

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

pass through school life with little apparent benefit. In all but a few cases, however, the effects of a good school will sooner or later manifest themselves. The majority will make a good start in art, literature, science, classics, and mathematics, and will leave with sufficient appetite for learning to make them desire to go on further. A few, gifted by nature, will make conspicuous progress, and be prepared to go on to the higher work of a University.

It is a great benefit to girls who may have a somewhat restricted life to start with a wide circle of congenial acquaintances. The idiosyncrasies which in a narrow environment become eccentricities are less liable to become obtrusive. Angles get rubbed down without any wound to sensitiveness. The give-and-take of a large school prepares a girl to show a wise consideration for others which does not always distinguish the gentler sex.

The writer has thus attempted to sketch in brief outline the tendency of different methods of education. It is to be deplored that some parents have not fully awakened to the knowledge that changed conditions of life demand a different kind of preparation from that which prevailed for girls a generation ago. Girls need a much more scientific knowledge even of domestic matters than sufficed for their mothers; but the further development of a subject so important must be dealt with in a separate paper.

C. M. BIRRELL.



ART. III.—MATTER AND SPIRIT.¹

THIS is an exceedingly interesting book. Like the author's well-known Bampton Lectures on "Personality"—to which, as he says, "it is in some sense a sequel"—it is so thoroughly well written and so admirably arranged, that it is a delight rather than a labour to read. In this respect it is a great contrast to many works upon philosophical subjects. Such books are too often written in a style which seems to have been almost designedly chosen to warn off the general reader, who is often driven to confess that, in order to understand their meaning, he must first study the language in which they are written, because that language, in far too many instances, is certainly not his own. This, we believe, is one reason why

¹ "Divine Immanence," an Essay on the Spiritual Significance of Matter, by J. R. Illingworth, M.A. (author of "Personality, Human and Divine"). London: Macmillan and Co., 1898.

so many people fight shy of philosophical reading altogether. But Mr. Illingworth's book is an example of how a somewhat difficult subject, and one which it requires some mental effort to understand, may yet be made positively attractive. Then, besides being regarded as unattractive, philosophical study is often regarded as "unpractical." It seems to dwell entirely in the region of theory, and to deal with ideas whose bearing upon the practical conduct of everyday life it is difficult to perceive. But if anyone wishes to see how the study of a philosophical subject may be really attractive, and how a knowledge of metaphysics and psychology bears most practically upon the everyday conduct of everyday life, we commend to such the volume before us.

The book deals with subjects in which most people who think at all are really interested. But, as a rule, the subjects are studied apart. Here we are taught to study them in combination, to see the relationship between them and their mutual effect upon each other. The range and diversity of these various subjects are both admirably expressed in the following sentences from the preface: "The world, after all, is a fact; sun, moon, and stars are real; men and women live and love; the moral law is strong; in a word, the universe exists, and some positive account of it must needs be true; . . . one love amid all our discords unites the modern world; we all of us love nature in our several ways . . . the wonder of its processes, the glory of its aspect, the contrast of its calmness to the coil of human care . . . with this feeling for nature comes an increased susceptibility to those spiritual emotions which the presence of nature inspires . . . we, for whom history has happened, can never again revert to a mere religion of nature . . . we have learned from nature itself that the law of life is evolution. . . . Religion, like other things, must have become increasingly articulate with the process of the years, its development more definite . . . and the plea of this essay is that the Incarnation is the congruous climax of such development" (pp. i-iii). In short, (1) we all of us love and study nature (the material world) in its manifold parts and aspects; (2) we all of us profess some religious belief. In different ways we are conscious of, and acknowledge the existence of, influences, powers, and forces which are not material, but we fail to see "the nature of the relation between matter and spirit." To elucidate the nature of this relation is the object of Mr. Illingworth's essay.

But, besides its general interest, the question is one of special importance at the present time, and we believe that, as a help towards the solution of a present controversy, this book may be particularly useful. In the ecclesiastical world

just now the ever-recurring controversy as to how far in worship the introduction of the material is a help or a hindrance to the realization of the spiritual—to what extent we are justified in trying to clothe spiritual ideas in material forms, or how far material ceremonies may be helpful in conveying spiritual truths—may be said to have reached an acute stage.

Mr. Illingworth's treatment of this difficult subject strikes us as at once broad-minded and discreet. Take, for example, the following sentences: "When we review the life and teaching of Christ, we see at once upon what condition this ministry of matter takes place; what it is that makes it religious, and not superstitious; progressive, and not retrograde. The condition is that matter be always subordinate to spirit" (p. 136). And again: "We see that the immemorial union of matter and spirit in religion was emphatically sanctioned by the practice and precept of Christ; while the complete subordination of the former to the latter was declared to be the condition of its legitimacy—the sole condition on which the functions of either could be duly fulfilled" (p. 138). If this condition was remembered we should hear far less of ritual controversies and of acrid disputes upon ceremonial observances.

The book consists of five chapters and two appendices. In the first chapter the subject of the investigation is admirably stated; it is, in short, "the Nature of the Relation between Spirit and Matter." The author is careful to give a clear definition of both these terms: "spirit" he defines as that which "thinks and moves and wills"; "matter is what moves in space." Very early in this chapter we come upon one of those explanations of common religious phrases which Mr. Illingworth has a faculty for translating into everyday language, and for showing their bearing upon everyday life. These "illustrations and explanations," plentifully scattered throughout the book, are one of its principal charms. The definition we allude to is found on p. 6, where we read: "Spiritual life consists in the free selection and conscious pursuit of the various objects of knowledge, affection, or practical endeavour which we are thus (by self-consciousness) able to present to ourselves." And again: "Spirit . . . is much more than a metaphysical abstraction; it is ethical and emotional as well. Its power of self-determination enables it to act from a sense of duty, to obey a moral law, and in so doing become good" (p. 7). If we read these words in connection with the second appendix ("On Freewill"), we can see how our own spiritual life depends in large measure on ourselves, on our past conduct, on the self-discipline—the

true means of obtaining freedom or the power of self-determination—which we have exercised.

In this first chapter Mr. Illingworth admirably states the conclusion of his principal thesis—the dependence of spirit upon matter—as follows:

“When, therefore, we find that the material world . . . is in countless ways adapted to further spiritual life, it is hard to resist the conclusion that matter exists for this very end, and that all its ingenuity of intricate arrangement is meant to serve the purpose which, in fact, it so admirably serves. If matter lay at our feet as a thing to be employed or neglected at will, the case would be different, and we might then regard its use as accidental. But its fusion with spirit is, in fact, far too intimate, its correlation too exact, to admit of any such idea. It is obviously part and parcel of the same system with spirit, and if so must, we argue, be qualified throughout by the final causality which is spirit’s goal” (p. 14).

Chapter II. is upon the Religious Influence of the Material World. This the author regards as one of the most striking “uses of matter to spirit.” In this chapter we have a collection of the evidence of the influence of nature upon the religious life gathered from a very wide survey of literature, ranging from the Egyptian “Book of the Dead,” the Vedas, the Zend Avesta, Greek, Roman, and Christian writers (both early and medieval), the Renaissance scholars, later theologians (as Zwingli, Fénelon, and Law), to modern literature in such different examples as Shelley, Byron, and Wordsworth. The result of this wide survey is thus admirably summed up:

“Here we have evidence that nature—the material world with its sights and sounds—has exerted throughout all ages a profound religious influence on the thoughts and affections of men. . . . The influence in question is independent of any theological interpretation . . . a mystic emotion, more fundamental than the varieties of creed—a primary, permanent, world-wide agent in the education of the human soul. Thus, matter has, as a fact, from the very dawn of human history, ministered to the religious development of spirit” (p. 48).

The next two chapters deal with Divine Immanence in Nature and Divine Immanence in Man. In the former Mr. Illingworth shows that the experience adduced in Chapter II. must be accounted for, and unless it “can be discredited it must be recognised as weighty evidence of a spiritual reality behind material things. . . . It can only be discredited either by proof that it is an illusion, or by proof that the faculties which feel it are unworthy of trust” (p. 50). An investigation of the first hypothesis leads to an interesting

study of the terms "real" and "reality." We must not follow the argument here in detail, but must content ourselves with giving the author's conclusion: "However little we may have reflected upon it, personality is, as a matter of fact, our tacitly acknowledged standard of reality. . . . What affects me personally, and thereby becomes part of myself, is real for me; while what affects me most persistently and most powerfully is most real" (p. 53). The question raised by the second hypothesis is that of the trustworthiness or untrustworthiness of our emotions. "It is too often assumed that the emotions, as contrasted with the intellect, are untrustworthy guides to truth; and many even of those who think otherwise still allow the emotions to be called irrational, as though belief in them were an act of faith, in some sort needing an apology" (p. 56). Mr. Illingworth clearly shows that "this sharp distinction between feeling and understanding" is untrue to fact. Knowledge really starts with personal experience—"the experience of a person who both thinks and feels." Our knowledge of nature is really both scientific and "sensible," the one is no more *real* than the other; thus the influence of nature upon us is its influence upon the whole of our personality, and is personally felt. If, then, "this influence cannot be discredited, it points to a spiritual presence in nature." Next we must consider the relation of this spiritual presence to nature, and how this relation is to be interpreted. This, of course, is one of the pivots of the argument. We are reminded that modern science has proved the unity of nature; remembering this, the problem is at once narrowed and simplified, for considerations implying dualism or polytheism need not be considered. The author then proceeds to show that the analogy from human personality, our knowledge and experience of ourselves (where we find spirit and matter in combination), is our only key to the solution of the problem as to how the Spirit which guides the system of things is related to the material order. From our own personal experience we find that spirit "has two different relations to matter—that of transcendence and immanence"; these two relations, "though logically distinct," "are not actually separate," but "two points of view from which the single action of our one personality may be regarded."

It is at this point of the argument that the general reader—one untrained to notice the niceties of philosophical language and thought—will need to exercise caution. The thought of Divine Immanence at first sight seems perilously near to Pantheism; and have we not heard of "Christian Pantheism" and "Christian Pantheists"? though the terms in themselves surely involve a contradiction. The condition of transcendence,

in addition to that of immanence of spirit, must by no means be lost sight of. Before the chapter closes Mr. Illingworth shows clearly that this double relationship—of transcendence *plus* immanence—excludes Pantheism, which is mere immanence; Deism, which is mere transcendence; and the modern theory of “Monism,” which would imply mere identity.

In Chapter IV. we pass to Divine Immanence in Man. This thought is shown to follow necessarily from the preceding one, for “if God is immanent in nature, He must also be immanent in man, since man is a part of nature.” This argument might have seemed sufficient to establish this further position, but the author prefers to proceed somewhat independently. He notices two faculties of whose possession man shows evidence, the first being that of conscience, the second being inspiration. We should like to have dwelt at length upon this portion of the book, for the treatment of both subjects is exceedingly instructive; but we must refrain.

Mr. Illingworth next shows how “our spiritual character reacts upon the material instrument of its realization, moulding the brain and nervous system, and thence the entire bodily organism, into gradual accordance with itself, till the expression of the eye, the lines of the face, the tones of the voice, the touch of the hand, the movements, and manners, and gracious demeanour, all reveal with increasing clearness the nature of the spirit that has made them what they are. Thus the interior beauty of holiness comes by degrees to be a visible thing, and through His action upon our spirit God is made manifest in our flesh” (p. 77). From this he concludes that, “in proportion as we are enabled to recognise this progressive manifestation of God in matter, we are prepared to find it culminate in His actual Incarnation, the climax of His immanence in the world.” Thus the Incarnation is shown to be the climax—may we not say the necessary and natural climax?—of the interpretation of the universe which has been pursued.

In the rest of this chapter the arguments for and the objections against the Incarnation are most carefully considered. Two points seem to call for special notice: (1) The author believes that the primary evidence for the Incarnation is spiritual; “the Incarnation is primarily and essentially a spiritual fact, and no conceivable amount of evidence that was merely material could prove it . . . the personality of Jesus Christ is its own self-evidence. . . . He appeals to His character to substantiate His claim; bids men look at Him and recognise that He must be what He says. . . . Such an appeal is directly addressed to the spiritual insight of His hearers, and can only succeed where that insight exists. It was

rejected as a matter of course by those who did not know goodness when they saw it" (p. 87). (2) Instead of regarding miracles as supporting the Incarnation, it is far more true to regard them as the natural outcome of a unique Personality in a unique position; "they flow naturally from a Person who, despite His obvious humanity, impresses us throughout as being at home in two worlds" (p. 89).

This fourth chapter may be considered as the central and culminating point of the discussion; what precedes it may be regarded as preparatory to it, and what follows as describing the results of the acceptance of its teaching, namely, that the Incarnation is the crowning example of Divine Immanence in the world. In the next three chapters the author deals with some of these results, and shows the effects of his theism upon our Ideas of Miracles (Chapter V.), the Sacraments (Chapter VI.), and the Trinity (Chapter VII.). Space forbids us examining more than one of these. In view of present controversies we will choose the second, that entitled *The Incarnation and Sacraments*.

In this chapter, as in the whole book, we are struck with the writer's spirit and method. The spirit is "Catholic" in the best sense of the term; it shows a breadth of sympathy and a power of appreciation of the good in systems and modes of thought with which as a whole he cannot agree: his method here, as elsewhere, is wonderfully clear.

The chapter opens by showing that matter has a religious influence upon man in two ways; besides its direct influence, there is an influence arising from the reaction upon it of the human mind. As an illustration he considers two flowers, one growing in a field, full of life and scent and beauty, the other dried between the pages of a book; "though the former may give us 'thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears,' the latter may be linked with tender memories of bygone love, which invest it with greater power over our personal life. So, beside the general religious impression which the beauty and wonder of the world creates, we find special associations of spiritual import gathered round particular material things; and matter has thus what may be called a secondary, as well as a primary, connection with religion" (p. 125).

These two effects of matter are seen in the early history and early stages of religion as those of "myth" and of "ritual or cultus." The growth and development of cultus is next investigated, and it is shown that throughout pre-Christian history—in the Old Testament, as well as in other religious systems—"the phases of man's spiritual life are closely connected with material forms."

This connection is not "simply and solely superstitious."

For the principle of evolution, when truly interpreted, implies that the lower form implicitly contains the higher. "Many of the instincts of primitive man were truer than the explanations of them which he attempted to give. His judgments were better than his reasons." The savage localizes the gods and spirits, who he believes act upon him; this action "at a certain stage of culture is a psychological necessity, if Divine presence and Divine action are to be realized at all."

But besides the relation of the gods to men, there is also the relation of men to the gods; "this, again, if it is real, must issue in physical action. Thus, the partaking in the tribal communion, the offering of sacrifice with its prescribed ritual . . . constitute the practical religion of an early race; . . . these were the necessary means by which spiritual life first came to recognise itself" (p. 129).

Mr. Illingworth's next point is one which we think needs specially careful consideration, because here, necessarily, the dividing line which separates the good from evil, the true from the false, must be finely drawn. But the teaching is of the greatest importance, and especially helpful in our reading of the early history of the chosen people.

"It is a mistake," he says, "to regard the association of religious belief and practice with material things as inevitably superstitious or irrational: for it is founded on a psychological necessity, from which there is no possibility of escape, in a world where spirit can only be realized through matter. Such association is, of course, a fruitful parent of superstition, when its underlying religion degenerates . . . nor is it always possible, in a given case, to say where superstition began and progress ended . . ." (p. 130).

Mr. Illingworth now reminds us of his definition of "reality" as "permanent relation to a person or persons"; whence he concludes that "if a particular person realizes the Divine presence (which we believe to be latent everywhere) with exceptional vividness in a particular place, does not this constitute an actual manifestation of God to that person in that place? For in what sense can it be said that God is not really present, when we apprehend His presence to such good purpose that the whole of our subsequent conduct is coloured by the fact?" (p. 131).

As an illustration of this teaching the historic life of Christ is carefully reviewed, and we are asked to notice how Christ's human body was "an integral element in His life and work," how "He controls its appetites under temptation, goes about when weary doing good, foresees yet faces suffering . . . these things do not merely show, they actually make His human character." Thus, from the example of Christ Himself we

see that "the bodily organism . . . is an essential ingredient in the progressive development of holy personality" (p. 134).

Christ's attitude towards nature and the external world, His use of symbolical language and symbolical action are then examined. Lastly, we come to the two Sacraments which Christ ordained, "selecting as their media the two simplest, most symbolical, most universal, religious rites, the sacred ablution and the sacred feast, both familiar to the world . . . and having their place under all kinds of religion, He raised and re-enacted them in their purest forms to be thenceforward means of union with Himself: and thus gave final recognition to the law we have traced by which matter is made ministrant to spiritual life" (p. 136).

But what of the effects of Christ's teaching on this subject—the attempts to realize it as seen in Christian history, that is, in "the sacramental system to which Baptism and the Eucharist gave rise"? Mr. Illingworth plainly states that "this (sacramental system) was not, of course, as elaborate at first as in process of time it came to be." We fully agree with him when he says that "from the very first, the material elements of these two Sacraments were intimately connected in the Christian consciousness with the grace which they conveyed." But he is, we are glad to notice, most careful to point out that while by the early Christians "water and bread and wine were raised to a position of new dignity as vehicles of a spiritual benediction upon man," yet "the entire dependence of their value upon the spirit with which they were linked is at the same time clearly and emphatically maintained" (p. 141).

The influence of the ritual connected with the ancient heathen mysteries, and, especially in the case of the Lord's Supper, the gradual appropriation of much of this ritual, is a subject upon which more exact knowledge and more careful and dispassionate treatment is much to be desired at the present time. Still, of the main facts there is not much doubt; and when Mr. Illingworth speaks of this being a "raising the old-world ritual to a higher and holier use," we fear he takes far too high a view of its effects and consequences. He seems to have forgotten his own condition of its legitimacy, viz., "the complete subordination of matter to spirit." Speaking of this assimilation of various parts of Pagan and Jewish ritual by the Church, he says: "It is, of course, easy, from a modern point of view, to regard this process as retrogressive." But was it not just this in large measure? To quote his own words, "all religion, as it becomes popular, is apt to be degraded, and the Christian Sacraments were undoubtedly degraded in their popular use."

We want no stronger testimony than that. Those who had been used to the ritual of the mysteries probably craved for a far more "sensible" religion than that of the very earliest Christians. The material is far more easy to grasp than the spiritual, though, to grasp the spiritual at all, a *measure* of the material (as sanctioned by Christ Himself) may be very helpful, if not absolutely necessary. Yet we know the awful danger of resting in the perception of the material alone, and of forgetting its transcendence by the spiritual. We quite agree with Mr. Illingworth that under present conditions there is a ministry through the material; we go so far as to admit, with him, that "the growth of the sacramental system was a historical necessity," though we much prefer to put the same thought somewhat differently, and say that with our greater knowledge of the marvellous complexity and adaptability of the material world there must of necessity be a growth in the breadth and diversity of the application of the sacramental idea. We learn to see the effect of the influence of the Divine Spirit upon us through material channels in many more instances, and in ways of ever greater diversity.

But, while we cannot accept this part of the treatment of his subject without strong qualification, we are thankful to notice that he seems to see the necessity of repeated insistence upon the two conditions whereby the influence of matter in connection with religion is legitimate and productive of good. (1) The effect of the material upon us depends on our feelings towards it; in other words, the benefit of the sacramental method is due to the reaction upon it of the Divine Spirit acting through the human spirit. (2) The absolute necessity of complete subordination of the material to the spiritual.

The first of these conditions seems to be that which Evangelical Churchmen are always urging with regard to the Real Presence. We agree with Mr. Illingworth when he says that "the separation of subject and object is easier in language than in fact." But we have entirely misread his whole argument unless we may conclude that he teaches that the religious effect of the material is due to a perceptive and appreciative power—surely a *spiritual* power—in ourselves. This power is, indeed, nothing else than an influence of the Divine Spirit upon our spirit, and is ours by *faith*—the essential means of our enjoyment of that communication, of our possession of that communion.

The second condition must govern all our use of the material in religion, as it certainly governed Christ's employment of it. We must remember those whose perception may never pass beyond the material, and who may be, if permitted, only too well content to rest there. By a too lavish and unrestrained

use of the "sensible" they may actually be prevented from apprehending the spiritual which transcends it.

There are many other parts of this deeply interesting book to which we should have liked to call attention. Especially should we have liked to examine the excellent appendices on "Personal Identity" and "Freewill," the final pages of the latter being among the most admirable pieces of practical ethical writing and teaching we have seen for a long time past; but we have already outrun our space, and very possibly the patience of our readers.

We heartily commend this book as a thoughtful and reverent effort towards the solution of problems which lie very near us all.

W. EDWARD CHADWICK.



ART. IV.—THE ALBIGENSES.

PART III.

LEAVING now the evidence which has been submitted elucidating the Albigensian and Waldensian doctrines and practices, we turn to the history of their suppression. A convenient starting-point is afforded us in the Council of Tours (A.D. 1163), at which it was ordered, under Canon 4, that the heretics, *in partibus Tolosæ*, were to be placed under anathema; that no one should deal with them, or receive them; and that when arrested they were to be brought before "Catholic" princes and deprived of their goods. But resolutions are one thing, action upon them is another, and practically those against whom the canon was directed remained undisturbed. Its harmlessness acted rather as an incentive, and as Roger Hoveden says, "The Arian heresy spread so rapidly that the King of France, and his 'man' the King of England, sent Peter Chrysogonus (Cardinal, Legate, and a Cistercian), Henry of Clairvaux, Archbishops and Bishops," into the infected district, "in order that by their preaching they might convert the heretics to the Christian faith"; while Raymond, Count of Toulouse, Raymond, Count of Castranovo, and others, were appointed by the said Kings to aid the Commissioners in the work of conversion. Henry of Clairvaux declares in a letter which he addressed "to the Catholic world" that, if they had deferred their visit for three years, scarcely one person would have remained orthodox. But imposing as was the personnel of this commission, its sole result was the condemnation and excommunication of