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tion between them so that there may be address and response on either side. There may be claims, requests, and promises. Under such circumstances communications from God that are prophecy, assurance, threat, may be inspired; truths pertaining to sin and righteousness, atonement and pardon, may be made known by inspiration. Such a theory of inspiration accords with the Scriptures and common sense far more than that which makes inspiration a necessary result of evolution. A covenant theology, as it seems to us, accords to man a position of far more dignity, and opens to him a Christian philosophy of far broader reach, than the theology that consists of the historical deposits accumulated through the development of a God-consciousness.

ARTICLE V.

THE DIALECTIC METHOD OF JESUS.

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It is possible that the title selected for this paper may seem more ambitious than is the purpose of the writer. That purpose, as a brief explanation will show, is not scholastic, but simple and somewhat practical.

The attentive reader of the Gospels is often impressed with Jesus' wonderful skill in meeting men; and in no variety of circumstances is this skill more evident than in those personal interviews, discussions, or controversies in which conversation, mutual question and answer, forms the the substance of the narrative. Our Lord displayed surprising readiness in his dialectics, as well as in his didactics. He was a marvellous disputant, as well as the first of teachers. And yet our study in Jesus' dialectic will not restrict the view to Christ's polemic discussions, or to any protracted logical processes. When two persons took counsel together for the purpose of intellectual or moral inquiry, and sought to separate and analyze themes according to their kinds, it

was, in the Socratic sense, a process in dialectics. Aristotle points out three modes of dialectical debate: the first, that in which teaching is the primary purpose; the second, that in which intellectual gymnastics is the sole object; and the third, that in which both disputants have the simple purpose of testing the argumentative consequences of different admissions, the acquisition of a larger command of the chains of reasoning, *pro* and *con*, bearing on some given topic. The term dialectic has been used in various senses by later philosophers and in general literature. We shall use the word somewhat widely, as pointing to Jesus' argumentative, conversational, analytical, or polemical methods of procedure. To exhibit some of the principles underlying his manner of meeting opponents or inquirers, of dealing with men individually, refuting their false arguments, rebutting their hostile charges, exhibiting their wicked prejudices, revealing their spiritual needs, and insinuating into their minds and consciences the perfect truth, is the object of this paper. Such a study, it is hoped, will enhance our appreciation of Jesus' insight into both character and truth, of his wonderful tact and his consummate zeal. It may justly be expected to be suggestive to such as are anxious to reach men by personal religious labor, by general discussion, or by Christian apologetics.

In attributing a dialectic "method" to Jesus, it is not implied that he used any conscious logical art, or pursued any fixed and uniform plan in his conferences. There was, indeed, as we shall soon see, a singleness of aim in all his discourses which gives unity, and even uniqueness, to them. But the variety of his dialectic resources and the spontaneous artlessness with which he used them are a marked feature in his conversations and arguments. Aristotle likens the dialectician to the fencer, who must be skilled in thrust and parry if he is to win the victory. And when we remember that he was the first to present a scientific analysis of logical processes, or read the acute and minute instructions which he gives to prospective disputants, or patiently follow his

exhibition of the fallacies of sophistical reasoning, we are amazed at the genius of that brain from which a new science could issue, Minerva-like, full-armed, and the accuracy of those observations of mental phenomena which the tests of many centuries of subsequent research have not discredited. Greater surprise, however, and a keener intellectual pleasure, even, await the patient student of the spontaneous and varied processes of our Lord, as, instructed in no schools and taught by no logicians, he wards off the attacks of an opponent, or thrusts his elenchus into the very heart of his foe.

Jesus was never at a loss what to say, nor how to say it. If he was silent, it was from choice, and because silence was the best answer. His weapons of defence and attack, his probes and scalpels were, indeed, the instruments of common life. There was nothing new or startling in the swords or foils that he used. It is the perfection of his skill in using them that amazes us. Just as in his teaching his words are the words of common speech, his pictures are drawn from the home, the street, the field; but the combination and apt presentation of words and pictures are what surprise us.

Sometimes Jesus met objections or inquiries by the plainest and directest statements of the opposite or appropriate truth. Thus he answered John the Baptist, Nathanael, the Nazarenes, or the critics of his disuse of fasting. At other times his words, though containing a true answer, were so veiled in enigma as to elude perverse minds, while honest eyes could see through the guise. Thus he met the Pharisees questioning his authority for cleansing the temple, the woman at the well, or the multitude asking how to work the works of God and seeking a sign from heaven; and such was the occasion and dialectic purpose of several of his parables. He could almost play on words (John vii. 25 ff.) for the effecting of his point. He used irony, sarcasm, reproach, rebuke, fiery indignation in the interests of his sublime elenchus. He was quick to meet emergencies. Enemies tried to entrap him, but were silenced, because seeing in their hearts that they were themselves entrapped. He appealed to the Scrip-

tures, to nature, to humanity, to precedent, to common sense, to inherent probabilities and possibilities, to conscience, to the rules of the rabbinical critics themselves. And in all his varied discussions, however subtile the objection or perplexing the inquiry, his mind spontaneously leaped to its decision, and moved artlessly, yet with unswerving precision, to the accomplishment of its end. For his purpose, and within the scope of his opportunity, he was, even beyond Socrates, to whom the palm is usually awarded, a master of dialectic skill.

It now remains to specify some of the more marked characteristics of his method.

1. In all his dialectics (whether in dialogue, in formal teaching, or in disputation) *the primary aim of Jesus' elenchus was that of moral search.* It is this that gives both individuality and unity to his method. The Socrates of Xenophon was indeed a moral teacher bent on promoting virtue; but when we combine with the accounts of the Memorabilia the impressions of the Platonic Dialogues, we see that Socrates often paused when he had effected a thorough intellectual search of his hearer. He was satisfied, for the time at least, to expose the mental ignorance of the artisan, artist, sophist, or statesman conversing with him. "Know thyself" was, it is true, the motto inspiring all his dialectic zeal, but it seemed to have primary reference to the reason and understanding only. The same is true, in yet greater degree, of Aristotle. It is as a logician, not as a moralist or advocate of religion, that the master of the Lyceum analyzes and unfolds the principles of debate. His affirmant and respondent, objector and defendant, are engaged in the pursuit or defence or analysis of truth as a matter of intellectual apprehension. It is as a rational, thinking being, chiefly, that both academist and peripatetic would show how

> "Man, proud man,
> Drest in a little brief authority,
> *Most ignorant of what he's most assured,*—
> His glassy essence,— like an angry ape,
> Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
> As make the angels weep."

And to a like use in debate and philosophy has dialectic been mainly put in modern times. It is the strong hand that tears away the carefully woven garment of argument, and shows the pads and artifices beneath. It is the keen and skilful anatomist, that follows out the concept or idea all along the veins and arteries and nerves of its being. It is a process which in German thought of Hegel's school has been wittily described by an English satirist as busying itself about the

> "Great Non-Existence, passing into Being,
> Thou twofold Pole of the Electric one,
> Thou Lawless Law, thou Seer all Unseeing,
> Thou Process, ever doing, never done!
> Thou Positive Negation!
> Negative Affirmation!
> Thou great Totality of everything
> That never is, but ever doth become,
> Thee do we sing,
> The Pantheist's King,
> With ceaseless bug, bug, bug, and endless hum, hum, hum."

Such is the scope for dialectic in its most modern and, as some have urged, its most worthy activity.

With none of these merely intellectual or philosophical results, however, was Jesus concerned. He desired that men should think rightly, and he often corrected their mental misapprehensions. As a matter of simple logic, he often exhibited the fallacy of their positions. But he did it in a way wholly subordinate to his primary aim of moral search. His elenchus was directed to the conscience and moral sentiments. In all the varied manifestations of his dialectic skill this single purpose of exposing to their own consciousness the moral dispositions and purposes lying beneath and behind the inquiries or objections or cavils of his interlocutors is apparent, individualizing and unifying all.

So evident and universal is this characteristic to the attentive reader of Christ's conversations, that it calls for little illustration. We detect it, in germ at least, even in his boyhood, when Jesus' answer to his mother in the temple must have reminded Mary that she was morally at fault for

losing sight of what she ought to know, that the child, born of the Holy Ghost, obedient and devout in his village home, could not be unfilial, as her tone and reproof had implied, while about his Father's business, or in his Father's house. We find it, in subtile form, in his "Woman, what have I to do with thee," —a reply designed, we think, to suggest that Mary and he were measuring his life by different moral standards, and that he could lend no countenance to her notion that life is a series of acts instead of an inward principle, and that God's mission for him can be fulfilled by any outward exhibitions of Messianic power for the purpose of display. No human being, only God, can direct his course.

Again, how evident the purely moral aim of his elenchus, as it slowly removes the false conceptions of Nicodemus or the woman at the well. Starting from the Pharisee's idea of the kingdom of God he works out the most vigorous, practical, and spiritual consequences. He wishes Nicodemus to see that a whole world of reality — the world of spirit — is as yet unperceived by him and that to know that world the eyes of his spiritual nature must first be opened, he must be born again. And then, as he recognizes the slow unfolding of the old man's spiritual intuitions, with what tact and supreme moral purpose he presents the heavenly truths of the Father, the Son, redemption, and salvation by faith! With the Samaritan woman, however, who was destitute of Jewish scriptural training, he takes his point of departure from the commonest thing imaginable — a well. Suddenly by a bold antithesis he exalts it to the idea of eternal life. Spiritual aspirations are awakened. He probes into the depths of her moral nature. That word "Go, call thy husband," is, it has been remarked, the first stroke, breaking up the surface of her fair appearance, revealing the foulness of the life beneath it: it is the word of penetration upheaving her moral nature; it digs down into her soul, a soul which must be dug through before the fountain of living water can spring up from the deep well of her purified spirit as an everlasting power. The words with which the interview closes are not

meant simply to startle or to instruct the woman's mind, much as they must have surprised her. They are designed to attach her confidence and love to the personal source of life who has now so thoroughly searched her moral being.

Many instances of a different and more dramatic character might be cited. One must suffice. We turn to the conversation with the priests and scribes and elders who came to Jesus at Jerusalem questioning his authority for his deeds and teachings. Had it been an honest question sincerely put, it would have called for a clear, convincing answer. And, as it was, though he nominally refused a reply, the three parables with which he followed his refusal were an indirect answer to their inquiry. But their question was not from a sincere heart desiring to know the truth concerning his teaching and mission. Even if the inquiry was honest, as based on an uncertainty in their minds, it was not ingenuous as coming from a desire to know and heed the truth. To expose this inward falseness, to exhibit to their own minds their moral perverseness, was the Saviour's aim in the dialectic of his reply. He is more concerned about them than about their question. Their question might be right, and then he would answer it; but they are wrong, and he will answer them. Their question, though legitimate, is based on a moral falsehood. He is before them for the moral end of "hunting men out of their refuge of lies." They are tacitly claiming authority as scribes to examine and pronounce upon him. Very well, have they pronounced upon John? Whatever their answer, it will involve a judgment upon him. For John foretold his work; he witnessed to Jesus. To answer Jesus' question, therefore, will get them into difficulties with their own consciences, or with the people, or with the rulers. And so they smother their consciences and hold their peace. They perceive the dilemma by which Christ has exposed them. They are shown to all whose eyes are open to be time-servers who have abdicated their spiritual office. But Jesus does not pause with this brief, but effective moral *exposé*. He follows up their consciences by the para-

bles of the two sons, the wicked husbandman, and the marriage of the king's son, until their moral blindness, their pride, their murderous spirit, their guilt and awful moral danger are pictured, if they will but look and see, on the horizon of their minds in colors of moral wrath and sorrowful regret.

2. In the foregoing observations we have been led, in a measure, to anticipate another feature of Jesus' dialectic, which we are now better prepared to appreciate. As it is of the nature of a corollary of the preceding principle it may be more briefly treated. *It is characteristic of Jesus' dialectic that he directed his elenchus toward the inward spirit of his interlocutors, in utter disregard of the mere form of their inquiry, argument, or complaint.* By this it is not meant that Jesus never gave a technically satisfactory reply to a technical objection. He often did this, as when accused of blasphemy (because being man he made himself God, in that he called God his Father), he answered: "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" It may be truly said that the cases are not absolutely parallel, that the inspired Psalmist did not call men gods in the same sense in which Jesus called himself the Son of God, that Jesus put more into his phrase than the Psalmist included in his word. Be it so, yet is the reply all the more effective as a direct technical answer to his accusers. For it is an argument from the less to the greater. If it was not blasphemy for an inspired writer to designate as gods the men who as kings were consecrated to office as the representatives of Deity, how much less is it blasphemy for one commissioned and consecrated by God himself as the representative of divine truth to call himself the Son of God. Thus Jesus meets his objectors on their own technical ground, and, having prepared the way so skilfully, then enters into the very heart and essence of the

matter. It is not blasphemy to speak of *my* Father, if I am his commissioned agent. But am I thus sent? That is a question easily tested. Look at my works. Are not they divine? Do not they substantiate my claim? Technically and really I am no blasphemer.

But though Jesus thus often met objections from the precise point of view from which they were advanced, he did not deem it essential to do this. It is usually an important principle of honorable and successful debate that a disputant shall answer his opponent from the latter's point of view as well as from his own. For the accomplishment of a purely rational victory this is doubtless necessary. And later on we may see how discreetly Jesus often heeded this principle. But for the purpose of moral search, for showing a soul its moral ignorance or spiritual death or religious prejudice — for revealing what is deepest and most essential in man, — in other words, for the end of Jesus' primary dialectic aim, — it is often unimportant and superfluous. And it is very apparent that Jesus so regarded it. The essential object with him was to search the conscience, and therefore the essential question to him was, What is the inward spirit of him with whom I speak? What is there, even though it be unconscious, lurking behind his inquiry, and urging on his questions? What is it, despite the outward form of his difficulty or cavil, that constitutes its inward essence? By what spirit is it prompted? by what motive instigated? To Jesus' thought the mental difficulties of men touching their relations to him, or his Father, or their fellows were moral in their remoter, if not in their immediate origin, and it was waste of time to attack the pickets and leave the citadel unstormed. As in his didactics, so in his dialectics, Jesus must have some point in common with his hearer. Some premises must be admitted or assumed by both, that will make his logic convincing. He refutes no arguments of straw, but penetrates to a knowledge of the real man, and answers him, unknown as that man often is to himself, till Jesus has brought to consciousness the deeper movements of his heart.

Thus arguments or replies that might seem indirect are, when we consider Jesus' purpose, marvellously direct. The quickest way to a man's conscience and inward spirit is not always, if usually, to show him that that is what you now purpose to assault. He may sometimes best be convinced if caught off his guard.

As a fine specimen of this outwardly indirect way of meeting a question, examine the parable of the Good Samaritan. A certain lawyer has come to Jesus asking how he may inherit eternal life. He is referred to the law of Moses; and when the Saviour has commended his reply, that man's duty is love toward God with all our being, and love of our neighbor as ourselves, and has said that through obedience to these requirements will come life, the lawyer's conscience begins to condemn him. Christ has only accepted his own declarations, and yet by that very acceptance has most effectively searched his moral being. We can almost see the scribe, as feeling the twinges of his conscience, and wishing to conceal his conscious short-comings and excuse his guilt before the law, he asks, "And who is my neighbor?" Just how far must I go to obey this second requirement? Precisely what does the law mean? Where shall I begin, and where may I stop? Now Jesus does not answer the question as the lawyer puts it at all. The parable of the Good Samaritan does not tell the inquirer who his neighbor is. But it does answer perfectly the spirit which prompted the inquiry. That spirit was one of calculation. It was legalistic. It counted on the winning of so much reward for so much service. It would measure love by bounds of race or creed or color. It lacked the flavor of true neighborliness. The man's moral impulses needed reversing. Not how few can I love and yet omit no neighbors; but how many can I make the recipients of my charity, should be the question. Not how little can I do and yet attain life; but how widely may I diffuse the living spirit of God? Having seen and admitted the nature of a loving neighborly spirit he was more effectively told than by a directer reply the wide and even universal diffusion of the neighbors whom he should love.

The same skill in the use of indirection in argument is seen in Jesus' reply to Simon's criticism of the reception of honor from the woman who was a sinner. No prophet, Simon was saying to himself, could fail to know this woman's abandoned character, and knowing it, would suffer these attentions. Now Jesus perceived that this objection was based partly on honest ignorance, and partly on the pettiness of a narrow, selfish soul, and so he proceeded to attack the spirit of the criticism, while indirectly meeting its letter. The parable of the creditor and his debtors disturbed the serenity of Simon's conscience, as is seen by his half-reluctant answer to the Saviour's question. But Jesus does not let him escape. "Thou hast rightly judged." Simon is entrapped. He has condemned himself. Because of an ungrateful heart, that in self-righteous sufficiency did not feel the blessings Christ had brought, he had suffered this poor sinful, but forgiven woman to express her loving adoration in attentions that should put to shame the proud and wealthy, but neglectful and uncourteous host. And yet, while thus reproving Simon's ungrateful spirit, how effectively does Jesus also answer his cavil. You think me no prophet, Simon, because I do not know and reject this woman. But, let us see; I am prophet enough to know the questioning that is now going on in your heart; prophet enough to know the precise attitude of your soul toward me, and to discern the fervent love of this sinful woman; prophet enough to see your pride and her penitence; to discern your *hauteur* and her devotion; to mark your brusqueness and her attention. Nay, I know her so well and you so well, that I see that she is worthy to be received by me, while you are not. And, as mightier evidence yet that I am a prophet of God, I say to her, in your hearing: "Thy sins are forgiven; woman, thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

8. *It is noteworthy that Jesus' dialectic is often directed chiefly to the hearer's admissions, tacit or expressed.* By this is meant that Jesus meets his interlocutor at the latter's point of view. He directs his elenchus toward the exhibi-

tion of the inconsistencies of an objector's admitted position. A delicate touch of this is seen in John vii. 25–29. The Jews have objected that Jesus cannot be the Christ, because when the Christ comes no one shall know whence he is, whereas they all know of Jesus' home and family. Then Jesus, with subtile irony and partial word-play answers: "Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am." And when the Christ comes ye shall not know his origin. Alas, how unawares to yourselves am I fulfilling in a deeper sense your own requirements. I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, and him ye know not; alas, too true is it that ye know not whence the Christ is come because *ye know not God*. Or see an illustration of the same feature in the verses immediately preceding the passage just cited. Jesus is defending his healing on the Sabbath-day. If, he says, as you admit, the positive vacates the negative precept, and a command to circumcise on the eighth day must override a command to keep the Sabbath free from labor, how much more justifiable is my making a man every whit whole on the Sabbath-day than any mere prevention of ceremonial defilement! The argument is, if we may so speak, a kind of *Tu quoque a fortiori*. "As for what I have done, you all allow the principle to be exercised, and for much less occasion. If I break the Sabbath, much more do you."

Indeed, the *argumentum ex concessu* is no infrequent weapon of Jesus. It is often a most effective way of securing his essential aim of moral search, because it serves so admirably to show the inconsistency and insincerity of his captious critics. And at times it approaches very near the *argumentum ad hominem*, though never vitiated by the usual fallacy of this latter mode of refutation. The account of the healing of the paralytic in Mark ii. is a case in point. The pharisees and doctors had gathered in and about the house expecting from Jesus some display of miraculous power, eager to see or hear some new thing, and quick to fasten on any seeming violation of their traditions. But when Jesus having healed the paralytic said, "Son, thy sins are forgiven

thee," it was an affront greater than was looked for. It was assuming the prerogative of God. It was blasphemy. They were amazed that any man, even Jesus, the worker of miracles, should speak such words as these. For it is to the inconsistency of this amazement that Jesus directs his reply. Why should they be surprised to hear words so simple, words the truth or falsity of which, in themselves, no man could, apart from other evidence, test, — words that pertained to a realm of unseen and spiritual ideas? As a matter of fact they must admit that they were expecting to hear from his lips words which, from their own point of view, as words, were far more amazing than these which he really did utter. Were they not gathered there expecting to hear the word of healing? Were they not looking for a command or declaration in the external realm of sensuous perception, the reality or deception of which could be immediately tested? Christ did not mean that from his point of view the forgiveness of sins was easier than healing a paralytic — it was a vastly higher work; but from the point of view of their captious criticism they should not be amazed that he chose what they regarded as the easier words. But that they might know his authority for the easier words, but harder fact, he will speak the harder words and accomplish the easier fact: "Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house; and he arose and departed to his house." So superhuman and so beneficent a deed as this was enough to authenticate the claims of one who even offered to pardon sins, and this was precisely the deed for which these captious Pharisees were looking, and thus by their expectation and by the deed they stood confuted, convicted of spiritual blindness, moral insincerity, and a spirit hostile to truth.

It was this recognition of each man's own concessions or prepossessions, it was this frequent agreement for the moment with his interlocutor's tacit premises, which led Jesus to adapt himself so skilfully to the peculiarities of each individual with whom he had to deal. He found some *πού στῶ* in every man's knowledge or circumstances before he applied

the lever of his word. Otherwise he could not move the man. Who that follows the thread of dialectic in the conversation with the rich young ruler, and sees the Master temporarily adopting his inquirer's assumptions, and then exhibiting successively their shallowness and falsehood, or traces his discussions with Pharisees disputing his right to heal on the Sabbath, his claims to divine authority, or his power to save, and marks the readiness with which he uses their own foils for warding off attack, and thrusting home the truth, can fail to exclaim at his reasoning, as did the people at his wondrous deeds: "We never saw it on this fashion; we have seen strange things to-day!"

4. It is also worthy of a brief notice that *Jesus in the interests of his supreme moral aim knew what arguments his elenchus should avoid.* Discussion is often cumbered with pertinent, but ill-timed evidence. Not all things that are true call for immediate statement. It was surely no slight evidence of his peculiar wisdom that Jesus' conferences were never laden with irrelevant or injudicious argument. Socrates often parleys and beats about, and wearies the patience of the reader as he leads into discussion seemingly irrelevant to the initial theme, or adduces argument susceptible of endless question and dispute. But never was it so with Jesus. His elenchus moved straight toward the mark. It was selective, choosing the things most apposite to the circumstances, and leaving all else unsaid. Only two of many possible illustrations may here be mentioned.

The first is the account of the disciples plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath. The Pharisees, when they saw it, charged Jesus with allowing that which was not lawful on the Sabbath-day. Now, this charge was based on a ridiculous development or exaggeration of the Mosaic law, wholly foreign to that law, and without justification, either in its letter or in its spirit. Jesus might have proceeded to show that this objection was ill-founded, as based on extra-Mosaic traditions. He might have entered into a lengthy interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures concerning the law

of the Sabbath. But evidently he thought such a course unwise. It would only lead to profitless casuistry, and blunt the edge of conscience. He saw that the whole objection, though sincere, arose from a captious spirit; he therefore struck inward. He adopted the *argumentum ex concessu*, and by it justified an *argumentum ad hominem*. Your objection, he contends, is inconsistent with yourselves. Do you not allow that David was justified in eating the shew-bread on the Sabbath, and priests are law-abiding in doing religious service on that day? You allow the exception, on grounds of necessity or mercy, to a David or to priests, and deny it to the Lord of David and the antitype of all high-priests. But more than this. You are not only inconsistent; you are dull of heart; you have thus reversed the true relations of man to the Sabbath, making him the slave and it the master. And thus you do not see that I, the Son of Man, am Lord even of the Sabbath.

In the second instance, Jesus is questioned whether it be lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day, and soon thereafter heals the man with the withered hand. Now here, as just before, our Lord might have answered this inquiry by a careful exegesis of the Mosaic law of the Sabbath. But, filled as their minds were with rabbinical refinements and traditions, a more radical and strenuous method than this was necessary. He placed the man before them. He proposed a dilemma: Is it lawful to do good, or evil, on the Sabbath-day? He pointed to their own practice with their flocks. He threw the decision of their question upon themselves; and then, knowing that their consciences admitted what their lips would not express, he declared that it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath-day, and then healed the withered hand.

Now, the skill of this dialectic lies in the way in which Jesus throws the decision of their question upon his critics, and, avoiding all needless argument over which they might captiously haggle, and turning the lance of his elenchus upon their consciences, probes their wicked, guilty spirit. In fact, this is the purpose, as we have seen, of all his dialectic with

opponents. He seeks the inner man of the heart. He works down into motives. He penetrates into the secret chambers of character. Of course, the intellectual validity of his argument involves the assumption that it is an injury to delay the man's healing, or that the healing requires no Sabbath labor such as the law forbids. But, without pausing to prove these premises, he seeks to exhibit the inhumanity and inconsistency of his critics. It is an appeal to the higher moral law, to which they are false. It is a use of their concessions, of dilemma, of inference from the less to the greater need, all in the interests of moral search.

It may be well to pause a moment, and review the features already described, in the light of a single illustration which presents them all, as well as others yet unmentioned. It may be doubted if the Gospels record argument more conclusive and searching than the reply of Jesus to the Pharisees who had charged him with casting out demons by the power of the prince of demons. On every ground, the accusation was false and wicked. We have noted how Jesus' elenchus is primarily directed to the end of searching the conscience and moral sentiments, and thus is directed chiefly to the inward spirit of his hearer. We have seen it fastening to concessions, and wisely avoiding cumbrous refutations. And thus we have seen it adapting to each peculiar case its method of procedure, and always wreathing with the crown of success its attacks upon pharisaic strongholds. These principles are exhibited in progressive and terrific power to any who will carefully analyze the Saviour's replies to the charge just specified. Such a charge is inherently inconsistent or self-contradictory, Jesus maintains, because it supposes Satan to be working against his own interests, and good to be proceeding from evil. But not only is the charge inherently false, it is inconsistent with his enemies' own admissions, since they acknowledge divine power in the control over demons which their sons are supposed to possess. But more than this, the charge is counter to the fact; for, instead of being under the dominion of Satan, Christ's power over Satan's

subjects is proof that he has conquered and bound the adversary. Moreover, their argument is inconsistent with the very nature of things. It violates the fundamental laws of nature and of life. Is not a tree to be judged by its fruit? But this is not all. False on every count as this charge is, it is mitigated by no considerations of pardonable ignorance and unintended prejudice. It proceeds from a wilful blindness to truth; it is the outgrowth of moral iniquity. In placing themselves against Christ, these Pharisees were showing that not Jesus, but they were in league with Satan. And last of all, in thus preferring darkness to light, error to truth, evil to good, they are incurring the danger of a guilt for which there is no pardon, an obduracy of will so fixed that even Omnipotence cannot change it.

Here, then, in Jesus' refutation may be noted an avoidance of all petty and purely technical considerations. It is an argument based on the most fundamental considerations. Here are tacit admissions used with most conclusive power. Here is dialectic aimed at the very heart and spirit of the objectors. And here is moral search that penetrates into depths of soul so profound and awful that it brings to light the very spirit of hell.

5. We are now led to specify a fifth characteristic of Jesus' dialectic method. *He appealed with absolute confidence of support to the moral intuitions of man.* Down in the hearts of men, despite all their sin and blindness, there was an eye which could see, and a power which would command, even if it could not enforce, the right. It is well to emphasize this feature; for it must be a guide to all who are publishing God's truth to-day. Socrates did not in reasoning appeal more firmly and constantly to the laws of intellect and reason than Jesus in his dialectic appealed to the constitutional instincts of our moral nature. Even when he referred to the Scriptures as authority, unless he was replying to some technical objection, he selected those words or truths of Holy Writ which express the character of God or the duty of man in some large and fundamental way. It was Scripture ex-

pressive of instinctive conscience, of necessary moral law, which he preferred to cite. Thus he strengthened his own moral being, and opposed the perverted conscience of the tempter in the wilderness. Somehow Satan's fallen nature must admit and feel the force of these ground laws of moral being. May not Jesus use his divine power to allay his hunger? No. Soul-satisfaction is better than bodily satisfaction, and to change stones to bread for his own use would be a desertion of his unselfish mission. It is the life of conscious obedience to God which is appointed for him. It is written: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God." Yes; but if, being God's Son, he thus shrinks from serving self, who will believe his claim? His coming is out of harmony with Jewish expectation. Why not correct the popular misjudgments, and show his dignity by a marvellous display of divine support in mid-air? No. That too would be an abuse of privilege. God's mission for Jesus is that of spiritual kingship; and faith in God is not presumptuous daring of God. "It is written: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Very well, then; let Jesus see what is before him — rejection, sorrow, suffering, death. He aims at the recognized lordship of the world. But by what a slow and disappointing path, at best, is that spiritual ascent to be made! Why so lofty an aim at the start? Why not get the world's allegiance first, and then elevate its ideals afterward? Why not be worldly wise, assert his power, rally his hosts, and then later establish his spiritual sway? But no: there is only one way of moral victory, or of duty, for man or Son of Man. Unconditional allegiance to God is the law of moral life and success. "It is written: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." It will be observed that in all these replies the cited Scriptures state basal moral principles. They are appeals of a conscience in its normal perfect workings even to a conscience hopelessly perverse.

Analogous to this, according to what we on the whole regard as the best interpretation of the passage yet suggested,

is Jesus' proof of the resurrection of the dead. To the Sadducaic mind immortality and resurrection were correlative. Establish the one, and the other followed, at least as a possibility. By a use of Scripture at once fresh and suggestive, Jesus proves the immortality of the soul. "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," said God to Moses at the bush. Not that the words themselves express, necessarily, a present relation; but the fact to which the words point — the fact that God is such a loving and self-giving God that he did, when the patriarchs were on earth, enter into moral relations of support and friendship with them — is the guarantee that for all succeeding time also he will give to them of his divine love and *life*. This is Scripture interpreted in the light of God's essential character, as made known, in part through the moral intuition, to an active conscience and a loving heart. It is a style of exegesis which, fitly guarded, should be of frequent use in our modern days.[1]

We have already had repeated illustrations of the principle now under consideration in the examples of Jesus' dialectic adduced in other connections. He appealed to men's sense of consistency, to their candor, to their justice, to their benevolence, to their mercy, their pity, and their tenderest instincts of humanity. How often when reading the parable of the Prodigal Son do we discern its dialectic aim and marvellous adaptation to its purpose? Yet even that evangelical story of sin and penitence has a strict argumentative use and connection; and is a very catapult of moral power built to shatter the walls of pharisaic hardness and prejudice of heart. The Pharisees are murmuring because Jesus receives sinners and eats with them. A righteous man ought not so to do. Listen to my parable, Jesus says. And then with matchless simplicity he paints the picture of a foolish son leaving the father's home, spending his fortune for naught; but ill, disgraced, alarmed, ashamed, until thoughts of a father's care and love recur, promptings to penitence arise, he

[1] See W. N. Clarke's Mark in loc., for a full and interesting presentation of this interpretation.

comes to himself again, and with tears of sorrow and sincerest purposes of amendment he sets out for the old forsaken home. We can see him along every step of the painful journey. We hear his prayers for help, we hear his acknowledgments of guilt, we read the honest purpose of reformation. Our hearts are filled with sympathy for the wayward but repentant youth, and we are alive to a hundred questions: Will the father receive him? Can he take him back? What will the elder brother say or do? And then, as all our fears are silenced, and our sympathies are met, and we hear the father say: "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him: let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again;" all our moral sentiments rise to commend so forgiving and generous a parent, and we think him a fit type of God. This is righteous forgiveness by man illustrating righteous forgiveness by God. Precisely this appeal to their humaner sentiments did Jesus design this parable to make in the case of these harsh, hard Pharisees. He, so to speak, takes them off their guard. He skilfully addresses whatever of heart, of tenderness and compassion is left within them, and then in substance says: If you justify, nay commend, this father in his course, as every one of you with a father's heart must do, how much more should you commend God and me for receiving gladly the penitent sinners who seek our embrace!

6. Proceeding in a manner such as this we are able to understand in a measure *the tone of authority with which Jesus used his dialectical resources.* Most reasoners have their moments and signs of trepidation. Few logicians, we must suppose, have felt unshaken confidence in all the arguments which they have adduced. Some things they have advanced with fear and trembling, and in later hours have either come to see their real validity in brighter lights or have withdrawn them as without support. But the absolute certainty of Jesus' dialectic processes is no more marked than his quiet dignified consciousness of their certainty. He expects men to be convinced by what he says, expects them, that is to say, un-

less they wilfully blind themselves to all light and defy approach along the lines of intellectual or moral analysis. This tone of authority may find its explanation in various causes. It surely proceeded in part from a conscious integrity which was willing to face any sin in others; but more particularly from a moral insight into men and the processes and developments of "the hidden heart" which enabled him to discern the end to be reached as well as the most effective weapons to be used.

We have seen in turn the moral aim, the neglect of outward form in the regard to inward spirit, the recognition of tacit or expressed admissions, the avoidance of cumbrous methods, the confidence of appeal to moral intuitions, and the conscious authority of Jesus, as he turned the forces of his logic toward the minds of men. A study such as that in which we have been engaged cannot fail to excite many questions which it may be difficult or impossible to answer. Was this elenchus of Jesus the Spirit of God (possessed by our Lord without measure) searching men's hearts, and using the weapons of human skill for its divine task of moral exploration? Or was it only the spontaneous operation of a holy mind, appropriating the instructions of early years and the observations of youth and middle life? Is it the workings of a perfect human spirit only, or is it the method of the divine mind also which we discern in Jesus' dialectic? Or is there in the workings of a perfect human mind, which is in communion with God, a method of procedure identical with the movements of the divine mind? Is it, in other words, Jesus, the Son of Man; or Jesus, the Son of God; or Jesus, the God-man; or Jesus, inspired of the Holy Spirit, who addresses so marvellously the mind of universal man? Or yet again, was Jesus' dialectic always successful? Did it accomplish its intended work? Were men enlightened, refuted, convinced? A candid mind studying our Lord's conversations and interviews to-day is convinced of the strength and conclusiveness of all his argumentations. They are final. They close debate. But were the uncandid hearers of his

very words driven from their false positions? Surely in many instances his enemies, even though convinced, and consciously condemned, were not dissuaded from their evil intents. In some cases it would appear doubtful if even in their heart of hearts they were convinced, at least more than for a moment, of their error. A vast and sombre field of inquiry opens out of these questions. If the elenchus of Jesus could not convince and convert unholy men in some cases; has Omnipotence, either in this or any other age, resources greater than those of the historic Christ whereby to win hardened sinners to conscience and to God?

But questions such as these, though prompted by our theme, are only suggested as topics for reflection, and must be left, at least by us, unanswered. The restricted and purely inductive method of this paper allows no digression into discussions now rife, save in this suggestive manner. The purpose of this study, however, would not be fully met, if we did not draw from the observations already made some brief suggestions touching the art of spiritual dialectics as an important acquisition for moral and religious workers.

Socrates called himself a midwife in the world of thought. It was his office, says Professor Tyler, "to aid those who came to him for such assistance in giving birth to the ideas, the sentiments, the elements of thought and action which were conceived within them, and, after having examined the birth to see whether it were a living, proper child or a mere abortion, according to the result of such examination to cast it away or to assist them in nursing and cherishing it." To such a work as this in the realm of moral and spiritual ideas and lives, as we are taught in many passages of the New Testament, the Christian teacher is called. Sometimes his best work is done upon great masses of men in the public assembly; often it is done in the dialectic contest with a single soul, by the wayside, in the home, or in an inquiry room.

1. Now, to deal with men individually, to grapple with difficulties that require the faithful application of our moral

elenchus and the ready command of all our dialectic resources is a test of Christian zeal. It has been justly pointed out that animal enthusiasm or intellectual vigor may lead a man to delight in addressing the crowded church or general assembly in tones of apostolic fervor; but it is only devout consecration to God which will prompt us to seek out individuals whom we may introduce, as did Jesus the woman of Samaria, to the richest stores of our mind and the sublimest truths of God.

2. There is no skill, therefore, which we should more resolutely endeavor to attain than the power of dealing with individuals in religious work. There is many a mind that can be brought into the vision of truth only by the clash of spirit with spirit, the moral awakening that comes from the use of question and answer, parry and thrust, move and counter-move of thought.

3. In the cultivation of this skill the capacity of moral insight is chiefly to be sought. And insight such as this is the child of study and experience, of prayer and the influences of the Holy Spirit, quite as much as the child of nature. To see men as they are, to discern their motives and inward spirit, is essential if we are to insinuate into their minds the truths of heaven and holiness.

4. Having gained this moral insight, the Christian dialectician, if he would have a real success, must hold firmly to the primary moral aim of his discussion. Wily minds will try to divert him. Acute intellects will seek mere theological debate. Even fools will hold up questions that saints in glory cannot answer. But the Christian respondent should preserve his moral aim. By seemingly indirect appeals to the constitutional moral instincts he should entrap, if he can, his interlocutor, winning, ere the latter knows it, his assent to some important premise. He should appeal to his concessions or practices or motives, if he knows them; never using fallacious argument, to be sure, but always using every argument in the interests of his supreme moral aim.

5. And then, lastly, the Christian dialectician, be he

humble religious worker or learned apologetic writer, can trust in perfect confidence to the entire harmony of revelation and conscience. There is no argument so effective as the pure white light of revealed truth exhibited in its absolute unity with the nature of things, the essential constitution of man, and the necessary character of God. Truth not only *is* so, but it *must be* so; and it is ever a moment of mighty power when we are able to display the "must."

Christ drew out of his own being, as from an unfailing treasure-house, his gems of truth and weapons of discourse, and had no doubt that conscience in man would endorse his affirmations and conclusions and appeals. We have the revealed teachings of Jesus, and may use them with equal certainty of their adaption, when rightly presented, to the moral needs of man. Jesus is the model man, the model character, the model teacher, the model *reasoner*. If a protracted study of his dialectic method will impart to his disciples any of the secrets of his power, it is a study deserving their attention. That it should not do it would be an exception to the usual laws of mind and life. "To have prayed well is to have studied well." To have reasoned well is to have convinced well.