excited imaginations; and something of the same kind is M. Renan's view, although the explanations of these two writers differ very widely. But M. Renan also bases the whole of his argument on the supposition that miracles are impossible.

Dr. Hase's view.

"If," he says, in the Preface to his thirteenth edition, (p. ix.,) "miracles and the inspiration of certain books are realities, my method is detestable. If miracles and the inspiration of books are beliefs without reality, my method is a good one. But the question of the supernatural is decided for us with perfect certainty, by the single consideration that there is no room for believing in a thing of which the world offers no experimental trace."

Renan on the impossibility of miracles.

Accordingly M. Renan, in his turn, must find some means of explaining away the Gospels. But, as we have seen, he is compelled to admit that all attempts to trace their authorship to a later age than that of the apostles, or, in the main, to other hands than those of their traditional authors, has failed; and so he endeavours to explain them as a kind of romance.

His explanation of the Gospels.

In view of these facts it will now be seen that the difficulties connected with the history of the four Gospels have never, at any time, been

Objections to the Gospels have never been based on candid and unprejudiced criticism.

The good faith of the evangelists.

Criticism has been unable to establish any serious objection against the authenticity of the Gospels.

based upon candid and unprejudiced criticism. They have been raised in the interest of a criticism which started with foregone conclusions, and their authors have been driven back from post to post, and have had to take refuge in one arbitrary theory after another. The "natural hypothesis" has always been what M. Renan declares it is now in respect to the fourth Gospel,—namely, that St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John were the real authors of the four books which bear their names, and that they are faithful witnesses to what actually occurred. It is remarkable that if we put out of sight the hypothesis of Baur, now confessedly exploded, that the four Gospels were of late origin, and written with a controversial purpose, no serious critic impugns the good faith of the writers. The only possible objection which remains is that all four writers were utterly deluded as to what they "saw and heard and handled." Other tracts of this series have dealt and will deal with that extravagant supposition. Our concern has simply been to show that we possess in the four Gospels contemporary records by competent witnesses, and that criticism has been unable to establish any serious objection against this belief.

MODERN MATERIALISM.

BY THE LATE

REV. W. F. WILKINSON, M.A.,

Rector of Lutterworth.

AUTHOR OF

"CHRIST OUR GOSPEL," (Sermons preached before the University of Cambridge.)

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THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:

56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
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Argument of the Tract.

THE mystery of Being is impenetrable. We only know the attributes and qualities of things. Elementary substances are few. The universal basis of the objects of sense is designated "matter." A large proportion of the objects of sense are living beings. They have certain characteristics and constituents in common. Life does not result from their combination. The mystery of life is as impenetrable as the mystery of matter. Mind involves life, but is not co-extensive with it. Thought is not a product of living matter, nor a movement of matter. Mind underlies thought. The changes of organic bodies, as well as their mutual attractions, and the action of chemical affinities, are due to force. There are different kinds of force. Matter is incapable of motion without force. The difficulties of materialism are insuperable. No answer is attempted to be given to the question, Whence were matter and motion? The attempt to reduce all existence to a material origin lands us in idealism. Materialistic principles lead to the conclusion that matter has a dependent and derived existence, and are utterly incapable of explaining the mysteries of life and thought. The construction of the system of nature must depend on something that is not law—on the will of an omniscient and omnipotent God. Materialism necessarily denies the immortality of the soul. The atomic theory is not necessarily inconsistent with Theism. The views of Cudworth, Descartes, and Newton are quoted.

MODERN MATERIALISM.

I.



AMONG the wonders by which we are surrounded there is no greater wonder than that of Being. Contemplating any one of the most familiar objects of our senses, when we ask what it is which presents to us certain observable qualities, what it is to which they belong and are due, what is the thing itself, apart from the combination of qualities by which it is known to us, we cannot get a satisfactory and intelligible answer; we find ourselves in the presence of a great mystery, and that—the mystery of Being.

Simple
Being.

If we consider, for example, a specimen of the substance called Gold: it is known to us, generally, by its colour, its malleability, fusibility, and relative weight; and to some it is known as possessing other qualities or attributes. But, whatever the number and character of these, it is not, and it cannot be thought of, as an assemblage of certain qualities and attributes, but as that *in* which they are assembled or united, that to which they belong. This

More than
its qualities.

inner ultimate something, the subject in which such qualities are inherent, the substance, the underlying reality, of the presence and nature of which they are the indications, must have an actual existence. *They* are not, but *it* is—gold. They, taken altogether, do not form *it*, but *it* is so constituted as to possess and exhibit *them*. And yet no analysis has ever revealed it to our senses, nor can our minds form any distinct conception of it. As Sir Isaac Newton says in the conclusion of the “Principia,”

“We only see the forms and colours of bodies, we only hear sounds, we only touch the outer surfaces, we only smell their odours, and taste their flavours; the inmost substances we apprehend by no sense, by no reflex action.”

Attributes
of Being.

Extending our observation, we notice that most objects of sense are compounds, consisting of various substances in combination, and having qualities arising from such combination. The elementary substances, however—those of which all others are composed—have been, perhaps, most of them discovered, and are not very numerous. Each of these is simple, and although it may have qualities which are common to others, it possesses them in virtue of its own nature alone.

If, in order to get as near as possible to the foundation and root of Being, we inquire what it is which all these elementary substances possess in common, and in all their minutest portions, without which they could not be material sub-

stances at all, and which, suffices to give them merely the character of material substance, we find these three necessary attributes or elements of material Being: *extension, moveableness, and impenetrability*. That is, a thing, to be a material substance, must take up some room in space, it must be capable of being moved from one place to another, and its place, while it is in it, cannot be occupied by anything else.

The
necessary
elements of
Material
Being

But here again we do not say or think that the combination of extension, moveableness, and impenetrability, makes up a body, but that a body is something which is extended, moveable, and impenetrable. We are still far enough from comprehending what that something is. It is that, however, which, as forming the universal basis of objects of sense, we designate by the term *matter*.

Matter the
basis of the
objects of
sense.

Before we proceed to notice the attempts which have been made to discover the nature and constitution of this unknown reality which meets us everywhere and in everything, we must attend to the fact that a large proportion of the objects of our senses consists of active or self-acting substances, that is, of living beings. They differ from the rest of the objects of sense by the possession, even in their lowest forms, of an organisation, and of the faculties of feeding, growing, and producing their like. They are all compound substances, and all composed of the same elementary sub-

Living
beings.

Their dis-
tinguishing
character-
istica.

stances, which, let it be remarked, have none of these faculties.

Life. But, although we know what are the material constituents of every living structure, we cannot ascribe life itself to their combination. Such combination may be necessary to life, but it does not of itself constitute nor produce life.

“Life,” says the great naturalist Cuvier, “exercising upon the elements which at every instant form part of the living body, and upon those which it attracts to it, an action contrary to that which would be produced without it by the usual chemical affinities, it is inconsistent to suppose that it can itself be produced by those affinities.”

**Not a
combination
of attributes.**

We cannot therefore conceive of life as the aggregate of the material substances composing the living Being, or of their affinities, any more than we can conceive of a substance as the aggregate of the qualities or powers which meet in it, and by which it is distinguished and manifested. The mystery of Life is as impenetrable as the mystery of simple Being.

Mind.

The remaining, and perhaps the most mysterious phenomenon of existence is Mind. Mind involves life. But as life is not co-existent with all matter, so neither is mind co-existent with all life. And as life is not accounted for, or caused, by the mere assemblage or action of those elementary substances which are always found united in every living thing, so neither is mind accounted for or caused by the union or operation of all those

substances, properties, and powers which in our experience are found combined in every thinking Being.

Mind is, in all cases known to us, connected with a certain organization, and also with the faculties of *feeding, growing, and propagating*. But it is difficult to conceive of these as essential and absolutely necessary to the origination, development, and exercise of thought. They may be the condition of the existence of material Beings who have mind, without being the conditions of the existence of mind itself. Thought, even in its lowest phase of mere volition, or conscious choice, cannot be a product of living matter, for then it would be itself a material object of sense.

Distinct
from its
environment.

Thought not
a product of
living
matter.

Nor can it be a movement of matter, such as a vibration; for not every movement or vibration of the matter—the grey pulp brain, let us say—which is the organ of thought, is a thought; consequently there is a difference between such movement or vibration as is merely mechanical, and such as is simultaneous or identical with thought; whence it follows that something more than movement or vibration is necessary to constitute thought. Mind underlies thought as matter underlies all perceptible substance, and as life underlies all organic substance. Life, in our experience, is invariably connected with matter, and mind with life and matter; that is, with living matter. But the connection of life with

Nor a
movement
of matter.

Mind
underlies
thought.

Life independent of matter.

Mind independent of life and matter.

Force.

Different kinds of force.

Force in relation to material existence, life, and thought.

matter is, so to speak, arbitrary : that is, it is not traceable, as an effect, to the action of material elements. Life is something of itself independent of matter. Similarly, the connection of mind with life appears from observation and reasoning equally arbitrary. Mind is not due to mere life—nor a function or development of it; but it is something of itself independent of life and matter.

We must also take into consideration an attribute or property of all being known to us, which indeed some think entitled to be accounted an element of being. This is Force. That to which movement, and the changes of organic bodies are due, as well as their mutual attraction and the action of chemical affinities, is Force. The growth, nutrition, reproduction and spontaneous motion of organised bodies depend upon force, called, for distinction's sake, Vital force. The same term expresses the distinct idea arising from the exercise of what are called the various powers of the mind. There is *mental* force as well as *vital* force and *physical* force. Each differs from the other as to the subjects specially and appropriately affected by it, and in the mode of its action, but they have that in common of which we can form an abstract apprehension, designated by the term Force.

Considering force in its relation to the three modes of being—simple material existence, life, and thought—we cannot conceive of the faculties

of life otherwise than as present in and exerted by that which has life; nor of mental faculties, or the power of thought, otherwise than as inherent in and essential to mind. But we *can* conceive of physical force as external to that which has a material existence only. Indeed, it seems impossible to conceive that such forces as gravitation, or attraction and repulsion, can be possessed and exerted independently, as inherent, essential powers, by matter, the subjection of which to action by those forces can only be explained by its own incapacity of action—its undoubted attribute of inertia.

All mere matter, or matter without life, must, in physical calculations—in mechanics, for instance, or astronomy—be treated as incapable of motion or change, except as acted upon from without, and by some force applied. Newton has been careful to state that he employs the word “attraction,” in speaking of the action of bodies on each other, not in a physical sense. Indeed, in another passage of the “Principia,” he says that attractions, physically speaking, are rather to be considered as impulses. In the end of his great work he seems inclined to the opinion that there is some subtle spirit by the force and action of which all movements of matter are determined. In his letter to Dr. Bentley, he says:

Forces not inherent in matter.

Newton's use of the word “attraction.”

Definition 8, B. 1. Prop. 69, “Scholium.”

B. 1. Section xi., Introduction.

Letter to Bentley.

“The supposition of an innate gravity essential to and inherent in matter, so that a body can act upon another at a

distance, and through a vacuum, without anything intermediate to convey from one to another their force and reciprocal action, is to my mind so great an absurdity, that I do not believe that any person who possesses an ordinary faculty for reflecting upon objects of a physical character can ever admit it."

Early objection to the doctrine of gravitation.

Objection was early made against the doctrine of gravitation that it involved the revival of the old scholastic belief in occult qualities, which the whole philosophical and scientific world had agreed in rejecting. Newton's language, above quoted, is a protest against this charge. Euler, in the next generation of men of science, also showed that no such belief was necessitated by the observed facts and demonstrated laws of gravitation. Among modern mathematicians and natural philosophers, Le Sage, Biot, and Arago, may be cited as repudiating the notion that the power of attraction resides in matter as an inherent and essential quality.

Materialism an ancient system.

From the very earliest known times of philosophical inquiry, however, down to the present, there have been those who held the opinion that all existence is to be traced back to mere matter, and that all the phenomena of existence of every kind are to be ascribed to the capabilities or qualities inherently possessed by the ultimate particles of matter. Those, including the most ancient and the most recent, who have carried the process of simplification to the greatest extreme, limit these original attributes of material elements to mag-

nitude, figure, position, and mobility. From these, all other qualities of all known existences are supposed to have been developed, and to be due to diversities of arrangement and combination of the primordial atoms.

The first difficulty in this system is clearly to account for the existence of an infinite number of atoms; the next, to account for their movement, so as to coalesce and form the conditions for subsequent interaction. Most of the ancient and modern physicists who have maintained this theory, being opposed to the belief of a Creator, or the direct action of a Divine Being in the original production or subsequent formation of all things, have adopted the hypothesis of the eternal and necessary self-existence of the atoms of matter. For, supposing there was a time when no substance existed possessing the primary qualities which we ascribe to matter, it is impossible and inconceivable that any such substance should come into existence without the exertion of an Almighty will, that is, the will of a personal Being who is absolutely Almighty.

Its physical difficulties.

Origin of matter.

Again, movement, without which the atoms of the universe must have for ever remained separate and independent particles, was assumed, by the older theorists of the materialistic school, to have been eternally co-existent with these atoms, and to have possessed a rotatory or vorticular character,

Of motion.

whence their ultimate conglomeration into existing forms. Aristotle, in his *Metaphysics*,¹ treats this assumption with deserved contempt, reproaching its authors with neglect or inability to assign any cause of motion, and claims for those alone who referred the origin of all substance to a supreme intelligence the credit of establishing a principal which is the cause of motion to things.

Solution of
Epicurus.

Epicurus, indeed, endeavoured to account for motion by the supposed necessity of a continual descent of the primordial atoms in space by this action of gravity; a notion, due, of course, to his ignorance of the fact that "up" and "down," "above" and "below," "ascent" and "descent," are relative terms, and that gravity could not account for motion in any one direction rather than another, nor, indeed, for any motion at all. Perceiving, also, that this theory implied motion in parallel lines, and therefore did not provide for concurrence and coalescence, without which matter could not have acquired its rudimentary forms, Epicurus proceeded to imagine a slight deviation or swerving from their original direction of movement by some atoms, so as to come into contact with others; but for such deviation—its where, when, and how, no cause was, or on his principles could be, assigned. His whole system, moral as well as physical, is based upon this crude hypo-

His funda-
mental
hypothesis
crude.

¹ Book I., close of Chapters 3 & 4.

thesis, "a childish fiction," as Cicero very justly designates it—"a fond thing vainly invented."

De Finibus,
i. 19. De
Fato, i. 9.

The modern theory, substantially that of Kant and La Place, is, as enunciated by the latter, that matter originally existed in a state of

"nebulosity so diffuse that its existence could hardly have been suspected,"

and that the formation of nuclei, and of separate zones revolving around them, breaking up afterwards into detached spherical masses, was due to the action of gravitation, or mutual attraction, the collision and condensation of the cosmical particles producing intense heat, which resulted in the fusion of the masses, which were afterwards solidified by the cooling caused by radiation.

Modern
theory.

This theory is equally inadequate with that of Epicurus to account for matter and motion. For, however diffuse the nebulosity, it must have consisted of separate particles, each of which, if not self-subsisting and eternal, must have been created. And motion, arising from gravitation, must have been either an original and therefore essential and co-eternal property or state of the mass of atoms, or it must have been communicated to it by some independent cause. In the former case it is impossible to understand what should have determined the commencement of the processes which have resulted in the present state of things. In the latter, matter was put into a different state

Inadequate
to account
for matter
and motion.

Dilemma.

from that in which it originally existed—received a property which it had not before ; but whence could this come, how could this be effected, but by the will and power of a Creator ?

It may be said, and, for scientific purposes, with apparent reasonableness, that those who maintain the theory that, given matter and motion, all things that are may be accounted for without the necessity of supposing final causes, are not obliged also to account for the existence of matter and motion.

Demand. But the mind, in contemplating this system, and endeavouring to realise the principle on which it is based, is logically compelled to examine its primary conditions, and to apply to them its radical principle, and therefore to ask,—If from matter and motion, progressively, and step by step, each deducible by natural law from the preceding, all things and all states of things have proceeded, whence were matter and motion ?

II.

No intelligible reply. Remarking, and registering the important fact, that no answer is attempted to be given to this inquiry, or none sufficiently plausible to be adopted or countenanced by any eminent physicist, and that therefore nothing has been proposed which can supply the place of an intelligent personal Being as the Creator of the elements of existence, we proceed to the consideration of the system of modern

Materialism, as propounded by its latest and boldest professors, and interpreted by various physiologists among us, who, without admitting its extravagant assumptions, accept it as the basis of the theory of the construction of all things by development and evolution.

Pure Materialism resolves all Being into *matter* and *force*, denying the fact or possibility of the existence of aught that is not material. Its maxims are :

Creed of pure materialism.

“No matter without force, and no force without matter; matter and force are inseparable, eternal and indestructible; there can be no independent force, since all force is an inherent and necessary property of matter, consequently there can be no immaterial creating power; inorganic and organic forms are results of different accidental combinations of matter; life is a particular combination of matter taking place under favourable circumstances; thought is a movement of matter; the soul is a function of material organisation.”

Such a system, it is obvious, is essentially atheistic: it excludes God from the universe. To those who receive it, the idea not only of the action but of the existence of a purely spiritual Being, infinite and omnipotent, is impossible: equally so the immateriality and immortality of the human soul.

The system essentially atheistic.

One of the first physiologists of the age, Professor Huxley, in a remarkable treatise on the “Physical Basis of Life,” published in the *Fortnightly Review* for February, 1869, asserts that

Denied in its conclusions by Professor Huxley.

“the materialistic position, that there is nothing in the world but matter, force, and necessity, is as utterly devoid of justification as the most baseless of theological dogmas.”

But not in its premisses.

The propositions which he accepts.

He admits that their terms are materialistic.

What his reason for this admission implies.

But, although he thus pronounces against the ultimate conclusions of materialism, regarding them as unscientific, unphilosophical, and, indeed, immoral, he assents to some of its most important and most startling propositions, those, in fact, from which its advocates, and others beside them, think that the conclusions which he considers unjustifiable must necessarily and immediately follow. He believes, and produces his reasons for believing, that all vital action, or life, is the result of the molecular forces of the elementary living substance, acting in a manner purely mechanical—

“the product of a certain disposition of material molecules;” and he thinks it an inevitable deduction from this statement, that

“thought is the expression of molecular change in that matter of life which is the source of our other vital phenomena.”

He admits that the terms of these propositions are distinctly materialistic, and contends for the employment of materialistic terminology in the investigation of the order of nature, alleging, as a special and indeed the principal reason, for his demand, that this terminology connects thought with the other phenomena of the universe. This reason implies that all the other phenomena of the universe are material, and that thought cannot be conceived of as connected with them unless it be conceived of as material—assumptions by no means allowable as axioms in the outset of this inquiry.

There can be no better preparation for the discussion of the principles of materialism than a summary exhibition of the train of observations by which Professor Huxley brings us face to face with the great problem of the origin of life. The following will be found a fair representation of his statements.

All living substances, from the lowest to the highest, possess a unity of faculty or power; all exercise the functions of feeding, moving, growth, and reproduction. They all possess a unity of form. They are all composed of corpuscles, or structural units, fundamentally of the same character, to which the name of *protoplasm* or "first formation," has been given. He instances the human being and the nettle. A nucleated mass of protoplasm is the structural unit of the human body; and the human body in its perfect condition is a multiple of such units, variously modified. The nettle arises, as the man does, in a particle of nucleated protoplasm; and similarly the whole substance of the nettle is made up of a repetition of such masses.

Huxley's
Biology.

Protoplasm.

But there exist innumerable living creatures which are each a single particle of protoplasm; each being nothing more than a unit of living substance, yet having an independent existence. And these, and all things that live, are composed of the same material elements—carbon, hydrogen,

The material elements of all living things.

They can derive life from a living substance.

Central proposition.

Vital action necessary to the production of life.

oxygen, and nitrogen. These, in various combinations, produce carbonic acid, water, and ammonia, which compounds, under certain conditions, give rise to the complex body, protoplasm, the basis of life. These elementary substances are themselves lifeless; and in their combination they can only form a living substance when appropriated and acted upon by a living substance already existing. Nor can every living substance so employ them immediately. Plants alone can do this. The animal depends for protoplasm upon the already formed protoplasm of the vegetable, whereas vegetable matter converts carbonic acid, water, and ammonia immediately into protoplasm. It must, however, be *living* vegetable matter. Without the agency of pre-existing living protoplasm these substances cannot form the matter of actual life.

We have now arrived at a fact upon which it is desirable to pause, and which should be kept steadily in mind, for it is a cardinal fact in this inquiry. The material elements of which every living substance is composed cannot of themselves combine into a living compound. Life must act upon them before they can contribute to life. There must be vital action employed upon the lifeless substances necessary to life in order that in their combination they may form a living substance. Life can only come from life. This looks very much like a scientifically ascertained neces-

sity for an original infusion of life into matter by a separate act of creation. The well-known experiments of Professor Tyndall, which have disproved the alleged fact of spontaneous generation, powerfully support this conclusion.

Tyndall.

But both these physiologists, in their zeal for the construction of a continuous chain of material agency, without proof, and contrary to proof, deduce from the fact that a combination of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen is necessary to life, the wholly "ultra-experimental conception," as Professor Tyndall himself calls it, that life is the immediate resultant of the properties of these elementary substances, the product of a certain disposition of material molecules, and all vital action the result of the molecular forces of the protoplasm which displays it. And if this be conceded, there is drawn from it the conclusion that thought is the expression of molecular change in that matter of life which is the source of our other vital phenomena.

Unwarrantable conclusion.

To ordinary, perhaps also to logical minds, it will appear, that from this conclusion, by an almost immediate deduction, we derive the doctrine of the most advanced materialists, viz., that the thinking substance, the soul, is a material organisation, its attributes and powers merely properties of matter, results of a certain aggregation and arrangement of its molecules.

Inevitable inference.

Disclaimed
by Huxley.

Let it not be supposed that Professor Huxley is chargeable with maintaining this doctrine. In repudiating materialism, and asserting that he is "individually no materialist," he must be understood to reject it.

On the
ground of
our ignor-
ance.

He promises in his Essay to point out "the only path" by which, in his judgment, extrication from what he truly calls "the materialistic slough" of the conclusion to which he has conducted us is possible. On examination, it is found that the relief and refuge from materialism which he offers consists in acquiescence in our total ignorance of cause and effect, and of the nature of matter and spirit, which, he says, are but names for the imaginary substrata of groups of natural phenomena.

Which
ought to
have pre-
vented his
conclusion.

The point at which he interposes a check in the descent through materialistic interpretation of vital and mental phenomena to absolute materialism is somewhat arbitrarily chosen. He draws the line between the materialism of the process of thought, which he allows, and the materialism of the thinking substance, which he is not prepared to allow. Ignorance of the nature of causation and of matter and spirit, is held to be a sufficient obstacle to further progress. He might have applied this principle earlier, for he had occasion for it. In the course of his previous investigation he had arrived at a term where, in the words of

Mr. Disraeli, he had "met the insoluble." His continuous straight line of reasoning had ended in a circle. He had discovered the material elements of life, but he had discovered also that they do not of themselves produce life, and that life is necessary to render them vital. But he would not accept the position. Not content at that point to pause before the absolutely unknown, he endeavoured to bridge over the void with a conjecture. The confessedly unintelligible influence by which the matter of life is made to live, is *assumed* to be something which has a representative or correlative in the lifeless elements of which it is composed; that is to say, it is *supposed* to be a strictly material agency, a result of the yet undiscovered and perhaps undiscoverable properties of certain dead matter.

Huxley's
assumption
and incon-
sistency.

And this assumption is necessary in order to proceed to the next proposition, that thought, mental feeling, and will, are the expression of molecular changes in the matter of life, originating, as life itself is supposed to originate, in the properties and arrangements of its elementary particles. So that, if he had acted consistently with his former course by following only experience and observation, and with his consequent course, by stopping short at the great blank created by our ignorance of matter and causation, he could not have advanced so near to the materialistic doctrine of the origin of life or the nature of thought.

His next
proposition
depends on
his assump-
tion.

The
advantage
of his in-
consistency.

Nor can any fail to notice the formidable advantage given to the advocates of absolute materialism by this inconsistency. When once we have arrived at the position that thought is a result of the properties of matter, the inference that the thinking substance, the soul, is material, seems direct and immediate. We are not, however, justified, according to Professor Huxley, in making this inference, because of our ignorance of matter and causation. But in forming the previous conclusion that all vital phenomena, including thought, are results of elementary properties of matter, he takes no account of this ignorance, although it is plainly suggested by the difficulty which he has acknowledged.

The materialist may fairly demand that if our ignorance presents no obstacle to the acceptance of the grand and general proposition it shall not be alleged as a sufficient reason for the rejection of one of its corollaries. He may say to the Professor,

The
materialistic
rejoinder.

"If you believe that life is the result of the interaction, mechanical, chemical, or electric, of lifeless material elements, although you have no proof that such interaction ever produced life, or can take place without a living agency, why should you not believe that thought, the chief activity of life, which you say is the expression of molecular changes in the matter of life, is the action of a purely material substance, although you cannot trace the relation between cause and effect, or between the material and spiritual?" his

It is, however, certain what our ignorance of

matter, which the Professor fully recognises, and to which, in fact, in the interest of materialism, he makes appeal, involves a principle which must entirely invalidate the materialistic theory of life, thought, and spiritual being, and which suggests encouragement and consolation to those that maintain the old instinctive belief that mind is different from matter, and that mind and matter are due to that which is neither matter, nor force, nor law, nor necessity.

Principle involved in the acknowledgment of ignorance.

If we attempt to reduce all existence to a material origin, we shall arrive at a conclusion which overthrows the foundation of materialism, and substitutes its very opposite—absolute idealism—in its room. Fixing our attention upon that inseparable compound without which, according to the materialistic theory, there can be nothing, and besides and beyond which there is nothing—matter and force—we observe that every particle of matter *is* matter because it possesses the attributes of extension, impenetrability, and mobility. Of these attributes the two latter are due to force, or are exhibitions of force. Pure matter, then, becomes mere extension endued with force. But if it be admitted that all that is essential to matter is extension, then every particle of matter is nothing but a portion of space. And so the idea of matter vanishes entirely. Or if it be said that matter is the unknown subject of which extension, impene-

Materialism supplanted by idealism.

trability, and mobility are the attributes, then, since these attributes alone give us our perception and conception of matter as such, the subject underlying them, whatever it is, is not matter, but an inconceivable and necessarily immaterial principle of being.

Paul Janet on the significance of this conclusion.

M. Paul Janet with great clearness demonstrates the necessity and exhibits the significance of this conclusion :—

“If I am told,” he says, “that the molecule itself is not the ultimate element of matter, that beyond the molecule there is a something, and that this something is absolute and independent, I reply that this is very possible, but that in this case we give up what I call materialism for another hypothesis which is not here in question. The molecule is the ultimate representative of matter that is possible or conceivable : whatever is beyond is some other thing ; it is no longer matter, but another principle which is conceivable by abstract thought alone, and which we may call idea, substance, force, as we please, but no longer matter. Matter is that which is presented to me by the senses ; that which is beyond and out of the range of my senses and immediate experience, is not matter. In what I call a body I can easily, it is true, resolve certain qualities into other qualities ; secondary qualities into primary ; smell, taste, colour, into form and motion ; but, as long as there remains anything of which I have a perception, it is still a body, and when I say that everything is body and matter I mean that everything is reducible to elements more or less similar to those which are perceived by my senses. But if in what I perceive by my senses everything is phenomenal, everything is mere appearance, if the basis of the object of sense is absolutely different from the object itself, I say that this object of sense which I call matter is relative only, and reduced to a superior principle, the power and value of which I can no longer estimate by means of my senses. Matter then vanishes in a principle superior to itself, and materialism abdicates in favour of idealism.”

Le Matérialisme Contemporain en Allemagne, chap. iv.

This conclusion is not urged in the interest of

idealism, for the purpose of proving that matter has no existence. On the contrary, the reasoning by which materialism is thus reduced to a contradiction of itself is founded upon the evidence of the senses, which report to us the existence of something presented to them, and not resulting from them, our perception of which as so attained, satisfies us that what we perceive is an objective reality different from ourselves. But what we insist upon is that we are compelled to believe, even by following out materialistic principles and premisses, that matter has a dependent and derived existence, and that that from which it is derived, and upon which its reality depends, is not matter. We need not argue the case of force. All materialists agree in denying its independence, and assert that there can be no force without matter, as no matter without force. Force, therefore, like matter, is dependent and derived; it originates in that which is not force. There is no mechanical basis of force, as there is no material basis of matter.

The conclusion not urged in the interest of idealism.

The reasoning founded in the evidence of the senses.

Matter dependent and derived.

So is force.

Application of the principle of ignorance.

If, then, materialism is incapable of explaining matter itself, we may reasonably conclude with M. Janet that

"a fortiori it cannot explain the two still greater mysteries presented by nature—that is to say, life and thought."

The doctrine that the existence and properties of matter supply all that is necessary for the develop-

ment of life and thought is no longer tenable when we find that something beside and essentially different from matter is necessary to its existence.

Examination
of the
constitution
of matter,
leads to
the same
result.

The same result will be found to follow from the consideration of the elementary constitution of matter; and equally whether we acknowledge its infinite divisibility, or adopt the hypothesis, so useful for practical purposes, of the indivisibility of its ultimate particles or atoms.

Moleschott
and
Büchner.

The most advanced school of materialism, represented by the German writers, Moleschott and Büchner, rejects the atomic theory almost universally adopted by modern physiologists, and maintains that every particle of matter is in reality, as in conception, divisible. It is, therefore, a compound, and every compound has necessarily a relative and dependent existence. Its existence depends upon that of its constituent parts. But each of these is also a compound; and so on in infinite series. Whatever, therefore, may be the final absolute condition of the existence of matter, it is plain that it cannot be material, since whatever is material must be relative and dependent. And so with regard to force. The force of every particle is the resultant of the forces of its constituent particles; an absolute force, one, that is, not resolvable into component forces, being nowhere to be found. Therefore the existence of force depends ultimately upon something which is not force.

Dalton's great discovery of definite proportions demonstrates, in the opinion of most men of science, the existence of ultimate indivisible particles of matter. Every molecule, or elementary constituent of any kind of matter is, on his theory, an aggregate of smaller parts called atoms, which are severally uncombined, and, as their name imports, indivisible. But by their indivisibility must be meant not that they are actually without parts, but that their parts are inseparable one from another; not that they are essentially and absolutely indivisible, but that such is the constitution of nature that they are never divided.

Dalton.
Ultimate
indivisibility
of particles.

For atoms are of different weights: the weight of an atom of oxygen is eight times that of an atom of hydrogen; and the weight of a body is dependent upon its mass; we cannot then avoid the conclusion that an atom of oxygen contains eight times as much matter as an atom of hydrogen, that its eighth part is as heavy as an atom of hydrogen, and that therefore it has parts. Atoms are also, as Professor Tyndall says,

Atoms are
of different
weights.

"probably of different sizes; at all events it is almost certain that the ratio of the mass of the atom to the surface it presents to the action of the waves of light is different in different cases."

Article on
Chemical
Rays in the
*Fortnightly
Review*,
February,
1869.

If an atom has a surface extended over more space than the surface of another atom, there must be points on that surface distant from each other; and, therefore, by the action of a sufficient power, such

An atom is
a compound.

Conclusion
from it, as
before, that
matter is
dependent
and derived.

an atom would be divisible. An atom, then, is, like a molecule, an aggregate, a compound consisting perhaps, of perfectly homogeneous parts, but still having parts, and these also having parts, and so on without limit. Consequently, the existence of the atom is relative and dependent; and therefore the atomic theory fails to establish the independent and absolute existence of matter.

If it be said that the terms weight and surface are not to be understood when applied to the ultimate elements of matter, in the same sense as when applied to its particles appreciable by the senses, we repeat the remark of M. Janet, that then we are dealing with something totally different from what we know or conceive as matter, an unknown something, a principle which, whatever it may be, is certainly not material.

The atomic
theory
proves a
supreme
will.

There are other considerations arising out of the atomic theory which are worthy of some attention. If the ultimate elements of all substances are particles which, although not essentially indivisible since they are aggregates consisting of parts, are yet actually, and as a matter of fact, uniformly indivisible, such an arrangement cannot be conceived of as necessary, but must be conceived of as arbitrary. It amounts to a contradiction in terms to say that non-essential indivisibility depends upon necessity; it must depend upon will.

Again, if the constituent atoms of a molecule are

practically and actually indivisible, though they are composite, and this indivisibility is a condition of the constitution of nature, and since, therefore, nature would not be nature if any conceivable force existing in nature, could sever the atom into its parts, it follows that there is no conceivable force existing in nature which could condense those parts into their present inseparable state, and which can maintain them in it. If there is no possibility in nature, as it is, for the one, there is no possibility in nature, as it is, for the other. Hence the actual indivisibility of these particles is due to something which is not nature, nor in nature, something beyond and different from everything which we experience or conceive of as force. This is a power of which matter and force may be creations, but of which they are certainly not representatives, and with which they have no conceivable affinity.

Proof of a power external to matter and force.

It appears, then, that our ignorance of matter and force, pleaded by Professor Huxley in defence of the materialistic theory of life and thought, when pursued into its darkest recesses, renders necessary the conclusion that matter and force do not originate in anything which is of their own nature, and that therefore their continued existence and action do not depend upon ultimate elements which are material and mechanical.

Matter and force could not be self-originated.

But the fundamental difficulty of materialism arising from our ignorance of matter occurs not for

The fundamental difficulty of materialism does not occur for the first time at the last stage of inquiry.

the first time at the last stage of the inquiry into the basis of all objects of sense. It was encountered, as we have seen, in the attempt to trace to its origin the connection of life with matter. For when it was ascertained that the material constituents of living substances cannot, by mere combination and interaction, produce life, but that life in its lowest forms depends upon previously existing life, it was already time to acknowledge the incompetency of matter and force to account for the phenomena of life, and to recognize the presence and the power of an element of life which is certainly not material. The result arrived at by subsequent investigation, viz., that matter and force do not contain in themselves the principle of their own existence, but that they also depend upon something that is beyond them and not of them, is more than an analogy to this conclusion, it is essentially connected with it; and it is impossible to evade its significance as to the immaterial origin both of life and matter.

III.

Laws of nature.

Let us pass now from the constitution of matter to the consideration of what are called "laws of nature," or, by the more advanced materialists, "necessity," names given to conditions under which the properties of matter act, and have come

into action, so as to produce the phenomena of the universe. Given matter and force, space and time, then, according to the materialistic philosophy, nothing more is required to construct a world. The molecules of matter, under the impulse of molecular force, must so act by the operation of law or necessity as to originate combinations, the results of which through a series of developments are—all existing forms. All that is needed is sufficient time for the process, and of that, in a past eternity during which matter has been in existence, there is of course an unlimited supply.

Requirements for the construction of a world, according to Materialism.

But it is here, in the first conditions for the operation of law, that materialism suffers shipwreck, as before, in the first conditions for the existence of matter or force. Supposing, for example, the matter of which our system is composed to have been, in its normal state, an extremely diffuse nebulosity, a mass of incandescent vapour or gas (a hypothesis by no means exclusively materialistic, though accepted by every materialist), the commencement of the present order of things must have been the formation of a central nucleus, and its acquisition of a rotatory movement.

Materialism suffers shipwreck in the first conditions for the existence of matter or force.

Let us date as far back as we please the transition from the normal state of uniform or irregular diffusion to this incipience of organisation, no reason can be assigned by the materialist why this transition had not occurred any number of ages

Creation unaccounted for by the operation of law.

Materialism can give no reason why our system did not arrive at its present condition at an earlier period.

previously. It has taken from that point of time to this to bring the matter composing our system into its present condition. Materialism can give no reason why it had not arrived at its present condition by the time whence we date the commencement of the process of which the present condition is the result. There are discovered by the telescope numerous masses of nebulous matter, some apparently in the entirely diffused state, some possessing nuclei already formed, all probably destined to become systems like our own—suns, planets, and satellites, worlds of organised and inorganic substances. Now, the matter of which they are composed, like that of our system, has, according to the materialist, been in existence from eternity, and the laws of nature are equally eternal. What has retarded the formation of these masses into systems? What has determined their various stages of progression?—and what is to account for the advanced state of the solar system?

It cannot be said that the operation of law which produced the initial nucleus or initial rotation in any case, was a necessary result of a previous series of operations or developments, extending backwards into a past eternity; for this would apply to all matter alike, all being eternal, and subject to the same eternal laws; and therefore every mass of matter would be at any period

in the same stage and condition. There would be no reason, from the operation of fixed and necessary laws, for the commencement of one system which would not be equally valid for the commencement of every other at the same time.

Chance, the old Epicurean doctrine of the fortuitous concourse of atoms, is, with apparent seriousness, relied upon by some men of science, even in the present day, as sufficient to account for the origination of a system of worlds. But what is chance? What action or movement can exist, or be imagined, which is not in sequence to some previous action or movement, and in some relation to it which could be represented by what we call a law? And so we are thrown back upon the difficulty offered by the eternal existence and operation of law. But, adopting the mathematical notion of chance, that is, probability, let us say that certain combinations of circumstances in the relations among the particles of matter are required for the production of the nucleus of a system of worlds, and that there is a certain amount of probability of their occurrence. One such combination has resulted in the production of the nucleus of our system. But the conditions necessary to, and occasioning its occurrence, at any date, cannot fail to have existed repeatedly in the eternal past antecedently to that date. The existence of so many millions of systems each, upon

Chance cannot account for creation.

The difficulty of the eternal existence and operation of law.

Why were not existing systems not originated much earlier?

the chance hypothesis, due to such a fortuitous combination, corroborates the conclusion arrived at by abstract reasoning, that, in the case of every separate mass of matter, the formation of which into a system commenced at any definite period, the probabilities were immensely in favour of the commencement of the process many times over before that period. Whenever it began, it ought to have begun before. In fact, the doctrine of the eternity of matter is fatal to the doctrine of evolution.¹

The doctrine of the eternity of matter fatal to the doctrine of evolution.

That combinations and developments of matter may begin at different periods, and may be in different stages, is only possible and conceivable on the supposition that the different masses of matter in which they take place came into existence at different periods. They must have had each a normal condition, and that at different times. The normal condition of the more advanced must have preceded that of the less advanced by the number of ages necessary to bring the latter into the present condition of the former. And a normal condition is necessarily, by its definition, the primary condition of existence, that which had no predecessor from which it was evolved, that before which was—nothing.

These considerations lead us to the conclusion

¹ i.e. Godless evolution—evolution supposed to be directed by law without will.

that the operation of law in the construction of the system of nature depends upon something which is not law; that the operation of chance to the same effect, supposing it to be distinguishable from that of law, requires conditions which are independent of chance. Matter and force we found could not exist except by the agency of something which is not matter or force. And now we find that something which is not law must determine action according to law, and something which is not chance must limit the range of probabilities. In a word, we are shut up to the necessity of believing in a creative power, and a determining and directing will, that is, an immaterial, conscious, intelligent, personal Being, the Author and Designer of nature—an omnipotent and omniscient God.

The system of nature depends on something that is not law.

We are shut up to the necessity of believing in a creative power.

IV.

Upon the materialistic theory, consciousness, intelligence, thought, and moral sense, are but the highest developments of the faculty by which the lichen draws nutriment from the air or the rock. The conscious, intelligent, thinking, moral being is as much a material substance as the lichen. Its intellectuality is due to the organisation to which it has attained, that is, to a certain combination of its material elements, and the forces with which they are endowed. Consequently, when, in each

Immortality denied by materialism.

Materialism
renders
immortality
inconceiv-
able.

particular instance or product, the organisation ceases to act, and the combination is dissolved, the result of the organisation and combination, that is, the separate individual intelligence—what we call mind or soul—vanishes entirely. So that materialism necessarily denies the immortality of the soul; in fact, renders it inconceivable.

Evolution of
immortal
being
impossible.

Evolution
must
proceed step
by step.

The evolutionist, who refuses to be bound by the materialistic conditions of evolution, may perhaps maintain that the human being has attained to immortality by a process of development, as it has attained to a life of consciousness, thought, and moral feeling.¹ But we are immediately arrested by a difficulty which inevitably arises out of the notion of such a development. It is essential to the very fact of development that the highest condition attained should be but a step from one next below it, should indeed be evolved from it. What is the condition of limited existence next lower than immortality? It is as impossible for such a con-

¹ Sir C. Lyell in his *Antiquity of Man*, chap. xxiv., as quoted by Professor Mozley in his Bampton Lectures (on Miracles) Lect. iii. note 3, says:—"If, in conformity with the theory of progression, we believe mankind to have risen slowly from a rude and humble starting-point, such leaps (in intelligence) may have successively introduced not only higher and higher forms and grades of intellect, but at a much remoter period may have cleared at one bound the space which separated the highest stage of the unprogressive intelligence of the inferior animals from the first and lowest form of improveable reason manifested by man." But, as the Professor truly remarks, "such a leap is only another word for an inexplicable mystery. Such a change cuts asunder the identity of the being which precedes it and the being which succeeds it."

dition to exist as for a number to be found next less than infinity. Personal immortality, therefore, must be as entirely a separate independent creation, or endowment, as we have ascertained life itself in its origin to have been.

Eminent materialists of the last generation accepted the doctrine of Cabanis, that thought is a secretion of the brain, just as bile is a secretion of the liver. But modern materialism rejects this doctrine, and affirms that thought is not matter which the brain produces, but the very action of the brain itself. It is described as the resultant of forces that exist in the brain, or, according to Moleschott, "thought is a movement of matter." If so, then thought is the action of the molecules which compose the brain of the ultimate atoms which are the constituents of these molecules. And this action, whether originating in the mutual attraction and repulsion of those atoms, or in a material impulse communicated from without, must be regulated by the ordinary laws of motion. And if thought is the motion of certain molecules, this motion must, as such, determine the character and quality of thought, and be mechanically appropriate to its various applications. The character and quality of thought must, therefore, depend upon the magnitude and direction of molecular force, and vary according to the form of its line of action. This inference is inevitable: Given that

Materialistic doctrine of thought.

Brain secretion.

Contrary opinion.

Brain action.

Inevitable inference.

the thinking substance is material, that thinking is the movement of its particles, that every thought is the resultant of forces acting upon those particles, then every thought must have a particular intensity of mechanical force, and a particular direction in space, and there is nothing to distinguish it from another thought except the difference in intensity and direction.

Results of
this doctrine.

The laws which regulate rectilinear and curvilinear motion must therefore be the laws which regulate thought. And thoughts will be right or wrong, true or false, good or bad, according to their direction in space, and the linear form in which they move—circular, elliptical, or parabolical, or any of the endless variety of curves. Hence the treatises with which mathematical students are familiar on the dynamics of a single particle may be expected to have an important bearing upon mental science when established upon materialistic principles. The formulæ of these treatises must necessarily express, if we could but interpret them, laws or conditions of thought.

Disclaimed
by Huxley

It is possible that those who have adopted the materialistic creed, "There is nothing but matter, force, and necessity," may accept these conclusions. It is obvious that they must, if they would claim credit for simple consistency. For, according to this creed, all action of mind must be action of matter, and there can be no laws of mind which

are not laws of matter, and therefore all the known laws of matter must act upon mind, and produce its phenomena. Professor Huxley rejects and reprobates this creed. He will not tell us that mind is matter, or that thought is nothing but a movement of matter, or that the soul is material. But if we understand him aright, he would have us pursue our psychological inquiries on the hypothesis that these propositions are true. He says,

“With a view to the progress of science, the materialistic terminology is in every way to be preferred ;”

But disclaimer not consistent.

and again,

“There can be but little doubt that the further science advances the more extensively and consistently will all the phenomena of nature be represented by materialistic formulæ and symbols.”

What is to be inferred from these statements but that the investigations of mental science, the study of the nature and attributes of mind, ought to be conducted on strictly mechanical and mathematical principles, and the world of thought considered as subject to the same conditions of existence and action as the material world? There needs not the absurdity which, as we have just seen, is involved in the necessary conclusions to which we are brought by this demand, to convince the intelligent, honest, and earnest thinker, unbiassed and unembarrassed by theories, of its utterly impracticable character.¹

¹ “All this show of philosophy is pure illusion. No mind that is capable of consistent thought can bring the forms and phrases

Atomic
theory
consistent
with theism.

It would be unjust and unreasonable to assume that all who maintain the atomic theory of the constitution of the universe are absolute materialists, denying that there is any original and necessary existence except that of matter and force. On the contrary, there is reason to believe that those very ancient physiologists who first broached the doctrine of elementary atoms applied it only to sensible substances, and fully admitted the existence of incorporeal substances distinct from matter, and principles of life and thought distinct from the qualities and powers of matter. Dr. Cudworth, the author of *The Intellectual System of the Universe*, has investigated this subject with profound learning, and affirms that he has

Cudworth.

“made it evident that those atomical physiologists that were before Democritus and Leucippus were all of them incorporealists, joining theology and pneumatology, the doctrine of incorporeal substance and a Deity with their atomical physiology.”

He also contends, with much force of reasoning,

of physical science into relationship with the processes, or the varying conditions of the mind.

“Mind and matter must each have its philosophy to itself. The modes of reasoning proper to the one can only be delusive if carried over to the other. That this is the fact might very safely be inferred from what hitherto has been the issue, without an exception, of the many ingenious theories propounded with the intention of laying open the world of mind by the help of chemistry, or any of those sciences that are properly called physical. Every theory resting upon this basis has presently gone off into some quackery—noised for a while among the uneducated, and soon forgotten.”—Isaac Taylor, *World of Mind*, cviii.

from considerations similar to those which we have alleged, that the

“intrinsic constitution of this (the atomical) physiology is such that, whosoever entertains it, if he do but thoroughly understand it, must of necessity acknowledge that there is something in the world beside body.”

Book I,
chap. 1.

The following is his summary of the opinions of the earlier and better atomical physiologists, opinions which were very clearly his own, and which prove how thoroughly he understood the theories of modern materialism, and the true reasons for rejecting them :—

His
summary of
the opinions
of the earlier
and better
atomical
physiologists.

“Our ancient atomists never went about, as the blundering Democritus afterwards did, to build up a world out of mere passive bulk and sluggish matter, without any active principles or incorporeal powers ; understanding well that thus they could not have so much as motion, mechanism, or generation in it ; the original of all that motion that is in bodies springing from something that is not body, that is, from incorporeal (immaterial) substance. And yet if local motion could have been supposed to have risen up, or sprung in upon this dead lump and mass of matter, nobody knows how, and, without dependence upon any incorporeal being, to have actuated (acted upon) it fortuitously, these ancient atomists would still have thought it impossible for the corporeal (material) world itself to be made up, such as it now is, by fortuitous mechanism, without the guidance of any higher principle. But they would have concluded it the greatest impudence, or madness, to assert that animals also consisted of mere mechanism, or that life and sense, reason and understanding, were really nothing else but local motion, and consequently that (they) themselves were but mere machines and automata. Wherefore they joined both active and passive principles together, the corporeal and incorporeal nature, mechanism and life, atomology and pneumatology ; and from both these united they made up one entire system of philosophy correspondent with and agreeable to the true and real world without them. And this system of philosophy, thus

Book I,
chap. i. 41.

consisting of the doctrine of incorporeal substance (whereof God is the head) together with the atomical and mechanical physiology seems to have been the only genuine perfect and complete (system)."

Modern
materialism
not modern,
but
antiquated.

His strictures, in a later part of the work, on the most advanced school of materialists in his day, are singularly applicable to the revived theories of Democritus and Epicurus, which find so much favour with some of our modern physicists, and show that there is nothing in them new or original, and that they have no claim to be received as the results of the progress and discoveries of the science of the nineteenth century:—

Ancient
theories
revived.

"But as for that prodigious paradox of atheists, that cogitation itself is nothing but local motion, or mechanism, we could not have thought it possible that any man should have given entertainment to such a conceit, but that this was rather a mere slander raised upon atheists, were it not certain, from the records of antiquity, that whereas the old religious atomists did, upon good reason, reduce all corporeal action (as generation, augmentation, and alteration) to local motion or translation from place to place (there being no other motion beside this conceivable in bodies), the ancient atheisers of that philosophy (Leucippus and Democritus) not contented herewith, did really carry on the business still further, so as to make cogitation itself nothing but local motion. And it is also certain that a modern atheistic pretender to wit,¹ hath publicly owned the same conclusion, *that mind is nothing else but local motion in the organic parts of man's body*. These men have been sometimes, indeed, a little troubled with the fancy, apparition, or seeming, of cogitation, that is, the consciousness of it, as knowing not well what to make thereof, but then they put it off again, and satisfy themselves worshipfully with this, that fancy is but fancy, but the reality of cogitation nothing but local motion; as if there were not as much reality in fancy and consciousness as there is in local motion. That which inclined these men so

Cudworth's
strictures.

¹ Hobbes. Physic. Chap. xxv. Leviathan Pt. 1, Chap. i. ii.

much to this opinion was only because they were sensible and aware of this, that if there were any other action besides local motion admitted, there must needs be some other substance acknowledged beside body. Cartesius (Descartes) indeed undertook to defend (maintain) brute animals to be nothing else but machines; but then he supposed that there was nothing at all of cogitation in them, and consequently nothing of true animality or life, no more than is in an artificial automaton, as a wooden eagle or the like; nevertheless this was justly thought to be paradox enough. But that cogitation itself should be local motion, and men nothing but machines, this is such a paradox as none but a stupid and besotted, or else an enthusiastic, bigotical or fanatic atheist could possibly give entertainment to. Nor are such men as these fit to be disputed with any more than a machine is."

Chap. v.

Descartes above mentioned, the well-known French philosopher, perhaps the most eminent philosopher of the seventeenth century, held that all space was originally occupied by matter of a uniform nature, divisible into innumerable parts, all in motion; and constructed a theory of the origin of the universe from matter in motion, very similar to that of Epicurus, or modern materialists. But he freely acknowledged the necessity, not only of God's causing motion for the origination of the universe, but of his conserving motion in it for its sustentation. The hypothesis of the evolution of the existing universe from matter in motion did not, therefore, seem to him to exclude, but on the contrary, did seem to require, the existence and agency, primary and constant, of a spiritual principle distinct from matter and motion.

Descartes.

The necessity of Divine origination and preservation acknowledged by him.

Sir Isaac Newton was inclined to believe in the

Newton inclined to believe in the atomic constitution of the original matter of the universe.

atomic constitution of the original matter of the universe. He wrote in his *Optics*—

“It seems probable to me, that God in the beginning formed matter in solid, massy, hard, impenetrable, moveable particles, of such sizes and figures, and with such other properties, and in such proportion to space, as most conduced to the end for which He formed them; and that these primitive particles, being solids, are incomparably harder than any porous bodies compounded of them, even so very hard as never to wear out or break to pieces.”

Book IV.
p. 260.

He also speaks of these particles of matter as—

“perhaps of different densities and forces.”

His language almost identical with that of Lucretius. Book 1. 503-564.

This language is almost identical with that of Lucretius, the chief exponent of the ancient materialistic and atheistic philosophy. But we are quite sure that the doctrine which it expresses is not necessarily connected with the materialism which denies all primary existence except that of matter and its movements, or with the atheism avowed by Lucretius, and implicitly taught by the modern professors of the Epicurean system. For it was not connected with such materialism in the mind of Newton, who, as we have seen, in a passage before referred to, would not allow that matter possessed any inherent capability of action, or that by matter and its properties the phenomena of attraction, electricity, light, heat, sensation, and the voluntary movements of animal bodies, could be accounted for. Still less was it connected, in his judgment, with atheism; for, as in the passage last

The doctrine not necessarily atheistic.

Newton ascribes the formation of matter to the act of God.

quoted, he ascribes the formation of matter to the act of God, so elsewhere, repeatedly, in his most scientific writings, he recognises the necessarily existing deity as the original cause and continual support of all things that are. No mind was ever so intimately and profoundly conversant as his with the subject of matter and motion. The intellect which grasped the idea of the primary force which rules the movements of all bodies of the universe, which measured it and discovered its laws, was capable, beyond that of any other man, of realising the constitution of force in the abstract, and the extent and modes of its operation. Yet that intellect utterly rejected the conception of force as dependent upon matter, or as independent of the will and action of God. On the contrary, Newton's contemplation of matter and force, sustained throughout the composition of the most wonderful of all mathematical works, the *Principia*, in which he revealed and demonstrated his discoveries, led him to close it by a formal and solemn acknowledgment of the creation and conservation of the universe by the will and power of an almighty personal Being. With his profession of his philosophical creed we may suitably conclude the strictures we have offered on the modern materialism which would banish from philosophy and science all consideration of final causes, or of God:—

The conception of force as independent of the will and action of God utterly rejected by Newton.

“This admirably beautiful structure of sun, planets, and

The
philosophical
creed of
Newton.

comets, could not have originated except in the wisdom and sovereignty of an intelligent and powerful Being. He rules all things, not as the soul of the world, but as the Lord of all. He is eternal and infinite, omnipotent and omniscient ; that is, His duration is from eternity to eternity, and His presence from infinity to infinity. He governs all things, and has knowledge of all things that are done or can be done. He is not eternity and infinity, but eternal and infinite. He is not duration and space, but He is ever, and is present everywhere. We know Him only by means of His properties and attributes, and by means of the supremely wise and infinite constructions of the world, and their final causes : we admire Him for His perfection ; we venerate and worship Him for His sovereignty. For we worship Him as His servants ; and a God without sovereignty, providence, and final causes is nothing else than fate and nature. From a blind metaphysical necessity which, of course, is the same always and everywhere, no variety could originate. The whole diversity of created things in regard to places and times could have its origin only in the ideas and the will of a necessarily existing Being."

Y. supra,
pp. 22-25.



CHRISTIANITY AND CONFUCIANISM

COMPARED

IN THEIR

Teaching of the Whole Duty of Man.

BY

JAMES LEGGE, LL.D.,

*Professor of the Chinese Language and Literature in the University of Oxford,
and formerly of the London Missionary Society*

AUTHOR OF

"THE RELIGIONS OF CHINA," ETC.



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:

56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
164, PICCADILLY.

Argument of the Tract.

THE writer does not institute a comparison between Christianity as a whole and Confucianism. He does not dwell upon the teaching of Christianity as to the moral and spiritual condition of man by nature, nor on the redeeming and regenerating power of Christianity, but confines himself to a comparison between the teaching of the respective systems on the whole duty of man.

The whole duty of man, according to Christianity, is comprised in the word LOVE. Christ's love to us is to be the measure, and His death for us the motive, of our love to one another. This love will prompt to obedience, self-control, and self-denial. The Christian will seek to be perfect, according to the prayer of the Apostle for the entire sanctification of believers. Christianity teaches the cultivation of the more winning as well as the sterner graces of character.

Confucianism teaches men the discharge of their duties in the various relations of life. It regards the moral nature as conferred on men by God, and so gives a religious sanction to the performance of human duties. The worship of God is confined to the sovereign. The religious sensibilities of the people flow into the worship of parents and ancestors, as a part of filial piety, which is regarded as the first and chief of human duties. The general rule of Confucius and the golden rule of Christ are compared, and the original character of the latter is vindicated. The absence of any glow of piety in the teaching of Confucius, and the uncertainty in which he left his followers about religion, are pointed out.

The superiority of Christian to Confucian teaching is shown to consist in the importance it attaches to the duties of religion, in the nearness of God to men which it reveals, the advantages which this nearness confers, in placing all our social duties under the guardianship of God, and the strength it assures to us in the battle with temptation, in the motive to which it appeals for obedience, in the duties which it inculcates with reference to the five relations of society, in the perfection of the example it offers for our imitation in our sinless High Priest and Saviour, who is the revelation of the Father. Confucianism is shown to be incapable of producing fruits comparable to the character formed by Christianity when its principles have free course. The aggressive character of Christianity, and what is needed in order to win the Chinese to Christ, are indicated.

CHRISTIANITY AND CONFUCIANISM COMPARED

IN THEIR TEACHING OF

THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.



FROM the teachings of Christianity and Confucianism I have selected and confined myself to one important point, by their treatment of which we may form a judgment as to their comparative worth. The subject chosen, however, as the ground of comparison between them is a testing one, and that in which the cause of Confucianism is specially strong. The courses and styles of life, to the attainment of which they respectively call their followers, will enable the reader to decide which of them is the more suited to secure the complete and harmonious development of our nature, to make men good, and to make them happy.

The point of comparison chosen.

It was one of the deep, if somewhat enigmatic utterances of Confucius (Analects xv. 28), "Man can enlarge his principles of conduct; it is not those principles that enlarge man." His idea was, that man is greater than any system which he may be called to follow, and that there is that in

Confucius on man and his principles.

The whole
duty of man.

him which constitutes him its judge, and will enable him to supplement and complete it, if that be necessary. In accordance with that saying, I will endeavour to set forth what Christianity and Confucianism lay down as **THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN**, and then ask my readers to judge of their own selves which of the two is the right teaching; or, if it shall be thought that both are good, then to say which is the better.

The teaching
of Chris-
tianity on
the subject.

Let us begin with Christianity. I prefer to do so, because my readers are probably all acquainted with it. I cannot tell them anything about its teaching on the point in hand which they have not often heard and read. I must refer to it, however, stirring up their minds, it may be, only by way of remembrance, but preparing them thereby all the better to appreciate and estimate what I shall shortly tell them about the teaching of Confucianism. What, then, is the **Whole Duty of Man** according to Christianity?

The Hebrew
preacher.

There will probably occur to most, in answer to this question, the words of the Hebrew preacher (Eccles. xii. 13): "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." When the preacher thus spoke of "the commandments of God," he, no doubt, had in his mind what we call "The Ten Commandments;" the "Ten Words," as the Hebrew text of the Bible

has it, in which God summed up His legislation for the infant nation at mount Sinai. Of those commandments "the mediator," Moses, himself gave a summary in the two sentences: "Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut. vi. 5); and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Lev. xix. 18).

The summary of the Ten Commandments by Moses.

It may be said that this was a summary of the Jewish law, while in this Tract we have to do with Christianity. But Christ made it His own. On one occasion, when He was asked by a lawyer, one of the Pharisees, which was the great commandment (Matt. xxii. 36), He answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law and the prophets." Did not Christ in these words adopt the Mosaic summary of the Jewish law, and repeat it with His own authority?

Adopted by Christ.

But we have been told that that second sentence in the summary of man's duty, as originally delivered, follows the injunction, "Thou shalt not bear any grudge against the children of thy people," so that it was only of national, and not of universal, application. This objection, however, cannot be

Universal in its application.

Whom we
are to love.

urged against the re-affirmation of it by Christ, when, replying to a vicious application of it, in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 43), He pronounced, "But I say unto you, Love your ENEMIES." Then we have His parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke x. 30-37), in answer to the question, "Who is my neighbour?" teaching us that all who need our sympathy and assistance, without distinction of nation or creed, should be regarded as our neighbours, and be loved and helped by us.

Christ's love
to us to be
the measure
of our love
to one
another.

According to Christianity, therefore, the whole duty of man is comprised in the one little word LOVE. That is "the fulfilling of the law." And Christ went beyond "the law." It was impossible to insist more strongly on the love of God than Moses, or rather than Jehovah Himself speaking by the mouth of Moses, had done; but the love of our neighbour appears in the Gospels enjoined more emphatically than in the summary of it which has come to us with our Lord's approval and commendation. He said: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, even AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, that ye also love one another" (John xiii. 34; comp. xv. 12). These words show the depth of His meaning in the declaration in the Sermon on the Mount, that He was come not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to FULFIL them. And thus those who heard them understood Him. Witness the lan-

guage of "the beloved disciple:" "Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John iii. 16).

Christ's atoning sacrifice to be the motive of our love to one another.

Where there is love—not to say this love—there will be the performance of all its promptings. The duties which we owe will be discharged sincerely, and to the extent of our ability. This implies of course the exercise of self-government, and the regulation of all the faculties in the continent of our nature. Every contrary lust and selfish desire, every angry impulse and passion must be denied lodgment even in the deep and hidden recesses of the breast. He who is seeking to fulfil his whole duty as enjoined by Christ will be striving, under the constraint of love, to be perfect emotionally, intellectually, and practically, a true son of God his Father, a faithful servant of Christ his Lord. The object of the Christian ministry is "for the perfecting of the saints" (Eph. iv. 12). The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "This also we pray for, even your perfecting" (2 Cor. xiii. 9). His prayer for the Thessalonians was, "The God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame" (1 Thess. v. 23). The summary of his teaching, as inculcated on the Philippians, was: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever

What is implied in this love.

The aim of the Christian.

The Apostle's prayer for the sanctification of believers.

Summary of St. Paul's teaching.

things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report,—if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. iv. 8).

Confucian teaching.

Such is a brief exhibition of the teaching of Christianity on the duty of man. I will leave it for the present, and proceed to show the teaching of Confucianism on the same subject. And I am glad to be able to place in the forefront a description of it by the highest Chinese authority.

Precepts for the formation of character.

The second emperor of the present dynasty (1662–1722), certainly a very great man, published in 1670 what has become known in Europe as the Khang-hsi Sacred Edict, a collection of sixteen Precepts, by which his people should form their characters, and order their conduct, involving all principles essential to their goodness and happiness, and to the prosperity of the empire. It was enacted that, on the first and fifteenth day of every month, it should be read in the hearing of the soldiery and people in each statistical division of the country. The emperor's son and successor, whose reign is called the Yung-ch'ang period (1723–1735), published in 1724 an Amplification of the Precepts in a high style of composition, forming a volume of elegant essays or sermons, which should be read on those days. But such finished Chinese compositions are not intelligible to a promiscuous audience without commentary

Amplification of the Precepts.

and paraphrase; and by-and-by there appeared a colloquial Exposition of the Essays, admirably adapted for popular use, by Wang Yû-po, the Salt-comptroller of Shen-hsi province. A Han Fang tells us that, having been appointed governor of Canton province in 1808, and become acquainted with Wang's paraphrase, he selected four scholars with very distinct enunciation, to deliver it on the appointed days in the Canton dialect. "The people," he says, "thronged round them, and such a change was effected that they exceedingly loved to hear, and found it easy to practise." He then distributed it throughout the districts, and charged the local officers to proclaim it everywhere, "and not leave a single person, even along the thinly-inhabited coasts of the sea, ignorant and disobedient." The Paraphrase has thus very generally superseded the balanced sentences of the Amplification. The public reading of it approaches more nearly to our popular preaching than anything else in China. Other expositions of the Precepts, some of them profusely illustrated, and others in easy verse, are also widely known. The publication of the Khang-hsi edict has been a great success.

Colloquial exposition of them.

The delivery of it in public.

Other expositions.

The text of the seventh Precept is this: "Discountenance and put away strange principles, in order to exact the correct doctrine." "The correct doctrine" is Confucianism, or the whole duty of man as inculcated by the great sage and the other

The correct doctrine.

The strange principles.

and older sages, whose views it was his boast that he transmitted. "The strange principles" are all systems of doctrine of a contrary character, and teaching other ways of life. Chief among them are Buddhism and Tâoism, which, though tolerated and even supported to some extent by the government of China, are not regarded as orthodox, and should be discountenanced and put away. Christianity also is mentioned, and men are warned against believing it; but it was very little that they knew about it in China two hundred years ago. On what "the correct doctrine" is, the imperial Amplifier says:—

The imperial Amplifier on the correct doctrine.

"Man, born in the position intermediate between heaven and earth, has nothing to attend to but the relationships of society and the regular constituents of moral worth, which are daily called into exercise. All should observe and pursue these, the wise as well as the simple. The sages and worthies do not approve of the search after what is abstruse, and the practice of what is marvellous."

The Paraphrast's expansion.

The Paraphrast expands these and one or two more sentences in the following manner:—

"What is most to be feared for the manners and customs of the people is that they become violent and selfish. But if men's hearts be not good, how can their manners and customs be generous and right? The heart of man, indeed, is naturally perfectly upright and correct; but through the existence of corrupt doctrines, men all get to practise and learn what is not good. That their hearts may be good, therefore, we must look to what they learn and practise, and make sure that it is correct and right. Here is man, with his head towards heaven and his feet planted on the earth, in the middle of all existing things;—he is endowed with a natural rectitude all complete; and there are the requirements of duty in his lot. Is there anything

besides, anything marvellous or rare, that he has to do? There are simply the relations of ruler and minister, of father and son, of husband and wife, of elder brother and younger, and of friend and friend. No one, whether intelligent or stupid, may neglect, even for a single day, the courses proper to those relationships. If, besides those courses, beyond your proper lot, you go about to seek after refined and mysterious dogmas, and to engage in strange and marvellous performances, you will show yourselves to be very bad men."

In what they thus say on the seventh Precept, neither the Amplifier nor his Paraphrast tells us what the "regular constituents of our moral nature" are, nor what are the duties of the several members of the five relations. They did not think it necessary to enter on these subjects, their Chinese readers being familiar with them from their early years. It will be well for me, however, to touch briefly on both topics at this point, in order to clear the way for the further prosecution of my argument. It is not necessary nor in accordance with the plan of this Tract, to discuss what is said about the heart of man being naturally upright and correct. "The five regular constituents of our moral nature" are the principles, attributes and faculties, of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and sincerity. The duties of the human lot in the five relations, as stated by Mencius, are "between father and son, affection; between ruler and subject, righteousness; between husband and wife, attention to their separate functions; between elders and younger, a proper distinction;

The seventh
Precept.

The five
regular
constituents
of our moral
nature.

The Chinese
Primer.

and between friends, fidelity.”¹ A more detailed account of these duties is given in what we may call the Chinese Primer, the first book which boys learn at school. “Affection between father and son; concord between husband and wife; kindness on the part of the elder brother, and deference on the part of the younger; order between seniors and juniors; sincerity between friends and associates; respect on the part of the ruler, and loyalty on that of the minister:—these are the ten righteous courses equally binding on all men.”²

Only social
duties
treated in
these state-
ments.

But in these additions to the statements of the authorities which I have been using, there is nothing to indicate clearly that in “the correct doctrine,” the Confucian orthodoxy of China, there is required of men anything but the discharge of their duties in the relations of society. It is not to be wondered at that some Christian writers, in comparing Confucianism and Christianity, and not well acquainted with the former, should contend that we have in it “an attempt to substitute a morality for a theology.”³ I will point out immediately wherein their view is defective; but at present we freely grant to them that in the above

¹ See *Mencius*, III, i., 4. 8.

² This is taken from *The Classic in Lines of Three Characters*. (San Tsze King), by Wang Po-hão, better known perhaps as Wang Yung lin, of our 13th century. The fullest treatment of the duties is in *The Book of the Record of Rites*.

³ See Dr. Matheson, *The Faiths of the World*. Lecture III.

expositions of man's duties there is no mention of any duty which he owes to God. There are the five relations of society :—let him manifest his cognizance of them, and to the utmost of his ability discharge their requirements. There are the five constituents of his moral nature ; let him show his appreciation of them, and regulate that discharge in accordance with them. Let him do this, and there is nothing more that he ought to do. I do not say that this is a poor ideal of human duty, or that it is not a high ideal of it; but it does not say a word about any relation between man and God. The first and great commandment of Christ is: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." On this those Confucian teachers are absolutely silent.

Nothing in this ideal about any relation between man and God.

Does the religion of China, then, teach anything about any worship of God or of other beings? No one who has sufficiently studied writings that have come down to us from an antiquity greater than that of Confucius, and with his approval, or those still older than the beginning of our era, and purporting to record his words and sentiments, will venture to say that it does not.

In the first place, the relations of society and the duties belonging to them are set forth as the appointments of Heaven or God. We have a treatise called "The Doctrine of the Mean," by the grandson of Confucius. It contains a con-

Nevertheless Confucianism sets forth the relations and duties of society as the appointment of heaven.

densed exhibition of his teaching, and begins with this sentence: "What heaven has conferred is called THE NATURE; an accordance with the nature is called THE PATH OF DUTY; the regulation of the path is called THE SYSTEM OF INSTRUCTION." A great monarch, in the eighteenth century, B.C., proclaimed:

A moral sense conferred by God.

"The great God has conferred even on the inferior people a moral sense, compliance with which would show their nature invariably right."¹

A poem of the ninth century B.C. commences thus:

"Heaven, in giving birth to the multitudes of the people, to every faculty and relationship annexed its law. The people possess this normal nature, and they consequently love its normal virtue. Heaven beheld the ruler of Cháu, brilliantly affecting It, by his conduct below, and to maintain him, Its son, gave birth to Chung Shan-fú."²

A religious sanction given to all man's duties and relationships.

These passages testify that while man is by his moral nature constituted a law to himself, he is so by the act and decree of God; a religious sanction is given to all his relationships and his performance of their duties.

In the second place, among the relations of

¹ See *The Sacred Books of the East*, III., p. 90.

² *The Sacred Books of the East*, III., p. 425. I have versified the stanza in *The Book of Ancient Poetry*, pp. 334-7:

Heaven made the race of men, designed
 With nature good and large;
 Functions of body, powers of mind,
 Their duties to discharge.
 All men this normal nature own;
 Its normal nature all men crown,
 With love sincere and true.
 Heaven by our Sovereign's course was moved
 And him to aid, Its son approved,
 Gave birth to Chung Shan-fú.

society is that of father and son, or of parent and child. The "affection" belonging to it takes, on the part of the son, the form of filial piety. My readers will all have heard of this as the distinguishing characteristic of the Chinese race. It is so. Filial duty is with them the first and great commandment. "It is," they say, "the first and chief of all human virtues." I do not wish to detract from their commendations of it, nor to deny the general estimate of their observance of it. I look, indeed, on the long-continued existence and growth of the Chinese nation as a fulfilment of the promise annexed to our fifth commandment, "Honour thy father and mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." But now Confucianism inculcates the worship of the dead as a part of filial piety. The sage himself specifies five things as necessary to its full discharge: the utmost reverence, the amplest and most ungrudging support, the greatest anxiety when parents are ill, every demonstration of grief in mourning for them, and the utmost solemnity in sacrificing (or presenting oblations) to them.¹ Quotations need not be multiplied. To bow before the shrines of ancestors and parents, to present offerings to them, and to pray to them,—these things are as much essential to filial duty as obedience to the commands of parents, reverently

Filial duty a distinguishing characteristic of the Chinese race.

The worship of the dead inculcated as part of filial duty.

¹ *The Sacred Books of the East*, III., p. 480.

An element of religion in the highest moralities of Confucianism.

honouring them, copying their good example, and ministering to their wants. Thus in this highest of the moralities of Confucianism there is also the element of religion. And it would be easy to substantiate further this point by adducing the worship which the system enjoins, not only of ancestors and parents, but also of the departed great,—of all who have distinguished themselves as legislators, inventors of useful arts, general benefactors, and patriots.¹

Worship of God in Confucianism.

In the third place, there is in Confucianism a worship of God Himself. From time immemorial, there has been in China the belief of one Supreme Being, first indicated by the name heaven, and then by the personal designation of God as the Supreme Lord and Ruler. For between three and four thousand years at the least, there has been the worship of this Being; but as formally approved and organized by the ordinances of the State, it is confined to the Sovereign for the time being. He renders it in the suburbs of his capital on a few occasions in the course of the year, attended by certain of his nobles and official functionaries; but of the people there are none with him. It was at first, no doubt, a representative worship by the Head of the Family; it continued to be the same when the Family grew into the Tribe; it is still

Confined to the Sovereign.

At first representation by the head of the family.

¹ See the writer's *Religions of China* (Hodder and Stoughton), pp. 88-90.

the same when the tribe has multiplied, and become the most populous empire on the earth. It has never been extended through the nation or joined in by the multitudes of the people. A most wonderful fact, and most deplorable ! The greatest occasion of the imperial religious celebration is at the earliest dawn on the morning of the winter solstice at "the Altar of Heaven." Some of the prayers, or psalms rather, with which the various oblations have been occasionally accompanied, have been remarkable, and have risen to a high style of devotion ; but, after all, the whole service is but a form of state ceremonial, of which the people have hardly any knowledge, and which does not contribute to maintain in them a real religious life to any great extent. Where it has that effect, the result is due mainly to a sentence of Confucius, in which, as if to guard against its being considered merely a worship of the great forms or forces of nature, he pronounced that "The ceremonies of the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth are those by which we serve the Supreme God."¹

Never extended through the nation or joined in by the people.

The service a form of state ceremonial.

Does not contribute to maintain in them a real religious life to any great extent.

Debarred from this direct worship of God, the spiritual sensibilities and susceptibilities of the masses of the Chinese have flowed all the more into the worship of their parents and ancestors, and the way has been all the easier for the dissemination among them of the magical pretensions and psy-

The spiritual susceptibilities have flowed into the worship of ancestors.

¹ *The Doctrine of the Mean*, ch. xix. 6.

chical fancies of Tâoism and the idolatries and transmigrations of Buddhism. There remains for them only the natural and indistinct reverence of Heaven, with groanings and complaining appeals to It, or to God in heaven, when they are suffering under calamity or other cause of distress. I have seen "the falling of the tear" in the bitterness of grief, and "the upward glancing of the eye" to the sky above. Recently I was struck with a passage in the story of a young lady pressed to a certain course which, though not contrary to what was right, did not command her full approval. It was not evil, but might be misinterpreted so as to give to another passage in her life the appearance of being evil, though it had been good and even praiseworthy in itself. She wished to avoid it, and to trust in Heaven to bring about, in a perfectly legitimate way, the object which it was intended to serve. "I have heard," she says, "that Heaven is sure to bring to pass the thing of which Heaven has originated the purpose." It was an expression it seemed to me of simple and genuine piety. Such a sentiment and such language, however, are rarely met with in Chinese society or writings. And where they do occur, it is as calculations of the understanding more than gushings of the heart. They are argumentative rather than emotional, expressing the fear to offend Heaven and not the wish to please it. They come short, very far short,

What remains for them.

The story of a young lady.

Her trust in heaven.

of that love of God which is the first and great commandment of Christianity. I have been reading Chinese books for more than forty years, and any general requirement to "love God," or the mention of anyone as actually "loving" Him, has yet to come for the first time under my eye.

No incitement to love God in Chinese books.

The three considerations which I have urged make it clear that the Confucian system is not a morality merely, but also a religion. That the sage, however, "the Master," as his disciples liked to style him, did not speak of the higher aspects of the system which he found existing in his country; and that he shrank from discussing metaphysical subjects, and even all questions about the existence and operations of God: this is a fact which we must accept, and which no explanation that we may try to give of it will alter. Morality, and its promotion, with the culture of the understanding through the study of the ancient literature, were his chosen themes; and it is with his moral teaching, as I have expressly stated, that we have specially to do in this Tract.

Confucianism a religion.

Morality and the culture of the understanding, the chosen themes of Confucius.

We return therefore to the consideration of that; and the first and chief thing that claims our attention is the general rule in which Confucius summed up all his inculcation of the duties of the human relations:—"What ye would not that men should do to you, do not ye do to them." He enunciated this rule several times. Its similarity

The general rule of Confucius.

Contrast
with the
golden rule
of Christ.

to "the golden rule" of our Lord never fails to strike the Christian when he hears or reads it for the first time. It is negative, indeed, while Christ's is positive; but the Chinese sage knew that man ought to take the initiative in doing to others what he would have others do to him. Eight, perhaps nine, of our Ten Commandments are really prohibitions. Was it a knowledge of the difficulty which men find in giving to others what is their due, and of their proneness to think of themselves first, and act with a view to their own advantage, which made Confucius give the negative form to his comprehensive rule?

Misunder-
standing of
the rule of
Confucius.

To say that "he did not mean to do anything more by it than suggest a law for the well-being of the State," preventing retaliations which would end in political anarchy:¹—this is a strange undervaluing both of the man and his object. At the same time, there is one passage in Confucius' history from which it is natural to conclude that the rule was prompted chiefly by his sentiment of justice or instinctive feeling of what was right. One of his contemporaries, Lâo-tsze, the reputed founder of Tâoism, had been led, by the peculiar nature of his philosophical system, to teach "the returning of good for evil." This seemed "strange doctrine" to some of the disciples of Confucius, and they consulted him about it. His reply was: "What

¹ Dr. Matheson's Lecture III., *The Faiths of the World*, p. 86.

then will you return for good? Recompense injury with justice, and return good for good." Higher than this he could not rise.

The highest point to which Confucius could rise. Analects xiv.; ch. 36.

Passing now to "the golden rule of Christ," we must pronounce it a greater error to argue that He was indebted for it to what we may call "the silver rule of Confucius." And yet this has been more than surmised. It has been said:

"That Confucius is the author of this precept is undisputed, and therefore it is indisputable that Christianity has incorporated an article of Chinese morality."

Dr. Matheson's *Lecture, Faiths of the World*, p. 83.

There is not the slightest evidence that any knowledge of the Chinese sage or of his teachings had penetrated to Judea at so early a time; and Christ subjoined to His rule a statement of the sources from which He formulated it in the words, "This is the law and the prophets." It was with Him the essence of the two commandments, to love God supremely, and to love our neighbours as ourselves. This is the secret of its positive form. It is the outgushing demand of love, while the other is the constrained expression of justice. And hence it was that in the same Sermon on the Mount, Christ pronounced, in language more unequivocal and full than that of Lâo-tsze, "I say unto you, Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you" (Luke vi. 27, 28).

Christianity did not derive its golden rule from the teaching of Confucius.

The secret of the positive form of the golden rule of Christ.

I have, in the above pages, endeavoured to set

The defects
of Con-
fucianism.

No glow of
piety in the
sayings of
Confucius.

He had no
mission to
teach
religion, no
Scripture to
teach him
about God.

Much to
admire in
his practical
teaching.

forth generally the teaching of Christianity and Confucianism on the whole duty of man. Where the former is most emphatic, the latter is all but silent. The old religion of China was very defective in what it required of man to God, and "the Master" said very little to supplement it. There was no glow of piety in his utterances. He never called his disciples to join with him in adoring God, as the perfection of beauty, the Framer of our bodies, and the Father of our spirits, in Whom we live and move and have our being, the Source of all our good, and the Fountain of our greatest comfort and consolation. He left his countrymen to the uncertain gropings and vague monitions of natural religion. I do not ask my readers to join with me and pronounce a stern condemnation of him for this. He had no mission to teach religion. He had no book to instruct him as to the character and doings of God, at all akin to our Scriptures. He had no gift or aptitude for anything like theology.

But when we turn to the Confucian teaching of the duties of man to other men, we ought to accord to it much appreciation. It is at once comprehensive and minute. The analysis of society into the five relations covers the whole ground. It is a piece of philosophical generalization of which we should not be slow to recognize the value and truth. And the duties incumbent in those relations are enjoined

in hundreds of passages with explicitness and point. One is often grieved to read the incautious assertions of writers who think that apart from our Christian Scriptures there are no lessons for men about their duties, and that heathendom has in consequence never been anything but a slough of immoral filth and outrageous crime. Such writers betray their ignorance of the systems and peoples about which they affirm such things, and their ignorance also of the sacred volume which they wish to exalt. Their advocacy is damaging rather than beneficial to Christianity.

Incautious statements about the state of heathendom.

But while I do not hesitate to avow this conviction, I am at the same time persuaded that there is not a single human duty set forth by Confucianism which is not also recognized and more fully enjoined by Christianity. In Christianity, moreover, there is no admixture of error in regard to the ground of the duty, or the details of its requirements from which the account of it in Confucianism is by no means free. In *The Eclipse of Faith*, of the late Professor Henry Rogers, he says (p. 196) that

All human duties set forth more fully in Christianity than in Confucianism.

Christian teaching free from error.

“If his sceptical opponent would do as he had done, and compile a selection of the principal precepts and maxims from the most admirable ethical works of antiquity, and compare them with two or three of the summaries of similar precepts in the New Testament, he would at once feel how much more vivid, touching, animated, and even comprehensive was the scriptural expression of the same truth.”

Confucius
and
Aristotle.

When he so expressed himself, Professor Rogers was thinking of the ancient Grecian moralists, and especially of Aristotle. The sage of China needs not to hide a diminished head, when placed amidst the Stagirite and his compeers; but the judgment is true as well, if it be applied to his sayings and those of all his school, in comparison with the teachings of Christianity. I can set to my seal that it is so.

On the ground of all that has been said above, I venture now to ask the assent of my readers to the following conclusions regarding the superiority of the Christian teaching of the whole duty of man.

Christianity
attaches
more import-
ance to the
duties of
religion.

I. It is superior to the Confucian teaching because it attaches so much greater importance to the duties of religion, and gives so much fuller a disclosure of their reasonableness and nature. Confucianism, indeed, affirms the relation between men and God; but its understanding of that relation is incomplete, and its teaching both about it and the duties springing from it is consequently imperfect.

No direct
access to
God in Con-
fucianism.

It keeps the masses of the people at an awful distance from God. Only "the One man," the sovereign of the Chinese race, is permitted to present to Him directly the offerings of reverence, gratitude, and prayer. Christianity, on the contrary, teaches how God is never far from any one of us, how He accepteth not the persons of princes, neither regardeth the rich man more than the poor, how

The
nearness of
God
according to
Christianity.

we all have to do with Him and how He is always near to all that call on Him. Of the dignity and strength, the peace, security, and hope which this relation between God and him imparts to man's being and experience amid the vicissitudes of life, so various and often painful, I do not speak;—our subject is his duty. But any system which does not make provision for the discharge of our religious duties, which does not in fact summon men to them, and encourage them to resort to them, and delight themselves in them, must be pronounced incomplete and insufficient. Such a system is Confucianism.

The peace, safety, and hope it imparts.

II. The Christian teaching is superior to the Confucian because it makes God the Guardian of all the duties obligatory on men even in their social relations. With what majesty and power the announcement, "I am the Lord," or "I am the Lord your God," comes in at the close of very many of the ordinances in the Mosaic legislation! For example, "Therefore shall ye keep Mine ordinance that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus xviii. 30). "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord" (Leviticus xix. 18). Not less powerfully though less rhetorically, it is said in the New Testament: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or what-

The divine guardianship of human duties according to the books of Moses.

New Testament teaching.

The
Christian
rule.

Confucian-
ism leaves
a man to
his own
strength.

Christianity
assures him
of Divine
help.

soever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31). And this injunction is completed, according to the Christian rule, by the same apostle: "Whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Col. iii. 17). Confucianism prefers to speak in this wise: "If you do this, if you do not do that, how can you regard yourself as a man?" That is all very well. But it leaves man to fight the battle of temptation in his own strength. He is strongest, however, when he is most humble. The assurance of God's presence and guardianship doubly arms him. It helps him, if he fall, to rise again; and if he seem to fail or be overthrown, he can yet write victory on his shield. To use the words of the Apostle Peter, "This is acceptable, if, for conscience towards God, a man endure grief, suffering wrongfully" (1 Peter ii. 19).

Christianity
appeals to
the motive
of love.

III. Still looking merely at the duties springing out of the social relations, the Christian teaching is superior to the Confucian, because the motive on which it requires their discharge is nobler and more powerful. That motive, we have seen, is love, while the Confucian motive is the sentiment of justice or right. Now love takes the performances out of the category of duty in which there is the element of constraint, and transforms them into that of gracious ministry. The love

will always operate in the sphere of right; but its constraint is of itself. At the very best the doer of justice is a servant of God, but the doer of love is a child of God. The service of duty may be slow and grudging; the service of love is prompt and untiring. Duty asks, "Is this enough?" Love asks, "Can I do anything more?" This is the operation of all love. Can its range and effectiveness over the whole being be calculated when the true nature of the Christian attribute is appreciated, when its measure, as has been pointed out above, is the love with which Christ loved us?

How love operates.

IV. The Christian teaching in regard to the five relations of society themselves is better than the Confucian. We have spoken of the relation between parent and child, and of the filial duty obligatory on the child. It includes in Confucianism the worship of the deceased parent as well as of remoter ancestors. Honour to the living parent is what Christianity requires; but it knows nothing of the worship of the dead, and of oblations and prayers to them. We accept with sorrow the fact that our parents have gone by death away from our circle; we cherish the memory of them and seek to copy their virtues; but we find that it would be in vain to try and have communion with them over any religious feast. Our belief and practice are more true and healthy than those of the Confucian.

Christian and Confucian teaching with respect to the relations of parents and children contrasted.

And while the requirements of filial duty in the latter are so stringent that I have often known them become a grievous yoke, a burden which Chinese sons were unable to bear, little is found in the Confucian writings to instruct or caution parents in their treatment of their children. More than enough is said of the rights of the parent, less than enough of the rights of the children. There are two texts in the New Testament, of the wisdom of which my readers will not entertain any doubt, while yet I have always found them very distasteful not only to Chinese literati but also to the people. One is that in which the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children" (2 Cor. xii. 14). The other is also from St. Paul (Colossians iii. 21): "Fathers, provoke not your children, that they be not discouraged."

Christian precepts with respect to the duty of parents to children distasteful to the Chinese.

Another of the five relations of society is that of husband and wife;—"it is the one, indeed," as Chinese writers say, "out of which all the other relations grow." And many fine and beautiful sentiments are found in them on marriage. But the position of woman in China has always been an inferior one. Girls are of small account in a family as compared with boys. Infanticide, mainly owing, I believe, to the poverty of the people, is more common than in any western country, but it

The position of woman in China always an inferior one.

is always female infanticide. A woman should not have any mind of her own, nor take the initiative even in what is good.¹ If she come out of the strict seclusion of her own apartments and domestic duties, her influence will prove to be for evil.² There is indeed only one wife, "one correct wife," in a family, but from the oldest times concubinage has been the rule in China. The ancient Yáo, whose beneficent influence, according to Confucius, "corresponded to that of Heaven, and whose virtue was so great that the people could find no name for it,"³ yet gave his two daughters in marriage to the same man at the same time.⁴ The life of woman in China is truly a hard and inferior one. It is not till she becomes a mother that she shares in the regard due to the higher party in the relation of parent and child. Even then she is subject to the law of "the three obediences,"⁵ and is bound, if a widow, to obey her eldest son, as she had, in the earlier stages of her life, been bound to obey first her parents, and then her husband. I have often thanked the Apostle Peter in spirit for his words, "Ye husbands, give honour to the woman as unto the weaker vessel, as being also joint-heirs of the grace of life" (1 Peter

The prevalence of infanticide.

Concubinage the rule in China.

The life of woman in China a hard one.

Christian teaching on a husband's duties.

¹ *The Sacred Books of the East*, III., p. 350.

² *The She King, or Book of Ancient Poetry*, p. 347.

³ Confucian Analects, VIII., ch. 19.

⁴ *The Sacred Books of the East*, III., p. 36.

⁵ See the Prolegomena to my *Chinese Classics*, I., pp. 104, 105.

Nothing parallel to this in Confucianism.

iii. 7). In all my reading in Chinese literature I have not met with so kindly and generous a sentiment.

There is not so much to object to in the Confucian teaching about the other three relations of society. I pass on to the last point of superiority in the Christian teaching, with the general remark that too much authority is assigned to the superior member in each category, and too much deference required from the inferior.

The example of Confucius.

The Chinese Classics, II, Book II. Pt. i., 2. 22.

V. The Christian teaching of human duty is superior to the Confucian, because it is commended and enforced by the perfect example of its Author. "What I wish to do," said Mencius, the ablest expounder of the Confucian system: "What I wish to do is to learn to be like Confucius."

He goes on to adduce the estimate of "the Master" given by several of "the disciples," with the opinion of one of whom we must here content ourselves, that of Yû Jo:—

"There is the Ch'i-lin among quadrupeds, the phoenix among birds, the Thâi mountain among ant-hills, and the Ho and the sea among rain-pools. (Though they are different in degree), they are the same in kind; and so the sages among men are also the same in kind. But they stand out from their fellows, and rise above the crowd; and from the birth of mankind till now there never has been one so complete as Confucius."

I have no pleasure in shattering this idol, nor would I lay a rude hand or an effacing finger on the reputation of the Chinese "Master." He was a great man and a good man, and deserved well of his own country and of the world. Yet it is a

true saying that "the best of men are but men at the best." He was not a perfect character. On one occasion, immediately after enunciating his "silver rule," he subjoined :

Confucius
an imperfect
character,
according
to his own
confession.

"In the way of the superior man there are four things, to not one of which have I as yet attained. To serve my father as I would require my son to serve me : to this I have not attained ; to serve my ruler as I would require my minister to serve me : to this I have not attained ; to serve my elder brother as I would require my younger brother to serve me : to this I have not attained ; to set the example in behaving to a friend as I would require him to behave to me : to this I have not attained."¹

The Chinese character which I have here translated by "I," is the personal name of Confucius, and ties his readers down to accept his words as his own acknowledgment of his personal imperfection. They are not the words of a sham "humility," as Chinese commentators contend, nor an example merely of the way in which men should measure others as they measure themselves ; but we do not think less of him, we think indeed more of him, because he was thus conscious of his own incompetencies, and that he fell short of his own standard of duty.

One of the four things, again, which Confucius was fond of teaching was "truthfulness ;"² and yet it is difficult to maintain that, according to our idea of the duty of a historian, he was not untruthful in his accounts of men and events.³ I cannot resist

His teaching
about truth-
fulness.

¹ *The Doctrine of the Mean*, 13. 4. ² Confucian Analects, VII., 24.

³ See the Prolegomena to *The Chinese Classics*, Vol v. pp. 40-49.

Confucius was not truthful in his accounts of men and events.

the impression that his example in this respect has lowered the standard of this important virtue among his countrymen.

No consciousness of sin in Christ. His appeal to His enemies.

Confucius was not a perfect character; and I appeal to my readers whether, if any acknowledgment on the part of Christ, similar to that which I have just adduced, were to be found in our Gospels, it would not sound very strange, and be disturbing to their faith. Christ could say, on the contrary, to his enemies, "Which of you convicteth me of sin" (John viii. 46)? After nearly nineteen centuries, throughout Christendom, the instances are very exceptional of any men who have ventured to insinuate a judgment concerning Him, different from that of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "He was in all points tempted like as (*we are, yet*) without sin" (iv. 15). "Such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners" (vii. 26). Even such men as Rousseau, and the late John Stuart Mill, whom we must class among unbelievers, have borne concurrent testimony as to the impression made by His life and words upon their minds.¹

A sinless High Priest needed by us.

The testimony of enemies.

Christ was indeed the perfect Teacher, and the perfect Exemplar of what He taught. The more that we press on to be like Him, the more do we

¹ See Present Day Tract, No. III., *Christ the Central Evidence of Christianity*, by the Rev. Principal Cairns. See there also, pp. 12-16, the discriminating observations on "Modern Theories of Christ's Moral Excellence."

feel that we fail to be so. But He said, "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father;" and the more conscious we are of copying His example, and endeavouring to realize in ourselves "the mind that was in Him," the greater is our peace, and the brighter our hope that we are going on to be "perfect, even as our heavenly Father is perfect."

Christ our perfect example. The revelation of the Father.

Our peace in proportion to our possession of His mind.

I have not, in writing this Tract, played the part of an advocate whose object is to win his cause. My endeavour has been to describe the case of both systems on the point laid down at the outset,—to describe it dispassionately, and yet sufficiently for my readers to form a judgment on the subject discussed themselves.

I think that the evidence of facts bears out the conclusion as to the superiority of Christianity to which I have come. It is, indeed, an eternal truth that "by their fruits" we know both men and systems; but though I have tried, over a long series of years, to weigh the moral condition of the Chinese people as compared with our own, and that of other nominally Christian peoples, I have felt the difficulty of doing so in an even balance, and there has frequently occurred to me the warning in the Sermon on the Mount: "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

An appeal to the fruits of the two systems

Take the Chinese people as a whole, apart from the points on which I have already given my opinion, and there is much about them to like and

Chinese virtues.

even to admire. They are cheerful, temperate, industrious, and kindly; and in those respects they will bear a comparison, perhaps a favourable comparison, with the masses of our own population. The ancient and universal use of tea as their ordinary drink has been beneficial to their habits. I found those of them who had any position in society for the most part faithful to their engagements and true to their word. I thought of them better, both morally and socially, when I left them, than when I first went among them, more than thirty years before. Their civilisation has developed under very different conditions from our own. They are less enlightened, very much less enlightened, and less capable of comprehensive views, and more superstitious. They have learned almost nothing from abroad, and are more conservative, thinking much of the past, and little of the future. Still they deserve our esteem; and they measure foreigners from their own standpoints, weighing them as well as they can in the balances of "benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and sincerity." Their Confucianism has done much for them, and its teaching of human duty has modified the practical influence which the systems of Tàoism and Buddhism have on multitudes of them.

Their civilisation, enlightenment, and superstition.

Their conservatism.

The shortcomings of Christendom.

On the other hand, we ourselves in this and the other nations of Christendom come far short of the standard of duty and character which

we ought to be aiming after. Where our Christian principles, religious and moral, indeed, have free course, as they have in millions, they produce a humanity with which there is nothing in China worthy to be compared; but in our social and national condition there are many things that may well make us lay our hands on our mouths, and cease from judging hardly of the heathen Chinese. The best promise of a better state for ourselves and the world is in the growing conviction that we need to rise more to the height of our privileges, and in the individual and combined efforts constantly called forth to remove evils that are brought to light. This is one remarkable feature of the different influence which the two systems that we have been comparing have on their adherents. Confucianism tends to make men satisfied with what they are, while true Christianity makes them dissatisfied that they are not better. Then the former system has not in it an impulsive spirit of propagandism. I have heard the saying among the people that "the Four Books do not go out beyond the four seas environing the Middle Land;" whereas the last command of Christ was that His followers should "go and make disciples of all the nations." No one who has become imbued with the principles of Christianity can be satisfied till he has realised "a new moral world" in himself, and sees a real progress to the same

The fruits of Christianity incomparably better than those of Confucianism wherever Christian principles have free course.

Confucianism makes men self-satisfied. Christianity makes them dissatisfied with themselves.

The aggressive character of Christianity.

The slow progress of Christianity a mystery.

The Spirit in Christianity.

How the Chinese are to be won to Christ.

goal in the manners and institutions of his own country and in the world at large. How so many centuries have elapsed since the delivery of the Sermon on the Mount, and the "lifting up" on the Cross, and the rising from the tomb, and Christendom should remain so imperfectly Christian, and so great a portion of mankind be still non-Christian:—this is a mystery which I will not try to fathom. But there is a spirit in Christianity that nerves its members to continue the struggle with what is evil in and around themselves, and maintains the consecration of time and labour and talents to bring "all the nations" to the fellowship of the Gospel. If we are to do our part in weaning the Chinese from their inordinate attachment to their sage and his teaching, and bringing the nation to "mew its mighty age, and kindle her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam," it can only be by our showing that, in all our intercourse with them, politically, commercially, and in other ways, we are ruled by the principles of love and righteousness, which blend together in "the golden rule" of Christ, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them."