

# THE COSMOS AND THE LOGOS

BEING THE LECTURES FOR 1901-2 ON  
THE L. P. STONE FOUNDATION IN THE  
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY;  
ALSO DELIVERED IN THE THEOLOGIC-  
AL SEMINARY AT AUBURN, NEW YORK

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WITH FRATERNAL AFFECTION I DEDICATE THIS  
VOLUME TO MY ESTEEMED COLLEAGUES IN THE  
THEOLOGICAL FACULTY AT SAN ANSELMO.

## PREFACE

IN putting these Lectures into print the author hastens to disclaim any such delusion as that he has finally solved all the problems he has tackled. He is well aware that he has crossed the critic's path in the very audacity of his undertaking. The task which he has taken up embraces nearly all "questions in the world and out of it"; but to make it less comprehensive than this would have been to miss the real meaning of the problem.

Every thinking man is a philosopher; he has some notion of the world in which he lives. He has a *weltanschauung*, a world-and-life theory. His world-philosophy may be superlatively un-philosophical, but it is *his* philosophy, nevertheless. If he regards the world as wholly given over to the bad, he is a pessimist; if he regards that there is no world distinct from God, he is a pantheist; if he regards it as such a hopelessly inexplicable tangle, that no man can really know anything about it, he is an agnostic; if he regards that God has abdicated his throne in favor of man, he is a Pelagian; and so on.

Not many of us think our way through to the farther side of our theory; but that theory is always in the background of what little thinking we do. If we regard the world as rational, we do well. If we regard it as ethical, we do a little better. But, in either case, we have stopped this side of our own conclusion if we have "not God in all our thoughts."

We believe that there are more skeptics in religion made by wrong and shallow thinking about this crooked old world we are now in than by thinking amiss about any other world that is to be. Our idea of God affects our conception of the world, to be sure; but many people begin at the other end and, accordingly, their notion of the world fixes their conception of God. And such a world! Evil mixed with good; wrong crushing out the right; "virtue in distress, and vice in triumph." What kind of a God can be inferred from such a sorry world as it is?

We believe that no man can reconcile sin and holiness without compromising one of the two, or both. What then? Shall we throw up our hands in despair? Is there anything more to be said? We believe there is.

Sin is the great "interloper"; it has no business in the world of a holy God, and, once having

smuggled itself in—and there's the mother mystery of all,—a holy and loving God has provided ways and means for getting it out.

Unless the thoughtful, reflecting man can get some sort of a setting in his amateur philosophy for the sinful world and at the same time for Christ, the *Salvator Mundi*, then there is a latent seed of skepticism in his soul which forbids the truest and healthiest type of intelligent Christian faith.

These Lectures are designed to be a modest contribution to the consideration of this great and ever timely subject. If the author had not himself once felt very keenly the difficulties which he discusses, he would never have dared to put these words on paper. But he profoundly believes that God is ruling this complex world of ours, and that the policy of His rule is both eminently rational and eminently right. That is to say, he believes that God is, in Himself and in all His works, both infinitely wise and infinitely good. But we must admit that, to the man who goes forth onto the street and into the field, there are on the face of things not a few embarrassments in holding to this faith. But shall he therefore give it up? “If the foundations be removed, what shall the righteous do?” Because he finds difficulties along the way,

shall he therefore abandon the search for truth? God forbid!

It will be easy enough for the reader to point out weak places in the argument; but let him hold his peace, if he will, until he can suggest a stronger. It is easy to find fault with things themselves; it is not so easy to make them better.

It is a large view that is large enough to take in this disordered, distressed old world and at the same time a God of infinite power and of infinite holiness and love; but that theory of things is too small which cannot do it.

Faith has its place, both large and fundamental, but faith is not "believing what we know to be impossible." We must be able, somehow, to accredit to our reason, directly or indirectly, what we accept upon our faith. A faith that is blind is but the dupe or the hypocrisy of superstition. We abhor agnosticism as the very Prince of Darkness among the philosophies. But there is immeasurable difference between an open-eyed ignorance which is inevitable, and therefore legitimate, and an agnosticism which blindfolds itself in the face of the noon-day sun and then makes a virtue of its blindness.

The limitations of a lecture course may account

in some degree for the obvious unfinishedness of these discussions. I have not been able, nor have I cared, to change the text from the exact form in which it was presented to the theological students of Princeton and Auburn. I have had some assurance that these Lectures have stimulated thought and started lines of inquiry among some of the young men who were patient enough to hear them through. I only hope that, by the blessing of God, the perusal of them may do for others what the preparation of them has done for the author, in this: that his conviction is clearer than ever, that back of all the shifting scenes of time a divine eternal purpose abides, and that, as the ultimate goal of cosmical creations and careers, that final purpose will be gloriously realized; and in this, that his faith is stronger than ever, that fundamentally essential to this process of realization stands forth our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, not only as the Logos of the philosophers, but also as the Seeker and the Saviour of the Lost, without whom and without whose reclaiming and restoring work, no satisfactory world-*rationalé* can be found or framed.

H. C. M.

PHILADELPHIA, January, 1902.

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LECTURE I

THE UNITY OF TRUTH

“And philosophers tell us, Callicles, that communion and friendship and orderliness and temperance and justice bind together heaven and earth and gods and men, and that this universe is therefore called Cosmos or order, not disorder or misrule, my friend.”

PLATO'S *Gorgias*, JOWETT'S TRANSLATION.

## LECTURE I

### THE UNITY OF TRUTH

#### INTRODUCTORY

IN all our intellectual processes the unity of the whole tract of truth is always tacitly assumed. It is not proved; it is postulated. It is not an achievement to which we aspire; it is not a result to be accomplished by a long line of reasoning; it is not a far-off end to be reached by and by; it is a part of the complete outfit with which we begin, or, rather, it is a necessary condition of our being able to begin at all.

This assumed oneness of truth is as significant as it is comprehensive. It is a precondition of all scientific knowledge of the world in which we live;<sup>1</sup> and yet it is not so obvious a truism that it may not easily be ignored. As a matter of history, it often has been ignored, and sometimes explicitly denied. And the trouble is, when it is

<sup>1</sup> "The unity of the cosmos—in some sense—is not so much a conclusion to be proved as an inevitable assumption." Prof. Andrew Seth's *Man's Place in the Cosmos*, p. 13.

denied, the inevitable impossibility of demonstrating the self-evident is encountered in meeting the denial. Indeed, it cannot be demonstrated, for the simple reason that it has already stealthily crept into the premise from which we argue, while it also, at every point, sustains and affects the process of our arguing. We cannot prove the essential elements of logical reasoning trustworthy or true, because we must necessarily draw upon those elements in the very attempt to prove them true. Every metaphysical system, however rigid it may be; every scientific method, however presuppositionless it may claim to be; every theory of knowledge, however exacting and bold, must, in spite of itself, posit certain first principles on which it takes its stand and in accordance with which it will proceed. The first note in all knowledge is the note of faith. We must assume before we can prove; we must have a standing place, a  $\pi\omicron\tilde{\upsilon}$   $\sigma\tau\tilde{\omega}$ , before we can make any advance. Coleridge truly says, "From the indemonstrable flows the sap that circulates through every branch and spray of the demonstration.<sup>1</sup> *Credo ut intelligam*. This is not a matter of choice with us, it is an absolutely necessary condition of all sound thinking and right knowing.

<sup>1</sup> *Coleridge's Works*, vol. ii., p. 471. Harper's ed., 1884.

The corner stone of every noble fabric which man's reason has erected was reverently laid by the hand of faith. Faith contrasts with demonstration, not with reason. Knowledge is not less knowledge because faith lies at its basis, but more. Indeed, would not the most rationalistic of us be ready to admit that, so far as our own assured confidence is concerned, immediate intuition has advantages over the most convincing mediated processes of ratiocination—especially, seeing that the one, in spite of all that we can do, is at the foundation of the other? If the world rests upon the shoulders of Atlas, on what do the feet of Atlas stand?

These presuppositions are not of our own making or choosing. They were here before we arrived; we find them on the ground. They are *data*; and, whithersoever we may trace them, whether we may regard them as subjective or objective in their origin and nature, they announce themselves as having been given to us, and not simply given by us. Neither is it left to us to determine what these *a priori* factors shall be when we find them. Conformity to them is itself rational thinking and the invariable test of true knowing.

Among these presuppositions it is our business

just now to insist that the principle of the unity of all truth has its prominent place. It is a *prius* of all connected and systematic thought. Empirical science, with all its enlarged conquests and extended domain, has neither discovered nor demonstrated it; rather, by assuming it, it has only developed it. It is of the nature of reflective thought to bring out and display implicit elements which have all along been unrecognized and unknown. Like the well-known Frenchman, M. Jourdain, who had been talking prose all his life without knowing it, the average man on the street has been assuming philosophy and employing logic all his life without knowing it. He may have done so falsely or faultily, and it may be that when he comes to a conscious knowledge of them he will use them more correctly; but if he is ever to know them better, it will be because he has been innocently assuming and using them all the while. I do not mean to say that the plain man cannot think correctly without mastering the scientific anatomy of thought, any more than I would say that the master of thought-analysis must be himself always an infallible thinker. The excellent teacher of vocal music may be himself a poor singer; a good professor of homiletics may be himself an indifferent preacher; and

the professional logician may be a very illogical reasoner. Human thought is often truly said to have advanced when it has not been traveling over new ground, but when it has been bringing out into its own consciousness that which had been, from the very first, hidden and implicit in all that it had been doing. It is a great advance to make manifest to ourselves what has been in the dark background of our thinking. Not unfrequently has it happened that a man may be so unself-consistent as to deny explicitly what he assumes implicitly; and, in the history of the world's thinking, a philosopher has often been so unphilosophical as to ignore, or openly to argue against, certain fundamental *implicita* which are involved in the very fact that he thinks at all. Accordingly, we shall be neither surprised nor dismayed to find that the great principle which is the theme of this lecture has often been overlooked or challenged.

By the unity of truth, we mean that every particular truth bears a certain definite, organic, and more or less determinative relation to every other particular truth. Every specific truth is a fragment of an organized whole, the segment of a circle, the bone of a skeleton. The entire world of truth, like the entire world of reality—

whatever may be the relation between these two worlds—is a closed circuit; and every change, experience, contingency, event, which seems to affect only a small region of that circuit, in reality affects the whole. The infinitesimal reciprocates with the infinite and reacts upon it. In mathematical terms which are conceivable, although they may be incomputable, the sluggish earth mounts upward to meet the falling snowflake. Somewhere Carlyle has mentioned that the fur markets of London and Paris are affected by the aim of the rude American huntsman in the valley of the Assinaboine. Everything is definitely related to every other thing, and this very fact constitutes the totality of being into a tremendously vast and varied organic unit.

But this were indeed a small truth if it were confined to the material universe. The world of mind and thought and purpose and endeavor and achievement and character is an integral part of this vast and complex tract of interrelated realities. In the broadest sense, spirit and matter combine to make a "universe" as over against what Professor James has called a *multi*-verse. If Cleopatra's nose had been an eighth of an inch longer, or shorter for that matter, the destinies of the Roman Empire would have been wholly

different. If Luther had not found that chained Bible at Erfurt, we can easily believe that the German Reformation would have taken a very different course. Man, himself, spirit as well as body, moral as well as material, is a factor in this great network of causes and effects, of relations and results. No matter now about free agency and the power of mind over external circumstance; all we need to remember for our present purpose is that the environment reacts upon the person; the material world affects the purpose of the spirit; it enters as a factor into the thought of the mind and the faith of the heart.

Nor is the Infinite Creator an absentee alien to this realm of which we ourselves are but a very insignificant part. Rather, He is the substratum and immanent life of it all. He is omnipresent and ever active. Atheism refuses Him any place or part, but even atheism must frame some conception of the God whose existence it is bent upon denying. Deism banishes Him from the circuit of our world, but deism is only *pro tempore* atheism, and its frail fortifications have crumbled under the blows by which atheism has been shattered. As Dr. Kuyper, in his Stone Lectures for 1898, pointed out, modern atheism assumes a most definite and acute relation to the

God whom it denies. In illustration of his thought, he says, "A government, as you yourselves experienced of late in the case of Spain, that recalls its ambassador and breaks every regular intercourse with another power, declares thereby that its relation to the government of that country is a strained relation which generally ends in war."<sup>1</sup> That is to say, to deny God is to defy Him, and to defy Him is to take up a very definite, conscious, "strained" relation to Him.

His divine power is the constituting bond of the whole world we know; His ineffable presence imparts to every movement an eloquent meaning, to every scene a mellow coloring, to every fact a sacred and, though we may not discern it, a divine import. This it is that magnifies and dignifies the cosmos into what has been called the "theo-cosm";<sup>2</sup> and, although God does not become merely a coördinating factor in the great social system, yet neither is He wholly absent from it nor inactive in it.

We shall not wait now to consider what all is implied in this unity of the vast world of truth which we cognize and in which we have our

<sup>1</sup> *Calvinism*, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Principal D. W. Simon's *Reconciliation by Incarnation*, p.

place. This unity is not only contemporaneous, it is also temporally continuous. This is the favorite idea of recent scientific thought. The great law of Evolution, in its most general aspects and bearings, is based upon such a continuity of the past, present, and future as, despite their incidental transformations, constitutes them into an organic unity. Indeed, with some writers, the idea of evolution is sometimes so diluted as to be scarcely distinguishable from that of mere historical continuity<sup>1</sup>—a thing which to deny would be to annihilate the natural order and to destroy all scientific thought. Accordingly, the tendency is to inquire into the history of things rather than to inquire into the things themselves, and thus to exalt historical studies into the first

<sup>1</sup>Instances are by no means hard to find. For example, see Professor Le Conte's *Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought*, pp. 65, 66. "Evolution as a law of continuity, as a universal law of becoming," is here called "axiomatic," "the law of necessary causation," "a necessary truth." In the late Professor Drummond's *The Ascent of Man*, we are told that "Evolution" is only a harmless synonym of "history"; "But after all the blood spilt, Evolution is simply 'history,' a 'history of steps,' a 'general name' for the history of the steps by which the world has come to be what it is" (p. 3). After this, we have a right to be surprised to find these words: "No one asks more for Evolution at present than permission to use it as a working theory" (p. 6).

place in the kingdom of human thought. All knowledge must come under the categories of natural growth and biological development. However, this much is certainly true, there is a continuity of things which is the very basis of all history. There is a time-nexus which joins into a broad unity all things that are, however diverse their origins, their causes, and their tendencies.

But it is time to consider what we mean by truth when we declare our belief in the unity of it. Pilate's question is one to which we may never expect that all men will give the same answer. Men may agree in affirming that this or that is *a* truth, but they will pretty surely disagree when they attempt a formal and constructive definition of truth in the abstract. We have no disposition to attempt what should so likely turn out a failure.

The main question for us now is whether truth is in the thing or in the thought. One school of philosophy finds it in the objective reality, and another, in the subjective thought or thinker. Between these two contending schools the contest is bitter and uncompromising, and today they stand, face to face, bidding for the suffrages of the citizens in the commonwealth of thought.

One of the interesting developments of recent

times is the renaissance of metaphysical idealism. It has captured many prominent university centers, and captivated many brilliant minds that are active in its defense and propagation. It has changed its bases from those of the early part of the nineteenth century, and it now aims to adjust itself more completely to the demands of the empirically scientific spirit that is so characteristic of this age. While it is not less *a priori* than formerly, it is at great pains to show that it is also sufficiently *a posteriori* for every practical and possible purpose.

Now, we are not so ambitious as to launch out upon an attempted comprehensive critique of contemporary idealism. Its rising star—rising, if it has not already reached its zenith—is immensely significant. It is a homebound return from the empty husks of agnosticism. It evidences a wholesome reaction in the direction of stiff metaphysical thinking. It is susceptible of exceedingly plausible presentations; so much so, that if its underlying principles are fallacious, the stalwart champions of a sounder philosophy should bestir themselves to check its bold and persistent assaults. It presumes to nestle in very closely with the most sacred elements of the Christian religion, and it argues that it can

throw a flood of light upon mysteries which, from any other point of view, are opaque and obscure and forbidding.

Over against idealism stands realism, affirming the truth of the independent, objective reality, as such. It insists that the mind finds its world, it does not create it. The supreme function of thought is discovery, not invention. It maintains that in the reality of the objective world both rationality and morality reside. Science only sees, and the man with the microscope or the telescope is only a seer; nothing less, nothing more. His perceiving mind comes into direct contact with the cognized object, and that cognized object is primarily neither his own *ego* nor an *alter ego*; to him, at best, it is simply a *non ego*. It declines to be bewildered by erudite distinctions between reality and appearance, between noumena and phenomena, between the *Ding-an-sich* and the thing as something other than itself; because it insists that there can be no appearance without something appearing; and that, while the thing may vary in forms manifold, so long as it is the thing at all, it is the thing "in itself."

Now, one of the peculiar things about this old-time contest lies in the fact that both positions

are so easily proved while at the same time they are both so easily disproved.

“How happy could I be with either,  
Were t’other dear charmer away.”

Thus, idealism denies the possibility of the object apart from the perceiving subject, and as the old world certainly was an object before creature men and angels had in it “a local habitation and a name,” the inference is quick and conclusive of a preëxisting personal perceiving God. But, on the other hand, seeing that the perceiving subject is necessary to the object, does it not follow that the object, *per se*, has no existence of its own whatever in the world of reality, and so can it be that our easy theism has carried us too far into the mazy meshes of an impersonal pantheism? But let us see how it is with realism. Not to be outdone, it makes an argument equally good, and, shall we add, equally bad? It naïvely declares that the thing exists apart from all thinkers, just as there is a noise far out at sea without a hearing ear, and form and color on a lonely desert without a seeing eye; accordingly, it claims the verdict on the ground of the universal and unchallenged experience of mankind. But,

are we not to heed the caution that experience cannot testify to what, upon the hypothesis, transcends experience? It is plain that the hearing ear and the seeing eye cannot testify to what takes place in the absence of all ears and all eyes. Moreover, if these realities exist and persist entirely apart from God, then in this Godless world what have we but deism in the sphere of things and Pelagianism in the sphere of persons, as the conclusion?

You will understand that I am not criticizing idealism and realism; I am only seeing how easily each is supported and each refuted. We are interested in testing them by their theological fruits. The one is made to answer for deism and the other for pantheism. We insist that it is perfectly fair to judge pure philosophical theories in this way by their theological entailments. Sir William Hamilton was not wrong in insisting that no difficulty emerges in theology which had not previously emerged in philosophy, and Mr. A. J. Balfour gave us a truth, which has a conspicuous illustration in this very subject, when he said, "In truth, the decisive battles of theology are fought beyond its frontiers."<sup>1</sup>

For ourselves, we must say that we are a

<sup>1</sup> *Foundations of Belief*, p. 2.

trifle suspicious of a position which is too quickly reached or too easily held. Commanding points are seldom seized from the enemy except at the cost of some severe fighting. Lofty summits are seldom achieved without some hard climbing. The greatest truths, though often simple enough when we get near to them, often command highest prices, and when they are too cheap in price there is danger that they will turn out cheap in quality, also. "No object without a subject," gives us theism at a single leap, for if the world is an object (and who but the outright pantheist will deny it?), who but a God can be a sufficient subject? But, alas, upon sober, second thought, does not this easy theism turn, under our very eyes, into pantheism—Coleridge's "painted atheism"? And here is the standing indictment against philosophical idealism. You know that a man who is charged with a certain crime may plead not guilty upon either of two lines of defense, namely, either that, although the thing charged is a crime, he did not do it, or, on the other hand, although he did do it, the thing charged is no crime. So, some idealists candidly avow pantheism, but demur to the charge that pantheism is an error; while others stoutly disclaim the pantheistic corollary

as a *non sequitur*. Here we believe history is against their defense. It is at the expense of logic and self-consistency that idealism halts this side of pantheism. Henri-Frederic Amiel believed that if "Christianity is to triumph over pantheism, it must absorb it."<sup>1</sup> So much is certain: if Christianity is to continue to be Christian, it must beware lest pantheism absorb it. And herein is the cause of the theological suspicion of the brilliant plausibilities of present-day idealism.

We are thankful that we need not complete the task of clearing the philosophical deck before we proceed to some sort of theological action. There are certain preliminary reckonings which must be made with our jealous friends, the metaphysicians, and they are sometimes very delicate and very decisive. No positivist could be a consistent supralapsarian and no agnostic could accept the Westminster Confession of Faith without more radical revisions than it is likely soon to undergo. Still, we may considerately leave some things for the philosophers to settle among themselves. And so, we may let the idealist and the realist fight it out along their own lines, to their hearts' content. It is a long battle, and the end is not in sight. Only when their tactics obstruct our

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, October 1, 1901.

path do we need to take a hand in the fray. And this is the very thing which often happens. The relation between theology and philosophy is exceedingly intimate, and yet they are not the same. It is only when philosophy goes out of its way to challenge the rights or to harass the labors of theology that students of the latter need to devote themselves to the adjustment of philosophical problems.

Judging the claims of idealism and realism, as bearing upon the present thesis, we should prefer to occupy a position that might be called eclectic or synthetic. We would covet the good and eschew the evil in both; for, assuredly, there are good and evil in both. We must trust to each to set forth its own virtues as well as the vices of its rival. The realist being judge, idealism is haughty, quasi-omniscient, rationalistic, and pantheistic. Idealism being judge, realism is raw, crudely lumpish, empirical, agnostic, and absurd. There is no word in the English language—not even excepting Evolution, or Socialism, or Mysticism—that is made to carry more different meanings than this word *Idealism*. We do believe in such an idealism as teaches that every object is the embodiment of an idea. We accept idealism if it means that the objective world is a cosmos, and not a crude chaos; that there is a rationality

in things, or, at least, in the totality of things. We do not need to annihilate matter, in the interest of an idealistic monism, in order to believe that, before matter existed, the eternal self-existent God alone existed.<sup>1</sup> We believe that matter is for mind, and not mind for matter. We believe that any scientific theory which idealizes matter away from itself is only a juggling with words and trifling with thoughts. We believe that ontological realities, apart from our cognizing minds, are to us relatively as if they were non-existent, and, therefore, *as if* they were absolutely *non est*; and we believe that a world of matter, apart and independent from a world of mind, is a philosophical impossibility, a theological absurdity. We believe, with Professor Bowne, that "a system of objects is meaningless, apart from a mind and consciousness in and for which they exist," and "that the world of things is so completely a world of ideas as to have no meaning except in relation to mind and consciousness."<sup>2</sup> We believe that the phenomenal world is not an *ego*, but that it is ego-morphic, I-like; and that, seeing that our epistemology is always the test of our ontology, Professor Ladd has not put it

<sup>1</sup> See Prof. Bowne's *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 327.

too strongly when he says, in his own italics, "*Human cognition is all to be understood as a species of intercourse between minds*"; and, again, "*Things are the manifestation, the word to man, of an all-pervading Will and Mind.*"<sup>1</sup> We can repeat these words, after a recent cautious and conservative writer, in a very valuable lecture on the Idealistic Philosophy: "I accept it [idealism] in so far as they tell me that mind is first in the universe, and that the universe has a meaning. I accept it when they tell me of experience of the distinction of subject and object, and of the truth that all objects are for the subject. I follow gladly, as they take this living, breathing, concrete self of mine, and show me that the analysis of this real self and of the conditions of its life, thought, and action, gives, or imperatively demands, the cosmos, that is to say, they show me that my experience is possible only if I am in a rational world, to which I am related and which is related to me. The world they show me is not a huge contemporaneity, but an ordered world, each part related to each, and all bound together in relations which can be thought."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy of Knowledge*, pp. 558, 606.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. James Iverach's *Theism in the Light of Present Science and Philosophy*, pp. 300, 301.

All this is not to refine matter into spirit nor to coagulate spirit into matter; it is, as we understand it, an idealism which makes the world of things an embodiment of a world of ideas. Anything less than this we regard as vicious epistemology, bad philosophy, the confusion of experience, the destruction of science, and an effectual bar against any intellectual commerce between man and the world in which he dwells.

This ought to suffice, *in limine*, if we mistake not, as a sort of philosophical confession of faith. Truth is not in the thing only; it is not in the thought only; it is in the thing as the expression of the thought. Matter is more than "coarsened thought," as Amiel called it; but there is thought there first of all, and it is because of that thought that we can cognize matter and study it. It is because of this thought that we can read thought not simply *into* it, but *in* it. Our idealism is an idealism which holds to the meaningfulness of the world, rather than to a speculative theory as to the essence of the world; that regards the world as the expression of an idea rather than nothing but an idea; that finds the traces of Personality all about us in that which is, in itself and as we see it, somewhat other than personality.

I trust that this long digression will not appear

to have been wholly in vain when we observe, as can be done at a glance, how it lends itself to the setting forth of my main idea of the unity of truth. Truth, as we know it, is the expression of thought; as it is, it *is* thought. Whatever is, therefore, in the objective world of experience is capable of placement in the subjective world of thought. Now, if there is such a unity in the whole world of reality and, consequently moreover, in the whole world of truth, and if the bonds which bind its parts into one are intelligible and thinkable, then this of itself is a sufficient challenge to profoundest mental inquiry and widest cosmical research. If the desire to know is a sin, then the soul of man is indeed an original sinner. We all have heard of that typical German thinker—Lessing, I believe it was—who distinguished himself by saying that if he had truth offered him on one side and the pursuit of truth on the other, he would quickly choose the latter; but we must not forget that the earnest pursuit of truth has the possession of it for its constant goal.

But, in our inevitably partial acquisitions of truth, we must avoid merely quantitative standards; for, knowledge, like wisdom, is rather a thing of quality than of quantity. A rude and illiterate Indian may know the world and life far

better than does the stuffed bachelor of arts, fresh from the great university. An ignorant fisherman may often instruct the expert ichthyologist; and the untaught miner knows more about mining than the master of the science of mineralogy. Cosmical knowledge is not always greatest with him who has piled up the largest stock of mechanical facts about the world; it is greatest with him who knows the world best, who has learned its tricks, caught its caprices, and read its thoughts. The world is an organism, not a mechanism; and he who knows it as such is far ahead of his neighbor who has learned this particular fact as isolated, and that particular method as unrelated. The way to know the world is to begin by regarding it as an organized unit, and to arrange every fact and process in it intelligently about that primary luminous and germinal conception. If we mistake not, it is this discovery that has been the secret of the noblest achievements of natural science and of the truest methods of education in schools of every grade.

This encyclopedic impulse of the mind is in perfect harmony with the comprehensive unity of truth for which we have been arguing. By a law of our thinking, we directly strive to see every

truth we know in its relations with every other truth. We assume that there are thinkable and intelligible relations between everything we know and everything we do not know. We postulate an ideal unity which is comprehensive and complete. Professor Ormund says as much when, in striking agreement with Professor Royce, he says, "In order that there may be any science the world must be conceived as completing itself in an ideal unity."<sup>1</sup> We catch glimpses of this ideal unity, as it lies untarnished and eternal in the creative thought, when we see it bodied forth in the world about us—not excluding ourselves also as a part of its larger self. Then we are seized with an inspiring zeal to decipher the thought which is already written there, and to discover to ourselves a kindred intelligence and an outworking purpose where before we had been only embarrassed by the opaque and the meaningless.

That this endeavor, legitimate and praiseworthy, has never succeeded to the full, is a truism too obvious to require mention. Why it has failed; why, with present conditions, it must continue to fail; why human thought should not tally, part for part, with God's truth; why, to the human

<sup>1</sup> *Foundations of Knowledge*, p. 228.

intellect with limited ken at its best and with obscured vision amid the mists of a strangely disordered and distorted world, the loftiest achievements and largest conquests are ever bound to come far short of a full and adequate interpretation of the vast, divine, world-thought-and-plan—these are some of the questions which may well engage our attention in the hours that are to follow.

Perhaps we cannot conclude this first hour better than by barely alluding to some of the more or less explicit denials of the principle which we have insisted upon as necessary and fundamental. You are, of course, familiar with the famous "antinomies" of Immanuel Kant, as developed in his *Critique of the Pure Reason*. That justly renowned criticism of the powers of the human mind is commonly regarded as a magnificent demonstration of the impotence of our faculties at their best. It was a destructive work which, even as a curious product of dialectical genius, is worthy of the epoch-making influence it has exerted. But the lesson it taught was disheartening and almost funereal. Indeed, the Königsberg sage, apparently realizing that he had bereft men of their priceless heritage, would fain make good the loss to them in his subsequent con-

structive work on the Practical Reason. Nevertheless, he had left a scar which could never be wholly healed. The "Categorical Imperative," for reverent and thoughtful spirits, has forever lost its commanding note, if it is to be divorced from rational sanctions. A cleavage between the ethical and the rational, between the right and the true, so long as it is not only unbridged, but also is believed to be unbridgeable, stands as an insurmountable barrier to further progress and is a menace to intellectual confidence, to moral integrity, and to a healthy religious faith. I am not now discussing the spirit or the purpose of Kant, nor affecting to state the full meaning of the Critical Philosophy; I am not forgetting that the task he set for himself was the investigation of man's powers and not of God's truth; I quite understand that of which Professor Ormund reminds us,<sup>1</sup> namely, that Kant admitted possible transcending spheres where human categories fail and where these haunting "antinomies" may disappear; nor am I by any sort of means denying that his own meaning was far different from, and far better than, that which has been so noisily exploited by the aggressive propagandism of the "Extreme Left" among his disciples; I am only

<sup>1</sup> See *Foundations of Knowledge*, p. 386.

now referring to the historical effect which this philosophy has left upon the religious world, and I venture to affirm that, with all the vigor and impulse that was given to the religious life by his later *Critique*, the Christian world of the last century was incomparably more the loser through his famous doctrine of the Antinomies, as that doctrine has been interpreted and widely accepted. Herein, for modern thought, was the genesis of agnosticism, and its genealogy is too well known to call for the tracing. Sir William Hamilton seized the negative horn of the Critical Philosophy and, pressing his distinction between real knowledge and regulative knowledge on the basis of his doctrine of the relativity of all knowledge, accordingly, made faith a contradiction of reason. Mansel, of the Church of England, in his once famous but now half-forgotten Bampton Lectures for 1858,<sup>1</sup> developed this thought in brilliant and plausible dialectic, endeavoring, in the interest of religious faith, to show how reason invariably leads to inevitable contradictions and inextricable entanglements. Of course, the end was not yet. It wanted only the widely empirical and yet the constructively generalizing genius of Herbert Spencer to seize upon this same negative view,

<sup>1</sup> *The Limits of Religious Thought.*

born of Kant, nursed by Hamilton, and christened by Mansel, and, organizing it into a new philosophy—if philosophy it can be called—with the all-containing and all-explaining law of Evolution as its principle and nucleus, to dignify and popularize the old dogma of the constitutional impotence of the human faculties into the unmitigated agnosticism of to-day. Lower than this it could not fall; further than this it could not go. Here it struck the zero point in philosophy. It is the final apotheosis of the Kantian antinomy. To be sure, it can be neither proved nor disproved. If the mind is so impotent, then it is too impotent to prove its own impotence. If a man say to you, "I cannot tell the truth," how can you know whether to believe him or not? If the mind demonstrates its inability, it has shown nothing but its inability to demonstrate. As Dr. Martineau has somewhere said, "Agnosticism is a dumb man calling out to you that he has no voice." However, Mr. Spencer's philosophy has been for the last forty years a force with which evangelical thought has had to reckon. And the spirit of the Königsberger has not cropped out only in the Synthetic and the Cosmic Philosophy. In theological circles, Ritschlianism would fain divorce philosophy from faith, the religious from the

rational;<sup>1</sup> and we need not pause to mention how plausible and how prevalent are its well-dressed tenets. Mr. Benjamin Kidd, in one of the most widely read and variously discussed books of the last decade,<sup>2</sup> has unblushingly affirmed that "a rational religion is a scientific impossibility," allowing it only "ultra-rational sanctions" at the best; and Dr. Iverach is abundantly warranted in declaring that sanctions which are ultra-rational are nothing else than "irrational";<sup>3</sup> and, we may add, the irrational is no better than the downright contra-rational. The ghost of Kant's first *Critique* haunted Christian thought during that entire nineteenth century from which we have just emerged; and if twentieth century Christianity is to be stalwart and strong, if it is to have and to hold a firm grasp upon the intelligence and the energies of the new age upon which we are entering, it can

<sup>1</sup> I shall have more to say of this later on. The reader may refer to the English translation of Ritschl's great work, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 17, 20, 194, 539 *et al.* See, also, Stählin's *Kant, Lotze, and Ritschl*, pp. 183, 185, 257; Orr's *The Ritschlian Theology and the Evangelical Faith*, pp. 67, 70, 263; and Garvie's *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> *Social Evolution*, Macmillan, first ed., pp. 101, 103.

<sup>3</sup> *Theism in the Light of Present Science and Philosophy*, p. 164.

never be by playing a sharp trick on the faculties of our being in order that we may believe in the God that made us, or by surrendering or compromising the divinely given rationality with which we are endowed, in order to place a blind faith in that which persists in concealing its face from our gaze.

Our contention is that if the reason in man can do no better than to lead up to such a *cul-de-sac* as the antinomies of Kant, then the race is doomed to hopeless and helpless skepticism. We are not now speaking at all of the need or of the function of a revelation from God, for the reason that if there is ever to be such a revelation, either in a form which men call natural or which they call supernatural, it must needs address itself to whatever of reason there is in man; and, accordingly, it must subject its content to the cognizing and digesting faculties which man may happen to possess. Such a revelation, to be a revelation at all, must be received and judged; but of what avail is this, if the powers by which we receive it and judge it are utterly and intrinsically untrustworthy? It were the work of an all-foolish being and not of an all-wise God to attempt to communicate truth to men if the best that they can do with it is to construe it into contradictions and

to tie it up into such double-hard-knots as the antinomies of Immanuel Kant. Dean Mansel's lectures made impossible the intelligent faith for which they were designed to prepare the way. In slaying rationalism, he slaughtered reason. He "threw out the child with the bath"; he "burned the barn to get rid of the mice."

No, we are not forgetting that we are saved by faith, and that it is the gift of God. We are not overlooking the great truth that man's rational powers are finite at their ideal best, and that they are blighted and handicapped by sin in their actual state. Nevertheless, we are to rescue and employ what little reason there is in man if we are to have a kind of faith which is at all worth the having. Right reason must be perfectly consistent with true faith. If faith is irrational, as Mr. Kidd insists, then men must be de-rationalized in order to be saved. In order to be saints, they must become fools. The very statement of this position is enough to show the irrationalness of it, but we must presuppose the validity of our own reason before we can pronounce this or anything else either rational or irrational.

There is no overestimating the damage done to intelligent Christian faith by this false philosophical teaching. To throw away reason for

the sake of faith is to pay too high a price for the spurious faith which we get in the barter. If of two evils we must choose the less, we should prefer Hegel to Huxley: we should side with rationalism, with its soiled robes and tattered dignity, rather than with agnosticism, proudly vaunting itself upon its own humility, and, owl-like, stubbornly shutting out the light in the very face of the undimmed sun.

Here again we come back to the unity of the truth. We may not see it, but we are ever assuming it still. There are intervening spaces, but, like the oceans between the continents, they do not separate; they connect. The boundary lines between the departments of human knowledge are arbitrary and artificial. It is a Tropic of Cancer that divides astronomy from geography, or anatomy from psychology. We pass from the one to the other as easily and unconsciously as we pass from New Jersey into Pennsylvania. Every science fits in with every other science to make the organic, symmetrical, complete body of scientific truth. Nor is so-called scientific truth all of truth. The scientist must turn metaphysician at times, then mystic, then poet, then theologian, then saint; but, whatever apron he may have on at his work, it is really the plain

man himself that knows the truth which he finds ; and, in knowing it, he, *ipso facto*, coördinates and correlates and classifies so much as comes within his purview, always with the often unconscious purpose to make his mental map reproduce the field of truth as it lies in limitless landscapes and ever-enlarging prospects before his eye. *Ordo et connexio idearum idem est ac ordo et connexio rerum.* There are connecting lines running between remotest points. They may thread the surface here, while there, like our Humboldt River of the West, they may stretch along in hidden, subterranean courses ; they may run, like the projected railway of the Czar of the Russias, in shortest distance by curveless lines, or they may seem to steer around the shore-lines of a continent ; they may be faint to the eye and fugitive to the seeker ; but of one thing we are sure, seen or unseen, they exist, they are always there.

There can be no impassable barbed-wire fence inclosing any field of human thought. Let every thinker, not least of all the theologian himself, take to himself the text, "No man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself." What is true at Girard College cannot be false at Princeton ; what is true in the laboratory of the university cannot be false in the lecture room of theol-

ogy. Any *modus vivendi* which denies this principle is a delusion and a snare. Human knowledge, like a dwelling house in Japan, has movable partitions between the compartments, and, as the light of day comes on, the partitions are taken out and the many become one.

Nor are we to forget that the scientist, the sage, and the saint, are but parts of the whole whose contents they are exploring and whose meaning they would read. The noblest study of man is Man. Know thyself; to man alone, the sole self-conscious spirit, is this loftiest task assigned. The whole complex unit stands as the embodiment and expression of a whole complex idea. Your mind and mine, as well as your body and mine, are parts of this great whole. The relations between them, the origins and ends, the tendencies and triumphs, the struggles and strifes, the buffetings and battles, the aims and effects, the births and deaths, all enter into this vast and varied unity of the whole. There are depths too deep for our fathoming; there are heights too lofty for our scaling; there are breaks and gaps, there are *lacunæ* and *cæsurae*, there are enigmas and mysteries; but the mind knows and forever assumes that the whole is a self-consistent, self-harmonious ONE. Of that one whole we may

never become the complete and easy master, but the secret of our aspiring and the measure of our achieving will ever be in the line of the pursuit of that unattained, unattainable Ideal.

LECTURE II

MODES OF APPROACHING  
THE COSMOS



## LECTURE II

### MODES OF APPROACHING THE COSMOS

THE assumed unity of truth, which was our theme in the last lecture, involves in some way an assumed unity of things. Every existing object belongs to the grand system of which it is a part. The knowledge of any one object in the world is possible because it has a knowable place in a knowable world; it enters into relation not only with the knower; not only with everything the knower knows; but also with everything the knower does not know. Unity means harmony, self-consistency, a rational scheme. The parts of the system are not related to each other as the grains of sand on the beach are related to each other, though even there there is a relation which is neither fortuitous nor unregulated. The whole of nature is not an aggregation, but an organism. It is diversity in harmony, variety in unity. Whatever metaphysical implications are involved in this conception, the very possibility of cosmical knowledge is contingent upon allowing these implications.

One of the severest indictments against this

idea of the self-consistency of things, appearing in recent years, is found in Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*, a book which some philosophical critics have pronounced the nearest approach to an epoch-making book in its time.<sup>1</sup> The modest judgment of a layman in philosophy is that the acumen displayed by the author is really brilliant, and his argument is unquestionably both keen and strong, yet the conclusions to which he brings the reader are thoroughly unsatisfactory and confusing. It is the most striking recent book in the English language, aiming, upon purely abstract grounds, to break down the concrete self-consistency of the cosmos; and the effect which it produces upon the mind is all the more startling because of the boldness and vigor with which it argues against those very substrata of thought which are too deep and fundamental to be either undermined or strengthened by argument. When he attempts to reconcile the One and the Many, he finds that the world must "go to pieces"; his abstract logic lands him in a contradiction; he pronounces the actual world "self-contradictory," "inconsistent," "unintelligent," "untrue." Accordingly, in this dialectical deadlock,

<sup>1</sup> By F. H. Bradley, LL.D., Glasgow, Fellow of Merton College, Oxford; in "The Library of Philosophy" Series.

he concludes, agreeing substantially with Mansel before him, "Our intellect, then, has been condemned to confusion and bankruptcy, and the reality has been left outside uncomprehended. . . It is left naked and without a character, and we are covered with confusion."<sup>1</sup>

And yet, somehow the old world manages to hang together, notwithstanding Mr. Bradley. It has survived his adverse verdict; it has withstood many such, and we have faith to believe it can stand many more. He is all right in insisting that "reality must be a single whole," and we believe that that is precisely what the actual world is. We believe this, too, not only because the metaphysician says it *must* be so, but also because the empiricist says it *is* so. This unity of the whole is not a mysterious and inscrutable Absolute in which we are to merge or, to use Mr. Bradley's frequent expression, to "transmute," the Many in order that we may preserve the One. We believe in the Many, and we believe in the One, and we are not exactly ready to abandon our faith in either because Mr. Bradley warns us that unless we do the whole will "go to pieces." The world is not so fragile as Mr. Bradley thinks; but, rather, in spite of

<sup>1</sup> P. 34; see also p. 120.

some ugly and persistent difficulties which Mr. Bradley thrusts in our way, we agree with the words of a sane, though not unsympathetic critic: "Now, I maintain that unity in multiplicity, identity in diversity, is just the ultimate nature of universal experience. Such a unity or identity is lived or experienced in every instance of self-conscious existence; and *it cannot be other than a misleading use of language to speak of our most intimate experience, the ultimate bedrock of fact, as unintelligible or contradictory.*"<sup>1</sup>

But let us go on, leaving it to science to safeguard its own presuppositions. And yet, there is an error here which is so prevalent that it has imbedded itself in common language, and, in turn, our speech reacts to confirm the error. We refer to the use of the term *Science*. Its common use limits it to physical phenomena. We call a man a scientist<sup>2</sup> who devotes himself to the investigation of natural forces and methods and results. So common has become this way of speaking that we fall in with it even when we are

<sup>1</sup> Professor Andrew Seth's *Man's Place in the Cosmos*, p. 163. The words occur in the course of a masterly criticism of Mr. Bradley's book, under the title, "A New Theory of the Absolute." Italics are ours.

<sup>2</sup> The reader may recall the late Professor Huxley's abhorrence of the term "scientist."

pointing out the fallacy in it. It may not be a very serious matter, provided we bear in mind that it is not strictly accurate, and that we are not to be held responsible for implications which we expressly disown.

There are at least three ways of accounting for this materialistic monopolization of the term Science.

The first is the obvious fact that the material alone yields to sensible tests. In our conscious development, the physical claims our attention in advance of the metaphysical—*τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά*; and there is in scientific pursuits a strong tendency to adhere to this order. It may claim to be natural, and science is generally content with whatever can argue for itself the sanctions of the natural order.

Secondly, it is insisted that only the physical belongs to the realm of nature, and that, of course, science becomes unscientific whenever it transcends that realm. Here, to be sure, is a challengeable assumption, but it is a plausible one. Definitions must be decided upon before we can allow it to pass. Mr. J. S. Mill's definitions of nature, namely, "Nature, in the abstract, is the aggregate of the powers and properties of all things," and "Not everything

which happens, but only what takes place without the voluntary and intentional agency of man,"<sup>1</sup> may be cited in support of the contention; and yet Mr. Mill elsewhere freely grants that there is an intellectual element in this closed circuit: "For the word suggests, not so much the multitudinous detail of the phenomena, as the conception which might be formed of the manner of existence as a mental whole, by a mind possessing a complete knowledge of them; to which conception it is the aim of science to raise itself."<sup>2</sup> Surely such a conception as this, of the "aim" of science, involving as it does some sort of residence of that conception in nature itself, lifts the level of science far above the range of the merely physical alone.

And thirdly, the evolutionary philosophy lends itself readily to this mode of thought. It limits science to the natural because, in its scheme, only the natural is. The Spencerian monistic school recognizes no object of knowledge outside of the great cosmical programme. Science is simply the systematic study of this programme in all its phases and parts. The atom, the star dust, the protoplasm, the mind, society, religion, the idea of God, the whole myriad-sided world—this is

<sup>1</sup> *Three Essays on Religion*, pp. 5, 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

what we can know, and this is the subject-matter of science.

This conception of science, however, is inadequate and misleading. Science means method, not material; it may have for its subject the spiritual as well as the physical. There may be a scientific doctrine of God as well as a scientific study of man; a theology as well as an anthropology. There may be a scientific study of Isaiah as well as of Shakespeare. We challenge the right of the man who studies rocks or stars or snakes or trees or bones to usurp the honors of science. There may be a scientific study of the Holy Spirit as well as of the human arm, of the spiritual life as well as of insect life, of grace as well as of nature. Science means an attitude of mind, a method of procedure, a systematizing of truth; and it may be of the unseen not less than of the seen, of the superhuman not less than of the sub-human. Whence it appears how absurd it is to talk about a conflict between science and theology; theology is science, or it is false theology. Conceivably, there may be a disagreement between geological or biological science on the one side and theological science on the other; only conceivably, however, for upon our postulate of the unity of truth, if the various sciences are

logical in form and true in substance, there can be in fact no conflict between them.

The error which we wish to point out is that natural science or, better yet, cosmical science, is entitled to a monopoly of the term Science; and, in yielding to the prevalent usage of speech, we waive no rights to the word so long as we pursue any line of thought, in a scientific spirit and according to scientific methods.

There are two methods of approach in coming to know the world: the *a priori* and the *a posteriori*, the deductive and the inductive. The first method is that of conceiving for ourselves what the world is and then going out to make the world conform to our ready-made conception. It evolves its cosmos out of the inner consciousness. If the world is instinct with reason, and if we are rational beings, then why may we not know the world by reading off the reason that is in us? We can judge the coin by knowing the stamp; why not infer the world-product by our knowledge of its origin?

This may seem strange to the predominant inductivism of to-day, and yet it has played a large part in the history of men's thinking.<sup>1</sup> Nor has

<sup>1</sup> "In that stage of physical and mathematical knowledge, Plato has fallen into the error of supposing that he can construct

it by any means disappeared yet; it never will disappear. Back of all our thinking about the world, lies the sleeping assumption that a certain relation exists between God and that world. Whatever that relation may be, we instinctively think of it as God's world, and, in some sense, we implicate the Divine Honor in the character and ordering of His world. Hegel disclaimed any "intention to assume the character of a God, and to *create* History,"<sup>1</sup> and yet, notwithstanding his disclaimer, he would not have been the first to do that very thing. To assume the character of a

the heavens *a priori* by mathematical problems, and determine the principles of harmony irrespective of the adaptation of sounds to the human ear. The illusion was a natural one in that age and country. The simplicity and certainty of astronomy and harmonics seemed to contrast with the variation and complexity of the world of sense; hence the circumstance that there was some elementary basis of fact, some measurement of distance or time or vibrations on which they must ultimately rest, was overlooked by him. The modern predecessors of Newton fell into errors equally great; and Plato can hardly be said to have been very far wrong, or may even claim a sort of prophetic insight into the subject, when we consider that the greater part of astronomy at the present day consists of abstract dynamics, by the help of which most astronomical discoveries have been made." Professor Jowett's Introduction to Plato's *Republic*; Jowett's *Plato*, vol. iii., pp. cx., cxi.

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, Bohn's Library Ed., p. xix.

God is to predetermine history, to foreordain a world. Only atheism can escape this creative task, and atheism is not only "bad metaphysics," as Mr. Fiske has said, but also bad science. Dualism has tried to escape it, but, as we shall see by and by, dualism is an impossible theism if it be any better than downright atheism; for a theism that gives to God a divided sovereignty or a limited sway, is certainly a misnomer. From pantheism to deism, cosmology is a chapter in theology; our theodicy waits upon our conceptions of cosmical science. This being so, men will continue, in their partial knowledge of the cosmos, to *infer* what kind of a world this is, not more from their actual perceptions of the world itself than from their conceptions of the God who made it and rules it.

But it must be conceded that this science of the "arm-chair," as Professor Royce might call it, this amateur world-spinning, is a very precarious business. Bishop Butler might well sound the warning, "Let us, then, instead of that idle and not very innocent employment of forming imaginary models of a world and schemes of governing it, turn our thoughts to what we experience to be the conduct of nature."<sup>1</sup> But men are slow to

<sup>1</sup> *Analogy*, p. 73; Lippincott, 1873.

heed the good bishop's admonition. It is easier to fabricate a cosmos of our own than to submit to the laborious and painstaking processes by which alone we can become acquainted with the commonplace and complex world which is already here. The smooth cosmogony of the arm-chair is unembarrassed by troublesome frictions and cog-slips, and if Plato is right in saying<sup>1</sup> that in the nature of things the actual must fall short of the truth, then here we may regale ourselves with worlds untarnished by the rude touch of fact, unsoiled by the dusty processes of materialization. We are masters of the situation, and we can predestinate that Satans and sin and storm and struggle and sorrow shall never invade the fair fields of the world which we create. Poets are *creators* and history is a poem,<sup>2</sup> and if Dante had his *Inferno* and Milton his *Paradise*, so poetry has always been a busy and prolific world-factory.

<sup>1</sup> "Must not the actual, whatever a man may think, always, in the nature of things, fall short of the truth?" *Republic*, v., 473.

<sup>2</sup> "One might be in doubt as to the class of artistic productions among which this poem should be reckoned; to some it has seemed to have the uniform flow of an epic, to others to be as full of catastrophes as a tragedy; again, it has not unfrequently been regarded as a comedy by mocking philosophers in sardonic moods; and each of these views has seemed, to those who held it, to have something in it." Lotze's *Microcosmus*, ii., 168.

“ Worlds on worlds are rolling ever  
From creation to decay,  
Like the bubbles on a river,  
Sparkling, bursting, borne away.”<sup>1</sup>

But to the philosopher belongs the high prerogative of determining in advance the world we can have. He deals with necessities, with idealities, with possibilities, and he insists that the best way to know what kind of a world we have is to find out first what kind of a world we *can* have. He tells us that mere crude actuality is only an incident in the eternal existence of the ideal. For Plato, Plato's ideas alone are real. Hegel's dictum is a proverb, “The real is the rational and the rational is the real.” It is more philosophical to look within and see what the rational is, and then infer the real, than it is to look first without to see what the real is, and then infer the rational. The seat of reason is the soul of man, and if we would know a world that is reason-made and reason-ruled, then know thyself, O Man! If man is the microcosm, the center, and the universe his periphery, then surely self-knowledge is cosmical knowledge at first hand. If in him lies “the key of nature,” if he is “the type and theme of history,” if indeed he is

<sup>1</sup> Shelley's *Hellas*.

in any sense "the creator" of that history,<sup>1</sup> then why should he ever lift his eye from the grand spectacle within himself to look out upon the face of nature or up to the stellar hosts? Accordingly, speculative philosophy has often been impatient of mere fact. Hegel's diary does not refer to a single historical event.<sup>2</sup> Coleridge was nothing if not philosopher, and yet that great man, who never knew his own age, says, in his Table Talk: "I have read all the famous histories . . . but I did so for the story itself as a story. The only thing interesting to me was the principles to be evolved from, and illustrated by, the facts. After I had gotten the principles, I pretty generally left the facts to take care of themselves."<sup>3</sup>

This *a priori* method of dealing with the world is legitimate to a degree, but perilous beyond that. The loudest calls of our age are for the fact. We treat metaphysical world-builders as harmless imbeciles; let them play on if they enjoy the game. The worlds they make are not even straw or paper worlds; they are merest cas-

<sup>1</sup> Schade's *Philosophy of History*, pp. 65, 66.

<sup>2</sup> See Royce's *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> Coleridge's *Works*, vol. vi., pp. 401, 402. In his *Biographia Literaria*, also, he says, "History, and particularly facts, lost all interest in my mind." Vol. iii., p. 152.

bles in the air. They are toy worlds, playthings of the creative fancy, brilliant bubbles bursting as they are borne away.

However, philosophy is often content with only criticising the world it finds instead of creating a world of its own. In this case the weight of responsibility rests upon the Creator and the critic has a freer hand. Besides, the secret misgiving that we are hardly equal to the task of world-creating, *de novo*, need not hamper us in the more congenial task of world-criticising. And here the genius of speculation has held high carnival. It is said that Alphonso, the pedantic king of Castile, regretted that he was not present when the world was made, for he believed that he could have given some timely and much needed advice; and, though they may not be so frank as he, there be many who have followed in the learned Alphonso's train. Competent world-criticism has for its first condition that the critic shall know what the function and purpose of a world are. Leibnitz argued that if God was to create a world at all, it must be a finite and, therefore, *ipso facto*, an imperfect world; accordingly, the divine choice was between no world and an imperfect world. In the interest of theodicy, he insisted that of all conceivable

worlds, God made the best world possible. On the other hand, Schopenhauer declares, "The existence of the world is itself the greatest evil of all, and underlies all other evil, and similarly the root-evil for each individual is his having come into the world."<sup>1</sup> Hartmann regards creation itself as "an inexpressible crime." This blasphemous indictment of the Creator for creating a world at all, is the lowest despairing growl of a pessimistic philosophy. And so, ranging from Leibnitz's optimism to Schopenhauer's pessimism, men have passed judgment upon the world-order, and, fixing every judgment and giving tone to its utterance, is their conception of the God who has set up this world-system and keeps it going. The rational apriorist, guided by his logic, creates his world his way, because it must be so; the ethical apriorist, guided by his conscience, creates his world his way, because it ought to be so; the æsthetic apriorist, guided by his taste, creates his world his way, because he feels that it is the only proper thing that it should be so. The first conceives of God as the creative Reason; the second, as the creative Righteousness; the third as the creative Beauty. If these three creators were infinitely able to project their ideals

<sup>1</sup> See Prof. Orr's *Christian View of God and the World*, p. 204.

into reality, we should then have three worlds which, merging into one, would embody for us the worthy philosophical ideal of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful.

But sad to say, the wrinkled old world which has so long preëmpted the ground, seems to disappoint these fine ideals. The actual does not tally with the ideal. I believe I can think of two reasons why there should be this disappointment.

The first is that, although God is infinitely rational, and therefore His world is in some sort a reflex of His reason, yet He was infinitely free in its origination and in the ordering of its plan. It is a fallacy to argue that because a man is wise, therefore, when a choice is presented to him between two courses, the one wise and the other foolish, his decision (for the wise, of course), being impelled by his wisdom, can be reduced to a metaphysical necessity. That were to make freedom no longer free when its possessor is become wise. There is a rationalism which is a polite name for fatalism. Because, if He made a world at all, God could make no other than a rational world; then the world which He did make, because it is a rational world, is the only world He could have made. Jevons says, "Out of the infinitely infinite choices which were open

to the Creator, that one choice must have been made [sic] which has yielded the universe as it now exists.”<sup>1</sup> What shall we say of a choice which “must have been made”? That were a wisdom which would rob its Almighty Possessor of his freedom. Of a score of godly, wise preachers, one preaches a sermon upon a certain theme. Because the other nineteen are equally wise and godly, are we to say that they can sit in their studies and read off from their own minds the very same sermon which their good brother has actually preached? Is it not more reasonable to suppose that if all the score should preach upon that same theme, they would be vastly different sermons, wise and godly, from as many wise and godly men? Because the Creator is wise, is He therefore not free? This world is not the only possible product of God’s creative rationality. If there is but one line along which reason in God and man can proceed, then individuality is sacrificed, freedom is an empty name, and the Many are forever merged into the One. The law of gravitation is rational; but who will say that the concrete law which science finds operative in the existing cosmos is the only rational form which

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Prof. Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. i., p. 207.

that law could have assumed? Who can tell us that there could not have been a world-order in which two bodies should attract each other directly as the squares of their masses and inversely as the cubes of the distances? If it be said that such a change would throw the whole world out of gear, we answer that it would be another world which would have that law, and that *that* world would be thrown out of gear by the law that *we* have.

This is why human reason cannot predict the world we have. This is why the only way to know what kind of a world we have is to go out and see the world for ourselves.

Were it the proper time to do so, we should be glad to show how this thought bears upon the doctrine of miracle. The objection is urged that the laws of nature are the laws of reason, and that for God to suspend the laws of reason, is impossible, seeing that He is Himself infinitely rational. But we must bear in mind that, while the laws of nature are reasonable, they are not *the* laws of reason in the sense that they exclusively contain and embody everything that could be reasonable and right. Reason is larger than this little world of ours, and God is greater than the world which He has made.

The other reason for the disappointment is in the fact that the world-critic is not equal to his task. Helmholtz criticised the eye as an imperfect mechanism; but Helmholtz forgot that it was designed to be not a mechanism, but an eye. If you say that the teleology of special organs is an obsolete notion, we waive the question, though reserving all rights, while we go on to say that, so much the more, the entire world was made, not simply under some speculative philosopher's inspection, but to do the useful work and to accomplish the practical purposes of a world. The abstract geometrician files his protests, but there is much reason to believe that the geometer's world would less successfully serve the purposes of a world than the world we have. We are assured, on highest authority, that pure mechanics have to do with ideas not facts, with calculations not measurements. Professor Ward says: "The most elementary conditions fail us. We have no fixed points, no fixed directions, no accurate timekeeper, not one *demonstrably* constant property of a physical description."<sup>1</sup>

We need not go far afield for these disappointments. The mathematician finds discrepancies in the world; the rationalist finds folly; the æsthet-

<sup>1</sup> *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. i., p. 139.

icist finds ugliness; and the moralist finds sin. Unless the critic abandon his ideals, he will surely find something to condemn. Who is to blame, how it came about, what it all means, and how it is to end—these are questions which our volunteer world-critic must be able to answer before he can pose as a final authority upon cosmical creations and careers. If it be too much to say that only another God could pass competent judgment upon the world-work of the One Living God, it is not too much to say that only when a man has comprehended the final purpose of creation; only when he has compassed all the elements, material and moral, which are needful to the fulfillment of that purpose; only when he shall have mastered the whole complex network of forces that are struggling toward some goal of which they themselves are faintly conscious, and is able to read both the past and the future in the cross section of the present moment, all bending toward that

“One far-off divine event  
Toward which the whole creation moves”—

not until then is mortal man entitled to sit in supreme judgment upon the *Weltanschauung* of his Creator-God.

The other of the two possible modes of approach is the empirical, the inductive. It knows the cosmos by going out to see it. It passes by subjective ideals and prototypes and presents itself, as a *tabula rasa*, to let the world write out upon it the story of its autobiography. This, as we have seen, calls itself Science, and all of science. It is scientific, to be sure, unless, forsooth, it become unscientific in calling itself all of science. This method needs no advocates to-day. Empiricism is having its innings, and it must be said that, with all that has been achieved, it is little wonder that it sometimes becomes patronizing and proud. For the truth is that, noble as may be its superstructures, it must go away from home for its secure foundations. Science, without its presuppositions, is not science but nonsense. Empiricism is all right in its place, but it must go to school to metaphysics before it can be safely licensed to do business. There is no quack more dangerous than the scientific man who repudiates the laws of cognition and reasoning and thought which, *nolens volens*, he must employ, correctly or incorrectly, in all his doings. It is always a pity to see a man of science sullenly snapping back at pure philosophy. Empiricism, standing alone, is either bashful or hypocritical agnosticism, and the

only condition of its standing at all is its inconsistency with its own contentions.

One of the first presuppositions of empirical science is our familiar postulate of the unity and rationality of the cosmos. Cosmical science is possible because it is an orderly cosmos which it investigates. The world of science is an *intelligibilis mundus*; it is the transcript of a rational thought, the product of a rational will. This thought or will is not itself the origin of the world. Thought, feeling, and will, are not agencies, *per se*; they are faculties of an agent and that faculty-possessing agent is, *ipso facto*, a person. The eternal Reason of which the philosophers make so much is not a substantive, it is an adjective. There is no free will in man; it is the man himself who is free and his will is just the man himself in the act or attitude of choosing. The *ego-volens*, the *ego-intelligens*, the *ego-sentiens*, is the only agent in the whole account. We hypostatize the Reason or the Will or the Love of God and then bow down and worship the fictitious deity which our own false thinking has made, while, alas, we too often forget the only true God who, as a substantive, is characterized by these attributes of infinite reason,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The theological term is *wisdom*, for many reasons, the more discriminative word.

and infinite power and infinite love. So common is this way of naming God from one of His attributes that most careful writers adopt it; as, for instance, the late Prof. Harris, of Yale, says, "Thus the existence of God, *the absolute Reason*, is the ultimate ground of the possibility of scientific knowledge."<sup>1</sup> A little later he quotes these words from President Porter, showing that his meaning is right though his language, literally construed, is inaccurate: "In other words, Induction rests on the assumption, as it demands for its ground that *a personal Deity* exists."<sup>2</sup>

Science means intellectual commerce with the divine mind by means of the thought-freighted symbols which constitute the orderly world that is the object of scientific study. It is the meeting place of mind with mind, the trysting place of the divine thought with the human. The astronomer is threading the paths of mind in space; the geologist is tracing its tracks in earth-measured time; in beauty of form, in nicety of adjustment, in adaptation to evident ends, and in the interpretable completeness of many an organic unit which is at once complete in itself and a small part of a vastly greater whole, the exploring

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophical Basis of Theism*, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> *The Human Intellect*, sec. 497.

student reverently recognizes that he is but following where a Perfect Intelligence has blazed the way. As Professor Knight has clearly said, "If all the life and movement of the universe can be shown to be an apocalypse of Mind, if the forces that work beyond us can be proved to be kindred to those that are within ourselves; if, in other words, Nature and Man are fundamentally akin, and between them there is a radical affinity, then for us the foundations of Theism are laid."<sup>1</sup>

It must not be supposed that this implicit theism of cosmical science is one whit the less positive because some men of science have denied it. A man brands himself an intellectual enigma who dogmatically declares himself an agnostic. Science is built on the assumption of a Person who has created the world; it is an "apocalypse of mind," otherwise, mind could not read or know it; it is, in the language of theology, a *naturalis revelatio*, and that which is revealed is the glory, the power and the divinity of the Creator.<sup>2</sup>

This kinship between the creative and the scientific intelligence is the inspiration to an ever-enlarging knowledge of the cosmos. It is as-

<sup>1</sup> *Aspects of Theism*, by Wm. Knight, LL.D., pp. 11, 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Psalm 19: 1*; *Romans 1: 19, 20*.

sumed that what lies beyond the circumference of our actual knowledge is of a part with what we already know. Science has no possible business with the word "Unknowable"; it is not in its legitimate vocabulary. Science can never assert nor assume that the unknown is unknowable; indeed, it is forever assuming that the unknown is knowable. What is, is essentially knowable. The astronomer assumes that the method of thought is the same with God and himself, and so he figures out where an undiscovered planet *ought to be*; he straightway turns his glass upon the spot and, lo, here it is. As the spectroscope has revealed the chemical kinship of the earth and the starry worlds, so all creation discloses the intellectual kinship between the Creator and His intelligent creatures. Science holds so pertinaciously to the rationality of nature that it sometimes ventures upon hypotheses—not too strongly supported—with no other purpose than to make the world intelligible. Professor Ward tells us that it is with this purpose alone that science assumes the existence of the luminiferous ether which, by the bye Lord Kelvin says, in his own italics, is the only substance in dynamics whose *reality and substantiality we are confident of*," and that if the Newtonian laws should ever

be denied, this hypothesis would have to give way to another which might show "a simpler and more complete unification of optical and electrical phenomena."<sup>1</sup>

And this calls to mind how much of what is given to us as scientific certainty is, in reality, very much of the nature of the guesswork of intelligent ignorance. There is as much ignorance to-day as there ever was concerning the essential constitution of matter and the forces by which that matter is controlled. The much-talked-of atom is invisible, ideal, purely hypothetical; Du Bois-Reymond says it is not only incomprehensible but also "inconceivable."<sup>2</sup> In the Most Holy Place of science there ever stands the sacred altar of Faith.

The truth is that in every right knowing of the cosmos there is a harmonious blending of the inductive and the deductive. They are both as old as human thinking. Neither can say to the other, "I have no need of thee." Lord Bacon was no more the author of the one than was Plato of the other. It is the same world which both see; only,

<sup>1</sup> See *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. i., pp. 113, 115, 116, 117.

<sup>2</sup> See Lange's *History of Materialism*, vol. ii., p. 309; Thomas's translation.

the view of each is a corrective of that of the other. As Kant has taught us, the concept is empty without perception and perception is blind without the concept. The philosopher tells us, in the abstract, how to think, and the scientist gives us, in the concrete, something to think about. A logical world might have no actuality, but, Mr. Bradley to the contrary notwithstanding, we do not believe that an actual world could be wholly illogical. At any rate, an illogical world would be unintelligible and, therefore, unscientific; the scientist could make no headway in it. It would be hopeless promiscuity, utter unintelligibility, not cosmos but chaos.

Our purpose in all this is not that of idle speculation. We posit God in our conception of the world, and then we go on to read His thought as bodied forth therein. He is wise, and we look to His world for marks of His wisdom; He is rational, and we look into the world for rationality; He is holy, and we look to His works for proofs of His holiness. Some world-critics place their emphasis here; others, there. Mr. Spencer posits infinite power and sees in the cosmos everywhere manifestations of that power; but Mr. Spencer has never shown why his favorite conception of power should be thus chosen out to

the prejudice of others among the attributes of God. Why not just as well begin with rationality or righteousness or benevolence and then proceed to trace out the development of reason or holiness or love in the career of the cosmos? Certainly he cannot reply that the conception of power is less anthropomorphic than that of any of these; indeed, were it not special pleading, we should insist that, in the common categories of a refined ethical sense, the concept of power is less ennobling, less honoring, than is that of wisdom, or goodness, or love. I confess that this were special pleading, because any conception or attribution which we men may essay concerning the Infinite God is truly anthropomorphic. We are far less afraid of the bogy of anthropomorphism than Mr. Spencer is; he is so scared away from any man-conceived God, that he prefers no conceivable God whatever.

Mr. John Fiske is a philosopher of the Spencerian family, though of a much improved variety, and in his *Outlines of the Cosmic Philosophy*, he adheres in the main to the lines of his master's *Synthetic Philosophy*. His later religio-philosophical writings, however, are very much of the nature of palinodes, and the Fiske of to-day<sup>1</sup> is

<sup>1</sup>This was written before Mr. Fiske's death.

scarcely recognizable from the pages of the *Cosmic Philosophy*. We now only intend to challenge Mr. Fiske's right to the name which he selected for his philosophy. He tells us that he carefully selected it, in the face of certain objections from Mr. Spencer.<sup>1</sup> With Mr. Spencer, he clings to force as the only clue in tracing the world-development. But the word "Cosmic" is too heavily loaded to fit the bare postulate of the agnostic. No man who denies or ignores every other attribute in the originator of the world has any right to characterize the world as orderly, intelligible, cosmical. If his world is cosmical, it is because he has gone out into the world and found it so; accordingly, his system is too pretentiously named; it is cosmical science or it is nothing. Even yet, Mr. Fiske begrudges the ordering attribute to the Creator, or the author, or the unknown origin of the world. At the best, we have to write into our world-creed what we began by explicitly taking out. That creed, at the first stripped of all theistically cosmical presuppositions, grows, in the course of our world-inquiries, into the faith that a world, born in a mist, nurtured in the shadows, maturing under the tender mercies of chance, a neglected, vagrant, self-evolving world,—a spray

<sup>1</sup> *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy*, vol. i., p. ix.

from the fountain of infinite force, swinging for a world-age between two cycles of utter disintegration—that such a world has managed somehow to gather up into itself such elements of intelligence and order and design as induced Mr. Fiske in outlining its course, to call the prodigious undertaking, the “Cosmic Philosophy.” Verily, agnosticism has its heavy draughts upon the credulity of men. A miracle too great for an infinite God is wrought by the poor age-tossed nebulous world, whose autobiography we would fain trace. Here is a fine bit of world-creating, indeed. Who will say that such a philosophy, however much it may abhor them at the start, has not somewhere smuggled in assumptions that are most astonishing and most significant? We question the right to regard the world as a cosmos, except we regard the source of the world as a Logos. It is an imaginary line which divides the moral from the rational, either in heaven or on earth. Speaking most broadly, if the world is unrational, it is irrational; and if it is unmoral, it is immoral. The cosmos is uncosmical if it be not teleological; it is immoral if it have not a worthy end. The cosmos swings between its remote ἀρχή and its far-off τέλος; if it sprang from the creative fiat of a God of truth and reason and love, then its aim

must be harmonious with its origin, its goal must be akin to its initiating impulse.

Not that we would force upon the world a moral character by the *mandamus* of a metaphysical "must"; not that we would read into it excellences and amiabilities which an open-minded study of it would fail to disclose; but regarding it as we find it, as the product of creative wisdom and holiness and love, we have a right to scan its biography, to read its revelations, to interpret its movements, and to cross-question its unyielding mysteries, modestly, searchingly, reverently, in the full light of its accredited credentials, in order to learn for ourselves whether this scarred and slandered old world is fierce with cruelty, dark with sorrow, breeding only the skepticism of despair; or whether there is a high over-arching plan, wise, good, loving, and true, which, under the patient, beneficent hand of the Infinite and Eternal God, is slowly working itself out into a final, glorious consummation. Is the voice of Browning's Pippa the voice of reason or of superstition, of a chastened and far-sighted faith or of childhood's flippant and rose-tinted fancy as, in passing, she sweetly sings,

"God's in His heaven—  
All's right with the world"?



LECTURE III

THE EMPIRICAL SURPRISE



## LECTURE III

### THE EMPIRICAL SURPRISE

IT needs no expert in science to discover very soon that the beautiful worlds which poets have framed and which speculative philosophers have been spinning are not exactly the sort of world with which we come into constant contact in the wear and tear of life. Not that these show-case worlds are so much at fault; not that they suffer so much when compared with the one world which has somehow managed to work itself out into crude actuality; rather, shall we say it, the discrepancy between the ideal and the real is due to the shortcomings and misdemeanors of the world we are in. This is the great scandal of philosophy; this is the stumbling-block of the fine-fibered poet; this is "The Empirical Surprise."<sup>1</sup> It is the *bête noir* of every attempt at theodicy, and it is the barrier that stands in the way of many a thoughtful man's devout faith in a

<sup>1</sup> I had thought myself indebted to Dr. Julius Müller's *Christian Doctrine of Sin* for this happy phrase; but in looking carefully for it, I have failed to find it there.

God that is both infinitely holy and infinitely powerful.

The attempt has often been made to dodge this issue, but never with success. It was Browning's *a priori* thought, and not Pippa's discovery, that since God is in heaven, all's well with the world. The awful scenes of crime and cruelty and injustice which are enacted in every age and country, have made men cynical and they have answered with a sneer that God must be taking His rest in some distant heaven, and has left this poor orphaned world uncared-for, the bruised and bleeding victim of every hard chance and hellish fate. If men will cease their spider-like world-spinning and walk out into the field or forest, into the street or the exchange, they will find on every hand rivalry, struggle, hatred, war, sorrow, suffering, tears, groans, death. If they would quietly dissolve the scene into a panorama of mere illusion, they will rightly be written down as silly or insane. If they would say, with Leibnitz, that it is the best world possible, the question comes back at once, "Why then should there be any world at all?" If they would convince us that all this is needful for the outworking of a great world-plan, that the individual must die that the race may live, that the *vir* must

fade that the *homo* may thrive, then the answer is not long in coming that the fine theory draws too largely upon what we do not know and that if the things we see are a fair sample of the unseen, then there is little solid warrant for the pretentious fancy. There is no blinking or shirking this stupendous difficulty. Every thoughtful man has faced it; every religious system must recognize it; every honest thinker admits it.

It matters not from what quarter we may hail, we find the same dark problem at the center. The fine ideals of our dreaming are met with a broken tally in the fact. Rational theorists find vast fields of sheer waste, long eras of arrested development, generations which, measured by the standards of their own maturity, never come to be more than mere abortions. Æsthetic theorists look about them and behold ugliness on every side, alongside of beauty; they see horrors and monstrosities in the fields of nature; they see flaws in the landscape, blemishes in the body, and defects in the lives and deeds of men. Benevolent theorists find suffering races ground down under the heel of the oppressor, organic nature "red in tooth and claw," and the very elements of earth and air and sea seeming to revel in the sighs and groans of the calamities which they

ruthlessly and pitilessly inflict. It is a strange world, a deranged world, a disordered world; benevolence shadowed by malevolence, beauty hounded by horrors, happiness haunted by suffering, health dogged by disease, life threatened and finally swallowed up by death.

Many have turned away heart-sick and have abandoned every hope of a rational solution. They have said, "There is no solution, there is no clue, there is no God." They have looked for light, but they say they have found none. They have been tempted to say, with Dryden,

"Yet sure the gods are good; I would think so,  
If they would give me leave;  
But virtue in distress, and vice in triumph,  
Make atheists of mankind."

But these, dark as they are, are but the penumbra of the real problem. Waste, ugliness, even physical pain and mental anguish, do not complete the mystery. Waste, rightly read, may be compatible with wisdom; what men call ugly may be beautiful when seen with a truer eye and from a higher point of view; even suffering for a time may be for the bettering of the sufferer or in order that, if not they themselves, then other

"Men may rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things."

The *centrum* of the dark spot in the field of human wisdom is in the fact of *Sin*. What we call natural evil is hard enough, but the real enigma is in moral evil. Indeed, the chief difficulty in the former is due to its organic connection with the latter. Professor Orr may well say: "Take away from the history of humanity all the evils which have come on man through his own folly, sin, and vice; through the follies and vices of society; through tyranny, misgovernment, and oppression; through the cruelty and inhumanity of man to man, and how vast a portion of the problem of evil would already be solved! What myriads of lives have been sacrificed at the shrines of Bacchus and of lust; what untold misery has been inflicted on the race, to gratify the unscrupulous ambitions of ruthless conquerors; what tears and groans have sprung from the institution of slavery; what wretchedness is hourly inflicted on human hearts by domestic tyranny, private selfishness, the preying of the strong upon the weak, dishonesty and chicanery in society! . . . If all the suffering and sorrow which follow directly or indirectly from human sin could be abstracted, what a happy world, after all, this would be!"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 218.

We do not deny, nor does Professor Orr, that, at any rate so far as we can see, there are natural evils in the world independent of sin; but, at the very worst, they are a small part of the problem that confronts us. Dr. Martineau says that judging from "the threnodies of the modern pessimist," it is not so much the sin as the misery of the world by which men are impressed. This, however, is to magnify the sad effect to the hiding of its cause and, viewing the problem at the wrong angle, to look in the wrong direction for promised relief. The real issue cannot be more clearly or correctly stated than Dr. Martineau has himself stated it: "The question which presses upon us is not, 'How does it consist with the *benevolence* of God to admit so much morally incurred *pain*?' but 'How does it consist with the *holiness* of God to admit so much *unholiness* in human life?'"<sup>1</sup>

This fact of sin has spoiled countless pretty theories of the world; it has wrecked a host of bric-a-brac schemes of history; and it has barred the way against any smooth, ethical interpretation of the cosmos. How moral evil can have a place in the world of a holy God is the *crux philosophorum et theologorum*. It is so difficult

<sup>1</sup> *A Study of Religion*, vol. ii., p. 100. Italics his.

because it involves so much more than its apparent self. If there is an "antinomy" anywhere, it is this. Here is the question of the Absolute and the Individual, of the One and the Many, of Necessity and Liberty, of Predestination and Freedom, of Good and Evil. I am persuaded that all the dark mysteries of our world center in this impenetrable focus, this inextricable maze.

Two important considerations must never be overlooked.

First, we must, through it all, hold that God is still God. Mr. J. S. Mill attempted a solution by virtually surrendering theism. His position was about equivalent to a revival of Persian Dualism; he would excuse God by holding, in effect, that He does the best He can. "If the maker of the world *can* all that he will, he wills misery; and there is no escape from the conclusion."<sup>1</sup> While he is disposed to admit that "there is a preponderance of evidence that the Creator desired the pleasure of his creatures,"<sup>2</sup> yet whatever beneficence there is is "armed only with limited power."<sup>3</sup> While we may accord great respect to the honesty of pur-

<sup>1</sup> *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

pose of Mr. Mill's skeptical spirit, as shown in these posthumous essays, yet his view-point is open to two serious criticisms. In the first place, he did not rise to the higher levels of his problem; he brooded rather over the miseries than over the vices of men. Indeed, with his positivistic philosophy and his utilitarian ethical theory, he could hardly do otherwise. In the second place, it was due to his philosophy that his theodicy turned upon the Creator's attribute of *power*. He held that "every indication of Design in the cosmos is so much evidence against the omnipotence of the Designer."<sup>1</sup> Thus he played the divine reason against the divine power; only a world of chaos, by this reasoning, could prove a Creator who is divine. Power alone is divine, and the more lawless it is, the more divine. To "brute force" we offer our petitions, and Mr. Browning has voiced our prayer for us:—

"Power, speak!  
 Stop change, avert decay!  
 Fix life fast, banish death,  
 Eclipse from the star bid stay,  
 Abridge of no moment's breath  
 One creature! Hence, Night, hail, Day!"<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Mill insists that either the goodness or the

<sup>1</sup> *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> *Reverie*.

power of God is limited. "If we are not obliged to believe the animal creation to be the work of a demon, it is because we need not suppose it to have been made by a Being of infinite power."<sup>1</sup>

If speculative world-making needs the corrective of sane empiricism, it is more necessary that empirical world-finding should have the tonic of a healthy intuitionism. Mr. Mill lacked this tonic. The theism of cosmical research needs the fine perceptions of the moral sense in order that it may not lose itself in the bewildering labyrinths which it is sure to encounter; and that, with a larger view and a faith that conquers many a mystery, it may sing, with Whittier:—

"I see the wrong that round me lies,  
I feel the guilt within ;  
I hear, with groan and travail-cries,  
The world confess its sin.

"Yet, in the maddening maze of things,  
And tossed by storm and flood,  
To one fixed stake my spirit clings ;  
I know that God is good."<sup>2</sup>

The other important consideration to be mentioned is, that if we must guard theism against compromise, we must guard the doctrine of *Sin* not one whit less. We must yield nothing here

<sup>1</sup> *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 58.    <sup>2</sup> *The Eternal Goodness*.

for the sake of plausible theoretical reconciliations. Not in the least degree can we afford to invalidate the unqualified testimony of consciousness. It is of the very essence of sin that it is what ought not to be. It is Schelling's "das Nicht-sein-sollende." To give the lie to the moral sense in order to yield to rational exactions, is to lose on one side what we gain on the other; it is robbing Peter to pay Paul. The besetting sin of modern thought is the denying of the sinfulness of sin. To reconcile God and sin, Mill stripped God of His godlikeness; but present-day pantheism would rob sin of its sinfulness. It is a necessary fact or factor in the constitution of things, or it is a normal stage in the development of a moral being. There is no strength without struggle, no victory without striving.

"Man

Must err till he has ceased to struggle."

As there can be no struggle without a resisting force, so sin has its necessary place in the development of virtue, in the individual and in the race. If evil be not, as Emerson thinks, "good in the making," it is at least needful to the making of good; and we believe that it is only sophistry that can show the difference. Evolutionary the-

ories of human history have very grave difficulty in holding to the essential blameworthiness of sin. The prevalent color-blindness to the distinction between metaphysical evil and moral wrong abounds in all popular literature. Evil is no longer evil because, without evil, good could not be good. Shelley tells us that

“Private injustice may be general good,”

reminding us of Pope's line,

“All partial evil, universal good ;”

both borrowing from Schelling's notion that “all evil vanishes when seen *sub specie æternitatis*.”

The great theological poet of modern England has voiced this sin-dissolving optimism, and, with all the charms of his genius, has preached the delusive error to an all-too-willing age. Good Bishop Blougram has his good word for “the blessed evil,” the *felix culpa*, strangely enough, because it helps to hide God :—

“Some think, Creation's meant to show him forth ;  
I say it's meant to hide him all it can,  
And that's what all the blessed evil's for.”<sup>1</sup>

Again, we are told,

<sup>1</sup> *Bishop Blougram's Apology.*

“Fair and good are products  
Of foul and evil; one must bring to pass the other,  
Just as poisons grow drugs.”<sup>1</sup>

In any case, we are to “concede a use to evil,”  
for it is

“The scheme by which through ignorance  
Good labors to exist.”<sup>2</sup>

If Mr. Browning's optimism is too outspoken,  
many will be disposed to turn to Tennyson, and  
will let him sing their *wish* as, falling into his  
all-too-frequent agnostic mood, he warbles on,

“O yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill,  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood.  
. . . . .

“Behold we know not anything;  
I can but trust that good shall fall  
At last—far off—at last, to all,  
And every winter change to spring.”<sup>3</sup>

We are bound to dismiss any theory that would  
make everything ethical—even “sins of will”—  
nothing more than what Chauncey White would  
call “weather.” It sinks the moral in the natural,  
the ethical in the cosmical. Its only defense of  
doing evil that good may come is that there is no

<sup>1</sup> *Pietro of Abano.*

<sup>2</sup> *Sordello.*

<sup>3</sup> *In Memoriam.*

radical difference between them. It removes the difficulty we are considering by denying that sin is sin. It solves the problem by dissolving it. We abhor any philosophy which openly or covertly denies the truth that the sin which our moral consciousness unqualifiedly condemns is that which *ought not to be*.

But, it will be said—and truly—that all this only accentuates the difficulty instead of removing it or relieving it. Suppose we now venture forward timidly toward the mouth of the dark cave, taking care that, whether we really explore anything or not, we shall keep to safe and solid ground. Let us proceed by means of a number of consecutive propositions which we cannot take time to prove, however it might be with us if we had the time. That was a very suggestive remark of Renan, in discussing this very subject in connection with the Book of Job, to the effect that “the genius of the poem lies in the indecision of the author on a subject where indecision is the truth.”<sup>1</sup> If it is genius to be timid with this problem, then there is no middle ground between being a genius and being a fool. But, on the other hand, it must not be inferred that

<sup>1</sup> *History of the People of Israel*; quoted by Prof. Bruce in *The Moral Order of the World*, p. 233.

all unsupported propositions are products of a hasty or dogmatic spirit.

1. We hold it to be indisputable that if God is good, the world which He has made is good also. We do not stop now to consider in what sense moral good is predicable alike of the Creator and the creature, though that sense is much affected according as the creature is personal or impersonal. A holy God is not the author of moral evil. The Reformed theology has often been charged with this teaching, but it has never hesitated, in explicit terms, to disavow it.<sup>1</sup> The thoughtful and scholarly Cyprian, baffled by the puzzling query,

“ In what manner  
Can supreme goodness be consistent with  
The passions of humanity ?”

reasoned his way out so far to a right conclusion, when he said,

“ Such awe is due to the high name of God  
That ill should never be imputed. Then,  
Examining the question with more care,  
It follows, that the gods should always will  
That which is best, were they supremely good.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, chap. iii., sec. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Shelley's *Scenes from the "Magico Prodigioso" of Calderon*.

No Christian theodicy can start out with less than this.

2. There is sin in the world. President Edwards was certainly right in insisting upon the difference between the cause and the nature of virtue and vice, and in urging that the essence lies in their nature, whatever their origin.<sup>1</sup> Any theory that denies sin, whether among the rose-tinted sentiments of poetry; or in the postulates of an all-embracing cosmical evolution; or in an idealistic philosophy of history which is only an *alias* for a more or less disguised pantheism,—any such theory falsifies the most immediate and unmistakable testimony of man's moral consciousness, and is therefore dismissed as false.

3. It is perfectly evident, then, that the solution sought must lie somewhere in the region of the independence of the creature. Dr. Julius Müller says, "The only way of avoiding this circle manifestly is to discover and point out, in the nature of the creature in whom evil is, such a principle of independence as may account for and originate a new beginning; so that thus a limit may be established, beyond which the origin of sin must not be looked for."<sup>2</sup> Here we are reminded of

<sup>1</sup> *Freedom of the Will*, part iv., sec. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *On the Christian Doctrine of Sin*, vol. ii., p. 2.

Professor Jowett's remark that the notion of first and second coöperating causes, having first been broached in Plato's *Timæus*, has long been "a great peacemaker between theology and science."<sup>1</sup> This doctrine of the efficiency of second causes, though they are derivative and somehow dependent, is not without vigorous challenge, but it holds its own in sound philosophy to-day. We believe not in the First Cause only, for that is pantheism; then God is the author of sin, God is all that is, and our own consciousness of the *ego* within us is a delusion and a lie. We believe not in second causes only, for that is deism with all its effectually exploded fallacies.

We are not interested just now to argue for the efficiency of second causes in the sub-human or in the inanimate and impersonal world. But if the human personality, with its distinguishing prerogatives of self-consciousness and self-determination, is not an *alter ego* to God; if we may not "thou" God, just as He in addressing us "thous" us, then again our innermost consciousness is convicted of breaking the ninth commandment, and we are wholly at sea. Sin—the essence of our problem—is primarily personal in its nature and in its origin, and, therefore, in ferreting

<sup>1</sup> Jowett's *Plato*, vol. iii., p. 417.

out this principle of independence, it suffices that we maintain the self-initiating efficiency of the human personality.

4. Man, the person, is free. This is a corollary from, or rather it is an implicate of, his faculty of self-determination. A choice that is not free is no more a choice than is a circle that is rectangular a circle. It is a *contradictio in adjectivo*. That the person is free is the testimony of his consciousness, but differences arise in reading the meaning of that freedom. It is as easy to overload the testimony of consciousness in this matter as to rob it of its due weight; and it has been as often done. Positively, consciousness tells us that we are free in choosing *as we choose*. Three mistakes are easily made as to the negative testimony of consciousness.

(I.) It does not tell us that we are free *to do* what we choose to do. Dr. Whedon does well to bring out the distinction between what he calls volitional freedom, having regard to the volition itself, and voluntary freedom, having regard to the "post-volitional act."<sup>1</sup> This seems a simple and obvious distinction, and yet students in the lecture room are constantly

<sup>1</sup> *The Freedom of the Will*, by D. D. Whedon, D. D., pp. 25, 26.

overlooking it. No writer makes it clearer than does the ever-lucid Calvin, when he says: "For in the dispute concerning free will, the question is not, whether a man, notwithstanding external impediments, can perform and execute whatever he may have resolved in his mind; but whether in every case his judgment exerts freedom of choice, and his will freedom of inclination. If men possess both these, then Attilius Regulus, when confined to the small extent of a cask stuck round with nails, will possess as much free will as Augustus Cæsar, when governing a great part of the world with his nod."<sup>1</sup> We are always free in choosing, otherwise we do not choose; but we are often constrained from "performing the doing of it." It is not freedom in doing, but freedom in choosing, to which our consciousness bears its witness. The spirit of the martyr in his dungeon or at the stake is imperially, triumphantly free.

(II.) Consciousness does not testify at all concerning a predetermined plan—if there be such—of which the consciously free choice is a harmonious and contributory part. Such an all-inclusive plan simply lies above or beyond the tract of the consciousness of the *ego-volens*. Concerning it, then, consciousness is silent, just because it is in-

<sup>1</sup> *Institutes*, Book II., chap. iv.

cognizant. It is preoccupied with the work of inspecting the mental content of the choosing self. If the consideration of such a plan has entered into the choice determinatively, it is because such a great plan has previously been contemplated and has then coördinated with all the other innumerable experiences and reflections which are, at the critical moment of the volition, cognized by the consciousness and capitalized in the specific act of self-determination. In no way more direct than this can such a larger plan enter into the particular choice. And the larger, the more comprehensive, the more complex such a world-plan is, the less able is the eye of consciousness to detect it as an influential factor in the mind of the chooser. Judas Iscariot was working out a high plan by his diabolical choice, but the plan was far away from his consciousness when he chose. Paul, at Athens, was working out a plan, and, although he doubtless often contemplated it without knowing very definitely what it was, yet however much the thought of it entered as a permanent and controlling factor into his life, while speaking on Mars' Hill, his consciousness was wholly busied in the inspection of the ceaseless flow of free volitions and accordant vocal actions of which he was then the author. My little girl

may refuse to come across the room to me until I hold out my watch for the express purpose in *my* mind of attracting her to me; she is conscious of choosing to come to me, but my purpose, my plan, lies outside the sphere of her consciousness. A man's consciousness of freedom in choosing gives no testimony whatever concerning plans and purposes not his own, which may include his choosings as necessary parts. I am saying nothing now about metaphysical necessity, or predestination, or overruling providence; I am only saying that the validity of the testimony of consciousness is fully safeguarded if the chooser is spontaneous, unrestrained, individually himself, in his choice.

(III.) Consciousness, in witnessing to our freedom in choosing, does not witness to our power to choose other than we do choose any more than it witnesses to our power to do other than we do do. Consciousness is the faculty of self-knowledge; it takes cognizance of what we do and of what we are. In choosing, the choice which consciousness observes is the actual self in the concrete act of choosing. All of the actual self is, to the inspecting conscious self for that microscopic instant of inspection, a chooser. The subject-self sees the object-self, and, while

it is the same self withal, the self that is seen is wholly occupied with the business of choosing which it just then has in hand. The self-knowing self does not see a part of the *ego* choosing and another part standing idly by, ready or able to choose otherwise. That the will is a "pluri-efficient" or an "either-causal" power is certainly nothing more than an inference; it is not a testimony of consciousness. All it sees is the actual choosing, and just then there is nothing else to see. The power of contrary choice is, in the very nature of the case, something which consciousness can know nothing about. Confessedly, it is only a possibility, but the distinguishing feature of a possibility is this, that it is *not* an actuality. To the noun "possibility" the adjective *mere* is tautological. Consciousness is blind and dumb concerning undeveloped potentialities. I know I have power by exercising it. A man awakes in the morning and is "conscious" of strength in his arms; but when he tries to lift them, he finds his right arm is paralyzed. His supposed consciousness of strength was an inference from the fact that he had his strength yesterday. The shaven Samson, when he awoke out of his sleep, "wist not" that his strength was gone.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Judges* 16 : 20.

He became really conscious of his strength—or of his lack of it—when he essayed *to use it*. A possibility dies as such the moment it becomes actual, but until it becomes actual, consciousness cannot know it. A possible self, making possible choices, is utterly foreign to the purview of consciousness.

5. This freedom which the chooser possesses involves two things, namely, spontaneity and rationality. The volition must not only be his own, it must also be rational. This last is only another way of saying that only a rational person can make a choice. The highest freedom is not only in the highest degree spontaneous, but also in the highest degree rational. We use the term rational here, in its largest sense, as contrasted with unrational, not contrasted with irrational. From the standpoint of ideal freedom, an unrational volition is no more possible than a coerced or unspontaneous one. Julius Müller says, "Our conception indeed of human and divine freedom would be a mere mockery, if it meant nothing more than the power of realizing what is already necessarily involved in the very constitution of the being in whom it is."<sup>1</sup> We are apt to put our emphasis upon the element of spon-

<sup>1</sup> *On the Christian Doctrine of Sin*, vol. i., p. 20.

taneity, rather than of rationality. This accounts for the modern tendency of liberty to degenerate into license, and action into impulse. The highest freedom is realized only in a spontaneous conformity to the standards of Right Reason.

“ But God left free the will ; for what obeys  
Reason, is free ; and reason he made right,  
But bid her well beware, and still erect.”<sup>1</sup>

In this sense God alone, who is infinitely rational, is infinitely free. A brute cannot be said to be really free because his volition (if we may now call it such), though spontaneous, is not rational ; for the same reason the lunatic and the idiot are not free. They are the slaves of impulse ; spontaneity is uncurbed by reason. A vicious man is mistaken in thinking himself, in the truest sense, free ; his will is enslaved, that is to say, he himself is enslaved in the most degrading slavery of all.

“ All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil.”<sup>2</sup>

This is the delusive freedom which is possessed by the man whose habits hold him fast and helpless. This is what Augustine and Calvin mean when they speak of mankind having by the Fall lost the freedom of the will ; and certainly, it will

<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Lost*, Book IX.

<sup>2</sup> Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*.

not be denied except by the outright Pelagian that, in a very real sense, a moral agent, untouched by sin as the unfallen Adam was, or wholly delivered from sin as the glorified saint in heaven is to be, has a range of freedom, a capacity for choosing, a power of spontaneous conformity to the rational and the right which men, in their present sinful state, do not enjoy.

6. Sin, formally defined, is noncompliance with the divine will. Disregarding all attempts at material definitions at this time, Dr. Charles Hodge has summarily stated the truth when he said, "Herein is sin that we are not like God."<sup>1</sup> The biblical account of the Fall represents the first sin as being an overt act of disobedience, and this essential meaning is accepted by those who regard the narrative as historical, legendary, or mythical.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Professor Orr is willing to stake the Bible doctrine of sin upon the known nature of it, even apart from the Genesis account of its origin. These are his words: "It would be truer to say that I believe in the third chapter of Genesis, or in the essential truth which it contains, because I believe in sin and redemption, than to say that I believe in sin and redemption because

<sup>1</sup> *Systematic Theology*, vol. ii., p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> See E. Griffith-Jones's *The Ascent Through Christ*, pp. 96, 97.

of the story of the Fall. Put the third chapter of Genesis out of view, and you have the facts of sin and disorder of the world to be accounted for, and to be dealt with, all the same."<sup>1</sup> Primarily, then, when looked at in the light of its first appearance in history, sin pertains to the will; that is, to man in the attitude of choosing. A positive, specific prohibition, precisely such as the inspired narrative presents,<sup>2</sup> accentuates this volitional and indeed the voluntary character of the first sin. In its foremost aspect, the first sin was neither rationalistic nor mystical, but thelematic. We believe that President Edwards's views are as applicable to that initial sin as to sins of sinful men when he says, "The Will itself, and not those actions which are the effects of the Will, is the proper object of precept or command"; and, again, in the same paragraph, "Obedience, in the primary nature of it, is the submitting and yielding of the Will of one to the Will of another."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> *Genesis 2: 17*.

<sup>3</sup> *Freedom of the Will*, Part III., sec. iv. Carter's ed. of his works, vol. ii., p. 99.

The reader may recall Satan's eternal obstinacy of will:—

“What though the field be lost?

All is not lost; the unconquerable will,

And study of revenge, immortal hate,

Remember, we cannot thrust the thinnest knife blade between the will and the intellect,—it is the one man all the while; but the first human sinner stands on record, *prima facie*, as the chooser. We do not mean to say that the will is not always in the forefront of sinning; we do recall the petition in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done in earth," and we know that in that supreme moment in Gethsemane the victory came when the resisting will surrendered in the cry, "Not my will, but thine, be done." The first sinner was a man choosing. God's command was clear; he chose to disobey. The commandment of God is always "holy and just and good." He is the infinitely rational Person, and His injunctions are infinitely reasonable. To disobey them, to ignore God's law, to refuse conformity to His will, is always to depart from the path of reason—that is to say, it is contrary to reason. While the chooser is a rational agent, his choice is irrational just as it is true to say that while he is moral, his choice may be immoral.<sup>1</sup>

And courage never to submit or yield,  
And what is else not to be overcome;  
That glory never shall his wrath or might  
Extort from me."—*Paradise Lost*, Book I.

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. James Kidd's *Morality and Religion*, p. 2 *et seq.*, on this paradox.

7. The power to choose at all, involved in that first instance, the power to make the wrong choice. Personal righteousness has for its necessary foil, not sin, but the possibility of sinning. If the alternative presented to the first chooser was purely fictitious, then the whole affair was a farce and the self-deluded chooser was a mere automaton. This has nothing to do with the doctrine of the power of contrary choice among congenitally sinful choosers. That doctrine is that, after we have made a certain choice, we can recall the moment of that choice, and affirm assuredly that, instead of choosing as we did choose, we could have chosen contrarily to that actual choice. This is, in the nature of the case, always and necessarily an *ex post facto* verdict; the choice which has been made is a *datum* in the doctrine. What we are now saying is that, before that initial wrong human choice was made, while as yet either decision was unformed, there was in the anticipation of the chooser a *bona fide* possibility of choosing either the right way or the wrong way. Indeed, without such an alternative there could be no right way or wrong way. This is essential to any moral choice. This is not contingency as to the fact; it is capacity for going one way, and that way may be the immoral, the

irrational way. A right moral choice carried with it the possibility of a wrong one.

“I made him just and right,  
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.  
Such I created all the ethereal powers  
And spirits, both them who stood, and them who failed;  
Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.”<sup>1</sup>

That this is perfectly safe teaching from the standpoint of the Reformed theology will need no proof.<sup>2</sup> It is almost self-evident that if God is to create a being capable of obeying, that being must be capable of disobeying; the condition of his being morally good is that he may be morally bad. “And one of the impossibilities is, having made man free, to compel him to act as if he were necessitated.”<sup>3</sup>

8. The constitution of the human race is that of an organic unity, not of an aggregation of individuals. This is one of the boasted finds of which modern science makes so much; but, all the same, it is a venerable and important truth in the Reformed theology. Dr. John Watson is

<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Lost*, Book III.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, *Westminster Confession of Faith*, chap. ix., sec. 2, and *The Larger Catechism*, Ques. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Principal Fairbairn's *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 456.

altogether too sweeping in his remark that "no single doctrine of theology, with the doubtful exception of original sin, has till recently been applied to the race."<sup>1</sup> The Reformed faith, following the teachings of the great apostle in his Epistle to the Romans, has always made much of the Adamic sin and guilt; and, although it may be quite true that recent thought has brought more prominently to the fore this idea of the racial unity as related to the redemptive work of Christ, yet it must be said that here also a scriptural theology has always regarded the individual in the light of the whole race, of which he is but an organic part. The organic oneness of humanity, the solidarity of the race, the scientific doctrine of heredity, are precisely in line with the Reformed theology both as to sin and as to redemption. The occasion to remind ourselves of this principle just now is in the fact that that first choice, introducing sin into the human race, accounts for the universal presence and blight of sin in the racial unit ever since.

9. In virtue of man's organic relations with the cosmos, the extra-mental world came under the threatened blight of human sinful disobedience.

<sup>1</sup>We cannot just now locate this remark either in *The Mind of the Master* or in *The Cure of Souls*.

This was partly natural and partly judicial, if we may adhere to a very precarious distinction. Man sinning is man abnormal, and abnormal man makes his environment abnormal; but man's environment is the whole cosmos. Sin brought a sense of shame before the penalty was spoken; the woman is consigned to the sorrows of maternity and the very ground is cursed for the sake of the man.<sup>1</sup> The blight is abroad; the cosmos is a unit; the blood poison has made its way into the veins; the whole system is vitiated.

It would be hard to conceive of man, as sinful, dwelling in a world unspoiled by his sin. Mr. Spencer regards a perfect man in an imperfect environment as impossible; we should say that equally impossible is an imperfect man in a perfect environment. His own perceiving self is impaired and, of necessity, the world otherwise unchanged would be to him, at least, a changed world. Kant tells us that if all men see the world through green goggles, then to all men the world is green; so if all men know the world by means of impaired faculties, then to all men it is an impaired, a disordered world. But the curse is greater than that. Man is the microcosm, the climax of the creation; he is the ruling head, with dominion

<sup>1</sup> *Genesis* 3: 8, 16, 17.

over the creatures. The microcosm is stricken with a deadly disease and the macrocosm is thrown into great disorder; the ruler's throne is undermined and the subject empire is thrown into disaster and ruin. The rational order is disturbed; the moral order is perverted.

This idea of the cosmical effects of sin is far-reaching and thoroughly scriptural. We are idealists enough to believe that matter is for mind, and not mind for matter; if, then, the soul be under the curse, how much more must be accursed that which is the servant of the soul? Our bodies are under the blight, and our bodies are to be redeemed from that blight. But, in a real sense, it is true that the whole cosmos is our body, our *σῶμα*; and it is this larger body which is blighted and which is to be delivered. Sin covers the whole creation with its pall, and redemption is to be equally comprehensive. It is because "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," that we are given to hope that in the consummations of redemption there will be "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."<sup>1</sup>

10. We are now brought out to a point whence we can see how it is that the world in which we

<sup>1</sup> See *Romans* 8 : 22 ; and *2 Peter* 3 : 13.

live is not the ideally rational and moral one. "An enemy hath done this." Tertullian called sin "the great interloper." Man alone of all terrestrial creatures was endowed by his Creator with capacity to comply with and to enjoy divine conditions; but the necessary counterpart of this unique capacity was his ability to disobey God and forfeit his birthright. This last he chose to do, and then entered the dark and disastrous train. Why he did so choose, is the mystery. Whence came the initial impulse, is the mystery. We have by no means assumed to solve that mystery; we have essayed only to ferret it out and state it. Mr. Browning thinks that "the acknowledgment of God in Christ solves all questions in the world and out of it"; we believe that it is equally true that the full acknowledgment of sin carries with it nearly if not quite all the dark mysteries in the world and out of it.

We are inclined to accept it as a finality that no rational explanation of the mystery of sin is ever forthcoming. It is impossible to formulate a *rationalè* of that which, in its inmost self, is essentially irrational. Dr. Müller's words are very much to the point: "We must acknowledge that evil is in its nature inconceivable—*i. e.*, incomprehensible—seeing that it is realized by arbitrariness

and arbitrariness is a violation of rational reason and true sequence. It is that which has being only by usurpation, and in the face of the exclusive claims of moral good. We can understand the connection of its particular manifestation with its principle, but this principle itself is a perversion, it is that which ought not to be.”<sup>1</sup>

A few years ago, an educated and godly minister of the gospel, in his happy home, surrounded by his beloved and lovely family, stole out one beautiful Sabbath morning and, at the very moment when the whole household was expecting to start to the house of worship, instantaneously took his own life. The dreadful shock that startled the whole community was followed by a general discussion of the reason which led to this rash act. It was suggested that his means were exhausted and that anxiety for his family drove him mad; but it was found that several hundred dollars lay to his credit in the bank. It was surmised that personal alienations had made him morbid; but it was found that all serious differences with his neighbors had been reconciled. No reason was ever found, and we believe that no reason ever could be found, simply because no reason ever existed. It was an irrational act;

<sup>1</sup> *On the Christian Doctrine of Sin*, vol ii., p. 173.

and there is no reasonable explanation of that which is without reason.<sup>1</sup>

To be sure, psychologists might account for that suicide ; but let us not forget that psychology is purely a descriptive science, nothing more. It is, as Coleridge has so clearly told us, one thing to state a reason which accounts for a fact, and another thing to state a reason which explains it.<sup>2</sup> Psychology may explain descriptively, but it is far beyond its province to justify rationally. It may trace connections where it cannot find reasons.

Sin belongs to the dismal chapter on pathology in the spiritual history of mankind. Every attempt to vindicate it has ended in losing more than it has gained. Its fountains are hidden, but its scorching streams, unlike those of the fertilizing Nile, go forth to blight every soil they touch. Its origin is the *point du depart* of man from God. It has ever baffled the reason, because it is itself preëminently unreasonable. Sin is violence to highest reason ; the sinner is *beside himself*, and his first look homeward, like that of the Prodigal

<sup>1</sup> No stronger illustration is possible than that afforded in the recent reasonless assassination of President McKinley.

<sup>2</sup> In Appendix C to *Aids to Reflection*, he says, " To account for Life is one thing ; to explain Life another." So, to account for sin is not to explain it.

in the parable, dates from the moment when he begins to "come to himself."

It has put to confusion all right-minded rational and moral world-builders, because, itself irrational, itself immoral, the very best that could be said for it is that it is an impertinence, a usurpation, an arbitrariness, an intruder, that which *ought not to be*.



LECTURE IV

ETHICAL VERSIONS OF THE  
COSMOS



## LECTURE IV

### ETHICAL VERSIONS OF THE COSMOS

It is quite evident that the academic world-builder is doomed to disappointment as soon as he strolls out, with eyes and ears open, into the world of actual fact. Few of us would say that the world we live in is precisely such a world as we should have made. It is aside from the point to remark that we could not have made a better; it is enough if we could only conceive a better; for then, given omnipotence, might we not, forsooth, have brought it forth? Pippa's sentiment is optimistic in the extreme; but, with the Leibnitzs and Schopenhauers on the other side, there are many who stoutly maintain that, as far as it *can* be so, "all's well with the world." In the interest of a sound theodicy it is generally understood in Christian thinking, on moral grounds, that whatever is wrong with the world is the fault of the world itself, and not of its Creator.

The anonymous writer of a very suggestive

book, *Evil and Evolution*,<sup>1</sup> names three hypotheses concerning the "maladjustments of the actual world," and adds that he can see no place for a fourth. In substance, these are: 1. They are a part and parcel of God's scheme; 2. They are undesigned and unavoidable faults, incidental to the scheme; 3. An enemy has disturbed the originally perfect adjustment. He takes the last one. We are disposed to say, though just now no more than to say, that these three alternatives are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and that a synthesis of the first and third, with all the difficulties which it may involve, is the nearest approach to the truth; that is to say, we believe that what is to us the "Empirical Surprise" is not a surprise to the Creator of the world, though it still is literally true that "an enemy hath done this."

Natural science has for its noble task the exegesis of the cosmos. Its text is in its hand, and its business is to read it. There is a good deal of preliminary work for the historical and the higher critics, but this work is here, as everywhere else, purely preliminary. The *ipsissima verba* are in the air and earth and sea, the stars and rocks and fishes. The scientist may know that his *texta*

<sup>1</sup> Macmillan; third edition. See p. 58.

*recepta* is corrupt, that the pure original is lost; still this is the best that he can get at, and he properly accepts the revelation-content of the cosmos of to-day as the legitimate basis of scientific study. He may infer from the corrupt cosmical text in his hand what was the original product of the creative hand. The rules of cosmical hermeneutics are as important as those of biblical study. Given the text, what does it mean? The results of world-exegesis have been as varied as those of Bible study. Science has shifted its ground as often and as widely as theology has done. Bishop Hugh Miller Thompson puts it none too strongly when he says, "When one considers the theories that have perished in chemistry, until the new chemistry, with the hypothesis of unitary structure, has seated itself amid the ruins of the old; in geology, from the theories of the Plutonists and Neptunists to the evolutionary; . . . in biology, the corpuscular, the fluid, the chemical theories, and now the contending material and psychical; the emission and undulatory theories of light, the vortices of Descartes, and the attraction of Newton; the Ptolemaic cycles and epicycles, orb in orb, and the Copernican central sun in astronomy; the phlogistic, caloric, and molecular theories of heat; in view, in

short, of explanatory theories painfully wrought out, painfully defended, universally accepted as sufficient, and universally exploded at last, he is a very rash man who will dare to assert that any existing theory is a finality."<sup>1</sup> It is not too much to say that with the postulates and hypotheses and "working theories" of natural science, the certitudes of which it boasts so much, have up to date shown themselves to be as precarious as the most dogmatic deliverances of Christian theology have been.

Students in theology must not be surprised to find themselves written down as imbeciles in natural science; their passports into the esoteric circles of cosmical exegetes will be fiercely challenged. But the challenge must be resisted. There is no conflict between natural science and sacred theology. We insist, with Professor Knight, that "the reverent scientist is a theological student," and that the true theologian is a scientific student. It is nonsense to talk about a truce, for there is no war. The trouble with the scientist is that he is prone to deny the whole subject-matter of Christian theology. His field is only a part of the theologian's. He has the

<sup>1</sup> *The World and the Logos*: The Bedell Lectures for 1885, pp. 11, 12.

cosmos; we have the theo-cosmos. Our area is vastly broader than his and includes his. We are willing to let him do his work in his chosen field, but he must not suppose that his corner is the whole. We are coworkers. We need him; we must have him, and he only narrows his work and his thought if he imagines he does not need us.

We may not be experts in cosmical study, but we claim the common sense of a competent jurymen. We may be awkward with the telescope and the scalpel, but we have brains enough to understand what others may tell us after they have used them. Probably we know as much about generation as they do about regeneration, and about the conditions of a sound physical life as they about the conditions of a healthy moral life. All we ask for is a mutual recognition of *status*—nothing more. There is too much to be known for any one of us to know it all. There must be division of labor. Ours is an age of specialism. The natural scientist is a specialist, but that need not disqualify him for good theological thinking. The theologian is a specialist in his line, indeed he is not much of a theologian if he be not a specialist, but his specialty need not deprive him of all fitness for having convictions concerning the cosmos. We know no pope in either sphere.

Authority has its place, but it is only such a place as an enlightened reason will cheerfully accord. Theology has had its sins, but theology has not been the only sinner. Mutual suspicions and jealousies are obstacles in the way of the attainment of truth. If we can only bear in mind that all truth is one; that, so far as it goes, the existing cosmos is a part of the text of the word of God, and to read it is the task which cosmical science has set for itself, then every movement in the whole field will be centripetal and every advance will be toward the common goal. Professor Le Conte is most enthusiastic in his devotion to natural science, and his words are well spoken on this point: "Many seem to think that theology has a '*preëmptive right*' to dogmatism. If so, then modern materialistic science has '*jumped the claim.*' Dogmatism has its roots deep-bedded in the human heart. It showed itself first in the domain of theology, because there was the seat of power. In modern times it has gone over to the side of science, because here now is the place of power and fashion. There are two *dogmatisms*, both equally opposed to the true rational spirit, viz., the old theological and the new scientific."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought*, pp. 293-4. Italics his.

In aiming at a just ethical estimate of the cosmos, two methods have been followed. The one posits the cosmical and regards the so-called ethical as but the incident or product of the all-comprehending cosmical programme. Its only category is the cosmical. The other method posits the ethical and regards the so-called cosmical as the incident or the evolution of that all-embracing ethical plan. Its only category is that of moral value. They proceed in exactly opposite directions; the one reads everything ethical in terms of the natural, and the other reads everything natural in terms of the ethical. The one regards all moral forces, functions, achievements, and ideals, as merely cosmical; this is naturalistic empiricism. The other regards all cosmical forces, phenomena, and products, as susceptible of a moral interpretation; this is theological idealism. Neither admits any neutral ground. They agree in having their preconceptions, although their preconceptions are widely different. These preconceptions fix the theory. I can think of no better or more classical exponents of these two methods in recent times than Mr. John Fiske, representing the former, and the late Professor Henry Drummond, representing the latter.

Mr. Fiske, in his *Outlines of the Cosmic Philosophy*, begins by attempting to strip his mind absolutely of all ethical presuppositions, and then he addresses himself to the exposition of the cosmos as he finds it. Taking his cue from his great English master, Mr. Herbert Spencer, he finds only the manifestation of Force everywhere throughout the cosmos. The term "Cosmos" "*denotes* the entire phenomenal universe; it *connotes* the orderly uniformity of nature, and the negation of miracle or extraneous disturbance of any kind."<sup>1</sup> The only cause that can be known is the Phenomenal Cause, and Efficient Causes are explicitly repudiated;<sup>2</sup> the bedrock presupposition of Cosmical Science is the Persistence of Force, the proof of which is not logical, but purely psychological.<sup>3</sup>

Assuredly, this cosmism is not overloaded with presuppositions; particularly, with ethical ones. Whether or not it is theistic, it is not hyper-theological. Mr. Fiske tells us that the word *Theism* ordinarily "*connotes* the ascription of an anthropomorphic [sic] personality to the Deity."<sup>4</sup> We must not ascribe intelligence or volition to God, for that would be to anthropomorphize our

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i., p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 286.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 424.

idea of Him; and yet he is honest—though inconsistent—enough to admit that “there is anthropomorphism even in speaking of the Unknown Cause as a Power manifested in phenomena.”<sup>1</sup> The scientific saint must dismiss Christ as an “anthropomorphic symbol,” and take for his motto Goethe’s familiar line,

“Im Ganzen, Guten, Wahren, resolut zu leben.”<sup>2</sup>

Is it not strange that, after this process of denuding the cosmos, which is the All, has been carried to the very last degree, and while we stand, dumb with awe, in the presence of the bare cosmic Force, *in puris naturalibus*, the cosmic philosopher should turn and assure us that “Nearer, my God, to Thee,” is the devout prayer to which scientific analysis will add new meanings, and that, in spite of everything, “we still regard Christianity as, in the deepest sense, our own religion”?<sup>3</sup> Surely this is the zero-point of cosmism, bereft of the ethical, and such assurances as that just mentioned may prepare us for his beautiful little essays which were published years later.

If now, on the other hand, we turn to Professor

<sup>1</sup> *Outlines of the Cosmic Philosophy*, vol. ii., p. 449.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 455.      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 502.

Drummond's *The Ascent of Man*, we get the antipodal starting point. As Professor George Adam Smith has pointed out, this book reverses the argument of his first and greater book, *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*; seeing that in that book he carried physical processes into the region of the moral and spiritual; whereas, in the latter, "he essayed the converse task, and succeeded in showing the ethical at work in regions of life generally supposed to be given over to purely physical laws."<sup>1</sup>

Here we have presuppositions in abundance. The writer is not only a theist, he is a fervently evangelical Christian, an ordained minister in the Free Church of Scotland.<sup>2</sup> He brings his own rich religious faith to the interpretation of the cosmos; doubtless his eisegesis affected his exegesis. He was the kind of man to get out of the world, in large measure, what he put into it. His standpoint was ethical, and so he ethicized the cosmical order; more than that, his standpoint was Christian, and so he Christianized it. He saw the unknown; he perceived the shadows; and yet, unconsciously to himself doubtless, his inborn and inbred Presbyterian faith colored his cos-

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Henry Drummond*, p. 462.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, see p. 265.

mical conceptions, and he knew, with Lowell, that

“ Behind the dim unknown  
Standeth God within the shadows, keeping watch above His  
own.”

Accordingly, Professor Drummond saw nothing in the natural order which he would not fain bring under ethical categories. These are some of his words: “The vicarious principle is shot through and through the whole vast web of nature; and if one actor has played a mightier part than another in the drama of the past, it has been self-sacrifice”;<sup>1</sup> “Men begin to see an undeviating ethical purpose in this material world, a tide, that from eternity has never turned, making for perfectness”;<sup>2</sup> “No man can run up the natural lines of Evolution without coming to Christianity at the top.”<sup>3</sup>

Now the singularly interesting thing about these two thoroughly representative men is that starting, the one from the deliberately chosen standpoint of agnostic cosmism, and the other from that of a theological professor in the Free Church College at Glasgow, they should come up so nearly together at the end. Mr. Fiske has

<sup>1</sup> *The Ascent of Man*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342.

made concessions again and again in his three little books, *The Idea of God*, *The Destiny of Man*, and *Through Nature to God*, until the darkest lines of his *Cosmic Philosophy* have almost wholly faded out. In the last of these books, he freely accepts the human element in the symbolic conception of God;<sup>1</sup> he admits that if we take away the ethical significance from our conceptions of the unseen world, no significance remains;<sup>2</sup> while there are many passages which, for ethical beauty and spiritual meaning, might well be found among the words of the author of *The Greatest Thing in the World*. Mr. Fiske posited the bare cosmical, and has ever since been advancing upward toward the richer ethical. Professor Drummond posited the ethical, and will it be too much to say that, throughout his brilliant but brief career, he had been making repeated concessions to the cosmical? The science of the Lowell Lectures was no more acceptable to scientific men than was their theology to the theologians. Not a few who loved the gifted and genial Drummond, on both sides of the Atlantic, wondered what place he left for the supernatural elements of the Christian Religion, what constituted the Atonement of Calvary *sui generis*, and where, in his "love-song of

<sup>1</sup> *Through Nature to God*, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

evolution," would fit in the New Testament doctrine of the Incarnation.<sup>1</sup>

Notably at variance with these conclusions, however, is that of the older Darwinism, which sees no ethical virtues whatever in nature. Mr. Mill, who was a Darwinian before Darwin, condemned nature as cruel and inhuman. But the classical utterance for this view was the famous Romanes lecture for 1893, by the late Professor

<sup>1</sup> Neither of these two representative men continued to please the constituents with whom they began. A friend has told me of a conversation he once had with the late Colonel Ingersoll, in which the latter fiercely denounced Mr. Fiske as inconsistent with his principles, afraid to stand by his position, and "truckling" to the superstitions of the churches. We fear Mr. Fiske must plead guilty to the first charge; a *felix culpa*, indeed! It will be remembered that the *Cosmic Philosophy* was written in Mr. Fiske's early life. It was based on lectures given as far back as 1869. Readers of Dr. Martineau will recall the remark of an eminent English Positivist who had been claiming the author of the *Cosmic Philosophy* as in agreement with himself in the rejection of religious beliefs. A friend was reading him a private letter in which were some extracts from Mr. Fiske's address at Concord (1884), which afterwards was published as *The Destiny of Man in the Light of His Origin*, when, at a certain interesting passage, he spiritedly interrupted him with the exclamation, "What? John Fiske say that? Well; it only proves, what I have always maintained, that you cannot make the slightest concession to metaphysics, without ending in a theology." See Martineau's *A Study of Religion*; preface, vol. i., p. vii.

Huxley, on "Evolution and Ethics."<sup>1</sup> In words worn threadbare by frequent quotation, he characterized nature as "no school of virtue, but the headquarters of the enemy of ethical nature";<sup>2</sup> and he declared that "social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step and the substitution for it of another which may be called the ethical process."<sup>3</sup>

This almost last utterance of Professor Huxley whom, rather than Mr. Spencer, if we mistake not, Mr. Darwin regarded as the true philosopher of evolution, created a great sensation among both theologians and natural scientists, and the Quarterlies swarmed with reviews and criticisms of it. It pleased almost nobody. Evolutionists repudiated it, Mr. Spencer most vigorously of all. Certainly its position was much exposed to attack. A monistic evolutionist starts out with the denial of any real distinction between the cosmical and the ethical; it is all *cosmical*. How then can he speak of the substitution for the cosmic process of "another" when that other, even though it may be singled out by itself and dignified by the name of *ethical*, is its own child or, rather, only a part of itself? Can he call a part of the cosmical

<sup>1</sup> Huxley's Works, Appleton's ed., vol. ix., pp. 46-86.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 81 *et alia*.

course "another"? To cosmical scientists who make the cosmos the ALL, and following nature—*naturam prosequi*—the summing up of the moral law, this condemnation of the "cosmic process" before the bar of morals was exceedingly disconcerting.

But what objection had the theologian to the argument of the lecture? A reviewer in the *Athenæum* called it an approximation to the Pauline dogma of "nature and grace";<sup>1</sup> certainly, at a hasty glance, it seems biblical and orthodox, and Mr. Fiske has said that it "carried joy to the hearts of sundry theologians."<sup>2</sup> But the thoughtful theologian can ill afford to condemn the cosmos utterly before ethical tribunals; else what becomes of his natural theology? Else deism must be called back, and while the Living and True God is supreme in the sacred pale of the kingdom of grace, the cruel and capricious Setebos, the horrible god of the beastly Caliban, rules in the dark and dismal and damned regions that are without.

No one believes that Professor Huxley's words closed the discussion. The lecture had in it much wholesome truth, but the premises were wrong,

<sup>1</sup> See Seth's *Man's Place in the Cosmos*, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> *Through Nature to God*, p. 76.

and the conclusions farther wrong. We can accept neither the Fiske nor the Huxley verdict as correct. While Drummond would ethicize nature, Fiske would naturalize ethics; and Huxley, seeing too much of "the ape and tiger," too much of "nature red in tooth and claw," gives it up in despair, an agnostic to the last with something of the Stoic hero in it all. Fiske holds to his thesis, and yet with optimistic faith insists that "though in many ways God's work is above our comprehension, yet those parts of the world's story that we can decipher will warrant the belief that while in nature there may be divine irony, there can be no such thing as wanton mockery, for profoundly underlying the surface entanglements of her actions we may discern the omnipresent ethical trend."<sup>1</sup>

But the method is wrong. Notwithstanding his disclaimer, the presuppositions are there, and they are wrong. When we may expect to gather grapes of thorns and figs from thistles, we may expect to get a satisfying religious faith from the husks of agnosticism. If we begin our search by denying all but the evolved cosmos, we must let our right hand be ignorant of what our left hand is doing, before we can find the Super-

<sup>1</sup> *Through Nature to God*, pp. 129, 130.

natural or the Divine. It would be hard to find a more judicious comment upon this line of cosmical interpretations, at once conceding its merits and indicating its errors, than the passage with which Dr. Martineau closes his discussion of Evolutionary Hedonistic theories: "So long as it sets itself to find the moral in the unmoral, to identify the *order of right* with the *order of strength*, to repudiate any study of what *ought to be* except in studying what has been, is, and will be, it totally shuts the door in the face of all conception and possibility of Duty, and by *naturalizing Ethics* reverses the idealizing process which rather *ethicizes nature*. It subjugates character to science, instead of freeing it into Religion."<sup>1</sup>

All evolutionary theories are presumably monistic, but students of the subject will not forget that from most ancient times there have been dualistic theories of the world; and that the occasion for these has been largely in this mystery of evil. The history of ontological dualism<sup>2</sup> is a singularly interesting witness to the persistence

<sup>1</sup> *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. ii., p. 424. Italics his.

<sup>2</sup> However, I believe that in the old Persian Dualism, in its last analysis, Good was held to be preëxistent to Evil; though the popular conception was that they are coeternal.

of an idea which is in itself rationally untenable, and yet which seems to serve, however ineffectively, to relieve this deep difficulty. Old Zoroastrianism, with its Ormuzd and Ahriman, regarded the conflict between Good and Evil as eternal; Evil always has been and always shall be. To be sure, this doctrine destroys pure theism, eliminates responsibility, and gives the lie to consciousness; but its saving virtue is in its theodicy, according to which it acquits the holy God of all the evil in the world. As we have seen, Mr. J. S. Mill arrived at a position not far from this; and it has had a popular setting forth in the book, already referred to at the beginning of this lecture, *Evil and Evolution*. This book is, in effect, a scientific vindication of the doctrine of a personal devil, and we submit that, with personality as the highest category of our thinking, the author makes no mean showing for his case. His argument would enhance the holiness of God by subtracting from His power. The cosmical creation, *κτίσις*, was "very good" at the beginning; but some "being with the intellect and the power of a God and the malignity of a devil" interposed and upset the nice adjustment. This was a "comparatively slight disturbance," but in a delicate organism it needs but a slight touch to

work havoc in the whole. God neither designed nor foresaw the Fall; otherwise, "He is entirely responsible for all that has come of it." "The great secret lies impenetrably concealed in the mystery of free will."<sup>1</sup> The argument has its defects, too obvious even to mention; but it is a reverent essay on the old problem, defending the thesis that there must be a devil, if God is to be God. If sin is essentially a choosing amiss, and if choice is the act of a person, then is it not philosophical to trace it to a personal source? The book never draws upon Scripture, it being aside from its purpose to do so, but, in so far forth, it is clear that the argument approaches biblical teachings. We believe that it does this much, it shows that the belief in the existence of a personal devil is not unscientific or absurd.

Modern attempts at the ethical gauging of the cosmos have been greatly influenced by the wide acceptance of the doctrine of evolution. All modern thinking has done obeisance to this idea. Dr. Edward Caird says, "We may, indeed, say without much exaggeration that the thought of almost all the great speculative and scientific writers of this century has been governed and guided by the principle of development, if not

<sup>1</sup> P. 198.

directly devoted to its illustration.”<sup>1</sup> Any manual of History of Philosophy will show at a glance that this idea is no new thing under the sun; and yet, it is, of course, true that, with the impetus given to it first by Hegel in his idealistic conception of development, and later by Darwin and Wallace and others, bringing to it the rich treasures of their scientific researches and enriching it especially in its biological references, it has become the dominating note in modern thought.

In its widest connotations, evolution is well-nigh self-evident. History is description, and time-description is impossible if there be not causative and formative elements in antecedent conditions. The present has in it the past capitalized and the future in embryo. Evolution is unfolding, and the broad conception is a *sine qua non* of the historical method. Natural history is a branch of cosmical science, and, in a sense, all science is history.

If you were asked whether you believe in evolution, you would not reply until you had ascertained what your interviewer understood by the word. Few words are so elastic and so loosely used. For example, in taking up the two books which lie nearest at hand, I find Professor Drummond

<sup>1</sup> *The Evolution of Religion*, vol. i., p. 24.

saying that evolution is but "a general name for the history of the steps by which the world has come to be what it is."<sup>1</sup> But, if it be objected that this is only a popular book on the subject, we turn to the other volume, by one of the leading proponents of the doctrine, Professor Joseph Le Conte, and while we find his careful and precise definition which has become classical,<sup>2</sup> yet later on we find such statements as these: "Evolution is a law of continuity, a universal law of becoming;" "it is a law of derivation of forms from previous forms." "The words Evolutionism and Evolutionist ought no longer to be used, any more than gravitationism and gravitationist, for the law of Evolution is as certain as the law of gravitation; nay, it is far more certain, it is axiomatic."<sup>3</sup> Suppose we should subscribe to all this, or to some of it; well, we have accepted evolution; and then, by some hocus pocus, a specific theory of evolution or some formidable formula, like Mr. Spencer's,<sup>4</sup> is substituted for what we had subscribed to, and we are misrepresented. Certainly no one would reject evolution if it is only an account of how the world came to

<sup>1</sup> *The Ascent of Man*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought*, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 66.

<sup>4</sup> *First Principles*, p. 396.

be what it is ; we all believe that history is a *continuum*, and that the events which it narrates somehow constitute an unbroken unity. But this is not *Evolution* in its accepted and technical sense.

Sentimental considerations count for little with thoughtful people, either way. Possibly it is not necessary to fasten the stigma of agnosticism upon evolution, although it has been its bad fortune that so many of its leading exponents have coupled that bankrupting epistemology with their favorite cosmology. It is very significant that Messrs. Huxley, Spencer, and Fiske, all have been avowed agnostics, and yet Professor Huxley was eager to clear evolution of his personal religious views when he said: "Evolution has no more to do with theism than the first book of Euclid has."<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, however, we are told by such a devout Christian evolutionist as Professor Le Conte that the acceptance of evolution means a revolution in religious thought;<sup>2</sup> that it necessitates a "reconstruction of Christian theology";<sup>3</sup> and that with it "the distinction between the natural and the supernatural disappears from view,

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica*; Article, "Evolution."

<sup>2</sup> *Evolution and Its Relation to Religious Thought*, see p. 280.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, see p. 295.

and also the necessity of miracles *as we usually understand miracles.*"<sup>1</sup> We should deceive ourselves then, according to the judgment of Professor Le Conte, if we infer that, because evolution is declared innocent of agnostic implications, it does not entail very important theological consequences.

It is not denied that the gaps which have always embarrassed the evolutionist are still unfilled; its breaks are still unbridged. The first appearance of life, of sentiency, of self-consciousness, and of conscience, has not yet been provided for in the evolutionary programme. It is easy to formulate grand schemes, but up to date it is frankly admitted, by fair and competent scientific scholars, that it has not yet been possible to find the required supporting evidence. Professor Drummond himself says: "No one asks more of Evolution at present than permission to use it as a working theory."<sup>2</sup> So that we are to regard the technical theory of evolution as a scheme of world-history, and, upon the statement of its most eager defenders, as a confessedly unproved hypothesis.

Not a little intellectual energy has been ex-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, see p. 356. Italics his.

<sup>2</sup> *The Ascent of Man*, p. 6.

pended in the last generation in the effort to define the formal relations between the scientific doctrine of evolution and evangelical Christianity. Unhappily, much of this has been done in a crude and quarrelsome spirit and from an *ex parte* point of view. In many cases, neither attorney has known too well the real nature of his opponent's cause, if indeed he was well enough acquainted with that of his own client. We are persuaded that a correct knowledge of each would go far toward dissolving the difficulties and the differences. Truth needs no labored harmonizing with truth; its best defense is often its clearest statement. A recent attempt, from the side of the Christian faith, has been made in a book written, we suspect, by a busy pastor who feels the need of some *modus vivendi*, at least; a book which, though not very profound in its insight or very broad in its scope, has been pronounced by a competent critic<sup>1</sup> an important and worthy pioneer in a line in which others are sure to follow. Probably the popular style of the book will make it widely influential; but we are convinced that if this is the best showing that can be made, the books that are to follow his will be, in a large measure, love's labor lost. In his zeal to con-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. James Iverach, in the *Critical Review*, October, 1900.

ciliate biblical Christianity and scientific evolution, the author modifies both terms of the equation until many Christians would regard his Christianity as unbiblical, and many scientists would regard his evolution as unscientific. An intellectual conception of Christianity with such a doctrine of inspiration as reduces Bible history to a myth,<sup>1</sup> and with such a doctrine of the Incarnation as makes Christ the procreating "Individual who started the new Type,"<sup>2</sup> "embryonically incarnated" in Old Testament prophecy,<sup>3</sup> certainly seems to us to strain itself overmuch to bring its teachings under evolutionary categories. And, moreover, the outright antagonism between any theory of individual redemption on the one hand, and evolution on the other, which, according to Professor Le Conte (whom Mr. Griffith-Jones wisely selects as the best exponent of Christian evolution), has no provision for such a restoration, for "once off the track and it is impossible to get on again";<sup>4</sup> and the author's frank admission "that so far the time does not seem to have come for a complete restatement of the doctrine of the Atonement on evolutionary lines";<sup>5</sup>—all this

<sup>1</sup> *The Ascent Through Christ*, see pp. 98-112.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 369.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 377.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 321.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 289, 290.

is by no means reassuring to the reader who turns to this attractive volume for the reconciliation desired. At best, it is an attempt rather than an accomplishment ; a study rather than a conclusion.

We are not now presuming to pronounce a judgment upon evolution. It must more definitely state its case and produce its evidence. The historical principle is one thing, and a particular evolutionary theory is another. We hesitate to pay the large price exacted until we can know precisely what we are to get. It is a radical programme that is proposed. If our religious thought is to be revolutionized ; if the supernatural is to vanish and miracles—yes, even as we have understood them—are to be dismissed, then we must not be regarded as foolishly wedded to our faith if we insist that a doctrine more clearly stated and more fully supported, a cosmical interpretation less beset with admitted embarrassments, a theory of things a trifle more susceptible of distinct harmonizing with the things which we have been holding both as true and sacred, shall be at once forthcoming as a compensation for what we are to give up.

Let it be understood that we plead "Not guilty" to the charge of hostile prejudice against evolution. We think we are fair enough to discount

very much that is said both for and against it, as very wild and wide of the mark. We heartily concede that it has brought rich contributions to modern world-study. We believe that it has in it much that is distinctly true. It has not revolutionized but illuminated the old argument from Design. Paley suffers, possibly, although not so much as is often alleged, and his truth is enforced more grandly than Paley ever imagined; for while we believe that teleology loses somewhat in the retail, it gains vastly in the wholesale. No man has his eyes open upon the world but sees the ever-present germinal principle of development at work. It is not a question of *whether?* but of *what?* But all this is entirely innocent, and it is not the technical theory of universal cosmical evolution. We must regard this theory in so far as it negatives whatever we have heretofore held as true, as properly under bonds to certify its own truth; until this is done we shall hold steadily to our course without embarrassment and without apprehension; in the event of this being done, then we shall be bound to reconsider the grounds on which we have been basing our faith.

The kindest critic of evolution, in his most propitious mood, could scarcely content himself with saying less than this, namely, that many

teachers of evolution have committed their greatest blunder in claiming too much for their theory. We do not believe that the Spencerian ambition to include all known phenomena under the all-comprehending category of evolution will ever permanently commend itself to sober and thoughtful minds. Already a reaction has come, and the world does not take Mr. Spencer very seriously. But even in his scheme, God is above and beyond all. He says, God cannot be known; but that is the voice of his agnosticism, not of his evolution. Evolution has a selfish interest in preaching the Divine Immanence. Indeed, many of its champions are not very careful to stand apart from pantheism. The immanence of God is a great truth, but, though there be many who would have us believe otherwise, it is no new thing under the sun. Augustine and Calvin both taught it as clearly as it has ever since been taught. It is not all the truth. It is not one whit more important, more scriptural, or more necessary to a true cosmical theory, than is the doctrine of the Divine Transcendence. If God is in the cosmical process, He is above it, also. God is greater than His world; the world reveals Him, but there is more of God than the world either contains or reveals. He is its author and its end; its begin-

ning and its goal. We know God in a way by knowing His world; and that world is knowable because a rational God, preëxistent, independent, and transcendent, has given it both its being and its form.

A severe test of evolution, as of any other cosmical theory, is its ability to take account of the fact of sin. Not that it must solve the mystery, for no theory can do that; but it must have a place for sin, as sin, and this we distinctly believe that evolution cannot do. Evolutionary anthropology has never satisfactorily squared itself with the Genesis narrative of the historical introduction of sin into our world. We need not infer the Miltonic Adam from the Mosaic; but we cannot reconcile the Adam of uninterrupted evolution with the Adam of the biblical account. We decline to see in present day degenerate savages the true living representatives of primitive man. We do not picture the Edenic Adam as a highly civilized citizen, nor are we anxious to prove that he was intellectually a greater man than Aristotle. Solitude is incompatible with civilization as we know it, for civilization is essentially social, industrial, economical, and commerical. In his moral equipment, as yet undeveloped and unutilized, the Adam of Genesis is a vastly dif-

ferent kind of being from the Adam of evolution, sluggishly waking into human capacities, falling upward into the dawning consciousness of right and wrong, and rising at last to the permanent dignity of a guilty sinner. We speak only of a Spencerian naturalistic evolution as applied to the origin of Man, and we insist that such a first man is inconsistent with any fair interpretation of the Scripture record, and is without adequate evidence to-day to justify his claim upon our belief or our respect.

No more can the evolutionary programme account for Christianity, for the Christian or for Christ. If Christianity is true at all, then it is entitled to have its works accepted at their face value not only, but to have its own explanations of those works accepted as well. The history of Christianity is a stupendous enigma apart from Christianity's Book. The Bible furnishes the only adequate *rationalè* of Christianity, historical, moral, redemptive, and social.

This being so, the redemption of the individual Christian is a sore puzzle to the world-student, who would fain explain all he finds on the principle of a purely naturalistic evolution. The evolutionist is bound to abhor the very word "regeneration" unless he eviscerate it of its meaning.

Our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus is absolutely unsusceptible of translation into the evolutionary language. "Ye must be born again—*ἄνωθεν*." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." And what is true of the initiative is true of the whole; the new life is sustained by the same source whence comes the new birth. *Omne vivum ex vivo*. To be sure, there is a process of growth, but there is an element of the supernatural which is the vital factor in it all. "I am the vine, ye are the branches."

Nor is this less true of Christianity as a life-force and life-giving force in the world's history. Christianity cannot be accounted for on purely evolutionary principles. It has its home in this law-ruled world, and in a thousand ways it exerts its benign and heavenly influences in a manner which is harmonious with the processes and methods of the cosmical sphere in which it works; but to de-supernaturalize Christianity is to destroy it. We speak not now of its miracles and theophanies; we are not now concerned for its apologetical and evidential aspects; we are only saying that as we cannot account for an individual Christian on the mere lines of naturalistic evolution, no more can we account for a social

Christian community in the same way. We can no more account for the church at Uganda than we can account for David Livingstone; we can no more account for the Christian community of the New Hebrides than we can account for John G. Paton. Social Christianity gives to evolution a many times harder nut to crack than does one individual Christian. If it cannot account for one ennobled publican, for one changed and chastened proud, persecuting Pharisee, how shall it account for the Church of God, with its unnumbered saints, raised from sin to purity, who by lip and life ascribe the power that raised them to a source that is both from without and from above?

And, as both individual Christian character and historical Christianity have their origin in Jesus Christ, we go on to say that, above all else, the Christ of Christianity, even more than the Christianity of Christ, cannot be accounted for on the evolutionary hypothesis. The Incarnation of Evangelical Christian doctrine obstinately refuses to submit itself to the categories of naturalistic evolution. I am not now referring specifically to the Immaculate Conception of the Child of the Virgin; I am not wishing to touch the mooted question whether the Incarnation would have

occurred by virtue of a necessity born of the nature of things, or whether the Divine tabernacling in the flesh was expressly and exclusively for redemptive purposes; we waive all that, and put evolution to the test to account for the Christ that is known, not to the philosopher and the critic, but to the world and to the heart; and we submit that, upon its own answer, it is found wanting. If we must drop the essential character of sin to let evolution account for sin, so must we drop the essential character of Christ to let evolution account for Christ. We believe that Professor Le Conte's well-known effort to *evolutionize* Christ is a complete failure, and we cannot believe that his argument ever afforded entire satisfaction to his own exceptionally reverent mind.<sup>1</sup> To grant an exception to the law in order to account for Christ is virtually to concede the inadequacy of the principle as a basis for the accounting. Certainly, as Dr. Forest has convincingly shown,<sup>2</sup> if evolution is to account for Christ, then the climax should have appeared at the *finalè* of the evolving process; but that would have been to defeat the very object of his coming.

<sup>1</sup> *Evolution and Its Relation to Religious Thought*, pp. 360-364.

<sup>2</sup> *The Christ of History and of Experience*, 2d ed., pp. 388-390.

The Christ of history ushered a new moral era into the course of man. A new force throbs, a new life pulsates, a new ideal, surcharged with divine dynamic, enters upon its renovating, regenerating work. The historian has refused to classify Jesus of Nazareth with other men and stop there. We can neither *naturalize* man nor *humanize* Christ, simply. It is not mere theology; it is not dry philosophy; it is the common judgment of mankind, enforced by reflection and confirmed by an experience that is both individual and unique, that even though men may reduce the race to a common cosmic level and presume to account for the generations upon some law of naturalistic biological evolution, still Jesus of Nazareth, in himself, in what he stands for, and in what he instituted, stands out the Great Exception in the history of humanity, putting to confusion all ordinary anthropological estimates and utterly withstanding every naturalistic mode of accounting.

Thus we do our best for evolution, and still we find it lacking. If it is a world-programme, there are serious unclosed breaks in that programme. It is sheer folly to say that it is natural and continuous, with God, for the human evolutionist must use the language of human science, and not of divine omniscience.

These admitted breaks are serious; notably from non-being to being, from the non-living to life, from the non-sentient to the sentient, and from the non-moral to the moral.<sup>1</sup> It is not that we deny that there is a great truth in the theory which is found both in the laws of thought and in the nature of things. It is rather that with as judicious a frame as we are able to command and with as hospitable a consideration of the evidence as we can give, we find ourselves forced to conclude that the evolutionary philosophy, which is at best merely descriptive, is unsatisfactory as an ethical valuation and that it is only by a confusion of ideas that it can be regarded as in any final sense a philosophy at all. The idea has its merits and its place; its standing vice is its claiming too much for itself; its blunder is its presuming to account for the world, whereas, when it does its very best, it only describes the world which still waits for its accounting.

<sup>1</sup> My esteemed friend, Professor G. H. Howison, LL.D., has just published a volume entitled, *The Limits of Evolution, and Other Essays* (Macmillan, 1901), the first paper in which, giving title to the book, is a most careful *critique* of evolution. He names five "limits," viz.: 1. Between the Phenomenal and the Noumenal; 2. Between the Inorganic and the Organic; 3. Between the Physiological and the Logical; 4. Between the Unknowable and the Explanatory; 5. Between Nature and Human Nature.



LECTURE V

MAN AS FACTOR IN THE COSMOS



## LECTURE V

### MAN AS FACTOR IN THE COSMOS

MAN bears a twofold relation to the General Revelation which is in the cosmos. In the first place, he is a part of it. If the world is the embodiment of ideas, then, seeing that man has a place in the world, he must figure among the ideas which it embodies. But, in the second place, man is the beholder of the cosmos, the person to whom its revelations are addressed. He may not be the only beholder, for we know that angels also are interested spectators of the vast "theater" of time.<sup>1</sup> Certainly it is an honoring recognition of the Godlike in man that the Creator deigns to show forth to him His glory in the heavens, and to declare to him His will in His Living and Written Word.

Let us devote the present hour to the consideration of man as an integral factor in the grand perspective of world-rationality, while we reserve the next for man as the wondering seer, the active learner of what is thus revealed.

<sup>1</sup> *1 Cor.* 4 : 9 ; *1 Peter* 1 : 12.

The most casual view of man and of his place in the order of which he is a part, discloses again a double character. He is purely natural, cosmical. He has his locus in space and time. He begins to be, he flourishes for a season, and then he passes away. He is born, he develops, he declines, and dies. As such a cosmical phenomenon, he belongs to the same category with the beast and the bird, with the shriveling leaf and the crumbling clod, with the cooling planet and the fading star. He weighs so many pounds avoirdupois; he occupies so many cubic units of space; he is subject to the common laws of chemistry and of mortality. He is not an exceptional bit of reality in the world in which he dwells. Nature treats him precisely as she treats the rest of her products, and gravitation does not "cease as he passes by."

But if he is this, he is just as truly more than this.

"Unless above himself he can  
Erect himself, how weak a thing is man."

If he is a part of the cosmos, he is also an image of the Logos. If he is the microcosm, he is also the micrologue. To stop with what is merely cosmical in man is to miss what preëminently makes him man. If he is body, he is spirit

also; if he is subject to gravitation, he can soar above it, too; if he crumbles like the clod, he can also think and choose and reason like a god.

Man is commonly said to be of twofold composition. He is spiritual and material; he is cosmical and super-cosmical. It is nothing new, however, that this theory should be disputed. Idealism and materialism, on *a priori* grounds and from opposite view-points, regard human nature, in all the vast round of its completeness, as a simple unitary thing. Idealism is a term of very uncertain signification, and perhaps, in this reference, it would be more accurate to say *Spiritualism*, although that is a term scarcely less ambiguous; but, whatever may be the term employed, the philosophy which reduces all things in their last analysis to immateriality, views man as spirit only. This spirit may have real objective existence, or it may have only ideal existence; in any case, man is wholly immaterial. This anthropology is a corollary from a certain philosophical theory which we may call idealistic monism; and toward this theory, with the distinct neo-Hegelian trend in contemporary thinking, there are in some quarters signs of a more or less pronounced drift.

This may seem like far-away speculation, but in the search for a world-plan it has no small

place. We must confess ourselves silly people if we take fright at a mere name. There is a sense in which every Christian thinker is a spiritualistic monist. God alone is, in the sense that He alone is self-existent and eternal. All else has its origin in Him and by Him is kept in being. And "God is a Spirit," a Spirit only. If we carry our view up high enough and back far enough, then, of course, we all are ultimate idealists and ultimate monists. But if we are to take the world as we find it, if we are to go out and look that world over empirically, if we are to base our theory upon our experience in the only world which we know anything about, then we shall write down spirit and matter as equally final. They are not equal in faculty or in dignity, but they are equally *here*. Notwithstanding the labored efforts of philosophy, spirit and matter stubbornly refuse to be reduced to a common denominator, by the plain man who knows the world he lives in. In the study of the actual world which we have to deal with, idealistic monism is a pure fiction of the philosophic imagination, just as the atom is a pure product of the scientific imagination.

But the monist quickly turns and tells us that spirit and matter are phenomenal representations

of the One Existing Substance, Spinoza's *una et unica substantia*; and that if we could only brush aside the veil of phenomenality and get a peep into the most holy place of reality, we should see the truth of his monistic theory. Very likely; it is enough for us to know that, veil or no veil, wherever we can see in this world, spirit and matter coexist side by side, and back of the veil we all must assume the attitude of the agnostic.

But, from the other extreme, there are those who stoutly affirm that man is matter only. Really, we have never been able to see any difference or preference between monistic idealism and monistic materialism; for, in the absence of the contrasting other, the name we give to the one we have is certainly a matter of indifference. All our thinking about spirit and matter were then purest nonsense, for one of them would be everything and the other would have no existence; there is no use for the word, because what it stands for never existed. We cannot know what we are talking about, for according to monism we pronounce what seems to us to be matter to be not matter at all, but *spirit*, or *vice versa*; but, inasmuch as our theory would contradict the seeming, and inasmuch as the very words we use, together with the ideas which they con-

note, are based upon the things which *do seem thus*, that is, upon the things which we know and *as we know them*, it must follow that the words we use are falsely used, and the thoughts we vain would pair with them are vain and meaningless. Mr. Spencer's words in closing his *First Principles* are above criticism, for if you grant what he thinks he has established, then it must be a matter of the purest indifference to him whether men call him materialist or spiritualist.<sup>1</sup> We fail to see where the monist can base his preference between the two. We know both spirit and matter in terms of contrast, each with the other; and if the other be blotted out of our thinking, then the one that is left means nothing to us, in any case. Professor Huxley saw this when he said, "In itself it is of little moment whether we express the phenomena of matter in terms of spirit or the phenomena of spirit in terms of matter."<sup>2</sup> In the interest of science, however, he preferred materialistic terminology.

Our epistemology is determined by our experience; our experience is determined by the world we live in; and the world we live in is a dualistic world. All our thinking and talking and acting

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 558, 559.

<sup>2</sup> *Collected Essays*, vol. i., p. 164.

prove that we so apprehend it. Concerning some other world that might be exclusively monistic, our modes of speaking and of thinking have not been trained. For once, we find ourselves where agnostics we must be. We believe that any other than a merely artificial monistic theory means utter agnosticism, and we do not see how spiritualistic monism has a feather-weight of advantage, in presumption or in proof, over a cosmical monism which is purely materialistic and not one whit more hypothetical.

So we conclude that these two views are alike deductions from *a priori* premises. Man, as we know him, like the world we live in, as we know it, is dualistic. If man is not as we know him, and if the world is not as we know it, then we do not know them at all, and we are left in the deadlock of helpless ignorance.

But spirit, or matter, or both, is man more than natural? Is his natural history his whole history, and is his natural decline his final ending? Is there more in man than the forces of the cosmos have produced? Must all his greatness turn to dust, and is the horrid mummy all that survives a Pharaoh's pomp and splendor in the past?

“Imperious Cæsar, dead and turned to clay,  
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.”

If we are thus to hold that man at his noblest and best is but the ripe crop of nature's harvest, we shall need a new interpretation of the fine eulogies which saints and sages have in all ages delighted to pronounce upon the possibilities of human nature. "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!"

The naturalistic theory of man has had great vogue latterly. Man is the climax of an ascending series; he is the crown of creative processes; he is the topmost pinnacle in the magnificent structure of millennial cosmical evolutions. His present is the accumulation and capitalization of his age-long ancestral past. Heredity lifts him up and sets him on the shoulders of his fathers. He is the "heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time." And he is a finality; from this on, whatever may happen, it will not be improvement away from man, but improvement of man. The progress of the future is to be not physical but psychical; the trained brain is to invent the ingenious tool to supplement the weakness of the hand; racial evolution has given way to social civilization. Man closes the series, and Lowell's

query is born of a fancy which is as unscientific as it is grotesque :—

“Who knows but from our loins may spring  
 (Long hence) some winged sweet-throated thing,  
 As much superior to us  
 As we to Cynocephalus?”<sup>1</sup>

Man is the most complex and complete of beings, and, to use Mr. Fiske's phrase, “completeness of living” is his true goal.<sup>2</sup> It must be said that from the merely natural view of human life this way of putting it is very suggestive; it fits in with Guizot's conception of civilization as being the multiplication of human wants, and with the doctrine that as man grows in moral stature he not only has life, but he has it “more abundantly.” But its weakness is in confining itself to the natural view of human life. As man succeeds in attaining to “completeness of living” he is good, and as he fails in this he is bad. This is the movable standard of his moral law. When he stumbled into consciousness of this high law he became truly man. Henceforth the only worthy rule of his life is not to survive, not to struggle in order to survive; it is not to be beautiful nor to be good nor to be true; but to live completely.

<sup>1</sup> *Lowell's Works*, Riverside Edition, vol. x., p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> See especially *Through Nature to God*.

“Completeness of living” is the equivalent for perfect righteousness. “Thou shalt live completely” is the summing up of the Law and the Prophets.

This is a plausible putting of the theory of the natural genesis of man’s moral life. Mr. Fiske says, “Morality comes upon the scene when there is an alternative offered of leading better lives or worse lives.”<sup>1</sup> And, pray, if morality is not yet on the scene, what can these words “better” and “worse” mean? Before that, there was no better or worse. No conscience is there, and yet, at a certain point, a conscience leaps forth. *Ex nihil, nihil fit*. It goes into the evolution mill, mere non-moral advantage, and it comes out a refined ethical sense. The theory would interpret “good” and “bad” in terms of “completeness of living,” whereas man’s moral sense, universally, precisely reverses the process. Herein is the condemnation of all earth-born theories of ethics. We must not measure moral goodness and badness by the standard of that indefinite “completeness of living”; we measure them by nothing, but we measure all things by them.

What interests us now is the naturalistic way of accounting for the cosmic disturbance which we have found. It accounts for it by denying it.

<sup>1</sup> *Through Nature to God*, p. 52.

The "Empirical Surprise" is, upon sober second thought, no surprise after all; indeed, the surprise would have been in its not being here. What we call sin is a necessary stage and factor in the moral development of the human race. No strength without struggle; no character without temptation; no holiness without sin. The upward course of the race has been the gradual molting of sin, that is, the shedding of the vicious habits and impulses of our sub-human sires. Original sin is not a fiction; it is a fact, sure enough, only it is not original *sin*; it is original, but it is not sin. The brute is becoming more human, less brutish. We are letting "the ape and tiger die," though it is too true that they "die hard." Evolution is no longer merely a cosmic process. The *will* of man has somehow got itself into the movement as a modifying factor; but, whatever he may think about it, this will is no more free than in *seeming to be so*. Evolution is now civilization; civilization is humanization; and humanization is all there is in what the theologian calls regeneration, adoption, and sanctification. This theory says good-bye to the idea of sin *as* sin. Instead of being abnormal it is thoroughly normal. What we have been calling lack of conformity to the law of God is the only condition of both knowing and keep-

ing that law. We may think it is what ought not to be, but we are mistaken. Without what we call sin man could not have been man; he could never have entered upon the grand and ever-expanding career which lies before him.

It need scarcely be said that all this is directly opposed to the Bible doctrine of sin and the Christian theory of human progress. Man was created "in the image of God in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures." Whatever may have been his biological antecedents and morphological affiliations, his spirit came by the inbreathing of his God, in whose image he was created. This Godlike image differentiated him from everything which had gone before. He was endowed with a rational and moral nature, by which he was able, directly and immediately, to know the true and to choose the right. In this state of pristine innocence he was able to enjoy free communion with his God, while the fields and forces of nature were his rich and willing servitors. He had it in his power to continue in this state of perfect innocence and happiness, as he had it also in his power to disobey the distinct command of his Creator, and thus to cause alienation between him and his perfect Father whom he thus resisted. He strangely chose to

disobey, and the promised calamity overtook him. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"; the seeds of mortality were swiftly sown in the soil of human nature. The ravages of sin soon made havoc of the beautiful habitat and beatific habits of the guilty progenitors of mankind. The cosmos shared the suffered penalty with its disgraced and dethroned king. Fruit gave way to thorns, and fragrant flowers degenerated into briars and thistles. Enmity came between man and animated nature. Birds and beasts flee from his presence and lie in wait, conspiring to destroy him. The world is out of joint. The whole cosmos, man's larger body, which had sympathized in his primitive harmony and bliss, now shares with him the shame, the curse, the penalty, of his disastrous downfall.

This, in very brief, is the Christian doctrine of the origin of the disorder and distress which mar the beautiful world God had made. It affected both man and his home, the cosmos. Both came from the creative hand "very good."<sup>1</sup> "Everything that He had made" was suited to accomplish the purpose for which He had made it. "Everything is beautiful in its time." We must not forget that goodness means one thing

<sup>1</sup> *Genesis* 1 : 31.

when applied to a moral agent, and another when applied to impersonal and unmoral objects. Our conception of *goodness* is different when we speak of a good man, from what it is when we speak of a good ship or a good orange or a good law. And yet there is a deep sense in which the meaning is the same. The world was made for a purpose, and so long as it served that purpose it was very good. So, also, man was made for a purpose, and so long as he served that purpose he was very good. But man is a part of the world; and when man failed to serve his purpose by sinning against God, the world itself could no longer accomplish its aim, and was therefore no longer very good. When man sinned, he carried the man-ruled cosmos down with him. It was not the extra-human world that sinned and fell; it was man, for only man could sin. The king fell, and his kingdom fell with him. His dominion over the creatures carried with it a responsibility for the well-being of those creatures. His disobedience of God's command involved a breach of trust in this "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Genesis* 1 : 26.

The consequent curse of sin fell upon a wider area than the head of the sinner. Woman's travail and subjection to her husband,<sup>1</sup> and man's labor and sorrow in bread-winning, are due to their guilty course. The earth also was withered with its curse; not that the earth is a person to feel shame or to suffer a penalty, but, being at the first "very good," as a subject and servant of man, it now is blighted with its Creator's curse, not for its own sake, but for man's, its false and disobedient master's sake. The instrument shall blister the hand of the workman; the food shall poison the mouth of the eater. No more volunteer crops shall spring forth from the ground to feed the hunger of guilty man; where had grown up "every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food,"<sup>2</sup> thorns and thistles shall now come forth. By the sweat of his face shall man earn his bread till he return unto the ground. Mortality has smitten him, and he is to return to the dust whence he came.

This is the ruined condition of God's image in man and the present state of his "very good" world. This is sinful man in a sinful world; that is to say, this is sinning man in a world blighted by sin. The organic unity of mankind links the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 3: 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 9.

race into one, and heredity makes one of many, *e pluribus unum*, in the blighted destinies of the First Man.

The world is thrown into confusion. Its order becomes disorder; its beauty hideous disproportion; its design jarring maladjustment, and its harmonies grating discords. The cosmos is disorganized, decosmized; it seems a chaos. It must not be understood that man is wholly dethroned nor the cosmos wholly deranged and disorganized. The old relation is not destroyed; it is disturbed, thrown out of poise. Fallen man is man still, but he is man shorn of his noblest prerogatives and highest powers. His faculty for fellowship with God is blighted by his consciousness of guilt; his innocence is clouded by his experiential knowledge of what he had been far wiser if he had never known; and his whole being, body and soul, is in the grip of God's inexorable executioner, the threatened death. Still he breathes the breath of life; his senses are not dead; his intellect survives; his rational powers, though affected, are not extinct. Yet all of these are blistered by the withering scorch of sin. Only his spiritual nature, that which above all constituted him in the image of his Creator, the link that bound him in loving union with Him, is atro-

phied and broken. All this too is purely his own work. He blames himself for it, and therein is the keenest pungency of the curse. St. Augustine says: "Man's nature, indeed, was created at first faultless and without sin; but that nature of man in which every one is born from Adam, now wants the Physician, because it is not sound. All good qualities, no doubt, which it still possesses in its make, life, senses, intellect, it has of the Most High God its Creator and Maker. But the flaw which *darkens and weakens* all those natural goods, so that *it has need of illumination and healing*, it has not contracted from its blameless Creator, but from that original sin which it committed by free will."<sup>1</sup>

Fallen man's relation to the cosmos is not so much destroyed as disturbed. He is a dis-crowned king; an emperor whose scepter is smirched and broken. No man can know how different from the present *régime* would have been sinless man's dominion over the creatures, over the forces of nature, over the laws of the cosmos, if Tertullian's "Interloper" had not invaded. Lord Bacon has somewhere said that if we would master nature we must learn to obey her laws. Modern science is not so much a gain in its dis-

<sup>1</sup> *De Natura et Gratia*, chap. iii.

covery of nature's secrets as in its recovery of nature's services. The advancement of material civilization is largely only the better adjusting of nature's methods to man's needs. Some of us heard Lord Kelvin say at the brilliant celebration of the jubilee of his connection with the University of Glasgow that in all his fifty years of hard work in the study of the laws of matter, he had only been able to learn a few of nature's "tricks." As the Lord Kelvins discover these "tricks," men come to avail themselves of them, and so more and more come to let nature do their work for them. Who knows what would have been,—who knows what, in the coming developments of a beneficent Christian civilization, yet shall be, the facilities, the possibilities, and the achievements of man as he succeeds in getting back *en rapport* with the vast and varied and fertile kingdoms of nature, animate and inanimate, over which, as originally ordered, he was given the dominion?

Now we are beginning to see why it is that nature, though beautiful and orderly at the first, is now so often opaque of beauty and doubtful of design. The world we see is not God's world, as God made it. Weeds and thistles, killing frosts and blighting mildews, venomous rattlesnakes and destructive coddling-moths, cyclones and

earthquakes, child-birth pains and labor strikes, wasting disease and tardy but sure-footed death; —all these belong to a world which the blight of sin has cursed. Whether or not some of these, and how many, would have marked a cosmical career unmarred by sin, the scientist is as impotent as the philosopher to say. Not that the objective forces would not have been the same; not that the laws that regulate their action would have been different; but, what counts for more than everything else, man's relation to all these things would have been entirely different. In the world as God made it, we would have ruled nature and might have summoned her facile forces for our willing service.

We are now in position to understand how it is that the idealistic world-framer fails to find the world which he has been fancying. If sin had not upset things, the world would have been a transcript of the ideal. That disturbance both soiled the ideal and obscured man's vision for seeing it. This is why men cannot sit indoors and study natural science; this is why Spinoza's pet theory that the world is but the skeleton of his geometrical and ethical formulæ, and Hegel's notion that human history is the unfolding of a purely rational plan, are chimerical; this is why the philosopher

says, too strongly, that it is of the very nature of the real that it fall short of the ideal, and why the poet can say not only that

“ Among themselves all things  
Have order; and from hence the form, which makes  
The universe resemble God ;”<sup>1</sup>

but also,

“ Yet is it true,  
That as oft-times but ill accords the form  
To the design of art, through sluggishness  
Of unreplying matter, so this course  
Is sometimes quitted by the creature, who  
Hath power directed thus, to bend elsewhere ;  
As from a cloud the fire is seen to fall,  
From its original impulse warp'd, to earth,  
By vicious fondness.”<sup>2</sup>

The cause of the discrepancy between the cosmos and the Logos, between the cosmical and the rational, between the real and the ideal, is Sin.

In coming up to this *fons et origo* of the world's disorder and distress, we are not so foolish as to imagine for one moment that we have solved any ultimate problems, though we do believe that we have escaped some grave difficulties. We have

<sup>1</sup> Dante's *The Vision; Paradise*, Canto I., lines 100-103. Cary's trans.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Canto I., lines 124-131.

already seen that it is of the very nature of sin that it cannot yield itself to rational solutions, and its influences in the world of man, like the principle whence they spring, are likewise befogging and confusing. There are, however, two or three questions sufficiently obvious and important to warrant our giving the remainder of this hour to their statement and consideration.

And, first of all, we shall be required to state what effect this view will have upon the idea of Natural Theology. If nature is turned upside down, then can nature teach religion? Is nature orthodox or heretic? Is Milton right in saying so tersely, "God and Nature bid the same"?<sup>1</sup>

Let it be carefully noted that we have not said that the order of nature is destroyed, but only that it is disturbed. If the cosmos were totally overthrown, then Natural Theology were gone; just as, on the other hand, if the cosmos were entirely undisturbed, then Natural Theology would be infallible and errorless. But it is neither the one nor the other; it is disquieted, disordered, measurably disorganized.

No, there is no contradiction in speaking of a disordered order. There may be discords in a melody; there may be blemishes in a thing of

<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Lost*, Book VI.

beauty; there may be lapses in sound reasoning. The effect of sin is not the destruction of the cosmos, but of the perfection of the cosmos. The harmonics of nature survive, but they are muffled and modified; her beauties can be seen, but they are veiled and marred; her rationality is discernible, but there are not a few monstrosities and absurdities to throw the mind off the search. And we must say that the history of Natural Theology is exactly what we should expect it to be, upon this view. Men have differed very widely in estimating its evidence and fixing its value. Atheism sees the disorder only, and is blind to the order; it sees the sun-spots, but is blind to the sun. Deism sees in the world-order the photograph of the divine thought, and so declines any further manifestation of the Divine as a gratuity or an impertinence. A Newman believes that Natural Theology alone leads straightway to infidelity, while a Ritschl denies it altogether in the interest of a true religion. Such a diversity of judgment would hardly be possible if the cosmos were either purely rational and ethical, or wholly irrational and non-ethical.

Besides, we are not to forget that the mind of man, which we are now regarding as only a factor in the cosmos, is deeply affected by this sin-wrought

disturbance. Its moral relation to its environment is vitiated. The man who wants to see the truth of God is the man who will most likely see it, either in the world or in the Book. The heavens declare His glory, but while one astronomer says it is God's glory which he sees, another insists that it is the glory of La Place. It is not that the invisible things of God are not to be clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; it is because men, knowing God, glorified Him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened."<sup>1</sup>

We believe there is a gospel of the cosmos, and that it is the gospel of God. But it is an obscured gospel, and men's eyes are holden that they cannot read it. Its lines are blurred, its form is marred; or, to say the very same thing, from the view-point of men's discerning faculties, their eyes are blinded, their ears are heavy, their hearts are unresponsive.

The second question we must face is the alleged crime of having abandoned the positions of modern science in the view presented. We shall be reminded that the cosmos is subject to laws and forces which are neither contingent upon such

<sup>1</sup> *Romans* 1 : 19, 20.

a mere incident as human choice nor disturbed by it. The objectivity of the world is beyond the blighting touch of man, and, it may be said, we exaggerate the consequent effect of sin.

In this matter very much will depend upon what we think of the scope and infallibility of science. We mean no disrespect to the scientist when we say that, if he demurs to the theologian's meddling with his work, the rule should work both ways. Not that there is any partition between their departments, for there cannot be. But in the distribution of the work among the specialists, we understand that the scientist is busied with finding and telling what is, and the theologian is engaged in the work of accounting for what he finds. When the scientist throws away his instruments and begins with his inferences, he ceases to be a scientist, and he ceases to be entitled to our superior respect. We have yet to learn that science has ever found an accounting for the awful fact with which we are now wrestling; its latest attempt is to do so by denying it. We have also to learn yet that science has really found anything which is irreconcilable with the Bible view which we accept. We are not resuscitating the Miltonic Eden and Adam as needing no revision; we are not insisting that

all the traditional interpretations of biblical narratives are to stand; we are only now ready to affirm our faith that there remaineth yet much land for science to possess, and that when science gets all the facts—if it ever does—and lays them down beside the chapters of Genesis which purport to give an account of the first introduction of sin into our world, the two showings will not only harmonize, but will also interpret and illuminate each other.

Science may find and state facts, but it is most scientific when it is most modest in going farther. The average scientist is a very amateur philosopher, and, when he tries his hand at theology, he generally justifies the condemnations which he is wont to pour out on it. Professor Orr is well within bounds when he says, "Science may *affirm*, it can certainly never prove, that the world is in a normal state in these respects, or that, even under existing laws, a better balance of harmony could not be maintained had the Creator so willed it."<sup>1</sup>

A third question which we shall be challenged to tackle is that of the place and meaning of death in our theory. It must be conceded that

<sup>1</sup>*The Christian View of God and the World.* p. 228. Italics his.

this is no easy question. Death is the threatened penalty of sin; sin came, and consequently death followed. But would death have occurred if sin had not? In the first place, we may reply that this is purely an idle query. The existing cosmos is a unit, and sin is a part of that unit; a cosmos without sin would have had an entirely different character and career. Such an "if" carries us entirely out of the world; that is, into another, purely hypothetical world. When a certain lad was asked if his sister liked cheese, he replied that he had no sister; the persistent questioner then asked him, "Well, *if you had a sister, would she like cheese?*"

The question is twofold; it applies to sub-human life and to man. Concerning the former there are mitigating considerations. There is much truth suggested by Dr. Newman Smyth's remark, "Death is a curse of no animal except man."<sup>2</sup> We put great stress on Mr. Alfred Russell Wallace's argument that the lower animals do not know pain as we do. They take things as they come; they are not wise enough to worry, or, shall we say they are too wise? Professor Shaler contributes an important truth when he reminds us that, economically regarded, not death

<sup>1</sup> *The Place of Death in Evolution*, p. 157.

but premature death is the evil.<sup>1</sup> The brute is hardly haunted by dread of death. Professor Shaler says: "There is no reason to believe that the idea of the end of their individuality ever occurs to them . . . . If they have any idea of their condition, [*i. e.*, that of their dead companions], it is, most likely, that they are sleeping . . . . It is, in effect, impossible that death can have any meaning to brutes, save it may be in the case of the higher apes and with the humanized dog. We see nothing in their acts that leads us to suppose that they find in it matter for questioning."<sup>2</sup> The experience of death itself, *articulum mortis*, is not regarded as distressing or painful in the case of any living thing; and, accordingly, if in the brute-world all apprehensive anticipations and dreadful associations are lacking, the difficulties of the problem are minimized; and when we remember that, as a fact, death is a servant of life, and that it is a part of the economy of the whole course of the world, we must agree that no serious objection remains in our way.

But is it not different with humanity? We

<sup>1</sup> *The Individual; A Study of Life and Death*, by Nathaniel Southgate Shaler. See pp. 226-228.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 193-4.

doubt not for an instant that man, *as man*, is mortal. His mortality is not contingent upon his having sinned. But what is mortality? St. Augustine distinguishes between *mortale* (capable of dying), *mortuum* (dead), and *moriturus* (destined to die).<sup>1</sup> Sinless man was capable of dying, but it is an entirely different question whether he was destined to die. Enoch and Elijah were mortal, but they never died. Mortality is not certainty of death; it is liability to death. Our Lord became human; nevertheless, he might have escaped the cross. It was an additional, voluntary humiliation for our sakes. Conceivably, he might have ascended into the heavens before the awful tragedy of Calvary had been enacted. Death, as we sinful men know it, is not the only imaginable gateway from earth to heaven. "The sting of death is sin;"<sup>2</sup> accordingly, in a world without sin, death is stingless and the grave gets no victory. In an Edenic state of innocence and communion with God, wholly untouched and uncursed by sin, death would have been lacking in every particular that makes it *Death* to us. On the lips of pure and stainless mortals that cruel name could carry no horrors, that dreaded foe is

<sup>1</sup> *De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione*, chap. iii.

<sup>2</sup> *I Cor.* 15 : 56.

stripped of every power to destroy and to intimidate.

This conception of death is fully warranted by the Christian faith concerning the changes wrought upon it by the grace of God. The child of God has been delivered from a lifelong bondage through fear of death.<sup>1</sup> Grace takes away sin, and as sin is the sting of death, death no longer has its terrors. Dr. Smith says, in speaking of the sinful state of man, "Death becomes, as it was not originally, a terror and a curse; it wears henceforth a punitive aspect to man's guilty conscience."<sup>2</sup> The cause of the curse, not of the *fact* of death, is sin; the cause is removed and the effect follows; the curse is gone and the fact remains; but, the curseless death is a blessed euthanasia, a glorious victory.

We cannot see why cosmological disorders should be regarded as void of ethical bearings, or why natural evil, in the sphere of man, should be considered exclusively as natural. Dr. Julius Müller is doubtless correct in thinking that theology "must give up the notion of fully answering all the questions which here suggest themselves, if it would avoid unpleasant complications with

<sup>1</sup> *Hebrews 2: 14, 15.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Place of Death in Evolution*, p. 145.

the natural sciences in their various branches and phases of development.”<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, we do believe that a careful consideration of the whole subject diminishes the difficulties of the problem. We are skeptical concerning Horace Bushnell’s theory of the “anticipative consequences” of sin,<sup>2</sup> for that seems to us to make nature *unnature*, not now only, but from the very beginning. The Apostle Paul explicitly tells us that nature is a fallen sufferer together with man, on account of sin.<sup>3</sup> Professor Orr, quoting Bishop Ellicott, thinks that the key to this whole classical passage of the apostle is in the one word “vanity” (*ματαιότης*), profitlessness, arrested development, defeated end. We can hardly conceive how a world whose chief factor has gone wrong could be a success in accomplishing its design. Man is corrupt, and the world of which he is a part and over which he is given dominion catches the contagion. Its forces are perverted to the evil purposes of its fallen head.

Only one more question, we can undertake now to consider. If man is wrong, what becomes of

<sup>1</sup> *The Christian Doctrine of Sin*, vol. ii., p 287.

<sup>2</sup> *Nature and the Supernatural*, chap. vii., especially pp. 215, 216.

<sup>3</sup> *Romans* 8 : 19-23.

his ideas of right and wrong? Must natural ethics go down as some say natural theology has gone? "If the light which is in us be darkness, then how great is that darkness?"

Alas, here too we find the evil stroke of sin. In clearest lights there remains much confusion. It is not that sinful man's ideals are wrong, but that he gets them and holds them wrong. Human nature, as well as extra-human nature, is unnatural. The word nature is ambiguous. Man is by nature finite, and this is all right; man is by nature sinful, and this is all wrong. Human nature, in so far as it is a factor in the cosmos, is perverted and out of joint. The natural man is unnatural. Nature, without or within, is not a sound teacher of ethics. Raptures over the beauties and sanctities of nature suffer cruel disillusionment by looking at the facts. *Naturam prosequi* is a misleading motto for noblest achievement. Man's soul is *de facto* the seat of deep disorder. We very much wish that some competent writer would discuss the theodicy of human instinct. Men's propensities, impulses, passions, instincts, mislead. They need saving from themselves. This truth is the fundamental presupposition of the element of rescue in all Christian work.

And yet here again we must not forget that the overthrow is not absolute and complete. Sinful men have their ideals, though consciously unrealized. Sin is against God, just as crime is against the State; and vice is against both God and self.<sup>1</sup> Vice, that is to say, is an offense against the ideal which is embodied in the very nature of the offender. This ideal may be wholly absent from the consciousness of the vicious man, but it is in the very nature of the man, nevertheless. It is his Creator's ideal, if not his own. If the first man had never sinned, he would have realized that ideal, and would have continued "very good." The author of the ideal which vice violates is God, so that all vice is, therefore, sin. Vice defeats what Dr. James Kidd calls "self-realization";<sup>2</sup> by which he means "the fulfillment of the design embodied in the self, the development of the germ that lies in our being." A natural morality that would exact and enable this "self-realization" would answer every demand of God or man. But, alas, men substitute for this what the same helpful author calls "self-gratification," that is, the appeasing of a passing appetite or de-

<sup>1</sup> Principal Fairbairn's *Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 452.

<sup>2</sup> *Morality and Religion*, pp. 39-40.

sire. All depends upon which *self* it is. All the distance between Sodom and the New Jerusalem lies between following the propensities of the self that is and striving to realize the self that ought to be.

And here we come upon a thought of deepest interest in modern literature and life. The conflict is between self-gratification and self-realization. There is a fadeless ideal in lowest depths often conscious to the darkened mind, for

“ In even savage bosoms,  
There are longings, yearnings, strivings  
For the good they comprehend not.”

The present appetite, however, too often obscures the remote ideal. Shakespeare counsels self-realization when he says, “To thine own self be true, and . . . thou canst not then be false to any man.” Too easily and too often we make our meanness the franchise for our being mean. We say with the garrulous old Bishop Blougram,

“My business is not to remake myself.”

The darkest sins in the history of man have boasted the sanctions of the human breast. The blackest deeds of lust and hate and cruelty and greed have been coined in the mint of “human

nature." Modern fiction reeks with this false gospel of self-gratification. The culprit's answer to every charge is, "I am built that way." Temper is substituted for will, and temperament for character. Realism in art, with all its salacious appeals and vice-breeding influences, is its hellish spawn. Renan was a brilliant high priest at this altar of instinctive lubricity. Tess of the D'Urbervilles breaks an accepted social law, but obeyed a natural impulse, and, although men said she had fallen from her innocence, men lied; Tess is as guiltless "as the sleeping birds in the hedges, or the skipping rabbits on a moon-lit warren." She has her philosophy, and these are her words: "Feelings are feelings. I won't be a hypocrite any longer, so there! . . . I must be as I was born." Again and again does Mr. Hardy apologize for adultery and seduction because they have the sanction of "impulse."<sup>1</sup>

We shall hope to see by and by that, paradoxical as it may sound, self-realization is attained only by self-humiliation; that the human heart is deceitful and desperately wicked; that the first move to be made in righting up a wrong world is to give to man a clean heart and a right spirit; that

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. S. Law Wilson's *Theology of Modern Literature*, pp. 381-408.

the way to honor and success is not to gratify self and take the pleasure of the hour, but to deny self and take up the cross that awaits its bearer; that it is a delusive and superficial philosophy which has for its motto, *Naturam prosequi*; it is the philosophy of present struggle and of the final victory which has for its motto, *Christum prosequi*.



LECTURE VI

MAN AS SPECTATOR OF THE  
COSMOS



## LECTURE VI

### MAN AS SPECTATOR OF THE COSMOS

IN the last lecture we considered man as a citizen of the cosmical commonwealth. In this we are to study him as an outsider. We shall see him akin to those of whom we are told

“Others sat apart on a hill retired,  
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high  
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate.”

Only man can do this. Herein is the distinguishing dignity of his nature. The brute is conscious, but not self-conscious. A dreaming man is conscious, but unself-conscious. It is a marvel that man can abstract himself from himself; make himself both scrutinizing scientist and the passive object of his scrutiny. He can place himself under his own glass and stand at one end and look through the glass while he lies at the other end and is looked at. Only man can climb higher than himself and look down upon himself. Only man can bring his scientific knowledge to the test of his consciousness, not only, but also bring his consciousness to the test of his scientific knowl-

edge. He is both seer and seen; both knower and known. "Know thyself" is a command as impossible to beasts as it is worthy of man. Anthropology is reflective human self-knowledge, and, as such, it is a chapter in theology; but the ornithology of a college of birds or the ichthyology of a college of fishes would be but the extravaganza of a fable. So that when man lays out for himself to know the cosmos of which he is a part, and to know himself as knowing the cosmos, he has set for himself a task in which no other earth-dweller can have a share.

Not that man is the only knower on the earth; but he is the only self-knower, and self-knowledge is a condition of truest knowledge. No complete knowledge of the cosmos is possible without a knowledge of the knowing self, which is an essential part of the world that is known.

Brutes have been said to be "men dreaming," and the remark is suggestively accurate. Dreaming men are conscious, but they are not conscious of themselves as dreaming. This is why so little can be known of the psychology of dreams. After we awake we remember the dream if, indeed, the whole dream be anything more than a panoramic flash at the moment of our waking. A dreamer may "dream that he has been dreaming"; he may

even dream that he is dreaming ; but the dreaming self is, *ipso facto*, incapacitated for that self-inspection which is essential to completest knowledge. Beasts know, but they do not know that they know. Professor James, of Harvard, says : "To *know* is one thing, and to know for certain *that* we know is another. One may hold to the first being possible without the second."<sup>1</sup> Self-knowledge conditions all knowledge of man which is most worthy of the name.

The eye of the horse, standing upon an eminence and overlooking a beautiful plain, may mirror the outstretching scene perfectly, as does the eye of the artist who is enchanted with the loveliness of the outlook. But there is no reason to believe that the horse has any æsthetic appreciation of the scenery. Animals form percepts, but they stop this side of concepts. They deal with the concrete and individualized ; they do not rise to the notion of the abstract or the universal. My dog can not only see and hear, probably with preterhuman keenness and accuracy, but afterwards he can remember that he saw and heard, and possibly that he relished the experience. But all this is too naïve to be dignified with the name of self-knowledge. The mental energy is expended upon

<sup>1</sup>*The Will to Believe*, p. 12. Italics his.

the object without. There is no reflex consciousness of the states and processes of the self-knowing, self-known self.

That is to say, man is the only terrestrial scientist. Science is organized, classified knowledge. The difference between scientific knowledge and common knowledge is not that the one is the real thing and the other is not, but that the one is related and classified knowledge, and the other is not. The farmer knows the soil as well as the agriculturist; the gardener knows flowers perhaps better than the botanist does; but the scientific knower takes into the account the whole tract of truth involved and sees the soil and plants as related to each other and to himself. It has been well said that the proper object of science is all existing things. This grand unity of all existing things falls into three parts, namely, what lies outside of the knowing subject, the knowing subject himself, and the consciousness of that knowing subject.<sup>1</sup>

All knowledge presupposes an affinity between the knowing subject and the object known. This fundamentally important principle has been too often set forth to need either development or defense. It is the sleeping postulate of all knowl-

<sup>1</sup> See Kuyper's *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology*, p. 65.

edge. We assume a radical analogy between ourselves and anything which we try to know. No writer has made this plainer than has Professor Ladd, of Yale. We know the world by first assuming that it is the manifestation of another self, an *alter ego*. The cosmos is knowable only because there is back of it and in it that which is akin to the knower. The staunch theologian tells us that science is "the necessary and ever-continued impulse in the human mind to reflect within itself, the cosmos, . . . always with the understanding that the human mind is capable of this by reason of its organic affinity to its object."<sup>1</sup> So also philosophy from the standpoint of epistemology says: "There is one figurative and yet valid and true way of representing the essential features of the relation of knowledge to reality—one and only one valid and true way. *Human cognition is all to be understood as a species of intercourse between minds.*"<sup>2</sup> And, again, in words which are of the utmost importance to the theistic thinker, "Things are the manifestation, the word to man, of an all-pervading Will and Mind."<sup>3</sup> And once more, swinging around to the view-point of pure

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Professor G. T. Ladd's *Philosophy of Knowledge*, p. 558.  
Italics his.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 606.

metaphysics, we are told that "a known or conceivable world cannot exist as a total Real, except as the object of an Absolute Subject, an omniscient mind."<sup>1</sup>

We gladly accept this philosophy. If it gives us a ready-made theism, so much the better for that. We are not scared when we find sound philosophy supporting sound theology; it is just what we should expect. All reality, known and knowable, banks up against a Personality who manifests Himself in just that way. Philosophy is absurdity if an implied God be lacking. The late Clerk Maxwell said, "I have looked into most philosophical systems, and I have seen that none will work without a God."<sup>2</sup> And Lord Bacon, in his famous essay on *Atheism*, well says, "I had rather believe all the fables in the legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind."<sup>3</sup>

We frankly confess that we desire to put the greatest emphasis upon this theistic philosophy in the development of our thought. If it seems to some to lend itself too readily to idealism and its too frequent theological corollary, pantheism,

<sup>1</sup> Ladd's *A Theory of Reality*, pp. 504, 505.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, p. 391; quoted in Smyth's *Place of Death in Evolution*, p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> *Essay*; No. 16; *Of Atheism*.

there is this to say: we have already, in the first lecture, frankly conceded the truth in idealism; not an idealism which is the offspring of the sensational philosophy; not the Berkleian idealism which reduces all things to ideas only; not a mere phenomenalism which reduces all things to empty appearance; not the Hegelian idealism which makes the actual world only the airy development of the ideal; but that sane, rational, and illuminating idealism which regards rationality and morality in things as absolutely impossible without a rational and moral consciousness in which and for which those things exist.<sup>1</sup> If the world is the objective manifestation of ideas, then those ideas must have had existence in a preëxisting consciousness. This idealism is involved in the doctrine of Final Cause, of a fore-ordering Divine Government, and of a plan whose unfolding is the history of time. It is the idealism of the poet who sees "one increasing purpose" running through the ages; it is the idealism of the philosopher who affirms the utter meaninglessness of the thing without a thought, of the object without a subject; it is the idealism of the scientist who reverently reads off the intelligible forms of nature

<sup>1</sup> See Professor B. P. Bowne's *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 327.

which have been molded by nature's God; it is the idealism of the theologian who believes that "the decrees of God are his eternal purpose, whereby He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." In short, as we see it, it is the idealism which is the necessary philosophical counterpart of intelligent Christian theism.

But we must be on the lookout for a plausible objection that will run in this wise: if our knowledge of the cosmos is really intercourse between persons, then man and God must be the persons; *ergo*, the cosmos is God. And here we are again charged with pantheism. It is worth while to consider this a moment. And let us inquire wherein consists personal intercourse. We commonly say that it may be either immediate or mediate; but we must say that we are skeptical concerning the immediate. According to Professor Royce, immediacy is the distinguishing mark of mysticism, characterizing the relation of the knower to the absolute.<sup>1</sup> But Recéjác, a recent writer on the subject, insists, quite to the contrary, that mystical knowledge is always symbolical, and, therefore, is never immediate.<sup>2</sup> Is it too

<sup>1</sup> *The World and the Individual*, First Series, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> *The Bases of the Mystic Knowledge*; Eng. trans., pp. 5, 44, 120.

much to say that all intercourse between human persons is mediate? We are not experts in the occult sciences of telepathy and suggestion, but, even granting their claim, they hardly eliminate the symbolical element from their processes. Words are symbols; facial expressions are symbols; passive silence may be, in certain conditions, a most meaningful symbol. The body, the countenance, the posture, the gait, are symbols. A non-symbolical intercourse between human beings is very rare, if possible at all. The body is so intimately connected with the person that, by a figure of speech so common that we forget that it is one, we call a man's body his *person*. We communicate with each other symbolically. It is not a spiritual *ego* conversing with spiritual *ego*, immediately, but by means of a visible, tangible body going through certain motions in the presence of another body. We know each other's thoughts by means of each other's words, spoken, written, or envisaged.

As with man, so is our intercourse with God. His book is a symbol; the sacraments are symbols; they are signs, representations of truth which is to be conveyed. It is not necessary to argue that *all* communion between God and man is mediate; we only argue that God does commune

with man symbolically. He uses symbols with men; and what else is the cosmos than such a symbol? Has not Professor Ladd, in language quoted, called the world "the word to man" of the all-pervading Will and Mind? It is not yet the Word Incarnated, but only the Word Immaterialized.

This is philosophy meeting theology more than halfway. It is precisely what Turretin calls *Revelatio naturalis*. It regards the world as God's word to man. The world is not God,—that is pantheism; the world is God's symbol, God's revelation,—that is cosmical theism. The highest self-revelations of God to the human race have been by symbols. No man hath seen God at any time; no man can see Him and live.<sup>1</sup> He dwells in "light which no man can approach unto."<sup>2</sup> He manifests His thoughts in things, His will in words, His majesty in mighty works. "He spake and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast."<sup>3</sup> The flaming sword, the shekinah, the pillar by day and by night, were God's revelation to man. The world of God is a word of God; the cosmos is a part of the Logos. The universe is a symbol of God's thought, and if man

<sup>1</sup> *Exodus* 33: 20; *Judges* 13: 22.

<sup>2</sup> *1 Timothy* 6: 16.

<sup>3</sup> *Psalms* 33: 9.

could have caught and held its meaning, this cosmical Logos would have been eloquent with its divine meaning and luminous with its messages of wisdom and goodness.

We have high authority for thus regarding the Logos, in the world. Philo called the world "the intelligible word." The term Logos has prevailingly a revelatory significance. Dr. Charles Bigg tells us that it gathered about it many floating ideas of purely symbolical import;<sup>1</sup> and Dr. George T. Purves tells us that while *ὁ λόγος* signified both *ratio* and *oratio*—the latter always presupposing the former—yet in biblical Greek it has almost exclusively the latter meaning, namely, of *verbum*, a means of communication, a medium of manifestation.<sup>2</sup>

The world in which we live, then, is a revelation from God, a Logos. It is an *oratio* because it is a *ratio*. This is what gives dignity to cosmical science; this is why the "undevout astronomer is mad"; this is why the reverent student of science is also a student of theology.

But, even granting that the world is the manifestation of thought, we are met with the wholesale objection that man cannot really know the

<sup>1</sup> *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> See Article "Logos," in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*.

world or what it means. This is the challenge of agnosticism. It is the final writ of injunction against all intercourse between the cosmos and its human spectator. In its broad view, it is innocent of theological implications. Man can know religious things as well as he can know anything. Mr. Spencer denies that man can know a book or a house, just as much as he denies that he can know God. Agnosticism is not owing to the nature of the object, but to the impotence of the mind. Our minds were not made for knowing. However, it comes to the same thing to say that the thing is too hard for the mind to know and to say that the mind is too weak to know it. If a freight hand cannot lift a bar of iron, the difficulty may be overcome either by increasing his strength or by lightening the bar. We could as well put the blame on the iron as on the man. So agnosticism may as well find fault with the thing as with the thinker, with the fact as with the faculty, with the cosmos as with the spectator. But the trouble is not that things are too large or the mind too small; it is that the mind is not suited to the work of knowing. There is a grand misfit. If knowing is our aim, then the world and our minds are so ill-suited to each other that, hard as we may try, it is utterly impossible that there

would be any really intelligible commerce between them.

It is the everlasting advantage of the agnostic that we cannot prove to him that we know, because some things must be assumed as known in constructing our proof; but it is also his everlasting disadvantage that if we challenge him to prove that we do not know, he has handicapped himself against assuming anything as known in constructing *his* proof. Accordingly, if it be declared a draw, we claim the immeasurable advantage of having the naïve testimony of consciousness and experience on our side.

And this *prima facie* evidence we would greatly emphasize. We are always presuming upon the trustworthiness of our perceptions and our reason. We cannot do otherwise. We must stop and bethink ourselves if we would invalidate our cognitive faculties. We base their accepted validity upon their assumed veracity. Men may be agnostic in their academic caps and gowns, but they fall from grace as soon as they go about their common daily work.

It is of a piece with this abomination of desolation in philosophy, that men have trained themselves to believe that things are not what they seem. No, I am not to argue for the infallibility

of the human faculties, and yet, even if they are not infallible, they are ours, and they are all we have, and we must either use them or we are no better off than the poor agnostic.

Every man assumes that his own perceptions are normal and true until the personal equation is corrected for him. A man who is color-blind assumes that the red flag is blue until he has what is to him convincing evidence that his own senses mislead him. He finds that he is an exception, that his eyesight is abnormal. If the great majority of men had eyes just like his, then his eyes would be normal, the flag would be voted blue, and they who call it red would be voted the abnormal. Coleridge has given us one of his finest little essays upon the reflections of the only remaining sane man in a race of mad men; and elsewhere he sums up the conclusions of the reluctantly yielding exception in these words: "I call all men mad and all men call me mad, and confound it they outvote me." It is not that our cognitions are arbitrary conventions; it is that we assume that the consensus of judgment is correct, and the exception defers to the consensus. Kant's conceit is correct, that if all men had always seen the world through green goggles, the world would have always been called green; and no man

would have arisen wise enough to tell the deluded race that the greenness was not in the world but in the goggles. We must trust the eyes we have unless we have evidence which leads us to trust other eyes as against ours. A nearsighted man would never know that the world is not as he sees it, if left absolutely to himself. The testimony of his oculist is accepted because he is persuaded that, his own vision to the contrary notwithstanding, his oculist *knows best*; he trusts one whom he has reason to accept as an "authority."

But as to the being *versus* the seeming; we submit that the greatest bogey ever foisted upon human thought is Kant's *Thing-in-itself*; as if the thing-in-itself were different from the *thing*. *Seeming* should never be regarded as a noun; it is always only a participial adjective. It is all wrong to imagine that the thing-in-itself is one thing and that the thing, stripped of the hyphenated qualifying clause, is something else. The thing is the *thing*, and anything else is a misapprehension of it.

I see an animal coming down the neighboring hillside through the obscuring medium of a fog. I dimly perceive the outline, and take it to be a calf. At that point, I take—or rather *mistake*—it to be something which it is not. The animal approaches me as the fog rises, and I presently

see that it is not a calf, as I had supposed, but a dog. In a few moments, however, I find a second time that I was mistaken; it was really a goat. "Things are not what they seem." Yes; but the difficulty is not with the thing, but with us. It was the goat all the way down the hill, only I misapprehended it. At each point in my observation I was bound to form a judgment based upon what at that moment appeared to me to be the truth. When I dismissed the calf judgment and pronounced it a dog, it was simply because just then it appeared to me as a dog. If you had been there and had assured me that it was a goat, against my judgment based upon my own perception, then I would have called what to me seemed sensibly to be a calf, a goat. But I should have changed my judgment because, all things considered, I had evidence, on a higher level than that of mere sense-perception, that it was a goat; that is to say, all in all, it then seemed to me that it was a goat, and not a calf, as it looked to me to be. We can correct the judgment based upon our own seeing by the testimony of those who we have reason to believe can see better than we can. We are doing just this thing every day. Our sense-perceptions are but the hewers of wood and drawers of water. We have reason and under-

standing, also. It seems to me, that is to my senses, that the sun goes round the earth every twenty-four hours; but, on wider views and higher grounds, it seems to me that it does no such thing. The science of astronomy is a contradiction of mere sense-perception. It seems to me, that is to my senses, that matter is all there is of man; but I have other powers than those of sense, and taking these into account, it seems to me that man is vastly more than matter. Every new bit of evidence changes the seeming. Our judgment of the cosmos to-day is based upon what, in the light of all kinds of evidence within our reach, the cosmos seems to us to be. If we get new light to-morrow, the cosmos will seem to us changed from our present conception of it by just so much.

Our conception of God is based upon what God seems to us to be. It cannot be otherwise, and there can be no quarrel in our minds between what God is and what He seems to be. What He seems to be, that, and only that, we must believe Him to be.

We are urging this now as a necessary psychological law of thought. It is absurd that there should be any difference in our minds between what a thing is and what, up to date, that thing

seems to us to be. For how can we *know* that it really is something else than it seems to us to be? If it seems to us to be that something else, then it has, *ipso facto*, ceased to seem to be what we were supposed to be contrasting with that something else. There may be a discrepancy between what a thing really is and what it seems to us to be, but we are necessarily ignorant of that discrepancy. There may be a discrepancy between what a thing seems to my senses only to be, and what, on the whole and all in all, it seems to me to be. There may be a discrepancy between what a thing seemed to me yesterday to be and what it seems to me to-day to be; but the change is in the line of what I must regard as the correction of a former misapprehension. It was the goat, really, all the way down the hill; the goat was the *ding-an-sich*; but at the first point of observation, to me that goat seemed to be a calf, and to me a calf it was, and would have been to the foot of the hill if other testimony, from my eyes or my ears, or from your words, or from some other of the ten thousand sources of modification in the sphere of my cognition and judgment, had not come in—if the goat-*an-sich* had not changed its appearance from the calf and from the dog to what I now believe it really was.

Indeed, it is only because it seemed to me to be a goat at the last, and because it never afterwards seemed to me to be anything else, that I am now warranted in believing and declaring that it really was a goat.

We can never get nearer to the thing in itself than we can get to the thing as it seems to us at a given moment to be. What it seems, it only seems *to be*. There can be absolutely no quarrel between Appearance and Reality. We know reality as appearance and, as it appears to us, that to us *it is*.

There is always at the last a chasm between the *ego* and its extra-mental object, absolutely unbridgeable except by faith. If you insist that I demonstrate to you the existence of the object, then you will follow that with a demand that I demonstrate the validity of my demonstration, and so on in a *regressus ad infinitum*. Here we are again searching for the foothold of Atlas. Remember that we are not saying that this weakens the quality of the knowledge of the object. Here is the truth in the perverted doctrine of "judgments of value." Here, too, is the truth in the Conception of Being which Professor Royce does not like, and which he calls the Validity of Ideas. It is capable of abuse, as if all

knowledge were supposititious and untrustworthy; but it is true in the sense that the search for an apodictically demonstrated basis of our cognition is a fool's errand and must forever fail. All our knowledge is analogical. President Patton is quoted as saying that "the world is full of *as ifs*."<sup>1</sup> Professor Royce exaggerates this when he says: "This *as if*, or *as it were*, becomes to some thinkers a sort of ultimate category. One . . . no longer proves that God exists, but only that, *It is as if he were*."<sup>2</sup>

A man may as well try to jump out of his skin as to try to divest himself of his own sense-perceptions and rational conclusions. Men sometimes slander human logic, but it does little credit to the slanderer. We may go wrong following logic, but if it is the best we can do, then we are bound to do that best. Because I am near-sighted I must not discredit all eyes. I must not refuse to see as best I can; my poor eyes are infinitely better than none. If we are not to use our logic, what are we to use? Are we more likely to reach sound conclusions by ignoring our logic? Every proposition is either logical or illogical; the terms *unlogical* and *super-logical*

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Dr. A. H. Strong, in his *Christian Monism*.

<sup>2</sup> *The World and the Individual*, p. 206. Italics his.

mean simply nothing. Logic is purely formal; a fictitious proposition, that is, a proposition having no correspondence in the world of actuality is subject to the same logical tests as the most matter-of-fact statement of the actual. There may be a logical lie; the lady was not so absurd as she was thought to be when she said her minister was very logical, but his preaching was not true. But the truth, in its entirety, is logical. It may be too large for our comprehension; but if we can grasp or catch it at all, then it will or will not seem to us to conform to the innate God-authenticated laws of human thought. Because we say of God that He is infinite, we cannot therefore predicate contradictory attributes of Him. God is infinite, but our idea of God is not infinite. The thought-objects in our minds may be purely ideal, as in pure mathematics; they may be of the non-existent, as in a poet's *Utopia*; they may be of the absolute and infinite, as in the conception of the ever-living God; but when we form our judgments concerning them we must needs do so in a way that seems to us either logical or illogical; in the former case they will be acceptable, and in the latter they will be abhorrent. Any presentation of the Christian religion which makes it appear either irrational in itself or logically

oppugnant to assuredly ascertained truth from any source whatever will surely bring its entail of disaster in the end.

All this is not the *hauteur* of rationalism; it is not the papacy of human logic; it is not a repudiation of the *Testimonium Spiritus Sancti*. It is simply a plea for the essential reasonableness of the Christian faith and the logicalness, as against the illogicalness, of the Christian religion. We do not argue that human logic is infallible; but its fallibility is to be ascribed to the adjective and not to the logic. The infinities of our faith give no franchise for a violation of any law of thought and test of truth. Mr. John Burroughs is giving us nonsensical twaddle when he says, "There may be any number of true though opposing and contradictory religions."<sup>1</sup> The late Professor Romanes for a time held to some such notion when he wrote these words, "The probability, therefore, that nature is devoid of Deity while it is of the strongest kind if regarded scientifically—amounting, in fact, to a scientific demonstration—is nevertheless wholly worthless if regarded logically";<sup>2</sup> but he saw his fundamental error afterwards. Such a view of religion does not lead to

<sup>1</sup> See his *The Light of Common Day*.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from *Physicus in Thoughts on Religion*, p. 19.

atheism; it is atheism to a thoughtful mind, and Professor Romanes, in the reasoned skepticism of *Physicus*, argued as much. No sane man can accept by his faith what he rejects by his reason. Dr. Charles Hodge speaks clearly and strongly in these words: "The assumption that reason and faith are incompatibles, that we must become irrational in order to become believers, is, however it may be intended, the language of infidelity; for faith in the irrational is of necessity itself irrational. . . . This would be to believe and to disbelieve the same thing at the same time. . . . And, therefore, the refuge which some would take in faith, from the universal skepticism to which they say reason necessarily leads, is insecure and worthless."<sup>1</sup>

One more question remains to be considered, and it is of the greatest importance. What conception of God shall we form or *can* we form? The view of cosmical knowledge which we have been arguing for implies intercourse between persons. The cosmos is not pantheistic, but, to borrow Henri-Frederic Amiel's word, *panentheistic*.<sup>2</sup> Man, the super-cosmical spectator, is one of the persons, and God, who is both within and

<sup>1</sup> *Systematic Theology*, vol. iii., p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal*, June 19, 1872.

above the cosmos, is the other. But shall we conceive of God as a person? Do we not dishonor Him by thus limiting Him? Are we not making Him such an one as ourselves? Is it true, after all, that we are guilty of the crime charged by Matthew Arnold in regarding God only as a "magnified man"?

Philosophy does not now seem to be troubled with Spinoza's old objection that, if God is infinite, He cannot also be a person. On the other hand, the tendency of recent thought seems to be with Lotze in regarding not infinity but finity as the negation of personality. Spinoza said that the infinite cannot be personal; Lotze questions whether the finite can. He says: "Perfect Personality is in God only, to all finite minds there is allotted but a pale copy thereof; the finiteness of the finite is not a producing condition of this personality, but a limit and a hindrance of its development"<sup>1</sup> It would be easy to name recent philosophers and theologians by the dozen who have heartily accepted this view. And yet, we have always felt disposed to inquire about that ambiguous word "copy," before subscribing to this tenet. A photograph is the copy of the king; so also is the prince. But they are altogether dif-

<sup>1</sup> *Microcosmus*, vol. ii., p. 688. Scribners.

ferent kinds of copies. The king and the prince are generically identical; the king and the photograph are not. We believe that human personality is a copy of the divine as the prince, and not as the photograph is a copy of the king. If Lotze means by "a pale copy" that man is less than really personal, that is to say, other than personal, and that God alone is personal, then we should be inclined to stand against Lotze and *contra mundum*. If the personality of God is to be held on condition of the infra-personality of man, then it is held at too great a cost. We are compelled, willingly or unwillingly, to take the human as the base-line of our conception of the divine; we are made in the divine image. God is a Spirit, and we are spirits, and we come back to that fundamental principle which we have so often encountered, namely, that it is because there is generic affinity between God and us that we can have any intercourse whatever with Him.

It is for this reason that we are very chary of any terminology that has the appearance of putting either God or man outside of the single category, the *personal*. In this we believe that we have abundant scriptural warrant and the imperative exigencies of a sound philosophy. Either to call God supra-personal and man personal, or to

call God personal and man infra-personal, is confusing and, we believe, wholly unnecessary and unwarranted. If God and man are essentially heterogeneous, then we are back again in the bog of agnosticism.

Aside from Spinoza's exploded objection, *Determinatio negatio est*, we may still inquire whether we honor or dishonor God by thinking of Him as a person. A very bright post-graduate student of philosophy once proposed this question to me in the best of faith, and it is fair to assume that it often asks itself in thoughtful and reverent minds. Certainly it is in the direction of light to remind ourselves that to all sound philosophical minds, to-day, personality is the highest category of human thinking. We pay our highest possible tribute to God, then, when we conceive of Him as a person. If we fain would honor Him more highly than that, we may speak the word "supra-personal," but to us men the word is absolutely without meaning. If a word is the sign of an idea, then, inasmuch as no idea is signified by "supra-personal," it is no word. It is only an abracadabra in the high-sounding jargon of agnostic pedantry. We can form no conception of the supra-personal. The personal is self-conscious. We can conceive of nothing which is not either

self-conscious or non-self-conscious; if it is the former, it is personal; if it is the latter, it is less than personal—not more. The personal is rational. Everything we can conceive is either rational or it is not. If it is rational, then it is personal; if it is not, then it is less than personal, not more. The personal is free. Everything we conceive is either free or it is not. If it is free, then it is personal; if it is not, then it is less than personal, not more. It is not the question now whether human conceivability is the test of truth, whether *homo mensura rerum*; the question is whether we honor God by refusing to think of Him in the very highest terms of thinking which we can command. To deny that God is personal in order to affirm of Him something which means to us absolutely nothing is not to honor God at all, but only to dismiss the thought of Him entirely from our minds.

Here we are again, to be sure, assuming the trustworthiness of our mental processes. We are not drawing from Scripture now, though that would settle the difficulty in a moment; we are dealing with the inquiring student of philosophy who has hardly been trained by his academic master to regard Scripture sanction as final; and yet we venture to affirm that it is not rationalism

but agnosticism which, out of a mistaken notion of reverence for the divine, withholds the predication of personality from God with the purpose of ascribing some higher attribute to Him. There are not three categories, the personal, the supra-personal, and the infra-personal. There are but two, and these are exhaustive, namely, the personal and the impersonal. To call God more than personal is to make Him less. Mr. Spencer calls the ultimate noumenon Force, but as we know force it is, *per se*, impersonal. Von Hartmann believed in the Supra-conscious Unconscious, a sort of Emersonian Oversoul, which settles down into pantheism; but pantheism is ever the doctrine of the ultimately impersonal. Either God is personal or He is impersonal; or, *all men are agnostics*. What we believe is that He is a person and we are persons; we are made in His image, sin-tarnished images of God, "pale copies" of Him, and we do well to conceive of Him in terms of our own God-given, Godlike nature.

The suggestion has been made by a very discriminating writer that God may be both personal and super-personal. "As person, or rational intelligence, He is immanent in nature. As multi-personal, He transcends nature, and interferes in nature, just as one human will interferes in the

experience of another. As super-personal, He unites all in one, and occupies a position of transcendency in a higher sense."<sup>1</sup> His own pages, however, serve to show the weakness of his position. He admits that "this super-personal unity is above thought"; he says: "For us, personality is the ultimate form of unity. It is not so for Him. For in Him all persons live and move and have their being";<sup>2</sup> concerning this unity, he says that "it is not to be regarded as irrational, it is rather super-rational, which means that it is rational and also more than rational."<sup>3</sup>

But what shall we say of that solution of an "antinomy" which is admittedly "above thought," and is upon a "principle of unification higher than any known to human reason"? If  $x$  and  $y$  both represent unknown quantities, where is the gain in reducing  $x$  to terms of  $y$ ? Of what possible value is a solution which is "above thought"?

The underlying question in all this is whether God really is what He seems to us to be? That is to say, can we rely upon His being what He seems to be, what we believe Him to be? Mr.

<sup>1</sup> *Idealism and Theology*, by Charles F. d'Arcy, B. D., p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> D'Arcy's *Idealism and Theology*, pp. 205, 93.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

d'Arcy says that "in His ultimate nature" God is super-personal; leaving us, of course, to infer that, without this qualifying clause, He is personal. This is utterly unsatisfactory; for if we would think of Him as He really is "in His ultimate nature," then (He being "super-personal") we cannot think of Him at all; but if we would think of Him as other than as He is "in His ultimate nature," we are deliberately fooling ourselves, and are not thinking of Him at all as He is.

Sir William Hamilton's conception of regulative knowledge of God, as against the possibility of a real knowledge of Him, is logically, as it has been historically, the philosophical ancestor of skepticism and not of Christian faith. Born of Kant's antinomies, it was the mother of Spencer's nineteenth-century agnosticism. If we cannot know God as He is, then we cannot know Him at all. Any lack of intellectual candor in our conceptions of God is bound to breed disastrous spiritual consequences. We cannot draw a line between the mere being of God and His attributes. No man ever knew *that* there is a God without knowing something of what that God is; otherwise, how could he know that it was a God he knew the being of? An attributeless thing is

no thing; an attributeless God is no God. It is not that our knowledge of God is exhaustive or accurate, but that, in so far as it goes, it is genuine and true. Calvin says, "It is not of so much importance to us to know what He is in Himself as what He is willing to be to us." This is true if it is meant that, as our gracious Redeemer, it is of the greatest importance that we should know what He is willing *to do* for us; otherwise, we should demur to the remark. That this is Calvin's meaning, however, is shown from the words which follow: "The foundation of this is a previous persuasion of the divine veracity; any doubt of which being entertained in the mind, the authority of the word will be dubious and weak, or, rather, it will be of no authority at all."<sup>1</sup>

Little time remains to speak of anthropomorphic theism, that horrible *bête noir* of modern

<sup>1</sup> *Institutes*, Book III., chap. ii., sec. 6. Neque enim scire quis in se sit, tantum nostra refert, sed qualis esse nobis velit. Jam ergo habemus fidem esse divinae erga nos voluntati notitiam ex ejus verbo perceptam. Hujus autem fundamentum est, praesumpta de veritate Dei persuasio. De cujus certitudine, quamdiu fecum animus tuus disceptabit, dubiae et infirmae, vel potius nullius auctoritatis erit verbum. Neque etiam sufficit Deum credere veracem, qui nec fallere nec mentiri possit, nisi constituas proculdubis, quicquid ab ipso prodit, sacrosanctam esse et inviolabilem veritatem.

scientific thought. Mr. Spencer is thrown into such a hysterical state of mind that he is bereft of every element of a personal or even of a knowable God; and Mr. Fiske would construct a cosmic conception of Him which is eviscerated of all that makes God God to us.<sup>1</sup> All this is a gratuitous straining after the impossible. It is of no avail to repudiate ourselves because we are human. Goethe says truly that man can never know how anthropomorphic he is. Being himself an *anthropos*, he must anthropomorphize every conception he forms, every object he touches. If our holiest devotions are to be paid at the shrine of a mysterious, fugitive *Ding-an-sich*, which is the eternally irreducible *x* of human thought, then our life is to be a dreary and aimless wandering and our religion must be an empty and unsatisfying mockery of the soul. If, as Sir William Hamilton has said, "The last and highest consecration of all true religion must be an altar, 'Ἄγνωστον θεῶν, to the unknown and unknowable God,"<sup>2</sup> then reason is dumb, the heart is frozen, and faith in God is the last dice-throw in the hopeless perplexity of the soul's doubt.

<sup>1</sup> We here speak of the Fiske of the *Cosmic Philosophy*, not of the Fiske of the later writings.

<sup>2</sup> *Discussions*, p. 22.

We do not know God exhaustively, but we know Him truly. The little child, playing upon the beach of the great Pacific Ocean, cognizes that vast sea correctly but not comprehensively. Whatever strange conditions on Asiatic headlands may bound its wide domain, whatever shores under the equator or beneath either pole may challenge the progress of its waves, the child sees and knows the Pacific Ocean, stretching out before him, partly but truly as it is. If he sail out at the Golden Gate and float westward, past fabled tropical islands, on and on till he come at last to strange races and unheard-of continents, it will still be the same Pacific Ocean he will know. Let him give his whole life to sailing on its broad expanses, cruising among its innumerable indentations, and tracing out the countless forms of living things, from tiny coral to huge leviathan, that dwell within its depths, and from microscopic insect to some undiscovered modern mastodon that make their homes upon its shores, it is the same Pacific Ocean, still. He knows it more thoroughly, but not more really nor, within its limits, more truthfully, than when he first shoveled the sand by my side on its beach. There is only one condition needed in order that we may be sure that none of his later knowledge will contradict

what as a child he knew, and that condition is that it was certainly the Pacific Ocean he then knew.

“We know in part;” but it is knowing. We know God as like ourselves; or, rather, we know ourselves to be like Him. *Qualis homo, talis Deus*. Augustine says, “We see the depths, but we reach not the bottom”; we know God, but eternity will be too brief to make that knowledge exhaustive, comprehensive, and complete.

LECTURE VII

THE COSMOS AND SPECIAL  
REVELATION



## LECTURE VII

### THE COSMOS AND SPECIAL REVELATION

WE have now seen that the cosmos is of the nature of a revelation, a self-revelation of its Author. It is essentially the organized transcript of an organizing consciousness, which at once pervades and transcends it. Otherwise it is neither legible nor intelligible; otherwise, it is not a cosmos.

This revelation, like every revelation, involves three elements, namely: the *ego* revealing, the *alter ego* addressed, and a certain relation between the two. This certain relation conditions any revelation whatever, for if the two persons are absolutely insulated from each other, then the outward revelation of the one cannot be taken up into the consciousness of the other, but must fall dead, aside from its purpose. If you write me a letter containing a secret, your letter may be said to be a revelation at the moment that it comes from your hand; but if I never receive it or if, when I do receive it, I find that it is written in a language which I cannot read, then, after all, in-

asmuch as it has actually revealed nothing to me, it cannot be called a revelation in the fullest sense, at all. The Bible is a revelation in itself, but it reveals nothing to the man to whom it never comes or to whom, for any reason, it is a sealed book. The cosmos is an objective revelation, but certain conditions must exist in men if its revelation-content is to be apprehended by them. And this apprehending capacity is a thing of degree. To almost no man is it wholly wanting, while in some it is quick and large. One man sees the hand of God in history, while to another the past is a dreary tract of arid facts.

"To him who in the love of Nature holds  
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks  
A various language."

Nature's teachings, like all others, wait upon the capacities of the taught. It is a truism in pedagogy that certain moral elements enter into the qualification of the ready learner, as well as of the skillful teacher. There must be teachableness, confidence, sympathy, surrender. No intellectual act is exclusively intellectual. The inclinations and disinclinations, the likes and dislikes, are enlisted in the maintenance of the certain nice relations between the cosmos, as God's revealing, and the human spectator, who is the

idealizing re-creator of that cosmos. The recipient must be measurably in harmony with the divine revealer, if he is to perceive and assimilate the thought and purpose set forth in the vast cosmical symbol about him.

But this relation is precisely that which, as we have seen, has been disturbed. And this disturbance has come in two ways:—

First, sin has vitiated man's capacity to respond to God's voice in nature. It has robbed him of no essential, natural faculty. A man is a man, *genus homo*, in Eden, in Sodom, in heaven or in hell. President Edwards has said, "Sin destroys spiritual principles, but not natural faculties."<sup>1</sup> However, we believe that the normal exercise of these natural faculties is greatly impaired and impeded. Edwards goes so far as to say, "There seems to be nothing in the nature of sin or moral corruption that has any tendency to destroy the natural capacity, or even to diminish it, properly speaking."<sup>2</sup> Metaphysically regarded, this may possibly be so, but in men, as we see them, though the spiritual principle is the seat of his ruin primarily, yet every faculty of his being seems measurably benumbed and sluggish. The spiritual death

<sup>1</sup> Sermon on *True Grace Distinguished from the Experience of Devils.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

which sin has wrought has, by a sort of capillary attraction, spread its deadening influence upon his whole being, body, soul, and spirit,—intellect, sensibility, and will.

In the second place, moreover, the cosmos has been itself thrown out of poise. This follows from man's fall. The world we see is not as God made it. Nature is now *unnature*, to use Dr. Bushnell's expressive phrase, and so the natural is now unnatural. The text of the cosmical protangelium has been corrupted and its meaning obscured.

The use which man makes of the God-revealing cosmos is too often an abuse, a misuse. The pure fountain has become a stagnant pool. By a false development of its teachings the noblest powers in man have often been prostituted to basest ends, and the very truth of God has been turned into a lie. *Corruptio optimorum pessima*. Paganism, with all its distortions of the good and its perversions of the true, is the historical child of a false reading of the cosmical message. The subjective capacity for religion in the natural man—what Calvin calls the *semen religionis*—and the objective element—what Turretin calls the *revelatio naturalis*—have both been put in bondage to the vilest propensities in human nature and to the

grossest falsifications of the truth of God. The horrors of heathenism, the frivolities of the Grecian mythology, and the Phallic shrines of sordid Hindustan, are the actual capitalizations of man's use of the religion of the cosmos. Dr. Kuyper says, "There is no single datum in idolatry which is inherent in it but has sprung from natural theology."<sup>1</sup> Natural theology is become unnatural theology. Paganism is the deteriorated appreciation of the divine in nature. The apostle's lurid description in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans locates the point of departure in the false use which men make of the truth which the cosmos contains and inculcates. Men knew God, but "they glorified Him not as God." Their imaginations were vain and their foolish hearts were darkened; they changed the truth of God into a lie and worshiped the creature rather than the Creator.

If God's dealings with men had ended here, who shall say that they had not been a failure? Sin had its deadly sway, and death had no one to dispute his final overcoming. Men's unforgetten but unrealized ideals had been only a goal to haunt their sinking hopes and a goad to torture their jaded energies. The manifesting mirror

<sup>1</sup>*Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology*, p. 305.

becomes the obscuring medium, and the cosmos which was suited to reveal God, more and more hides Him. The distance widens between man and God; the Godlike in the soul dies out as the vision of the Godlike in the skies, the oceans, and the forests, fades away. Nature has her sacraments and oracles for spirits untarnished by sin, but to an erring race her voice is feeble and her lessons are grown pale. It is the testimony of history; every page tells it, every nation illustrates it, every age repeats it; "they soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel." "The world by wisdom knew not God."

It is not too much to say, then, that if the incident of revelation had thus forever closed, man's conception of God would have always been inadequate and incorrect. The cosmical manifestation of His nature would have been incomplete and, therefore, misleading. If man's sin had been met by sullen silence from the heavens, and his need had evoked no pity or promise from above, who will say that God's self-revelation, stopping with nature, had been either just to Himself or sufficient to serve as the basis of a true conception of Him in man? Not that, amid the exigencies of sin, a metaphysical necessity coerced Him into a further self-disclosure; not that the love of

God did not leave Him thoroughly free to save man or not to save him; for love is no love if it be but the fruit of hard compulsion, and unfeeling fate frowns on the gratitude of its beneficiaries; but, with tears and woes and heart-burdens and self-reproaches among men, a God who could maintain an unbroken and impassive silence and leave pitiful but guilty mankind to sink lower and lower into the pit of death, were certainly not the God we know, "a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth."

Does it not appear, therefore, that sin becomes the occasion, if not the condition, of a completer revelation of God? This additional revelation we call a *special* revelation. We insist not so much upon the word as the idea. If we call the cosmos a natural revelation, then we shall call this extra- or super-natural. "Natural" and "revealed" have been used as contrasting terms, but they are open to just criticism. Coleridge has a right to say, "All religion is revealed; revealed religion is, in my judgment, a mere pleonasm."<sup>1</sup> We must admit that the contrast is not upon its being revealed or not; but both being revealed, how and why. Dr. Martineau says, with a distinction which

<sup>1</sup> *Table-talk*, March 31, 1832.

he clearly draws, but which we can hardly grant, "Natural Religion is that in which man finds God; Revealed Religion is that in which God finds man."<sup>1</sup> He makes the former mediate and the latter immediate, and, accordingly, with him revealed religion is an individualistically mystical rationalism.

It is common to say that the one is a revelation in nature and the other in grace; and from this usage we see no good reason for departing. To be sure, in broadest meanings, it is of the grace of God that the worlds were made and that man exists at all; but this usage easily lends itself to the Pelagian reduction of divine grace to God's works of creation and providence, and is both confusing and foreign to the faith of Christendom. The natural revelation is made to the race as men; the gracious revelation to the race as sinners. The latter sprang from the divine purpose to save salvable, sinful men. Its highest norm is theodicean, for in its most glorious sweep and its eternal issues it indicates and vindicates the ways of God to man as the cosmos could not have done. Its *principium* is strictly theological, for in its truest conception, in redemption as in creation, God reveals Himself for His own sake,

<sup>1</sup> *The Seat of Authority in Religion*, p. 302.

and not only for that of His creatures. But in its personal bearings and most precious meanings to men it is thoroughly and emphatically soteriological: the race is ruined, and God would restore it; the race is lost, and God would save it.

We are by no means justifying sin when we say that it is the occasion of this gracious revelation. An occasion is neither a procuring cause nor the only possible condition. President Edwards did not hesitate to say, in one of the greatest sermons he ever preached, "Sin, the greatest evil, is made an occasion of the greatest good."<sup>1</sup> It is certain that our conception of sin will determine our conception of grace. If sin is natural and purely individualistic, then grace need be, and is, nothing more than nature. If sin is simply a wrong particular volition, then the Pelagian is right, and grace, like sin, is nothing more at most than mere imitation. If sin is ignorance, then Plato and Emerson are right, and grace is but intellectual enlightenment. If sin is death-dealing, then Paul and Augustine are right, and grace must be life-giving. The remedy waits upon the nature of the disease. The conception of a saviour takes its character from the condition of the sinner. If the sinner is normal and well, nothing is needed; if

<sup>1</sup> *The Wisdom of God Displayed in the Way of Salvation.*

he is sick, the physician is needed; if he is dead only a new birth will avail.

It must not be lost sight of that the salvable unit contemplated in this soteriological revelation is not the human race only, but the human race together with its cosmical environment. The human individual, as well as the human race, may be regarded, as we have seen in the fifth lecture, as but an integral part of the cosmical unit. If the fifth chapter of Romans should drop forever out of Scripture, the great truth still stands, attested by science and confirmed by history, that every member of the race, pagan and Christian, adult and infant, is full sharer in the common lot of humanity; while we remember that we are told that it was God's love to the world—*τον κόσμον*<sup>1</sup>—which was the moving cause in the giving of His Son. Bearing this in mind, let us notice how the gracious revelation suits itself to the twofold ruin, subjective and objective, which we considered at the beginning of this lecture. Man's faculties of spiritual perception, being extinct, are to be quickened again. Regenerated man is man restored to his original *status* and activities. Saving faith imparts no new faculty to a man. New incitements call out a new exercise of hitherto latent

<sup>1</sup> *John* 3: 16.

powers; the new heart is still human, but it rises to new experiences. Sanctification is at least rectification; redemption is at least restoration; spiritual illumination is a removal of the cataract that has formed upon sinful eyes, so that they are again enabled to perceive the beauty, the order, and the meaning, that had faded into twilight shadows or into the deeper darkness of a midnight gloom.

But, also, the sin-disturbed cosmos is to be brought back to its original loveliness and order. Along with the process of man's redemption there is to be a slow cosmical *palingenesis*, and no man knows what all that means. The whole creation, now subject to vanity, shall be freed from its corrupting bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God. There is to be "a new heaven and a new earth *wherein dwelleth righteousness*"; the ethical element is essential to the newness of the creation. These bodies are to become immortal. The object of redemption is not souls only, but men. It is a commonplace in physiology that organic unity overrides material identity. These bodies—shall we not say *this body*, meaning by the word our whole cosmical environment?—shared the curse of sin, and they are to be sharers in the glories of our deliverance from sin.

Science has no oracles with which to predict or to describe this regeneration of the cosmos, with the redemption of its king and chief inhabitant, man. Allotropic forms and transformations may suggest the marvels which it involves. The glittering diamond and the crude charcoal are the same substance, while coarse sand becomes crystal glass, with no substantial changes. Man's sin means nature's curse, and man's redemption means nature's emancipation. Matter, sluggish and unresponsive, has been degraded, but it is yet to be restored to its highest possibilities. Nature, now unnature, will become her sane self again. It has been said, "Nature, thus sublimated, as it were, will no longer be the veil concealing the spiritual world, or the mere semblance of the Beautiful and the Sublime; but will continue to be its most adequate expression."<sup>1</sup> And the same writer adds: "Now the purified world is man's own. It now becomes a system open to his instantaneous insight and immediate influence, no more to be forced into subjection by screws and sledges and pulleys and derricks, but being at his service voluntarily and joyfully."<sup>2</sup>

It will surely be necessary before long to remind

<sup>1</sup> Schade's *Philosophy of History*, p. 430.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 432.

ourselves that the content of both the natural and the special revelation is, in general, susceptible of human cognition. We do not now say that it is capable of intellectual formulation; we are not anxious just now to press the primacy of any one faculty or function of the mind. Professor Ormund suggestively defines existence as "presentableness to consciousness,"<sup>1</sup> and, as he insists that experience is a larger and better concept than knowledge, we may content ourselves with saying that the revelation-content in such case is somehow susceptible of getting itself presented to the human consciousness in experience. All truth is God's thought, and if some of it is not thinkable by man, the fault is in man, not in the truth. The whole content of the cosmical revelation, intellectually stated, would be the closed and complete circuit of scientific truth. The whole content of the gracious revelation, intellectually stated, would be an accurate and exhaustive statement of theological truth. The latter includes the former, and the former overlaps a large part of the latter. The gracious revelation is constantly and in a thousand ways invading the sphere of cosmical phenomena, and in so far forth it becomes the proper object of scientific contemplation; while, on the other

<sup>1</sup> See *Foundations of Knowledge*, p. 153.

hand, the fields and forces of nature are very influential in our study of the gracious revelation. The revelation-content in each case is the proper subject of reverent intellectual cognition and reflection.

This being so, it must needs be that both alike must enter into human experience, subject to the universal categories of that experience. If God would disclose to men the mysteries of His own nature, He must use terms borrowed from human experience and familiar to human thought. Father, Son, and Spirit, are terms men had employed to designate relations among themselves, and the gracious revelation seizes upon those terms to indicate the transcendental relations between the members of the Adorable Trinity. They are probably not adequate, but the Divine veracity is involved in their appropriateness to the purpose for which they are employed. If divine relations are to be revealed to human minds, it must be done in terms which those minds can understand and appreciate. A revelation to man in the language of archangels would be no more of a revelation in effect than would a letter to a child of six be appreciated if written in the language of Butler's *Analogy*. If it be really a revelation, it must *reveal*; and if it is to reveal, it

must be in terms which can be understood. Theological statement and formulation no more do violence to spiritual truths than do scientific formulations vitiate the verities of geology or of astronomy. It is not the scandal but the glory of Christian truth that it has been able to get itself expressed in the legitimate forms of human thought. The late Dr. Hatch said that the Greeks were "incapacitated to receive or to retain Christianity in its primitive simplicity,"<sup>1</sup> so that in Christian theology it is "that philosophy that has survived."<sup>2</sup> But Professor H. M. Scott has well said that "it was only a question of time, as every missionary to the heathen well knows, when the life and thought of the Church must take an intelligent attitude toward the morals, the religion, and the philosophy of Greece and Rome."<sup>3</sup> The molds of Greek philosophy stood ready for the gospel, and so far as they were adapted to the purpose they were employed. If it be true that all men are either Platonists or Aristotelians, then the thought-forms of these great masters stood waiting for the truth of the Nazarene. The lin-

<sup>1</sup> *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, p. 49:

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.

<sup>3</sup> *Origin and Development of the Nicene Theology*, p. 140.

guistic forms of the Greeks, with their marvelous range and flexibility, were providentially prepared for use as the vehicles of Christian truth, and so the Greek philosophy, with all its richness and accuracy as to form, and despite its haughtiness and error as to spirit and substance, was, in the providence of God, a waiting vessel of honor, destined to do noble service for the wisdom which cometh down from above. We cannot disown human forms of thought if we are to think at all, and among all the great philosophies of the past we know of none so admirably suited for the high and permanent uses of Christianity as that of Greece in its purest and palmiest days. The pure essence of the Christianity of Christ and his apostles is unchanged to-day. Weizacker remarked that "Christianity as religion is unthinkable without theology";<sup>1</sup> indeed, theology is nothing else than religion *thought*, as over against religion *felt* or *acted out*. When men cease to think about religion they will cease to be theologians; it is not the question whether we shall be theologians or not, but whether we shall be good ones or bad ones.

Concerning the relation which this special reve-

<sup>1</sup> See Scott's *Origin and Development of the Nicene Theology*, p. 354.

lation sustains to the general cosmical one, at least four conceivable views may be mentioned, namely: (I.) It is identical with it. (II.) It is antagonistic to it. (III.) It displaces it. (IV.) It supplements and interprets it.

(I.) The first identifies the special revelation with the cosmical. This is done by naturalism, on one side, and by pantheism, on the other. While one naturalizes, the other supernaturalizes, everything. Each of these methods, however, presupposes the other. Naturalism affects to be very innocent of presuppositions, and fain would take things as it finds them; but Mr. Balfour has done fine service in showing that naturalism is heavily loaded with implications. "Naturalism is nothing more than the assertion that empirical methods are valid, and that no others are so."<sup>1</sup> "If naturalism be true, or, rather, if it be the whole truth, then is morality but a bare catalogue of utilitarian precepts; beauty, but the chance occasion of a passing pleasure; and reason, but the dim passage from one set of unthinking habits to another."<sup>2</sup> This is very true, and we, therefore, may certainly excuse ourselves just now from defending special revelation against the assaults of a school of thought which denies everything

<sup>1</sup> *Foundations of Belief*, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

which is not known by sense-perception, and which is not the subject-matter of empirical science. The other wing of the identity-theory is pantheism. We used to think that in order to see a pantheist one must visit the home of the Hindu or call up the shade of the God-intoxicated Jew of Amsterdam, but we may find him nearer home than that. Implicit pantheism has often found an abiding place in the pale of the Christian Church. Jonathan Edwards, with his doctrine of continuous creation and his "arbitrary-establishment theory" of identity, was not far removed from pantheism. Dr. Emmons, with his doctrines of absolute dependence, of the non-existence of second causes, and of the direct divine creation of human volitions, was a baptized pantheist without knowing it. Schleiermacher drew largely from pantheistic premises. The Malebranchian view of the soul, as a series of states, curiously agrees with Mr. Spencer's conception, and it is a truism that the Synthetic Philosophy is as easily made to serve for pantheism as for materialism.

But pantheism cannot allow grace as distinguished from nature. Not atheism, but acosmism is its fallacy. All is the divine *ego*; there is no human *ego*. If Spinoza was the "God-intoxicated man," the materialist is the "World-intoxicated

man"; and in their implicit elements and practical results neither has much to boast over the other.

(II.) The second relation which I named was that of mutual antagonism. This is the old notion of an irreconcilable contradiction between nature and religion. It has sometimes been presented as the fountain of faith, but it is really the matrix of doubt. God is the author of both, and if they are ultimately contradictory, then man is not to blame for his doubts. However, two things must be borne in mind:—

The first is that the world we see to-day is not exactly the pure product of God, and the other is that the special revelation we have is not exactly as God gave it. Right here is the true meaning of cosmical research on the one hand, and of biblical study on the other. Each has its historical, its textual, and its hermeneutical disciplines. God made them true, but he also made them both subject to the vicissitudes and mutations of terrestrial history; and we believe that He did this in order to challenge the intellectual efforts of men, so that, in making God's revelations also men's own discoveries, the knowledge of the truth may be contingent upon men's own diligent inquiry, and, by the blessing of God, the

precious treasure may be the reward of their own labors as well as the answer to their prayers. We see no escape from utter intellectual confusion if we must accept as final the idea that nature and religion are irreconcilable. Such a judgment is a slander upon God and an insult to the reason which is in man. If I must be one thing in the laboratory and another, contradicting it, in the sanctuary; if the stars declare to me one thing, and the psalmist or the evangelist tells me that the stars lie; if I am to be one man praying and another thinking; one man worshipping God and another viewing His works; one man with my head and another with my heart, then, whatever names may be hurled at me and whatever anathemas the churches may proclaim, I must still insist that something is fundamentally and constitutionally wrong either with me—in which case I cannot be sure that I know anything at all; or with God's world, which is virtually to impeach the divine character; or with God Himself, and a God with whom something is fundamentally and constitutionally wrong is no God. In any case, I am left to live in darkness and to die in despair.

(III.) The third view is that the gracious revelation supplants the natural, rendering it practically nugatory. This we understand to be the ten-

dency of Ritschlian thought. Following Kant, it denies that the theoretic reason can know God, thus dismissing natural theology with a single bow. Harnack declares that Christ and Christianity have nothing to do with nature, and regards cosmological Christology as the corruption of true Christianity.<sup>1</sup> Apologetics are outlawed by sweeping off the field all the points in which the believer and the unbeliever are agreed.<sup>2</sup> In any case, as Kaftan says, "the proof of the truth of Christianity is *the proof of the reasonableness and absoluteness of the faith reposed in the Christian Revelation*";<sup>3</sup> that is to say, we can come no nearer to proving Christianity true than merely to prove that faith in it is reasonable. Most of us will heartily consent that there is a subjectively personal element in Christianity which is beyond the scope of apologetics; but shall we not insist that the objective factors in Christian history must be subject to the criteria of all historical truth? And yet we are told by one of the most eminent representatives of Ritschlianism that "it is not possible to prove to an unbe-

<sup>1</sup> See *History of Dogma*, Book I., chap. iv.

<sup>2</sup> See Scott's *Origin and Development of the Nicene Theology*, p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> *Truth of the Christian Religion*, vol. ii., p. 384. Italics his.

liever the truth of the things which a Christian knows concerning the objective reality.”<sup>1</sup> Of course, this leads Christian thought to “become totally indifferent to the doctrine of the importance of the historical in Christianity.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, religious truth refuses to be expressed in language that is either reasonable or consistent; “when we try to express it we constantly fall into the use of conceptions which contradict each other and cannot be combined in one definite and consistent picture.”<sup>3</sup>

It thus would appear that reason has little to do with religion; metaphysics is alike the bane of Christianity and the barrier to faith; the poet is wrong in saying,

“God and Nature bid the same.”

This view merits severest condemnation. The New Testament of grace did not come to destroy, but to fulfill the Old Testament of nature. It does not supplant it except as the distinct supplants the dim and the complete the incomplete.

<sup>1</sup> Herrmann's *The Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20; see also Orr's *Ritschlian Theology and the Christian Faith*, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> Orr's *Ritschlian Theology and the Christian Faith*, p. 92.

The rising sun supplants the fading glory of the morning star. The official bulletin supplants the fugitive rumors in the gossip of the Court. Thus, and thus only, does Christianity supplant nature by a fuller, clearer, stronger setting forth of her lost and neglected meanings.

(IV.) The fourth view of the relation of the special to the cosmical revelation is that it supplements, interprets, and confirms it. The soteriological idea is determinative throughout. Nature is inadequate as a source of knowledge of God to man in his present state. Unfallen man needed no Bible, and, in a certain sense it is true, the Bible will be out of date in heaven. Nature cannot save man from sin, and man's need is God's occasion. It is in this aspect of it that we can speak of gracious revelation as provisional and temporary. Dr. Kuyper says: "Our human race, once fallen in sin, can have no more supply of pure or sufficient knowledge of God from the *natural principium*. Consequently, God effects an *auxiliary* revelation for our human race, which, from a *special principium* of its own and under necessary conditions, places a knowledge of God within the reach of the sinner which is suited to his condition."<sup>1</sup> This second *principium* is en-

<sup>1</sup>*Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology*, p. 361. Italics his.

tirely harmonious with the first; it deepens the lines and strengthens the intonations of the first. It discloses truth which nature now conceals, and which reason is now impotent to discover. Its object is specifically different. Nature manifested God to sinless man, but when man fell nature's voice was muffled. At best, her messages were not attuned to the needs of doomed and dying men. Her revealings were to the unfallen scientist, poet, mystic, and saint. But sin created a new need; it introduced a new condition; and to meet these a new revelation was effected. Its aim is not to satisfy speculative curiosity, not to inform scientific inquiry, not to enrich intellectual resources; it was to reclaim a morally bankrupt world, to bring life to a race "dead in trespasses and sins," to "seek and to save the lost." The one supreme, controlling, determinative element is redemptive, and in the light of this one aim all its contents are to be read, all its relations are to be construed, and all its results are to be appreciated.

It is not our purpose now to discuss miracles and their place in the development of this special revelation. In my own judgment, a proper understanding of that revelation greatly relieves some traditional difficulties attending the subject. Not only does the possibility of miracles fall as a cor-

ollary from theism, as Mr. J. S. Mill said, but, also, the probability of them is a corollary from a true conception of gracious revelation. The spiritual disorder in man calls for psychical manifestations, and these we call the work of the Holy Spirit in men's hearts; and the cosmical disorder calls for physical manifestations, and these we call, in common speech, miracles. The special revelation is supernatural, and miracles are only the shining through of the supernatural in the midst of the ordinary phenomena of the natural sphere. True enough, nature itself is a theophany, only men have forgotten to see God there; they "have not God in all their thoughts." Miracles are not after-thoughts; God does not need to "tinker" with an imperfect world which He has created. Every miracle is an organic part of a great process. It is not an isolated event, cut off from every other. The smallest miracle—*miraculum*—gets its meaning and placement from the age-long, organic, historic, process of the special revelation of which it is a part. We must never divorce the little miracle from the great redemptive plan of which it is not only an evidence, but also a constituting part. "We shall more accurately say that, while miracles have their evidential value, they are still a part of the whole for which they stand.

Christianity minus miracles would be *per se* a different thing entirely from Christianity as it is."<sup>1</sup>

To be sure, there is a sense in which we shall say, in good faith, that miracles evidentially support Christianity; and there is another sense, not less important, in which we shall say that Christianity supports miracles. Granted the soteriological revelation, supernatural in its origin, its purpose, and its processes, and just such miraculous occurrences as are recorded in the canonical Christian writings would be most reasonably expected.

Neither can we now speak at proper length of the place of Scripture in this gracious revelation. We have already shown that the substantial content of it is susceptible of reduction to intelligible literary forms of statement. We do not for one moment believe, with Herrmann, that Christianity contradicts itself as soon as it tries to get itself expressed intelligibly. There is a sense, then, in which we believe that Christianity may become a "book religion." Not that all the contents of that revelation can be packed within the lids of a single volume. But an understandable statement of its great germinal, essential elements can. God has not chosen mystically to communicate this reve-

<sup>1</sup> The author's *Christianity Supernatural*, p. 18.

lation-content to every man, individualistically; but only to a certain number of men who, by His call, became the *media* through whom He conveyed the truth to mankind. These certain ones He qualified to communicate in these truths with their fellows by the unique enduement of inspiration. This is designed to be a safeguard against the refracting tendencies incident to human ignorance, prejudice, and error. The Christian's Bible is simply the handbook of this gracious revelation, in which its essential elements are expressed in literary form. The Bible is sacred on account of what it contains. An American field officer in the Philippines was saved from death in battle by a little Testament in his breast pocket which stayed the deadly bullet in its course toward his heart. The same protection might have been afforded by a scientific text-book or by a gambler's deck of cards. Protestant reverence for the word of God is no base superstition of bibliolatry. Dr. Kuyper quotes Guido de Bres approvingly as saying, "That which we call Holy Scripture is not paper with black impressions, but that which addresses our spirits by means of these impressions;" and then Dr. Kuyper adds for himself these words: "These letters are but tokens of recognition; these words are only the clicks

of the telegraph key signaling thoughts to our spirits along the lines of our visual and auditory nerves.”<sup>1</sup>

The Bible is to Protestants the book which substantially contains and truthfully presents the content of the gracious revelation, and hence their jealous and affectionate reverence for the word of God. It is folly to deny that, because God has committed His truth to a book, therefore that book is not to be treated, in the first instance, as other books; we should rather confidently draw the exactly opposite conclusion, otherwise He would not have chosen the literary form for that revelation. Here is the divine franchise for every legitimate form of biblical criticism and research. A mere *fides implicita* in Holy Scripture is a devotion born of ignorance, a veneration which is only blind superstition. The Bible was produced among conditions generally characteristic of literary production, and hence the tasks of historical criticism; its history has not been exempt from the vicissitudes of literary forms, and hence the tasks of textual criticism; it is to be read and understood according to the accredited rules of literary interpretation, and hence the tasks of hermeneutical study. The Scriptures, and the

<sup>1</sup> *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, p. 57.

Scriptures only, are to us the literary embodiment of the truth conveyed in this gracious revelation ; and this is at once the reason why we accept it as a book among books, and why we accept it as a unique volume in all the realm of literature, the very Book of books.

And this speeds us on to the question whether or not this special revelation may be reduced to the ordinary categories of human thought. If we are asked whether it could be brought into scientific formulæ, we unhesitatingly answer that, if by science is meant merely cosmical science, it can not. Gracious revelation is super-cosmical or it is nothing ; and how can the confessedly super-cosmical be reduced to the categories of cosmical knowledge ? Science can take cognizance of gracious forces whenever they invade the region of scientific observation ; but as to the origin, the *rationalè*, and the aim of those forces, phenomenological science is agnostic. Such science is dumb in the presence of personality. We regard it as, in so far forth, an evidence of the divinity of Christianity that it puts scientific wisdom to confusion ; if it were otherwise, whatever else it might be, it were not a supernatural revelation come from God.

But it is another question if we are asked

whether Christianity is susceptible of philosophical formulation. Two things we must not forget, namely: Man is, constitutionally, finite, that is to say, his powers are limited; and these finite powers are darkened and handicapped by reason of sin. Now there is no denying that there is truth in Coleridge's idea that reason is never a thing of degree, as well as in Mr. A. J. Balfour's reminder that men often talk about reason when they mean only right reason. To be sure, in the end, only right reason is entitled to be called reason at all. Reason is properly only an attribute, never an entity; it is only rational spirits that exist. We often speak of the Infinite Reason when we deceive ourselves by a hypostasis of our own creation. God alone is infinite. There is no such thing as the Absolute, the Infinite, the infinitely Rational. These are only adjectives with their noun suppressed. They are merely attributes of the Infinite God.

Now God, the infinitely rational, has all knowledge; if He had not, shall we not say He could hardly be infinitely rational? We are made in His image, and are, therefore, rational beings; but the tract of our knowledge is narrow and our powers of intellection are very infirm. Nevertheless, herein is our likeness to God, and herein

is the possibility of our intercourse with Him, that what is rational with God is rational with us, and what is right to God is right to us. Ideally, this is perfectly true, but, even here, the universally vitiating influence of sin must be taken into the account.

Human reason—to adopt the common mode of speech—is identical with the divine. The substantive is the same in both cases; it is the adjectives that mark the *differentiæ*. And these differences are because, in us sinful men, we mistake many things for reasonable which are not reasonable at all. Our reason is often wrong reason,—it is folly. This is why it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent; . . . because the foolishness of God is wiser than men.”<sup>1</sup> Paul tells us, what history abundantly confirms, that “the world by wisdom knew not God.”<sup>2</sup> And yet the profoundly devout Edwards has said: “If we had as clear an idea of universal infinite entity, as we have that twice two are four or that a circle has no angles, I suppose we should most intuitively see the absurdity of supposing such Being not to be; should immediately see that there is no room for the question

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. I : 19, 25.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., v. 21.

whether it is possible that Being, in the most general abstracted notion of it, should not be. But we have not that strength and extent of mind to know this certainly in this intuitive independent manner.”<sup>1</sup>

Special revelation presents more mysteries to a child of seven<sup>2</sup> than to a man of forty and to an ignorant person than to a thoughtful and enlightened one. Many a mystery of our childhood vanishes before the maturer thought of later years. The old doctrines of the *Gnosis* and the *Pistis* are but curious relics now, and yet there was an element of truth in them; not that faith and knowledge are mutually exclusive, but that with clearer vision and wider horizons, under the divine illumination, many a truth which was once accepted upon the basis of a distant authority, may become to us a truth of most intimate and immediate consciousness, brooking no dispute.

But men are children, indeed. Some of us are more advanced than others. We are told that Newton had such an intuitive mathematical in-

<sup>1</sup> *Freedom of the Will*, Part I., sec. iii.

<sup>2</sup> See a very interesting paragraph in President Edwards' *Mysteries of Scripture*, in which he supposes revelation to have been given to a race of beings having only the capacity of children. Works, vol. iii., 538.

sight that he saw at a glance through propositions which others had to wrestle with for weeks. By the genius born of the Spirit of God, the saint has spiritual insight into the truths of revelation. Like some great Newton contemplating things spiritual, he sees more of the sweet and consistent reasonableness of the thoughts and ways of God than do we of meaner vision who dwell on lower and less sunny levels. Not that his faith is made less needful; it is just because his faith is stronger than ours that his vision is the clearer and the keener. But the *homo* is finite. An angel, excelling us in strength, whose eye is undimmed by sin, as he peers into the mysteries of redemption, sees mysteries deep and divine still; but we may well believe that some of the antinomies of our human ignorance and doubt melt out and disappear before his gaze. There are fewer gaps and breaks in his spiritual outlook than in ours. And to the archangel, with loftier powers and more penetrating vision still, the field of view is clearer, and smoother, and brighter yet.

But we must not be guilty of the *petitio principii*, by deftly assuming that the intellectual discrepancies are to be exorcised by transubstantiating them into merely spiritual difficulties. We are just now trying to hold ourselves to the intel-

lectual aspect of Christianity, and we are contending that if only our sphere of cognition were broad enough, and our rational powers normal and under complete control, there would be no such difficulties. If it be said that still this is begging the question, we demur to the charge. We have been misled by the too often unchallenged but wholly vicious contrast between faith and reason. We imagine that we go under the escort of reason as far as she can take us, and that then we intrust ourselves to faith as our guide. The solid truth is that faith is possible or impossible to rational minds according, all in all, as its object is held to be reasonable or unreasonable. Our faith is in God because we believe God to be infinitely reasonable. We believe in God's revelation because we believe that that revelation is intrinsically rational. We accept Christianity because we believe it, in itself, reasonable. We do not for one moment doubt the rationality of what we believe, for that would be simply to reject it in such a way as not to let our left hand know what our right hand doeth. This were trifling and frivolous, indeed. Our doubt, so far as the intellectual elements in Christianity are concerned, fastens itself upon ourselves, not upon the object of our faith; we do not ordinarily

doubt the veracity of our faculties, but we are conscious of their limited capacities. To the angel these are fewer than to the sage, and to the sage they are fewer than to the child of seven. We believe that this is the truth in the *Critique of the Pure Reason*. Rationalism belongs only to the throne of God; it has no room among finite spirits, where ignorance exists and sin abounds.

There are supernal heights where faith, pre-eminently rational always, is able to look out over the rough places, as they seem to us, and see them made smooth, and to behold the crooked places made straight. There comes a time when we shall no longer see through a glass darkly, but there never shall come a time when finite man shall have thrown off his constitutional limitations; and so we may never expect to solve and dissolve all the mysteries of God's truth, and to compass and comprehend all the mighty marvels of His grace. If rationalism dispenses with faith, then heaven through eternal ages will be traveling farther away from the home of the rationalist.

But we hold on to the rationalness of God's revelation and to the reasonableness of our accepting it by faith. The doctrine of the Trinity has transcendental elements which no Hegel can

philosophize; but it is because of the smallness of a human Hegel, not because Trinitarianism is anti-philosophical. The doctrine of the Atonement has in it elements too profound to be pressed into the molds of human ethics; but the trouble is with the molds, not that the Atonement is contra-ethical. There are mysteries in the constitution of the Theanthropic Christ which transcend human psychology and defy the tests of human experience; the trouble is with the human measuring rods, not with the historical fact of the Incarnate God-man.

If this be heresy, then we must face the stake. Our faith is not in spite of our reason; it cannot be. Our faith is in what our reason cannot fully compass, and we accept it because we believe that, if our reason could fully compass it, it would then be to us manifestly reasonable. This is no doctrine of ultimate antinomies. This is not settling down to the absolutely irrational position that we accept this by faith here and we accept that by faith there, while, at the same time, we believe that this and that squarely contradict each other. Indeed, there can be no rational and healthy faith so long as there is a belief that this and that *may* contradict each other; for the lurking suspicion, in so far as it lurks, haunts and

hinders the sound faith of the soul. The very thing that we believe is that the things believed are worthy of our belief, that is, are reasonable, right, true. The analysis of the act of faith always discloses a confidence that its object is in itself and in its relations rational and right.

No, no; Christianity is not a human philosophy; nor can it ever become so. Men have called Plato the "divine philosopher"; but it was only a metaphorical compliment to the magnificent mental sweep of the sage of the Academy. The infinitely rational God is the only *Divine Philosopher*, and to Him, to Him alone, if we may speak after the manner of men, is all truth a manifest and manifold philosophy. As we approach Him, the tract of truth becomes more luminous and clear. Not in the pride of our own wisdom must we become "as gods"; for along that way it was that the eyes of men were darkened and their path was insuperably closed. But through faith in the revelation of His grace we may become the "sons of God," and then we shall see light in His light and know Him as He is.

"Whene'er the mist that stands 'twixt God and thee  
Defecates to a pure transparency,  
That intercepts no light and adds no stain—  
There Reason is, and there begins her reign."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Coleridge's *Works*, vol. vi., p. 143. Harper's ed.



LECTURE VIII

THE INCARNATION THE CON-  
GRUOUS CLIMAX OF ALL  
REVELATION



## LECTURE VIII

### THE INCARNATION THE CONGRUOUS CLIMAX OF ALL REVELATION

WE have seen that Special Revelation has for its meaning Redemption. The occasion for it was the world's need of it. Cosmical history minus sin would have been cosmical history minus redemption from sin. Hamartiology pre-determines soteriology. If sin is a fiction, then salvation is but a fanatic's fancy, and a saviour has none other than a fool's errand among men; for "they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

This special revelation, in addressing itself to men, must needs conform itself to the conditions upon which men's perception and reception of it are possible. It must present itself in the general field of their experience; it must impress itself upon the circle of their thought; it must introduce itself into the sphere of their life. There will not be any violent wrench of the regular and uniform order of nature with which men are familiar; for in this world, sinful as it is, God

is yet ever active and immanent. The "Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity" has not forsaken this little world of ours, nor has the presence of evil banished His presence from the terrestrial fields of His creation. It is a great mistake to suppose that because there is bad in the world, therefore the world is all and altogether bad. The venerable and scriptural doctrine of total depravity is not that the world is totally depraved so much as that the total world is depraved. If a very small quantity of poisonous acid is poured into a cask of wine, the totality of the wine is vitiated; but it is not totally vitiated, in the sense that it would not be more completely vitiated if a quart of the poison had been poured in.

All of the world's moral life is depraved by sin, but it is not absolutely and altogether depraved; otherwise every sinful man is as depraved as he possibly can be, and the unregenerate are wholly given over to Satan and his cruel mercies. This is cosmological pessimism with a vengeance; it would make the world, seeing that sin has come into it, a reprobate and unsalvable Gehenna, at once. The idea of totality is predicable of the scope, not of the degree, of the depravity. The totality of the individual man is depraved, but yet

not so utterly and entirely depraved as he might be, and as by the further withdrawal of the restraints of common grace, he will be. Exactly so, also, it is with the world under sin. God has not forsaken his world nor abrogated the seat of power upon its throne. The doctrine of sin is not the equivalent of deism; because God suffers Himself to be resisted and disobeyed, we must not conclude that He is an "Absentee God." This world is a battle field, not a cemetery; there is in it a strife between good and evil, not an absolute and irremediable sway of diabolism and death. God's cosmical energy is everywhere present and everywhere active. Science may call it potential or kinetic, but its very manifesting declares that God is here. We may believe in second causes or in the Great First Cause only; but second causes can exist and persist only in and by the omnipotent *Causa Causans*. We may draw distinctions between the cosmical and the gracious energy of God, but every manifestation of His energy is a revelation of the same One Living and True God. The God of the cosmos is the God of all grace. His immanence only makes His special revelation all the more credible. If God be in the cosmos everywhere, then He can speak not only in His wonted tones of

law and order but also in His clearer, sharper notes when and where and how He will. So then there is truth in the idea that the special revelation is the throwing off of the *incognito*, the more manifest theophany than sinful men perceive in the stars and in the flowers.

The history of redemptive revelation, then, becomes in a measure a part of the history of the cosmos. It conforms itself largely to the normal laws of historical growth. "There is a historic and progressive development. The end is latent in the beginning, and the beginning is patent in the end. It is 'first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.' The revelation at every stage conforms to moral and psychological conditions induced by antecedent stages. The fullness of time presupposes preparatory chronological eras."<sup>1</sup>

This is not at all to concede that Christianity is only a naturalistically evolved product. But it could not have come so near to men if it had squarely defied or belied the methods with which men are familiar. The verbal dictation of the Koran were not more credible or more helpful than a revelation which utilizes and passes through

<sup>1</sup> Author's article, "Authority in Religion," in *Presb. and Ref. Review*, April, 1900.

the medium of thinking minds and throbbing hearts in living men. The object of special revelation would have been defeated if its whole content had been bodily presented to the race immediately after the first fall into sin. The race must be prepared for the fullness of the message, and the fullness of the message must be prepared for the race. The earlier stages were designed to school the world for later and larger unfoldings. Prophet must come before apostle and type before anti-type. The law is a "schoolmaster" to bring men to Christ. No one supposes that John the Baptist could have exchanged places with Elijah the Tishbite, or psalmist and prophet with John and Paul, without a very radical impairment of the whole scheme of gracious revelation.

However, if this gracious revelation is to avail as a corrective of the cosmical, which has so largely failed, then it must be immune against the degrading influences which corrupted the cosmical. Sin has affected the one; why should it not also affect the other? Man is finite and infirm; and how, then, shall he be the adequate medium for the communication of heavenly messages from God? This is the objection which Dr. Martineau urged with so much force when he said, "The heavenly message in the earthen jar, the ethereal perfume

in the tainting medium, the everlasting truth in the fragile receptacle—this is just the combination which does not content the weakness and distrust of men.” “You cannot receive the light on a refracting surface, yet expect it to pursue its way still straight and colorless.” “Come whence it may, from Nature or from Grace, new truth, once committed to the mind, falls into fallible custody.”<sup>1</sup> It cannot be denied that this view is very plausible, but it is necessary to note that it points to one of two positions.

The first of these is that no man can possibly be a trustworthy witness of divine truth to another, and, therefore, if God has any communication to make to men He must make it to each of them immediately and individualistically. A revelation “at first hand,” to use Dr. Martineau’s expression, is the only kind of revelation possible.

The other position is that God is able to correct or counteract the “refracting” elements in men, and in doing this He can use men as His prophets and organs in conveying His will and truth to their fellows. Herein, precisely, is the significance and value of the Christian doctrine of Inspiration. It is aside from our purpose to speak of this at any length; but there are two thoughts to which

<sup>1</sup> *Seat of Authority in Religion*, pp. 288, 289, 290.

we ask attention before passing on. The first is that without this factor of Inspiration, oral and graphical, historical Christianity, in any such literary form as we believe it to be embodied in the Scriptures, were utterly impossible. The Bible ceases to be a unique volume. Isaiah and John and Paul may have received God's truth for themselves, but when they would fain tell that truth to us, it passes through the refracting medium of their nature and hence is no longer God's truth to us. If God has a word for me, let Him speak it to me, and not to John or Peter or Paul. The Gospel according to John, *ipso facto*, is to me John's Gospel and not God's. Accordingly, all historical development and organic unity of revelation is dissolved into innumerable atomistic revelations conveyed immediately and independently to individual men.

The second thought is that while it is true that God could pursue this method, for there is no *a priori* impossibility in the way, yet we affirm that God can use men as trustworthy messengers of His truth. It is no accident that Augustinian thinkers have been foremost in defending the evangelical doctrine of Inspiration. That doctrine has for its postulate that God is able to direct and employ free men wholly as He will. A Pelagian

bars himself against belief in Inspiration, and an Arminian can hardly hold to it in its full integrity without relaxing his hold upon some of his views concerning human freedom. The doctrine of the Reformed Faith is that God has such free access to and such entire control over the spirits of men that He can use them, while suppressing none of their psychological idiosyncrasies and doing violence to none of their personal and local and temporal conditions, as the trustworthy and unerring witnesses of His truth to their fellow-men. It is believed that there is no other means or medium so suitable or so successful. God's message is not a mathematical proposition, else it might have been dropped in cold type like hailstones from the sky. It is not non-vital speculative truth only, else some speechless oracle or mysterious augury might have strangely intimated its secret to mankind. It is warm, living, life-giving truth, appealing to men's hearts, stirring their very souls, and reaching to the deepest depths of their spiritual being; and no angel from heaven could so convey it to men as could beings of their own flesh and blood, speaking forth as it had been shown them, passing on the thrill of the divine impact through the sympathetic medium of the human touch, and carrying into and along with the heavenly message

all the contagious enthusiasm and invigorating stimulus of a divinely moved, divinely led, human personality.

This, too, makes the Bible possible. *Litera scripta manet*. In it to-day we have God's revelation to the race, given in former ages. Not a mere mechanical *depositum*; not a mysterious piece of celestial ore fallen, like a meteor, from heaven to earth. Like all things else in the cosmos, it has a history. God is its *Auctor primarius*, but not the less did it have *auctores secundi*. Deny this because of the mystery that is in it, and you must deny all men's doings, for there is a strange *concursum* of the divine and the human in all our work. These secondary authors were truly authors. David is just as truly the author of the Davidic psalms—if there are any such left—and John of the Johannine writings as was Dante of the *Inferno* or Bacon of the *Novum Organum*. The doctrine of Inspiration is absolutely indispensable to an organic, Bible-holding Christianity, but this doctrine is not made less indispensable or less meaningful by allowing, except in plainly anomalous instances, fully for the personal characteristics and psychological freedom of the speakers and writers inspired. The doctrine resolves itself at last into the old question of the relation of

human freedom to the divine control, and the solid position of the Reformed theology furnishes ample room for all its legitimate implications. So that we hold that the Bible, while truly in its way the product of man, is also, and not less so, the word of God.

We are now in a position to say that the Logos, the self-revealing God, immateriates the truth in the cosmos and inscripturates it in the Bible. The second form of revelation is a marked advance upon the first. While we remember that the immanence of God renders all human illustrations inadequate and possibly misleading, yet we cannot see that this immanence belies the best conceptions which we can form of God's relation to His world. God speaks in the laws and forces of nature, and He speaks again in His inspired word. It is simply the cosmic word and the written word. His works reveal Him, but His words reveal Him more clearly. The heavens declare His glory, but His grace appears in the raptures of a prophet and the narrative of an evangelist.

“The heavens declare thy glory, Lord,  
In every star thy wisdom shines ;  
But, when our eyes behold Thy word,  
We read Thy name in fairer lines.”

A house is a revelation of its architect as well as of the builder. You know the worker from his work, the doer by his deed, the creator by his creation. The human builder leaves the unmistakable earmarks of his individuality upon every product of his toil. We put ourselves into all we do; we leave our finger marks upon all we undertake. God's immanence in the world does not negate his creatorship of the world, and so we may well say with a double emphasis that the creation reveals its Creator. The symbol of this revelation is the cosmos; call it inert matter, or omnipresent energy, or machine-like phantasmagoria, or mere illusion; call it what you will, it still appears and appeals to men, and, accordingly, it serves as the medium by which its Author speaks to men. This is natural religion.

But, if the building speaks for its builder, how much more does the teaching speak for the teacher, the word for its author? A true writer writes himself into every line. His heart's blood flows from the point of his pen. Mr. Boyeson said that all writing is auto-biographical. Goethe called his writings an uninterrupted personal confession. The character, the genius, the soul of a writer tints or taints every output of his brain. If the cosmos is what God has made, the Scrip-

ture is what He has said. If St. Peter's bespeaks the genius of an Angelo, shall we not say that a Hamlet far more clearly bespeaks the genius of a Shakespeare? The one is a poem in marble and the other is a poem in speech. The cosmos appeals directly to the senses, and, through the senses, speaks to the soul; the Scripture speaks less distinctly to the senses and more directly to the soul, with its sacred messages from above.

But, with all this, God's revelation is not complete. He can come nearer to men than in the starry heavens or in the printed parchment. Man is earthy of the earth; but he is also heavenly of the heavens. He is both cosmical and super-cosmical. He is the link that binds two worlds into one. His divine kinship is the open door for a more direct communication between God and himself. If God and man were wholly unlike, they would be forever insulated from each other; but since they are essentially akin, the assured presumption is that when God has sacred and vital messages to give to men He will come yet nearer to them than by the symbol of His creative work or through the medium of His written word. Proud philosophers have disdained anthropomorphic conceptions of God, vainly forgetting that any other kind of a conception of Him is

absolutely impossible to the minds of men. Mr. John Fiske has pleaded for the de-anthropomorphization of theism; but he might as well have asked that human thought shall commit suicide and then officiate at its own funeral obsequies. On the other hand, we thank God for the great and everlasting truth of which anthropomorphism is the cumbersome and inadequate designation. If anthropomorphism were false, the divine Incarnation had been forever impossible. We are not unmindful of the degradations and perversions that have been christened under this name, but an abused truth, stripped of its abuse, is none the less a truth still; and it is because of the kinship between God and man that we can know God at all, and it is because of that same kinship that God could descend to our low level and become as one of the children of men. If we anthropomorphize God *in intellectu*, God has marvelously anthropomorphized Himself *in facto*. The Incarnation of the Son of God is nothing else than a historical, substantial, divine self-anthropomorphization. And the very possibility of such a self-identification of God with the organic body of mankind was, with infinite love, the assurance that it should be. The love which actuated the revelation of grace, whose whole

meaning is redemption, would not stop this side of the farthest limits of its own condescension so long as it does no violence to the divine nature and does not crush out the free autonomy of the human.

Thus we believe that, seen both from the metaphysical and from the soteriological point of view, there is a tremendous presumption in favor of the Incarnation of the revealing Logos. For certainly in this way only could the message of redemption be best conveyed. The cosmic word has lost the clearness of its meaning; the written word, in form, is but an ink-and-paper symbol. The Living Word only could speak the word of life in accents which would charm a dead world into life again. The cosmos is personal, the philosophers tell us, but the person is something other than the manifesting symbol; the Scripture, too, in a more indirect sense, is personal also, and yet we are not Lutherans to declare that the written word itself is invested with a supernatural life-giving power. These symbols are too sluggish, too reluctant, too unresponsive. If God would speak most effectually to men, He must speak as soul to soul. The immateriation of the Logos in creation is ineffective as a *Salvator Hominum*; the inscripturation of the Logos is

also incomplete, except as it is pervaded and applied by the Divine Efficiency for which, after all, it only speaks. With an infinite God, whose ways are unsearchable and whose judgments are past finding out, whose name is Emmanuel, and who Himself is Love, the incomplete in His plan is a prophecy of its accomplishment and the inadequate in the development of His purpose is the assurance that, in His own time and in His own way, the consummation will be complete. *Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν.*

The Incarnation is the logical and fitting culmination of the gracious revelation. The content of that revelation is not simply a body of truth for the philosopher; it is a message of life to the dead, of light to the blind, of redemption to the lost. It is not only divine truth striving to make itself known to the world; it is not only divine wisdom aiming to give guidance to a foolish and vagrant race; it is most of all and first of all divine love striving to make itself felt and known and operative in the lives of helpless, hopeless, sinful men. If it be true that cosmical revelation is incomplete in a sinful world, is it not also true that a merely written revelation—as such, indeed, being only a part of the cosmical—is insufficient for the work of saving a world that is lost to God?

We insist, therefore, that with God as is God and with man his creature, made in His image and lost in sin, the impulsions of His holy being could find their complete expression nowhere this side of the free and voluntary Incarnation of His only-begotten and well-beloved Son. There is a low empirical level from which miracles are improbable; but there is a higher platform from which, when it is seen that man is in helpless need and that God is infinite in love, a supernatural movement toward redemption, emanating from God and aiming at men, carrying the little miracle—*miraculum*—on the surface of which it is but an integral and temporary part, is the most probable of all things which we can conceive as originating in divine thought and performed by divine power. The same remark is preëminently true of the Incarnation. To lower visions it is incredible; to sights of sense it is impossible. But once get the right conception of God and the world and of sin and of the exigencies of the human race, and the predictions of short-sighted empiricism are reversed, and we wait, as the world for weary ages waited, as by the unerring instinct of the soul, for the coming of the Son of God. But the possibility of this is in the kinship between God and man. If God be essentially super-personal, or if

man be essentially infra-personal, then the metaphysical veto upon the Incarnation is final and beyond appeal. If rationality in God is intrinsically different from rationality in man, if divine ethics, divine thought, divine love, are generically unlike the human, then belief in the humanization of the Logos is philosophically forbidden. This is why the question of the personality of God and man is of such crucial importance. This is not to say that the difference between the divine and the human is only one of degree; it is to say that the fundamental canons and conditions of rationality and morality, of truth and righteousness, are absolutely identical in heaven, on earth, and in hell; among gods, angels, men, and devils.

Thus it is that Christianity culminates in its Christ. The revelation of God is not complete until He could speak forth in human voice and say, not "This is the truth," while pointing to either star or book, but "*I am the Truth.*"

It is an interesting question which has more often been answered unsatisfactorily than otherwise: What is the exact relation which the Truth Incarnate in the historical Christ sustains to the truth immateriate in the cosmos and, especially, to the truth inscripturate in the Scripture? We believe that here is an opportunity for the theo-

logical student to work a field that has not been overworked, and that promises large returns. Certainly, we cannot say that the Living Word sustains the same relation to the cosmos as to the Scripture, nor that He sustains the same relation to the written word that this written word sustains to the cosmic word. We know that the sanction of Christ rests upon the written word, and that that gives it permanent value and validity for all time. Indeed, it is by means of the written word that we have objective means of knowing the Living Word. Principal Fairbairn, in discussing religious knowledge, insists that "our formal source is the consciousness of Christ"; but he adds: "In order to it, the Scriptures are necessary, but as a medium or channel which conducts to the source, not as the source itself. They testify of Christ as His witnesses."<sup>1</sup> This is unquestionably true, and every Church assents to it which makes the test of Christian discipleship and of church membership personal trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and not merely an intellectual assent to a body of truth. Our Lord Himself sanctioned this view when He said that the Scriptures "are they which testify of me."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 450.

<sup>2</sup> *John 7 : 39.*

It is exceedingly important to bear in mind Dr. Fairbairn's caution that Scripture is necessary in reaching the consciousness of Christ; for, waiving this, we are left to the wayward whims of our own subjective confusion and folly. Scripture not only speaks of Christ; it speaks for Him. We go to the written word to hear the spoken utterances of the Living Word. He has left the world behind in order to complete His mediatorial mission, and to carry forward to consummation His priestly function in the heavens; and though He has sent His blessed Spirit, in gracious activity, as the dynamic of redemption, yet the illumination and promised guidance of that Spirit are confined to the tract of truth which has been opened up in the written word. If theology is a growing science, it is because the grasp and faith of the theologian grow. The content of special revelation is complete in the inspired Book which God has given us, and if there is new light to break, it will be from that Word that it will break; and the new light will only serve more clearly to elucidate and more accurately to interpret the truth which has already been placed objectively in our hands. Only thus are we to grow in grace and in knowledge; only in this sense is spiritual illumination, revelation; only thus is the objective revelation

taken by the teaching Spirit who is the successor and executor of the locally and thus personally departed theanthropic Christ, and made a veritable revelation *to us*.

There is no time or place now to speak of the culminating peak in this elevated table-land of divine revelation. Personality is the highest category of our thinking, and Christ, the personal Logos, becoming a living man, has touched the limit of conceivable possibility. Not an orderly world, not an inspired book, but a man, born as men are born, living as men live, suffering as men suffer, tempted as men are tempted, struggling as men struggle, dying as men die,—this is the very climax of the revealing process. Further than this God cannot go; nearer to us than this He cannot come; lower than this He can never condescend. The ages of preparation travail till the fullness of time is come. The shining skies bend and resound with the angelic chorus when the Bethlehem Babe is born; and the whole cosmos is in sympathetic throes while the earth quakes and darkness shades the awful scene when the Incarnate Logos, amid the jeers and sneers of an insulting throng, in the indescribable anguish whose keenest pang was the cold ingratitude of those whom He came to save, “be-

came obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

The Incarnation has its justification, its explanation, and its illumination, in the Atonement which He accomplished for the sin of the world. The deepest and tenderest note in all God's revealings to man is sounded in that "It is unfinished" of Calvary; the clearest glimpse we catch of God Himself, in His goodness and His glory, is the vision of His only-begotten Son on the cross.

Concerning the question whether the Incarnation would have ever been historically realized if sin had not come into the world, we are persuaded that it is idle to speculate. We regard the question as one of curious rather than of practical interest. Our view has contemplated special revelation as soteriologically motivated and conditioned. It goes without saying that if a sound and rational metaphysics declares this absolutely impossible, then we are completely and disastrously routed at once and for all. But, quite to the contrary, many tell us that philosophy furnishes the favoring presumption, and it is not easy to see why theology should make haste to decline the courtesy. We confess that we have never been able to see why the doctrine of the voluntariness of the Incarnation is not just as

valid and complete coupled with the doctrine of the metaphysical necessity as opposed to it. To be sure, if the motive is merely and exclusively necessitarian, then Christianity is eviscerated of its redemptive signification, and the Love of God is reduced to the low grind of impassive fate. If the Incarnation is to be accepted as the necessary ontological unfolding of the Logos in time, like the necessary generation in eternity of the Son by the Father, then theology has abandoned its rights in favor of philosophy, and John 3 : 16 is stripped of all its great and precious meanings.

But, even granting the necessity of such an incarnation in a sinless world—though no man can dogmatically affirm it or deny it—the conclusion might not be apropos in a world blighted by sin. Here its motive and meaning are wholly different. It is quite true that there are passages in the Scriptures which seem to make redemption incidental to the grand purpose of the Incarnation ; but certainly both the spirit and the letter of the written word put the soteriological motive in the foreground both for human thought and human faith. But the one does not at all negative the other. As Dr. Purves says, in discussing the Epistle to the Colossians : “ His life and work on earth appeared as the climax not only of

Hebrew history but of the whole cosmic process of the self-revelation of God. In the light of this vast vision of revealed Deity and of its entire relation to the entire universe, faith in Christ appeared more than ever the condition of salvation and Christianity itself the only true religion."<sup>1</sup>

Unless metaphysical necessity must exclude entire voluntariness, and we cannot consent that it does, we fail to see that it makes the seeking and the saving of the lost one whit less credible or less effective. Necessity in one sphere does not kill freedom in another. Shall we say that because the eternal generation of the Son is necessary, therefore it is not voluntary? Because it is necessary that I should do something, can I, therefore, not freely choose to do that thing? The physician informs the aged saint that he must very soon die, and the saint's face beams with joy as he welcomes the verdict of the inevitable. We are immortal. "To be or not to be," is not the question; *we are*. Suicide does not end existence. Self-annihilation is utterly impossible. We cannot help ourselves; we must be. Shall we conclude, therefore, that none of us can freely choose to continue to be? Can a man not freely

<sup>1</sup> *Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, p. 245.

choose that which, in the absence of his choice, would be absolutely and metaphysically necessary?

What we take care to deny is that the Son of God became human merely because He was forced by some compelling necessity to do so. Whatever speculative metaphysics may say about that, its deliverance must not touch or modify His free volition in becoming flesh, in order to save sinful men. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." The incarnation of philosophy may be or may not be necessary. The Incarnation of Christian theology is primarily voluntary and soteriological. In any case, there is no contradiction between them. To reduce it to only a necessary climactic stage in a process of cosmic self-revelation of God is to libel the grace of God and to disappoint a waiting, sinful world. We shall certainly be safe in refusing, with Dr. Warfield, "to seek the proximate account of the Incarnation either ontologically or ethically in God, or in the nature of the Logos as Revealer, or in the idea of creation, or yet in the character of the created product, and especially man, as made capable of receiving God, and therefore not finding his true end until he is raised to union with Him; and affirming that it is to be found only in the

needy condition of man as a sinner before the face of a holy and loving God.”<sup>1</sup>

This is the view which we prefer to adopt and emphasize, and it has the support of special revelation; it has the presumption of cosmical thought; it has the sanctions of sound reason. The redemptive motive argues no after-thought in the plan of God. Generic Calvinism knows no such abhorrent conception. It holds that God never decreed that the world should run its course free from sin. Professor Orr, with almost excessive caution, guardedly says: “An ultra-Calvinist would speak of the foreordination of sin; I take lower ground and speak only of the foresight and permission of sin. Dealing with the question on the largest scale, I do not see how either Calvinist or Arminian can get away from this. It is not a question how sin historically or empirically eventuated—that we agree it must have done through human freedom—but it is the question of fact, that sin is here, and that in the divine plan it has been permitted to exist—that it has been taken up by God into the plan of the world. His plan included the permission of sin and the treatment of it by Redemption.”<sup>2</sup> On grounds of the-

<sup>1</sup> In *The Bible Student*, Dec., 1900, p. 318.

<sup>2</sup> *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 323.

odicy, we fail to see wherein the "ultra-Calvinist" has much the disadvantage or wherein, if God be infinitely powerful and holy, "foresight" exonerates God from much which foreordination involves. The cosmical programme, as divinely purposed, embraced Adam's fall and race redemption. In the same article in *The Bible Student*, from which we have just quoted, Dr. Warfield says, with great clearness, "The fall, though as an event in time it was contingent, that is, dependent on the action of the human will, was no more uncertain of occurrence than the Incarnation itself, which was an event in time and contingent on the other events with which it was connected."

It is only thus that we rightly conceive of the Incarnate Christ in His cosmical conditions and relations. The eternal plan of God contemplated a ruined and reconstructed world. The Lamb is "slain from the foundation of the world"; and Professor Orr can say almost in the words of Jonathan Edwards, "Even creation itself is built on Redemption lines."<sup>1</sup> Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the Origin and the Goal, the First and the Last. All things were created by Him and for Him and unto Him. He is not only the Head of the Church; He is also the crown of the

<sup>1</sup> *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 323.

world. Sin is an incident in the vast sweep of the ages, but that incident is the occasion of the saving mission of the Son of God. Again we quote from Professor Orr, who is so thoroughly sane and satisfactory in his discussion of this profound subject: "The Incarnation has, indeed, immediate reference to Redemption; but it has at the same time a wider scope. It aims at carrying through the plan of creation, and conducts, not the redeemed portion of humanity alone, but the universe to its goal."<sup>1</sup>

Thus we find the adequate valuation of the historical Incarnation, not in speculative philosophy, not in cosmical research, but in the teachings of the special revelation of which it is itself a central factor and the crowning part. We find it deeply rooted in the plan of the world's career, amply occasioned by the world's fall into sin, and organically involved in the ultimate goal of all cosmical and human developments.

However, our study of this cosmical palingenesis is by no means completed till we have considered whether the contemplated restoration is, or is to be, actually accomplished. If the whole world is lost and if the Son of man is come to seek and to save the lost, then is the whole world

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 327.

to be saved? Is universal redemption the conclusion from the premise that the cure is as extensive and as radical as the malady? This argues the ultimate abolition of all evil and the utter banishment of sin. And the student of theodicy must not shirk the task, however he may wish to do so, of essaying to square this optimistic inference with the evangelical doctrine of the eternal persistence of sin and the orthodox tenet of an everlasting hell.

Concerning this hard question, two or three brief remarks may be allowed in default of time for fuller consideration.

First, it is true that as in Adam the race fell, so in Christ the race is redeemed to God. We do not mean to insist, with Dr. David Somerville,<sup>1</sup> that the classical passage in the fifth of Romans is to be taken as teaching that in Adam the race actually fell and in Christ the race is "ideally" saved, pending the necessary condition of personal faith; for while there is a truth in this view, it seems to do violence to the parallelism and balance of the passage. It is undoubtedly true that the two *alls* in I Corinthians 15: 22, have a different reference of comprehension; that is to say, the "all" who died in Adam outnumber, in

<sup>1</sup> *St. Paul's Conception of Christ*, third lecture, p. 87.

individual count, the "all" who are made alive in Christ. What we insist upon is that the constituency of both the first and the second Adam is the human race. The race sinned and the race is to be saved. Those that fail of salvation are to be regarded as individualistic exceptions. The aim of special revelation is a regenerated humanity. God deals with the race; He deals with individuals only as organic parts of the race. A man is not properly an isolated atom, he is a part of a whole. Dr. Abraham Kuyper's words here are clear, and they express the Reformed Theology on the subject: "Christ saves *humanity*. He redeems *our race*, and if all of our race are not saved, it is because they who are lost are cut off from the tree of humanity. There is no organism in hell, but an aggregate. In the realm of glory, on the other hand, there is no aggregate, but the 'body of Christ,' and hence an organic whole. This organic whole is no new 'body,' but the original organism of humanity, as it was created under Adam as its central unity."<sup>1</sup>

Secondly. It follows from this that the saved are to the lost as an innumerable multitude to a few. The "aggregate" of the lost is composed of the exceptions; the rotten fruit that is

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology*, p. 298. Italics his.

cut off from the tree is a small part compared with the good fruit which is gathered and garnered. It is practically the universal and unchallenged faith of the Reformed Church that all infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved. When we remember the scriptural teachings that few stripes will be allotted to those who have not known their Master's will, and that from those to whom little has been given little will be required, it must be said that the doctrine of the eschatological future of mankind is not so pessimistic as it is sometimes represented to be ; and that the racial blessings which spring from the redemption which is in Jesus Christ, embracing the restraining and ameliorating influences of common grace upon those who are not of the number of the elect of God, are such as to justify the humiliating Incarnation of the Son of God and to crown His sufferings in behalf of mankind with an immeasurable victory. Dr. Charles Hodge will certainly not be regarded as a rash representative of the Reformed Faith, and these are his words : " We have reason to believe that the number of the finally lost in comparison with the whole number of the saved will be very inconsiderable. Our blessed Lord, when surrounded by the innumerable company of the redeemed will be hailed as the 'Salvator

Hominum,' the Saviour of Men, as the Lamb that bore the sins of the world."<sup>1</sup>

But, thirdly, while all this may relieve the difficulty, it does not solve the mystery of the problem. It is only the old problem of sin, slightly modified. The primary difficulty is not that there is a hell, but that there is sin. When the door of God's world went ajar enough to let sin in, no darker and more diabolical intruder could follow in its train. The ideal was broken when the first impulse to sin invaded. The mystery of hell is but the inevitable corollary from the mystery of sin; it is but the same mystery throughout.

That hell should be eternal does not increase the mystery one whit; for even an eternity, as we conceive it, must beat its endless journey step by step, moment by moment. The essential mystery is not a matter of duration, but a matter of moral principle. It is no greater mystery that sin should be in God's world a thousand years from now or a million years from now, than that it should be here now. That it is here at all is the essence of the problem. The initial sin unlocked the door for a possibly everlasting doom. The will that chose the wrong has the capacity to choose the wrong forever; and, unaided or aided, it alone has the capac-

<sup>1</sup> *Systematic Theology*, vol. iii., pp. 879, 880.

ity to choose to be righted again. Dogmatic universal redemption is implicit fatalism: at least, no "freedomist" can espouse universalism in redemption, for the whole platform on which he affects to stand is that future human volitions cannot be forecast or foretold. But, remembering the ethical elements involved in personal salvation, it must appear that predictable universal salvation implies that every individual human being will, sometime, *certainly choose* to submit to God. Any doctrine of election has its difficulties; for election means partialism, as against universalism. We may hold, with Schleiermacher, that all are elect, or we may hold, with the universal pessimist, that all are non-elect; morally, they are as far apart as heaven from hell; but, logically, they are equally easy of acceptance. But the facts of life and the teachings of Scripture squarely disprove both; and when we enter into the region of partialism the difficulties begin. We remember that not pain but sin, not suffering but guilt, not future punishment but present, and therefore possibly ever-present, wrong, is the core of the mystery with which we have to deal.

Calvinism traces the mystery back to the mind of God, whose "judgments are unsearchable, and whose ways are past finding out." It finds the last

term not in blind selection, but in personal election; and, with Personality as the highest note of a sound philosophy, it insists that it has not only scriptural sanctions, but also those of a true philosophy. It humbly carries its fundamental principle of divine, sovereign control on to its eternal issues. It believes that the same God who rules men in this world rules men in all worlds; that the same hand that disposes temporal favors and earthly lots among free men has its determining part in the immortal developments of free men in conditions different from those of time. Dr. Kuyper has said that all Christians hold election in honor in *creation* and in *providence*, but that "Calvinism deviates from the other Christian confessions in this respect only: that, grasping unity and placing the glory of God above all things, it dares to extend the mystery of election to spiritual life and to the hope of the life to come."<sup>1</sup>

The limits set upon our task are already overpassed; and yet how deeply we realize that it has been very imperfectly accomplished! The magnitude of our theme would have long since disheartened us utterly had it not been that it is so vitally implicated in all intelligent reflective Christian faith. The best preacher preaches

<sup>1</sup> *Calvinism*, p. 272.

many a sermon for his own good, confidently trusting that what he needs himself will bring help in the case of others. We pity the man who has never doubted, for he who has not doubted has only half learned to believe. We have shrunk from the myriad-sided largeness of the question we have tackled, and we have often heard the mental censor adjuring us that our overweening ambition must be the measure of our inevitable failure.

Nevertheless, questions keep on asking themselves, and we dare to presume to offer our contribution as a modest study of one of the deepest problems of human thought. We should meet with suspicion the brazen face of the man whose voice proclaims that he has either formed or found an easy and all-sufficient answer. It is as necessary an achievement to know the bounds of our knowledge as to traverse the tracts between them. A few years ago, Gail Hamilton, in the *North American Review*, cautioned her readers against attempting to "poss the impossible and scrute the inscrutable." Pascal held that truth on this side the Pyrenees is error on that. We believe there is a mystic, though distantly unattainable, mountain height where all contradictions fade into unity and all the jarring colors softly blend in the white light of the eternal truth of God.

Many a difficult problem is measurably relieved by being clearly stated. With all the limitations, constitutional and incidental, which beset our knowledge, we submit that an inquiring mind gets unspeakable relief when it finds that no positive contradictions stand, like the lions in Pilgrim's path, to forbid its forward passage.

If Christianity and the cosmos contradict each other, the death knell has been sounded for Christian faith in every intellectually honest mind. If science and the Bible, if nature and religion, if the Logos, self-revealing in the cosmos, and the Logos, self-revealing in the Christos, positively clash, then Christianity must give up the ghost, and the disciple of Jesus must bury his reason, not at the goal but at the starting point of his irrational, foolhardy, quixotic pilgrimage.

We believe it is not so. We believe that any scheme of thought, scientific, philosophic, ethical, historical, or religious, which presumes to be comprehensive, and which does not have a large place at the center for a Christ-culminating, cross-crowned redemptive revelation, falls short of its pretensions, and, at least, by its inadequateness, is so far forth misleading and untrue. We believe that the cosmos and the Christ are historically incomplete, each without the other. The genesis,

the development, and the consummation, of the cosmic course yield their richest meanings only to him who studies them in the light of Him by whom and unto whom they are and were created. There is an unexplored remainder surviving our best endeavors after truth. The mystery of sin is the mother mystery of all others; but in Christ we have the mother solution of them all.

“The acknowledgment of God in Christ  
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee  
All questions in the earth and out of it,  
And has so far advanced thee to be wise.”

We should hesitate at believing were there no mysteries to us in the doings and dealings of the Divine. Sin hides from our reason its reason simply because it has none. Yet the grace of God were forever hidden from man were there not rebellious sinners to be saved; the father's forgiving love were, in all the richness of its fullness, unrevealed had not the prodigal occasioned and elicited its manifestations.

Man partly is and wholly hopes to be.  
Such progress could no more attend his soul  
Were all it struggles after found at first  
And guesses changed to knowledge absolute,  
Than motion wait his body, were all else

Than it the solid earth on every side,  
Where now through space he moves from rest to rest.  
Man, therefore, thus conditioned, must expect  
He could not, what he knows now, know at first."

There was a deep scarlet wound on the face of the cosmos which God had created. But the gentle hand of the Creator never put it there. If He was to people His world with creatures in His image, fair objects of His complacency, and capable of reciprocation in innocence and joy, then those creatures must be endowed with the capacity of disobedience, self-alienation, and sin. This dark possibility strangely emerged into a dread actuality, and the cosmos is cursed by the consequent blight. Man did it, not God; but God forthwith provided and presented a deliverance and a Deliverer. The ugly gash is healing, and will be healed at last; but the indelible scar remains. Despite the scar, the cosmos and the Christos, alike revelations of the eternal Logos, who is none other than the ever self-manifesting Theos, by overarching the mystery, quiet the eagerness of the inquiring spirit, give peace to the restlessly troubled conscience, and promise hope to the longings of the hungry heart.



# SYLLABUS

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## SUBJECT

### THE COSMOS AND THE LOGOS

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#### LECTURE I

##### THE UNITY OF TRUTH

- I. Unity: An Assumption, necessary and significant;—yet sometimes challenged. THE WHOLE, an Organic Unit—a *Uni*-verse;—the Theocosm. Contemporaneity and Continuity. The latter distinguished from Evolution.
- II. Truth: In the Thing? or in the Thought? Renascence of Idealism. Realism. Both easily proven and disproven. Theological Interest in the Conflict vital, though limited. "Idealism," an overloaded term. A True Idealism. Truth in the Thing as Expression of the Thought.  
All Truth is Thought. Comprehensive Unity of Truth answers to Encyclopedic Impulse of Mind. This Impulse Baffled;—Why?  
Some Denials of Unity of Truth. Concerning Kant's Antinomies. Genealogy of Modern Agnosticism. Kant (negative side), Hamilton, Mansel, Spencer. Some Theological Counterparts;—Ritschlianism. Benjamin Kidd's "Ultra-rational Religion." Faith not Folly.

Science includes the Sciences. Dividing lines imaginary. Notwithstanding persistent Breaks, the Oneness of Truth is always assumed.

## LECTURE II

### MODES OF APPROACHING THE COSMOS

Assumption of Preceding Lecture Involved in all World-study. Denied in Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*. World survives Bradley.

Materialistic monopolization of the word "Science." Three reasons for this: (1) Only the material yields to sensible tests; (2) It is argued that only the material is "natural"; (3) Evolutionary philosophy makes cosmical programme all-comprehending. Science means method, not material.

Two Methods of Approaching the Cosmos: The *A priori* and the *A posteriori*.

I. The First is neither wholly out-of-date nor wholly wrong. Hegel, Spinoza. The Science of the Arm-chair precarious. "Pure," fact-ignoring Philosophy; Coleridge. World-spinning a Harmless Pastime. Philosophy may descend from World-making to World-criticizing. Alphonso of Castile. Qualifications of the World-critic. Leibnitz, Von Hartmann.

The World disappoints Ideals: Why? Two Reasons given: (1) God Infinitely Free in Ordering His World-plan; (2) World-critic unequal to his Task.

II. Empirical World-study. Favorite Method in Modern Thought. Empiricism not Self-based. Bare Empiricism Veiled Agnosticism. Presuppositions Unavoidable. All Science really Intellectual Intercourse. Professor Knight. Kinship of Divine and Human.

Right World-knowing blends Inductive and Deductive. Something Posited, and that something read into the World. Mr. Fiske's name "Cosmic" for his Phi-

osophy Criticized. World-theories not Predeterminable only by *a priori* "Must."

## LECTURE III

## THE EMPIRICAL SURPRISE

Actual World Disappoints *a priori* Ideals. Fault not altogether on side of Ideals. World-ideals disenchanted by World-seeing. Gravamen of Difficulty is SIN.

Two Important Preliminary Considerations: (1) God must still be God. J. S. Mill discussed. (2) Sin must still be Sin. Evolutionary theories discussed. Browning, Tennyson. But these Considerations accentuate the Difficulty.

I. If God is good, then a World He has made is good, also.

II. There is Sin in the World. To deny this is to belie Consciousness.

III. Solution must lie in Independence of the Creature; Müller; Jowett's Remark. Functions of Personality.

IV. Man, the Person, is Free. Testimony of Consciousness. Three mistakes in reading this testimony: It does not testify (1) that we are free to do what we choose to do; (2) Concerning a Plan of which our Choice may be a Contributory Part; (3) Nor that we have power to choose other than we do choose any more than to do other than we do do. Pluri-efficiency of Will an Inference at best.

V. Freedom involves Spontaneity and Rationality. Evil of Undue Emphasis on former.

VI. Formally, Sin is non-compliance with the Divine Will.

VII. In First Instance, Power to Choose Involved Power to Choose Wrongly.

VIII. Human Race, Constitutionally, an Organic Unit.

IX. In Virtue of Man's Organic Relations with the Cosmos, His Sin Entailed Cosmical Disasters.

- X. *Therefore*, the Actual World is not Ideally Rational or Moral. Sin is Irrational, *i. e.*, without a Possible *Rationalè*. Hence Sin is Everlasting Absurdity to Reason and Impertinence to Righteousness.

## LECTURE IV

## ETHICAL VERSIONS OF THE COSMOS

The Wrongs in the World are Fault of the World, not of its Creator. Three Hypotheses named in *Evil and Evolution*: (1) They are a Part of God's Scheme; (2) Undesigned and Unavoidable Faults, Incident to it; (3) "An Enemy Hath Done This." First and third not Mutually Exclusive.

Natural Science, as Exegesis of Cosmos, as Precarious as Biblical Exegesis. Intelligence of Expert not needed for Jury duty.

In Aiming at Correct Ethical Estimate of Cosmos, Two Methods Possible: (1) Posit the Cosmical and Work Up; (2) Posit the Ethical and Work Down. The Former, John Fiske's Method; the Second, Henry Drummond's. The Older Darwinism. Huxley's "Evolution and Ethics," Suggestive of Paul's Nature and Grace.

Theodicy of Dualism. Revived by Mr. Mill; Argued in Anonymous *Evil and Evolution*.

Evolution Influential in Modern Thought. In Widest Sense, Evolution Self-evident; Le Conte. Influence of Evolution Theories upon Religion. Griffith-Jones's *The Ascent Through Christ*. Evolution often Claims too much. Some Severe Theological Tests Named. (1) Sin. (2) Christianity; (a) Individual Redemption, (b) Historical Force. (3) Christ. Forest's Criticism of Le Conte. Even if Evolution be a World-programme, not a World-*rationalè*.

## LECTURE V

## MAN AS FACTOR IN THE COSMOS

Twofold Relation of Man to the Cosmos: (1) He is in it, part of it; (2) He is above it, outside of it.

The Former, Theme of Fifth Lecture; the Latter, Theme of Sixth. Man's Composition Twofold: Spiritual and Material. Each has been denied; Hence, Materialism and Spiritualism. Pure Monist is Indifferent Which.

Man Viewed as a Final Product of Cosmical Evolution. Sin Naturalized and Normalized is Sin Abolished.

Christian Doctrine of Sin Determined by Scriptures. Man's Sin Blights not only Himself, but also his Home,—*i. e.*, the Cosmos. His Cosmical Relations not Destroyed but Disturbed.

*First Query*: Does this not overthrow Natural Theology? No; For not the Cosmical Order but the Perfection of it has been affected.

*Second Query*: Are Cosmical Laws Subject to or Contingent upon Man's Obedience? Empirical Science can never Prove the Present Order Normal; Many considerations Point to the Other Conclusion.

*Third Query*: Is Death in the Cosmos Due to Sin? Question has twofold scope: (1) Sub-human life; (2) Man. Little reason to believe that "Death" is to Brutes what it is to Man. Wallace, Shaler.

With Man, Death Apart from Sin something Different from what sinful Men know. Death not the only conceivable Destiny of Mortality. Translations. Death's Sting is Sin; Sting is Extracted when Sin is Removed.

*Fourth Query*: Must Natural Ethics go? Double sense of "Nature." *Naturam Prosequi* may be either good or bad motto. Dr. James Kidd's Self-realization *versus* Self-gratification. Realism in Modern Literature. *Christum Prosequi*: Self-realization reached through Self-abnegation.

## LECTURE VI

## MAN AS SPECTATOR OF THE COSMOS

Man only is fully Self-conscious ; Hence the only Knower, in fullest sense. Man the only Terrestrial Scientist. All Knowledge, Intercourse between *Egos*. This is Theism, Ready-made. But is it also Pantheism? That is to say, is the known Cosmos an *Alter Ego*?

Large Function of Symbols in all Knowledge. Recéjác *versus* Royce. The Cosmos, a Symbol. Hence Related to a Logos. Common Meaning of "Logos." Bigg, Purves.

But granted Cosmos is a Symbol, Can we know it? Advantages and Disadvantages of Agnosticism in arguing in Self-defense. Being and Seeming ; Seeming, always Seeming *To Be*. Value of Logic. A Lie may be Logical ; John Burroughs ; Romanes ; C. Hodge.

Is God a Person,—*i. e.*, Personal? Spinoza's Objection that the Infinite cannot be Personal has given way to Lotze's that Only the Infinite can be truly Personal. God's "Pale Copy." God not limited nor dishonored by calling Him Personal. Supra-personality, pedantic nonsense. D'Arcy's Conception of God as Personal *and* Supra-personal Untenable. Hamilton's Regulative Knowledge. Calvin. Spencerian Dread of Anthropomorphic Theism, Gratuitous. *Qualis Homo, Talis Deus*.

## LECTURE VII

## THE COSMOS AND SPECIAL REVELATION

Three elements in any Revelation : (1) *Ego* Revealing ; (2) *Ego* Addressed ; (3) Certain Relation between the Two. This third Element, Sin has Disturbed ; in two ways : (1) Man's Powers Vitiating. Edwards. (2) Cosmos out of Poise. Nature, especially Including Man, is now *Unnature*.

Revelation Succeeds, as such, only when it actually *Reveals*.

Natural Revelation, thus tested, partially fails—*i. e.*, if

Natural Revelation the only one, Revelation Fails.

Man at best could have only Incorrect and Misleading Conception of God.

Hence the (1) Occasion and (2) Need of Another Revela-

tion. Variouslly called Special, Supernatural, *Gracious*.

The Salvable unit is the Cosmos—*i. e.*, Man, the Race,

*Homo—in his Environment*, which is the Cosmos.

This Gracious Revelation, *ipso facto*, susceptible of human

Cognition and Experience. Philosophical Categories and Formulas.

Four Conceivable Relations which Gracious Revelation sus-

tains to Cosmos.

I. Identity, Either Naturalism or Pantheism.

II. Mutual Antagonism. Two Cautions: (1) World we see not

Pure Product of God; (2) Neither is the Special Reve-

lation which we see. If this Relation is a Finality,

Skepticism, Goal of all Rational Thought.

III. Gracious supplants the Natural. Ritschlianism. Lack of

Consistency; Debatable Merit.

IV. The Gracious Supplements, Interprets, Confirms the Nat-

ural. Kuyper. True *Rationalè* of Miracles. Christian-

ity as a Book-religion. Relation of Bible to Special

Revelation.

Is Christianity Susceptible of Philosophical Formulation?

Edwards, Hegel, Coleridge.

## LECTURE VIII

### THE INCARNATION THE CONGRUOUS CLIMAX OF ALL REVELATION

Special Revelation Essentially Redemption. Yet has its

Placement in Cosmical History. Logos becomes cos-

mical. However, from its very design, Immune against

Sin. Martineau. Mysticism. Inspiration. Christian-

ity less than Itself if Inspiration lacking. Inspiration and Reformed Theology. The Logos Immateriated in Cosmos, Inscripturated in Scripture. A Marked Advance. Not yet Complete. Presumptions, Metaphysical and Soteriological, in favor of Incarnation of the Logos. Incarnation the Inevitable, though Free, Culmination of Gracious Revelation. Relation of the Logos Incarnate in Jesus Christ to the Logos Inscripturate in the Scriptures. The Incarnation Free, Hence Voluntary.

Soteriological Incarnation Harmonizes with Cosmical Scheme.

Does Gracious Revelation Accomplish its Purpose? Does it Redeem the Cosmos? (1) As in Adam the Race died, so in Christ the *Race* is made alive. (2) The Saved are to the Lost as the Innumerable Multitude of the Organic Unity of the Race, to a Scattering Unorganized Few. Kuyper; Charles Hodge. (3) Old Problem of Sin still Persists. "Eternity" of Sin does not deepen Mystery. Concluding Reflections.

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