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THE  
CHURCHMAN

JANUARY, 1889.

ART. I.—THE CHRISTIAN COMMISSION AND  
CRITICAL AND SCIENTIFIC RESULTS.

HOW far is the Christian Commission independent of critical and scientific results ?

In this question, there are two indeterminate quantities—one is the Christian Commission, and the other is Critical and Scientific Results. By the Christian commission I understand the final charge of the Saviour, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." This implies (1) that a gospel has been committed unto us, has been laid upon us as a burden and a charge; and (2) that we have a gospel to preach. (1) It implies that the imposition of this burden is perpetual and not transient; it anticipates no essential change, and looks forward to no end. Human nature being what it is, and Christ being what He is assumed to be—the risen Son of God and Son of Man—it conceives of no condition of things when the commission will have spent itself, till the kingdom, which is announced as always at hand and is ever being prayed for, shall indeed have come. (2) It implies that what we have to preach is a gospel, a message of good news; that it is sent to every creature, to the whole creation, primarily of mankind, as directly concerning them, although indirectly calculated to benefit also the brute creation, whose physical condition is so largely subject to the will of man. And, if I am asked to define it further, I should say that it is the Gospel of God's forgiveness and goodwill to man, that it contains the promise of deliverance, of pardon, of redemption, of salvation here and hereafter, a promise that is limited only by man's rejection of it. "He that believeth not shall be judged" and condemned (*κατακριθήσεται*) for his unbelief. "He that believeth not hath been judged already (*ἤδη κρίσται*), be-

cause he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

This is the Christian commission; it is a commission that comes only through Christ. Historically it was first given by Him, and the terms upon which it was given involved the recognition of the fact that He was the author and cause of it, and that but for Him and His work there would have been neither the knowledge of, nor the authority for it. For the Christian commission is not a philosophy or a school of teaching, but it is the proclamation of a fact through the revelation of a Person who bases all that He has to announce upon the unique position that He claims to fulfil. This position is itself either a fact or a fiction; if it is a fiction, then it will infallibly be detected, and the sharper men's intellects become, and the wider their experience grows, the more certainly and speedily they will detect it; but if it is a fact, that is to say, part of the substantive truth of the universe, and consequently in keeping and harmony with its central truth, then in proportion as men's knowledge of the facts of the universe, which can never be other than partial, increases, it is probable that from time to time it will seem to contradict these facts; but no less certainly and surely is its eventual triumph guaranteed, because, as Hooker says, "truth of what kind soever is by no kind of truth gainsaid," and on the hypothesis the Christian commission is part of the substantive truth of the universe.

Of course if we demur to this hypothesis we are only pretending Christians, and not believers; the real question turns upon our acceptance of the hypothesis, that is, upon our admission or rejection of the claims of Christ. It does not turn upon the abstract truth or falsehood of those claims—of that we are and can be no judges; but it turns upon our acceptance or rejection of them upon adequate grounds. If we accept them, then the question for us is closed as far as regards our ability to demonstrate the harmony between *that* and any other truth. If we reject them, it is quite possible, and more than probable, that our sense of allegiance to some other truth may make us believe it our duty to reject *this* as false; but so far as we are Christians, that is, believers in Christ, we cannot do so.

And it is perfectly clear that we cannot be the bearers of any commission unless we are believers in Christ. What is it that is committed to us, unless it be the Gospel which He died to establish? If His death did not establish it, then we have no Gospel—we have nothing to proclaim. The Christian commission implies not only its own absolute truth, but yet more, that those who receive it are profoundly convinced of its truth. This, doubtless, is no more than may be said of the

Mohammedan commission, and then it becomes a question of the comparative merits of the Gospel of Christ and the religion of Mohammed; but no man in his senses can for a moment suppose that the two rest upon anything like the same foundation of independent evidence. In speaking of the Christian commission, as we are speaking now, we assume beforehand that the basis of evidence on which it rests has been found to be altogether satisfactory and entirely sound. In receiving the testimony of Christ, we have, in the words of St. John, "set to our seal that God is true," and that the truth of Christ is the truth of God.

So much, then, for what we understand by the Christian commission. And in saying this we have anticipated the essential answer to the question proposed. To a large extent the Christian commission is entirely independent of the results of science and criticism. And for these reasons. First, the foundation of the Gospel is one of historic fact. It is idle to suppose that Christ was not an historic person, as real as Plato and Aristotle, as Alexander and Cæsar. The validity of His claims turns upon His known historic character, the nature of His teaching, the reality of His death, the truth of His alleged resurrection, the kind of recognition which has been supplied by the long result of history and the experience of ages. These are all, or nearly all, facts which are not open to question. The only question is the meaning and interpretation of the facts; and that is a question only so far as the ultimate resolution of it is essentially a matter of belief rather than of intellectual demonstration.

But, secondly, what is historically true once is historically true for ever. No discoveries of science or speculations of criticism can undo a thing which has once been done, or turn back the course of history. If Christ ever truly died, no lapse of time can have the smallest influence upon that fact. Having been a fact once, having once occurred, it is a fact for ever; and whatever its significance may be, so far as that significance depends upon its being a fact, it is unalterable. Every believer knows that the death of Christ as a motive power, as a source of life, is as fresh and potent now as if it had happened but yesterday. The lapse of time has no effect upon it; and that divine energy arises, not from his faith, but from the fact itself, which awakens and stimulates the faith. If the unbeliever is not conscious of this, it is the fault, not of any weakness in the evidence of the fact, but of his inability to apprehend it—that is, of his unbelief. It stands to reason, therefore, that so far as the Gospel is based on fact, and derives its strength from fact, so far the revolutions and

mutations of time can have no effect upon it. If it ever was true, it must be true for ever.

But, thirdly, the revelation of the Gospel is a revelation of the relation between God and man; and this, from the nature of the case, is an unalterable relation. However man may vary in condition, intelligence, knowledge, power, and the like, his relation to God will not vary. God either is or is not his Father; man either is or is not the handiwork of God. This is not a matter that we can find out by science or criticism. The Gospel announces it as a fact; and, if a fact, then the relation is a permanent one, independent alike of development on our side, and of growth in our conceptions of God arising from increased knowledge of His works. The Fatherly relation is independent of infinite possible variations in the subjects of it, and is itself beyond the sphere of observation and induction so far as it subsists between God and man. For though our conceptions of God will vary as we vary, yet the relation between us, if a true one, must of necessity be permanent. The relation is *constant*, however much the condition of the things related may *vary*. For this reason, then, the Christian commission, assuming it to be a true one, is necessarily independent of any conceivable results of science, because, however much they may enlarge and modify our conceptions of God, it is manifestly impossible that they should affect His relation to us if only He has made that relation known; and that He has done so is the declaration of the Gospel of Christ.

The results of science and criticism differ in this respect, that those of science are likely to affect our knowledge of God and of the ordinary methods of His working. It is impossible to read such a book, *e.g.*, as Mr. Norman Lockyer's on the chemistry of the sun, or any astronomical treatise, and not feel that the name of God, which we name so lightly, is raised to an inconceivable degree of glory and majesty, which may well tempt us to adopt Tyndall's variation of the Psalmist's language, and exclaim, "What is man, that Thou shouldst have respect unto him, or the son of man, that Thou shouldst regard him?" It is impossible to note the uniformity of the operation of natural laws, and not be led to reconsider the belief that their uniformity has been less than universal. It is simply our conception of God and His mode of working that the study of physical science is likely to affect, but the results of criticism are calculated not to interfere so much with our conceptions of God as to "throw ominous conjecture on the whole success" of the methods by which we have arrived at the conclusion that the recorded testimony concerning God is valid and genuine. And certainly the extravagance with

which some critical questions have been pushed of recent years is such as to threaten the very existence of that testimony.

I wish, then, to inquire how far it is reasonable to suppose that the results of science and criticism are likely to affect the alleged validity of the Christian commission, and I will consider some of the results of science first.

It is, of course, obvious that it was not for many centuries after the canon of Scripture was closed that men began to be at all aware of the true relation of the earth to the heavenly bodies among which it moves. Doubtless, if the writers of the Old and New Testaments thought at all about the matter, they thought that the sun moved round the earth, and believed that the earth was a vast plain, broken only here and there by seas and mountains. To be sure, we read in the Prayer-book Psalms, "He hath made the round world so fast that it cannot be moved," but there is, of course, no authority for the word *round*. The writers uniformly speak of the earth and the heavens as they appear, and it possibly never occurred to them to ask how far these appearances were true. If, then, their ignorance on these matters affords any reason for calling in question the authority of their Divine message, it is plain that we cannot for a moment regard it; and possibly, when it began to be known that the earth moved round the sun, and was itself a sphere, it was felt by many as a rude shock to faith; and yet clearly without cause, for why should any Divine commission in the writers carry with it also the promise of information on topics such as these? Rather, the very fact of their special illumination being coupled as it was with the natural ignorance of their time is calculated to enhance the value of that special illumination. How strange that in the midst of the thick surrounding darkness there should be flashes of such conspicuous brilliancy! And, in like manner, when within the last three-quarters of a century the researches of geology and palæontology have made plain to us the fact that the earth has been in existence for inconceivably long cycles of ages, it is impossible not to feel that there are certain statements in the early books of Scripture which, if not contradicted thereby, must at all events be understood in a way vastly different from that in which the writers understood them. And yet here, as before, it is more natural that they should speak on the level of their own knowledge than that, because they were the agents of a really Divine revelation, they should also have been enlightened upon matters which, however interesting to us, were foreign to the immediate purpose of their commission. The very perfection of the fossil was, to a large extent, dependent on the environment

of the chalk or the old red sandstone in which it was embedded and preserved.

So, too, with the antiquity of the human race, and its origin from a single pair, and the connection between sin and death of which St. Paul speaks, and the accounts of the flood and the dispersion after it. These are all matters upon which our opinion must be liable to modification as our knowledge of physical facts increases. But I feel myself, with regard to the early statements concerning them, that inasmuch as they are altogether unique in their kind, differing *toto celo* from the legendary narratives of other nations, and being immeasurably superior to them, and doubtless of far greater antiquity; and forasmuch as they manifestly contain so much of truth, which a far wider experience has only tended to confirm, but which it was not at the time conceivably within the power of man to discover; and considering the credentials with which they come to us, it would certainly not be wise to jump at once to the conclusion that they are to be rejected because some of the conjectures of some speculators are opposed to them. These are, for the most part, matters on which we have had to wait long for further knowledge, and there is no reason in the nature of things why we should not be content to wait yet longer, or possibly to forego it altogether.

It is very rarely, if ever, that we find the express statements of Scripture irreconcilable with assured facts. Take, for instance, the connection between sin and death as stated by St. Paul. Unless we shut our eyes to facts, we know for certain that there never was a time in the history of the physical universe when death was not an essential element in its constitution. The mere alternation of the seasons alone is a proof of it. Summer gives birth to multitudes of creatures that winter destroys. No season can pass without vital changes taking place in the animal kingdom. To suppose, therefore, that man was originally possessed of natural and inherent immortality, which he lost in consequence of a certain act, seems to me to be no less opposed to the analogy of God's revelation in nature—which I presume is a *true* revelation—than it is not necessarily required by literal adherence to the language of St. Paul. He says that "by one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death by sin." There was clearly no *sin* in the physical universe till man had sinned; and what was it but sin that introduced death?—not, indeed, into the natural world, but with all its attendant misgivings and terrors to the moral world of the human conscience. With what would have been had man not sinned it availeth not us to concern ourselves, and Scripture, which deals only with the realities of our condition, has not told us. We, if

we are typical men, are conscious of two great realities, sin and death. It is highly desirable that we should know how to deal with these, and *here* it is Scripture alone that has not left us in the dark; for I never yet met with the philosopher who could deal with death, however wisely, if not well, he might speculate about sin; but it is the remedy for death and the promise of eventual triumph over it that is the central and essential burden of the message of Scripture.

With regard to the antiquity and origin of the human race, the results of science are, perhaps, as yet, too uncertain to occasion much apprehension from any apparent conflict with Scripture. To my mind the literal narrative in Genesis suggests the existence of other races besides the Adamic. Whom did Cain marry? Of whom was he afraid when he went and dwelt in the land of Nod? How could he build a city without the help of others? Of what use would it be to him when built? These and similar questions impress me with the unwisdom, as well as the injustice, of supposing that the Mosaic narrative is a sufficient and still more an exhaustive summary of human history from the first. What it has told us it has only told us in an enigma, hard and obscure in the extreme; and it will be a long time before we shall be justified in saying that what it has told us is in insuperable variance with known facts. And with regard to the origin of man, accepting the wildest theories of Monboddo and his more recent and illustrious followers, there must have been a wide chasm as well as a long interval between the first man and the last monkey; and it will be a still longer time before we ever can succeed in proving, contrary to universal experience and the recorded testimony of the old Roman "*pulvis et umbra sumus,*" that virtually the constituent elements of which we are made, are anything better than, as Genesis tells us, dust and ashes. So far then, I think, we may rest securely in the tent of sacred tradition, while the blasts and counterblasts of unlimited speculation rage and storm without.

With regard to the story of a flood co-existent with the area of man's habitation, and that of the subsequent dispersion, there are undoubtedly all but universal traditions which point to a confirmation of the one, while the broad and patent fact of three great families of language, the Semitic, Aryan, and Allophylian, having marked features of characteristic difference, and yet severally of individual likeness, is at all events in general conformity with the other, which refers to three primary branches, the families and tribes with which the whole earth was overspread.

I am, of course, well aware that very great latitude of opinion is allowable and, indeed, inevitable in questions of this



kind, and moreover that the questions themselves are not directly connected with the Christian commission; but I think, nevertheless, that inasmuch as the records to which we are indebted for our knowledge of that commission are also the sources of our traditional knowledge in these matters, it is desirable not indeed to make Christianity stand or fall therewith, but to show that there is not even in them that insuperable disagreement with probable fact which those who reject Christianity are so ready to assume and assert.

I think, moreover, that we have two sources of knowledge—one in Scripture, and the other in the reverent study of the works of God in nature; and I regard the one as hardly less a revelation than the other. It is certain that in our study of the one we shall continually be obliged to correct and modify our former conclusions; and who shall say that the principles of our interpretation of Scripture are as yet mature and perfect? There, as in nature, we must be largely dependent on observation, comparison, reflexion, inference, induction, and the like. The great previous question that we have to determine is whether or not Scripture is legitimately to be regarded as a special and unique source of Divine knowledge. If it is not, then there is an end to the whole matter; then Scripture is but another department of nature, and we have only one source of knowledge instead of two. But if it is, then there is no reason why our studies and even our discoveries in the one should not go on almost *pari passu* with those in the other. Certainly nothing can be a greater hindrance to our progress in either than the assumption that we have learnt all that it has to teach us—that we have no need to reconsider, re-examine, and correct.

Surely the revelations of the telescope, the microscope, the spectroscope, and the like, are scarcely less sacred than those of Scripture, and that only for the reason that while the one speaks to us, or may speak to us (for alas! this is not absolutely certain) of a God, the other tells us with no faltering or uncertain tones that that God is a Father. I fear we must first postulate the God whom the telescope and microscope are to reveal even as we must first postulate the fact that He has spoken or can speak, before we can receive Scripture as the Divine word. But conceding these two positions, there can be no conflict between the two revelations, and if we imagine that there can be, it is only because we have not rightly apprehended one or both. The Bible most distinctly proclaims God as the God of nature. What nature, then, has to tell us is only more and more about the God whom the Bible proclaims, only there is this difference: that the Bible claims to tell us that about God which we cannot learn from nature, viz., the relation in

which He stands to us and we to Him; and, as I said before this relation is a permanent and unalterable one, not directly susceptible of proof, but dependent for acceptance upon our faith, though, when accepted, confirmed in ten thousand ways by the converging lines of moral and historic evidence. If, then, we really hold a commission from Him, that commission must be independent of anything that nature has to teach us about Him.

But then this position which I assign to Scripture turns upon the credibility with which it comes to us, and here it is that the so-called results of criticism are likely to affect us. And how are we to estimate these? They may involve the rejection of the fourth Gospel, that of the historic authority of the Synoptic Gospels, the rejection of the greater part or even of all of St. Paul's Epistles, for who shall set bounds to the possible conjectures of irresponsible critics? They may involve the absolute rejection of the New Testament as anything more than a group of purely human documents possessed of no final authority. They may involve, therefore, the rejection of Christ as anything more than a benevolent and large-hearted visionary, who was adroit enough to avail Himself of the concurrent forces of His age to achieve a prominent position in His own time, and a unique position among the reformers of all time; and though not skilful enough to avoid the natural consequences of His collision with the then dominant powers, yet sufficiently enthusiastic to inspire His followers with a belief that led them to advance the most extravagant claims for Him after His death, which, in a society naturally prepared and predisposed, were destined to achieve even greater success than He did.

I say that the so-called results of criticism may involve even this as regards the New Testament, for it is unquestionably these supposed results to which the wildest and most extravagant of our modern lights so confidently appeal; and as regards the Old Testament there is, of course, involved the entire rejection of the Pentateuch as the work of Moses, the rejection of all the historical books as trustworthy records, the abandonment of almost all the Psalms as the composition of David, the rejection of the greatest part of Isaiah as a contemporary work, the obvious rejection of such books as Daniel and Jonah, together with such an estimate of the other writings of the prophets as at once deprives them of any special claim to our attention, and places them merely on a level with the writers in the Greek anthology. And undoubtedly if such are the results, as some would have us believe, we can no longer speak of a Divine commission in any sense but that of Mohammed, or Ignatius Loyola, or Joe Smith, for, "when the salt has lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?" To dispute about

the quantity when the quality is gone is idle and useless, and if we have no special commission we have virtually none at all.

What, then, is our position with respect to these results? We put them at the extremest estimate that we may the better form our judgment. Clearly, then, to the Christian believer the value of the Gospels can never be less than infinite; but it by no means follows that the validity of his position depends upon his ability to make good this value to others. Supposing, what is absolutely impossible, that the Gospels could be proved to be forgeries of the second century, the historic reality of Christ would remain, the fact of His death would remain, the fact of the Christian commission would remain (because the simple fact that we are baptised Christians proves it), and the general features of the character of Christ would remain, because there are none that we can assign to Him, but those which are with more or less truth portrayed in the Gospels, and these are in general harmony with His known claims, and with the known conditions of His death. Consequently as belief in the person of Christ, and that alone, was the meaning of the Christian profession from the first, it follows that the actual features of His life must have been adequate to causing this profession; but men believed in Him in a twofold way, (1) that He was the Son of God, and (2) that He had risen from the dead; and they believed this about Him notwithstanding the obscurity of His birth, the lowliness of the social position He held, and the ignominy of His death. Although, therefore, the Gospels amply confirm and account for all these facts, no one can for a moment say that they created them or were the cause of them, or that these facts stand or fall with the Gospels. On careful consideration it will be seen that these facts are established by the known existence and character of the Christian society of which they are the ostensible cause; and the existence of the Christian society is a patent fact, which has asserted itself in the face of the world with unbroken continuity for eighteen centuries and a half.

Let it be noted, therefore, that though the Gospels are to us a priceless possession, and though their verbal accuracy may be most important, and the inspired nature of their teaching highly essential, it is altogether erroneous to suppose that if each or all of these positions is impugned, the stability of the Christian faith is destroyed. That does not rest on Gospels or on documents of any kind, however precious these may be as witnesses to its existence at any given time, but it rests on the historic person of Christ, whose personal character on the whole was of such a kind as to call into existence a society which has been a unique power in the world from that day to this, or, if not to call it into existence, to be the central force of its cohesion.

No one can pretend for a moment that the early Christian literature was the cause of the early Christian society; it did not create that society, but was created by it. Though, therefore, of priceless value as a witness to the character of the society, the origin of the society must be sought elsewhere than in the literature, and cannot be held to stand or fall therewith. We cannot discover what that origin was without drawing largely upon the literature which supplies almost the only materials for our investigation. But it is in the nature of certain facts to be proved by certain other facts, and the life and character of Christ may be rightly inferred from the early character of the Christian Church, in the same manner, *e.g.*, as we infer the success of the Greek resistance to Persia, from the fact that the Persians were unable to make good their hold on Greece. Herodotus and other writers may be our authorities for the battles of Marathon and Salamis, but without these authorities, be their value less or more, we may be perfectly certain that battles of a like character must have been fought and won. I am of course only trying to show the relation of our position as Christians to the speculations advanced from time to time by reckless criticism. I believe that such criticism in the long run is surely destined to confute itself, but it is desirable at times to have something else to rest on while the confutation tarries.

To pass, in conclusion, to the Old Testament. If we are to trust the confident assertions of sundry writers there is hardly anything that is left us there. The law of Moses is a fabrication of the time of Ezra. The Psalms are largely Maccabean. Daniel and Jonah are old wives' fables. Isaiah was an obscure and forgotten poet of the Return. As for prophecy, it is a misconception. Strictly speaking, there is nothing that can rightly be so-called. Modern criticism confirms the judgment of Hosea's time,—“the prophet is a fool, and the spiritual man is mad;” while for those who still cling with greater or less tenacity to the traditional belief there is no epithet of contemptuous pity they do not deserve. But here, again, I believe we may wait with patience for the judgment of such criticism out of its own mouth. The novelty of an hypothesis is not seldom its strength, and if to novelty we add brilliance of conjecture and confidence of assertion, the popularity of the hypothesis is assured. But there is scope for emulation here, and one hypothesis begets another, each more daring than the last, until wise men are fain to ask, Is there anything we can save from the wreck, or must the Bible as a whole be given over to the critics till nothing is left that can truly be called the Word of God, and inspiration is merely used as a vague and convenient term for blinding men to the fact that the only

inspiration of the prophets is that which they shared in common with Æschylus and Sophocles, with Horace and Lucretius?

Now, to my mind there is one word which may serve as a corrective of substantial and positive value to the ever varying and uncertain results of the criticism of the Old Testament, and that is the word Christ. It is undeniable that Christianity takes its name from that Christ whom the early disciples believed Jesus of Nazareth to have been. They to a man believed in Him as the Christ. This is why they believed in Him, and what they believed about Him, and this their belief is independent of the Gospel history, though of course fully confirmed by it. The name of Christian is to the believer what circumcision was to the Jew—it is the voucher for his faith; it is unalterable and indelible. If he was a Christian he believed in a Christ. What was this Christ? He was a person holding a particular office, whose coming was expected by the Jews. This expectation was national and characteristic. Their expectation had penetrated to other nations, but *they* did not hold it in the same way as the Jews. The expectation of a Messiah was peculiar to the Jews; it was their national heritage. How came they to have this expectation? There is only one answer: Because for long ages their prophets and psalmists and great writers had begotten it in their national imagination. They believed their sacred writings were full of it. They had gathered and learnt it from them. But the impression produced by this literature upon the Jews was a unique impression; there is nothing to compare with it in other nations. Neither do we find in the case of the world's greatest men that there has been for ages before their birth an expectation in vogue that they would arise and fulfil a certain office. Nothing of the kind preceded the birth of Alexander, of Cæsar, of Hannibal, of Napoleon. We can see for ourselves now how the expectation had grown, though not how it had arisen; what justification there was for it in the time of Christ. We may decide that the cause was inadequate to the result: that does not matter. It is undeniable that this was the cause; it is no less undeniable that the result was produced; while, as a matter of fact, the simple belief that a particular Person had arisen who realised in Himself the promises of this expectation has been the producing cause of the mightiest historical movement that the world has ever known. These are facts of a broad, patent, and far-reaching character, the significance of which, I take it, is beyond the power of the narrow cavillings and carpings of critical objection here and there to destroy. It is impossible to deny that the Christ expectation existed; it is impossible to account for it but as the effect of the sacred

writings. And it is useless to affirm that individually the statements of the prophets did not and could not mean that which they were supposed to mean; for, as a matter of fact, this is how they were understood. Am I right, then, or not, in pointing to this as an indication of the presence in the sacred literature of the Jews of a foreseeing and prophetic spirit as far above the natural ability of the writers to beget or cherish as it was above the power of the disciples to order the events of their own and subsequent ages so as to appear in their combination to be the Divine fulfilment of a Divinely-ordered expectation.

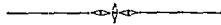
It is not merely the rise of Christianity as an historic fact that we have to account for, but the fact that for ages before Christ came there was a literature in existence of which the most conspicuous feature was its uniform tone of expectation, and that so far from this expectation being the natural cause of the coming of Christ, nothing is more certain than that His actual coming was in direct contrast and contradiction to the form that the expectation had at that time assumed; and it is only by the bringing in of another element—that, namely, of spiritual illumination—that we can see how clear and minute the correspondence was, notwithstanding the actual disappointment and the apparent failure that attended its production.

A certain kind of criticism has done its best to obliterate all the Christ features of the Old Testament—to prove that they do not exist; but here the verdict of history is conclusive. Were it not for the existence of these elements, there would have been no New Testament and no Christianity. The germ of Christianity may have been sown in error and misconception, but the vitality and permanence of the plant that sprung from it shows, at all events, the vitality of the germ, while the natural tendency of the plant is to disengage itself more and more from the error and misconception that surround it. The soil in which it grew may, indeed, have been barren and dry, but the vitality of the seed is proved by the strength and magnitude of the growth that sprung from it.

Whether this strength, magnificence, and vitality may be interpreted as the handiwork of God must depend upon the spirit in which we view it. There are those who can see no tokens of God in nature, and still less in grace. The recognition of the grace of God is the work of the Spirit of God. If it could be proved with the accuracy of mathematical demonstration that Jesus was the Christ, there would be no room for the work of the Spirit of God in bringing about that certainty of moral conviction which is intended to supply the place of it. But where this conviction exists it is felt that logic and reason are its willing and loyal servants, whose

natural function is to do nothing against the truth, but for the truth, and that in contending for the faith we are contending, not for error, but for truth. And though the Christian commission rests upon other grounds and looks to other sources than physical science for its authority, it cannot, from the nature of the case, if true, be disproved by the advancement and discoveries of science; while the broad and patent features of the Old and New Testament are such as to be independent of suppositions as to the authorship of this or that book, seeing that the net result of either Testament as a whole is a unique and unparalleled phenomenon, and the testimony of the one to the other a fact of marvellous significance, which, as it was in no sense the work of human ingenuity and design to produce, so neither is it in the power of critical analysis to destroy or of conjectural theory to supersede.

STANLEY LEATHES, D.D.



#### ART. II.—THE REPORT OF THE EDUCATION COMMISSION.

THE Education Act of 1870 was, in some respects, "a leap in the dark." Previous educational legislation had recognised only a single system of supplying school-machinery; Mr. Forster's Act was a new departure, and introduced a dual system. When School Boards were called into existence no one could clearly foresee the extent of their development, the expense they would involve, the effect they would have on the voluntary system, or the line they would take in the matter of religious education. Compulsory attendance was an equally novel experiment, the results of which not even its advocates could clearly forecast. Since 1870 other important educational questions have been raised, such as free education, technical education, manual training, modes of examination and making public grants, the pupil-teacher system, and day training colleges. It was not without good reason, therefore, that the present Government appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the working of the Elementary Education Acts.

The Commission was unusually large, and fairly representative of the various interests concerned, though somewhat weak in educational experts capable of judging the *desirability* and *feasibility* of proposed changes from the point of view of the child to be educated. The results of its inquiries and its recommendations are now before us in a series of huge

folio volumes that few people will have the courage to read, and still fewer will have time to digest. Evidence was collected with reference to the way in which the existing law grew up; the existing facts of our educational system; the efficiency of our present machinery, both central and local; the working of the Board school system; special schools, such as rural, half-time, Welsh, and workhouse schools, and their difficulties: the relations of ordinary schools to advanced general education and to continuation schools; the burden of the cost of education; school libraries and museums; the grievances of teachers, employers, parents, and managers; and the constitution of the Education Department. Whether legislation will directly follow the recommendations based upon this evidence or not, the evidence itself forms a storehouse of information which will be invaluable to educationists, and, through them, will infallibly exert a powerful influence on the elementary education of the future.

It would be impossible for me in the compass of a brief article to review in detail the Report of the Commission. I shall confine myself to the examination of the leading recommendations of the majority and minority.

Foremost among the recommendations of the majority in importance is the proposal "that the educational authority be empowered to supplement from local rates the voluntary subscriptions given to the support of every public State-aided elementary school in their district to an amount equal to those subscriptions, provided it does not exceed the amount of ten shillings for each child in average attendance." As regards the equity of this proposal, there cannot, I think, be any question; though, if the principle of affording aid out of the rates to voluntary schools is just, there is something illogical in limiting the amount of the proposed aid while the rate-aid to Board schools is unlimited. The rates are paid by all classes of the community alike, and all classes of the same social standing would seem to have an equal right to assistance out of the common fund. It cannot be just that the parents of children who attend denominational schools should, because they prefer definite religious teaching for their children, be refused assistance for the schools which their children attend, while other parents, equally well off, can get their children educated in schools receiving unlimited assistance from the rates. The question is not one of the poverty of parents, but of equality before the law. At present parents who send their children to voluntary schools are punished for their religious convictions by being refused any assistance in the education of their children out of rates which they themselves contribute, with the result



that, in many cases, their children get an inferior education, it being impossible in poor parishes for voluntary schools to offer the same advantages as Board schools. Christian benevolence may do much to compensate for this unjust deprivation of religious parents of rate-aid, but it cannot hope to successfully compete everywhere with Boards having an absolute command of the public purse. It is not contended that aid should be contributed out of the rates towards the religious instruction given in voluntary schools, but simply to the secular instruction. This is a civic right, and it is only those parents who prefer distinctive religious teaching for their children who are denied its enjoyment.

When, however, we quit the question of equity to discuss that of expediency, the policy which the friends of voluntary schools ought to pursue is not so easy to determine. I pass over political considerations arising out of the relations between the Unionists and the present Government. Rate-aid is assumed, somewhat rashly, to necessarily carry with it direct popular representation on the boards of management of voluntary schools receiving such aid, and such representation, it is feared, may endanger the control which voluntary managers ought to have over their schools. Then, again, it is urged that rate-aid will extinguish voluntary subscriptions, and that, if it were withdrawn at any time, the schools that had come to depend upon it would collapse. An objection of another kind is that rate-aid would reverse the so-called "settlement" of 1870.

For my own part, I do not see why rate-aid to voluntary schools should carry with it direct popular representation any more than tax-aid. The ratepayer and the taxpayer would be represented by the Education Department, and the auditing and publication of the school accounts would be a sufficient guarantee of the proper expenditure of public money. Voluntary schools would be examined by the Government inspector as at present; the conscience clause would be observed as at present; and not a penny need be paid out of the rates without guarantee that the schools are thoroughly efficient, and that the rate-aid is confined to the secular instruction. It would, of course, not be difficult to proportion the rate-aid to the degree of efficiency. The terrors inspired by the prospect of popular representation have had a powerful influence in inducing large numbers of denominationalists, more especially such as live in non-School Board districts, to reject assistance out of the rates. So far as their action has proceeded out of a desire to maintain definite religious teaching in their own schools at all costs, it cannot be too highly commended; but the friends of religious education ought to remember that the

interests at stake are not local but national, and that once the voluntary system breaks down in School Board districts there will be little guarantee for its maintenance in districts not under School Boards :

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That rate-aid would, to some extent, dry up contributions to voluntary schools is certain, but I do not think that the loss thereby incurred would be serious. Those people who are really interested in religious education, and give most freely to its support now, would not be likely to discontinue their subscriptions because they had to contribute to a school rate also, though it is highly probable that persons who subscribe to voluntary schools, not out of religious but economical motives, would withdraw their subscriptions once a school rate was imposed.

As to the "settlement" of 1870, it should be remembered that the friends of voluntary schools withdrew their claim to a share of the rates in 1870, on the understanding that the Government grants should be largely increased, and that the School Board rate would never amount to 3d. in the pound. The word of promise was kept to the ear, but it was broken to the hope. The grants were increased, but an increased expenditure was simultaneously necessitated by the increased demands of the Department that rendered the increase of grants wholly illusory. The School Board rate, so far from never amounting to 3d. in the pound, has reached an average of 7·2d. in the pound. In 72·6 per cent. of the boroughs and parishes where School Boards are established the rate is 3d. or over. In 20·3 it is 9d. or over. Here it should be remarked that every increase in the School Board rate makes it increasingly difficult to maintain the voluntary schools that exist by their side—first, by increasing the compulsory burden on the shoulders of the subscribers to voluntary schools, and so diminishing their power to assist such schools; and secondly, by compelling voluntary managers to increase their expenditure to compete with Board schools. The so-called "settlement," therefore, has ceased to have any moral obligation upon the consenting parties. Its two essential conditions have wholly failed. It has not afforded to voluntary schools the protection that it promised. So far from confining School Boards to the work of supplementing the voluntary system, it has afforded them every facility for subverting it. Denominationalists consented to the "settlement" of 1870 in ignorance of its effects; they have had their eyes opened, and they may now reasonably demand that the "settlement" should be modified. It is too late to confine School Board

rates within the limit of 3d. in the pound ; it is not too late to carry out in some other way the pledge of the Government of 1870, that the voluntary schools should be enabled, in Mr. Gladstone's words, "to perfectly well stand in competition with the Board schools."

I hold, therefore, that the proposal for assistance out of the rates ought not to be finally dismissed. It is founded on justice and religious freedom. But I am prepared to admit that such a practice may be, for the present, inexpedient, *provided the other measures suggested by the Commissioners for the relief of voluntary schools are adopted.* The objection to relief derived exclusively from the Parliamentary grant is that it may at any time be withdrawn or coupled with conditions that would render it no relief at all.

Let us see what the other measures suggested are: It is proposed that the 17s. 6d. limit should be abolished, as tending to discourage improvement; that special grants should be made to small schools; that the fixed grant should be increased to 10s. per child in average attendance; that the average amount of the variable grant should be not less than 10s. per scholar; that extra grants should be given for the purpose of allowing pupil-teachers more time during school hours for their own studies, and for the supplementing of the instruction given by the head-masters by central-class teaching; and that public elementary schools for which no rent is paid or received should be exempted from local rates.

The injustice and impolicy of the 17s. 6d. limit are too obvious to argue. The boast of the present system is that it is a system of "payment by results;" the 17s. 6d. limit is a system of "*fining* by results;" it mulcts the successful poor school because it is poor; it rewards the rich school because it is rich. The limit is practically inoperative in the case of Board schools, for the Board can always fall back upon the rates to make up for any diminution of the Government grant.

The necessity for special grants to small schools is recognised by the minority as well as by the majority of the Commission, and is placed beyond dispute by the statistics collected on the subject by Prebendary Roe. These statistics show that the smaller a school is the more expensive it is to work, and the smaller is the grant that it is capable of earning per child. In 151 small rural schools in Somersetshire each child costs on the average 5s. 8d. a year more than the average cost in all Church of England schools. The explanation of the costliness of small schools is found in the fact that no matter how small a school may be, it demands, in order to satisfy the requirements of the code, the same classification as a large school, and, as a consequence, a larger staff in pro-

portion to the number of children. The explanation of the small grants to such schools is found in the irregularity of attendance in country districts, the impossibility of providing a separate teacher for each standard, and the inability of the managers to secure the services of the most efficient class of teachers.

The increase of grants is absolutely indispensable if the various recommendations of the Commissioners for the improvement of schools are to be carried out. The way in which it is proposed to distribute the grants would greatly relieve the anxiety of managers, teachers, and children, and would remove one of the strongest temptations to over-pressure. It is especially satisfactory to find the Commissioners recommending that "the conditions of the variable grants should be so modified as to depend upon the good character of the school and the quality of the acquirements of the great majority of the scholars," instead of upon individual passes.

The assessment to the rates of public elementary schools is utterly unreasonable, and it is surprising that it should have been maintained so long. The managers of voluntary schools in School Board districts have to pay rates upon their school-buildings not only for the maintenance of the poor, but for the maintenance of the Board schools. It is true that Board schools are rated also, but there is this vast difference in the two cases: in the case of the Board schools the money comes out of the pockets of the whole body of the ratepayers, including, therefore, the supporters of voluntary schools; in the case of voluntary schools it has to be provided by the voluntary subscriptions. The business carried on in the school-buildings is not carried on for profit; and as the buildings could never be let for any purpose, the rate upon them is simply a rate on public charity.

It remains to be seen whether the Government will have the courage to give effect to these recommendations. That they will be stoutly opposed we have had fair warning from the recently held National Conference on Education; but it should be distinctly understood that, unless they are acted on, the various recommendations that have been made by the Commissioners will be utterly futile, and large numbers of voluntary schools will inevitably collapse. It is to be hoped that Denominationalists will not show the tame spirit that they exhibited in 1870. They may plead ignorance in extenuation of their remissness in accepting the disadvantageous terms of that Act, but they cannot plead ignorance of the intentions of the present opponents of the voluntary system.

Ought Denominationalists to be content with merely holding their ground? Was it intended by the Act of 1870 that the

voluntary system was to be rendered incapable of further expansion? If so, the date of its total disappearance cannot be far distant. Voluntary schools will, through various causes, disappear one by one, and no new ones are likely to take their place. Mr. Cumin contends that the prior right to supply new school accommodation belongs to the School Board, though the Board can divest itself of this right, and that it is for the Board to determine whether a new school is necessary. Now, that there should be some check on the multiplication of schools is indisputable, but the majority not unreasonably consider that this check ought to be placed, not in the hands of the local School Board, whose religious animosities might blunt their sense of justice, but in those of the Department. Otherwise Denominationalists would be delivered over, bound hand and foot, to the tender mercies of a School Board, and would be absolutely dependent on its caprice for the enjoyment of the not unreasonable privilege of sending their children to a school giving such a religious education as they preferred. It is true that they would be free to maintain schools wholly at their own expense, but it is a new doctrine that religious opinions suffice to disqualify parents for receiving State aid in the education of their children. As a matter of fact, the Department has not acted in accordance with its own interpretation of the law, even when a School Board was willing to divest itself of its alleged prior right of supplying school accommodation. The Willesden School Board was compelled by the Department to supply a deficiency under pain of being declared in default if it allowed the deficiency to be supplied by voluntary agency.

The Commission see no reason why voluntary effort should not be entitled to work *pari passu* with a School Board in providing accommodation to meet any increase of population subsequent to the determination of the necessary school supply arrived at by the Department after the first inquiry of 1871. They further suggest that if a similar inquiry were held periodically—say, every five years—voluntary effort might be recognised in the interval between two inquiries as entitled to meet any deficiency not ordered to be filled up by the School Board on the requisition of the Department. Such an arrangement, they consider, would not violate the letter, much less the spirit, of the Act of 1870, which was intended to supplement not merely voluntary schools then existent, but the voluntary system.

Closely connected with the matter of school provision is that of the transfer of schools to School Boards. Under the 23rd section of the Education Act of 1870, power is given to

denominational schools to transfer their school-buildings to School Boards on the following conditions :

1. That the resolution to transfer must be adopted by a majority of two-thirds of the managers present at a meeting specially convened.

2. That the resolution of the managers must be confirmed by a majority of two-thirds of the annual subscribers present at a meeting specially convened.

3. That the proposed transfer agreement must be sanctioned by the Education Department, which "shall consider and have due regard to any objections and representations respecting the proposed transfer, which may be made by any person who has contributed to the establishment of such school."

The Commissioners point out that the effect of these provisions has been to set aside almost entirely the influence of the trustees and founders of a school, and to place its fate at any given moment in the hands of the managers for the time being, who are an uncertain and changing body, and may never have contributed to the erection of the school. It is notorious that numbers of voluntary schools have been transferred to School Boards without adequate justification. The clergyman was, perhaps, indifferent to distinctive religious teaching; or was unpopular with his parishioners, and could not get them to assist him in supporting his schools; or experienced some little difficulty in tiding over the interval between the earning of a public grant and the obtaining it. I have known a Church school with a handsome endowment, and situated in a wealthy parish, handed over to a Board. I have known a school that had been temporarily transferred to a Board, on the ground that the parish could not maintain it, recovered by a more energetic body of managers, and carried on without difficulty. I have known a clergyman who meditated the transfer of his schools, but was induced by his Bishop to make a further effort to keep them on, with the result that, though the incident occurred some fifteen or sixteen years ago, the schools are still in the hands of the Church, and perfectly solvent. It was stated in evidence before the Commission that in many cases in which the transfer itself could not be opposed by those who founded, and who have to a great extent maintained, the school, an agreement with the School Board has been sanctioned by the Department, containing provisions which were not even necessary for the purposes of the Education Act, and which have been widely at variance with the original trusts. In view of the grievances complained of, the Commission recommend: (1) that no transfer of a school held under trust shall take place without the consent of a

majority of the trustees; (2) that the Department be instructed to sanction only such terms of transfer, beyond what is required for the purposes of the Education Acts, as do not interfere with the original trust, in the event of a voluntary school being leased to a School Board; (3) that provision be made that no structural expenses should be incurred without the consent of the trustees who lease the building. The second of these conditions would allow of a school being used for many religious purposes, even if the managers were compelled to hand it over to a Board for the purposes of a day-school.

The majority and minority agree in recommending that school accommodation should be provided for one-sixth of the population; that the farming of schools to teachers should be prevented; that voluntary managers should co-operate for the purpose of engaging the services of organising masters and peripatetic teachers of science; that the inspectorate should be thrown open to teachers, and that all new inspectors should have previous practical experience; that teachers should be paid fixed salaries; that the head-teachers should not be dissociated from the work of actual teaching; that the Code requirements as to staff should be considerably increased; that pupil-teachers should be allowed more time during school-hours for their studies, and that the instruction of the head-teacher should be supplemented, but not superseded, by central class-teaching; that extra grants should be offered for this purpose; that provision should be made for the training of day-students at places giving a liberal education; that the minimum age for half-time exemption should be eleven, and for full time thirteen, and that half-time should be conceded only to those who are "beneficially and necessarily" employed at work; that drawing should, as far as practicable, be made compulsory for boys; that the teaching of history should be introduced earlier than at present; that singing by note should be gradually made universal; that there should be an increase in the number of reading-books; that various schemes of instruction should be provided for various classes of schools; that every school should have a school-library; that evening-schools should be encouraged; that higher schools should be set up, and that, where they cannot be supplied, higher classes for children who have passed Standard VII. should be attached to ordinary schools; that arrangements should be made whereby the school-fees of the children of poor parents should be paid without any association with ideas of pauperism; and that a longer term of office, with partial renewal, would be an improvement in the constitution of School Boards.

This is a substantial body of valuable recommendations,

and is in itself a sufficient answer to those critics of the majority who assert that their sole object was the promotion of the interests of voluntary education. It is natural that in the discussion of the Report stress should have been, at first, laid on the points of difference between the majority and minority; but, if there were no other outcome of the Commission than legislation based upon the recommendations on which majority and minority are agreed, there can be no question that the cause of elementary education in this country would be enormously advanced, and that the Commission would have imposed on the nation a heavy debt of gratitude.

The minority of the Commission consists of eight members, the Hon. E. Lyulph Stanley, Sir John Lubbock, Bart., M.P., Sir Bernard Samuelson, Bart., M.P., Dr. Dale, Mr. Sydney Buxton, M.P., the late Mr. Richard, M.P., Mr. T. E. Heller, and Mr. G. Shipton. Though unable to sign the Report of the majority, they agree in giving their assent, to the recommendations mentioned above. There are other points, however, on which they are not agreed, and a sub-minority of five have felt it their duty to issue a separate Report. This report is ably drawn up, and, as the opponents of the voluntary system are likely to base their "plan of campaign" upon it, I propose to briefly consider the scope and probable results of its recommendations. I do not question for one moment the educational zeal of its subscribers, but I do not think that it will be difficult to show that the effect of carrying out their policy would be the gradual extinction of voluntary schools and the endangerment of religious instruction of any kind in elementary schools.

The sub-minority deny that when the first deficiency of school provision has been supplied, voluntary agency ought to be allowed to supply further and future deficiencies. In other words, they are opposed to the expansion of the voluntary system. Voluntary schools may die out, but no new ones are to be recognised. The sub-minority would not only not oppose the transfer of voluntary schools to School Boards, but recommend that where any building which has been aided by a Parliamentary grant, exists for the elementary education of the poor, and is not used on week days for such purpose, the School Board should be entitled to have the use and occupation of the building for the purpose of supplying school accommodation. As the Parliamentary grant did not cover more than a sixth of the cost of building, this recommendation means the confiscation of the remaining five-sixths originally subscribed by Church people for Church purposes. The sub-minority object to the proposal to aid voluntary schools out of the rates, because "such a proposal seems to them unsound in principle, destructive of the settlement of 1870, and certain, if it became



law, to embitter educational politics and intensify sectarian rivalries." Their anxiety to maintain the settlement of 1870 may be measured by their efforts to subvert the system which School Boards were intended, under that settlement, to supplement. The sub-minority recognise the need of technical training, but would place it almost entirely in the hands of School Boards. "We cannot," they say, "see our way to support a proposal to impose on the ratepayers a contribution in support of voluntary elementary schools." The sub-minority think that the time has come when ten square feet of accommodation should be allowed to every child in an elementary school. As the present allowance is eight square feet, this proposal would at once reduce the accommodation in voluntary schools by over 700,000 places, a reduction equivalent to suppressing one voluntary school out of every five. While no one will grudge any extra superficial or cubic space that may be necessary for the health of the child or the convenience of the teacher, the increase should clearly be only gradually increased. The necessity is not urgent, eight square feet having been the allowance that the Department, until quite recently, always accepted as sufficient. The sub-minority admit the injustice of the 17s. 6d. limit, but do not recommend its remission, for no other reason that I can see than that it would ease the burden on efficient voluntary schools. They would have the fees in voluntary schools subject to the approval of the Department, a control which would never be likely to increase the fees, but might often injuriously lower them. They would increase the expenditure in voluntary schools without providing any proportionate increase of income to meet it. It will thus be seen that the recommendations of the sub-minority strike at the expansion of the voluntary system and at the reduction of its present area of usefulness, and would render it increasingly difficult for voluntary schools to exist at all.

There is one point on which I have not touched, and that is the proposals of the majority with regard to the training of teachers. The majority fully recognise the need of increasing the facilities for the training of teachers, and—seeing no prospect of increasing the number of residentiary training colleges unless the unsectarian party put their hands into their own pockets—recommend that day training colleges should be opened in connection with local university colleges, and that existing training colleges should be permitted, though not compelled, to take day students. Both these arrangements are admittedly a *pis aller*, and as they will seriously deteriorate the future teachers of the country, on whom more than anything else its education will depend, I cannot but regret the

conclusions arrived at. The majority say, "While unanimously recommending that the experiment of a system of day training for teachers and day teaching colleges should be tried on a limited scale, we would strongly express our opinion that the existing system of residential colleges is the best for the teachers and scholars of the elementary schools of the country." Why should we be satisfied with anything short of the present arrangement, if such arrangement is the best? At the very moment when we are seeking to improve the education of the country, why should we take a step which is distinctly retrograde? What guarantee would there be that religious and moral instruction would be given by local university colleges, when those colleges themselves are not founded on a religious basis? What guarantee would there be for the practical teaching and training of teachers by professors who know nothing about education? It is assumed that the students attending a local college could practise in some neighbouring school under the skilled direction of a trained teacher. So they could; but it is a great mistake to assume that such practice is sufficient to meet the exigencies of the case. *Every* teacher of teachers should have studied the science and art of education, and should constantly bear in mind in his teaching the class of children for whose instruction his pupils have to be prepared. If, however, day colleges are inevitable, why should not voluntary agency be left free to establish them? Why should we not have Church day training colleges as we have Church residential colleges?

The suggestion of Mr. Cumin that day students might be admitted into the denominational training colleges without being required to join in the family worship of the college or receiving any religious instruction to which their parents object, appears to the majority to have very great recommendation. I admit the advantages such an arrangement offers for the purpose of secular training, but I do not think that the Commissioners could have given much consideration to the effect of having in the same college students of different religious beliefs and, possibly, some of no belief at all. A training college is not like a residential university college, where students have separate rooms, and rarely meet except in the lecture-room or the dining-hall. In a training college the students live in common rooms, and are in each other's society from the time they rise in the morning to the time when they go to bed. Any discordant element in such colleges, therefore, would be intensified by the opportunities afforded for its manifestation. While the resident students were attending chapel or religious instruction the non-residents would be engaged in secular studies; and as the whole body

would be preparing for the same competition in secular examination, the resident students would be constantly exposed to the temptation to claim the same freedom from attendance at chapel and religious lectures as the non-resident students. I have no hesitation in saying that, though the religious convictions of many students would stand even such a severe and constant trial as this, many students, who at present profit by the religious privileges afforded by a training college, would grudge the time that was withdrawn from secular studies for religious exercises and instruction, and would consider themselves placed under a great disadvantage, as regards the examination in secular knowledge, when compared with the non-resident students. Nor do I see how a conscience clause could be successfully resisted for resident students if it were insisted on for non-resident. Once students were admitted into a training college who were exempted from religious exercises and religious instruction, the principle on which our residential training colleges are now conducted would be gone—viz., that it is absolutely essential that teachers who will be responsible for the moral and religious instruction and training of children should be themselves morally and religiously educated.

I cannot close this paper without expressing a hope that the leaders of the Church will see the necessity for a general and systematic endeavour, not merely to protect from extinction the schools that we have, but to render them more efficient, and to provide new schools wherever our co-religionists need them. A system that does not develop is doomed to extinction, and its end will approach with ever-increasing rapidity. Every voluntary school that collapses will render the collapse of another voluntary school more easy and certain. If our existing schools are worth fighting for, their multiplication is worth fighting for. At present one school is given up after another, and nobody seems to greatly care. Church education is looked upon as a purely parochial matter, and not as a Church matter. Cornwall has no concern in the voluntary schools of Northumberland, nor has Northumberland any concern in those of Cornwall. Churchmen by profession, we are, educationally considered, Independents in practice. Stronghold after stronghold is abandoned or surrendered, and the officer in charge of it often scarcely considers it necessary to notify the loss to his commander-in-chief. Even the parishes which are well provided with schools are often shut up in educational isolation, and are content to fight for their own hand. What we want is the recognition of the solidarity of Church educational interests, and an effective organization for mutual succour and mutual defence.

EVAN DANIEL.

## ART. III.—MUHAMMAD, OR CHRIST?

THE question which stands at the head of this paper is one which has been during the last year forced upon the consideration of all minds interested in the missionary work of the Church of Christ. For the suggestion has been definitely made that Islam is, in some places and for some reasons, better than Christianity.

The reason given for this assertion sounds strange. For not only are we told that the Muhammadan religion has been more successful as a missionary religion than the religion of Christ (a statement the force of which entirely depends upon what persons mean by "successful"), but it is argued that Christianity is "too spiritual" and "too lofty" a religion for any except "the higher races." Such an argument quite contravenes the statement of the greatest missionary of the primitive Church, who said that not many wise and not many noble were called, and that the preaching of the Cross was to Jews a stumbling-block, and to Greeks foolishness. Nor does the history of the early transmission of the Christian religion permit us to doubt that it was to the poor, the weak, the suffering, the ignorant, that the Gospel was effectually proclaimed at the first. It was only gradually that the intellectual and philosophic superiority of the doctrines and ethics, which were based upon the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, came to light. To make Christianity a *peculium* of an esoteric circle of disciples, and to say that something lower or less divine may be sufficient for the uninitiated, is not consonant either with the facts, or with the spirit, of the Christian religion. Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. He came to tell the message of divine love for all, and to invite men to see in Himself the Light of the world. The religion which He proclaimed was not proposed as a philosophy for aristocratic intellects. It was given as a solace and a source of infinite hope for the burdened heart of sinful men and women in all classes, races, and places, throughout the world.

If Christianity be true, no religion can compete with it. It is *exclusive*, because it is *inclusive* of all the moral and spiritual truths which are fragmentarily indicated in other religions, and at the same time it puts forward paramount claims for Christ as the Apostle of God and the High Priest for men in things pertaining to God. It was, indeed, this exclusive claim on the part of the Christian religion that evoked anger and irritation among various opponents, and drew upon its adherents manifold persecutions. And if this claim be not allowed, we make Christ a liar and an impostor. But when

we speak of the claims of the Christian religion we should not forget that we mean the claims of Christ Himself, not those of any local Christian Church, which may be corrupted or defective, or may have deviated from the faith as once for all delivered by Christ.

Controversy in the matter of religion is inevitable. It is only the unfair, controversial spirit of one-sided partizanship which we should endeavour to avoid, not controversy itself. For controversy clears truth. All religions must include some doctrine which is asserted to be the highest truth, and is put forward for acceptance. Discussion necessarily ensues, and conviction, or doubt, or denial is the result. Opposing views are placed side by side, and the comparison of partial conceptions of any complex truth brings out a clearer understanding of the real point in question. Thus a history of heresies becomes a history of the intellectual evolution of Christian doctrine. Moreover, since accepted truths may often gather round them accretions of error and of prejudiced or mistaken interpretations, reconsiderations of what passes as true "doctrine" become necessary; and this involves reformations of the Church or society wherein the erroneous element has become apparent. The ultimate question in all such discussions, however, is, What is *authoritative*? Which statement of so-called truth has the surest foundation in fact?

In the controversy as to the claims of the Muhammadan religion a great deal has been written and said about the features of the religion itself, and about the spread of the religion both in ancient and in modern times. There can hardly be anything new to be brought forward on the subject.<sup>1</sup> But it may be useful to bring to a focus, in a concise statement, the chief arguments by which the Christian advocate feels himself entitled to maintain that the religion of Muhammad is precluded from being in any case a desirable substitute, even among the lower races, for the religion of Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> The following list of books, consulted by the writer, may be mentioned as containing information of a sufficiently varied sort for the purposes of those who wish to make a study of the Muhammadan religion, such as may enable them to have a fair knowledge both of the merits and defects of *Islam* as compared with *Christianity*: Maracci's folio edition of the Koran, with Latin translation and *Prodromus* (Patavii, 1598); Sale's "Koran, with Preliminary Discourse;" Washington Irving's "Life of Mahomet;" Macbride's "Mohammedan Religion Explained;" Sir W. Muir's "Life of Mahomet;" Rodwell's "Koran" (with notes); Syed Ahmed Khan Bahadoor's "Essays" (1870); Syed Ameer Ali's "Life of Mohammed" (1873); Deutsch's "Literary Remains" (article on Islam); T. P. Hughes's "Notes on Muhammadanism;" Bosworth Smith's "Essays;" Stobart's "Islam, and its Founder" (S.P.C.K.); Sir W. Muir's "The Corán" (S.P.C.K.); Dr. Badger in "Dictionary of Christian Biography" (s.v. Muhammad); Sir W. Muir's "Rise and Decline of Islam" (R.T.S.).

Both religions must be estimated according to the personal position of those who introduced them into the world; for in each of them the whole weight of the teaching is inseparably connected with the person who is alleged to be the prophet or messenger of God. And if a religion bases itself upon historic facts as connected with a definite teacher, we can best gather the intrinsic claims of the religion by asking, Who is this? Why does he claim our adherence? What is his character? What are his credentials? It should be recollected that the proclamation of a religion differs from the promulgation of a philosophy. In the latter case much, indeed, depends upon the personal abilities and intellectual power of the teacher; but he appeals merely to reason, and not to faith. He does not assert himself. In the case of a new religion the prophet asserts that his message is divinely authoritative. He claims to be specially commissioned and inspired as a messenger from God; and his appeal is not merely for adherence to a doctrine, but for allegiance to a divine rule. He claims not merely assent, but obedience, and speaks to men as himself a revealer of God's will, who has a right to say, "Thus saith the Lord."

There are four points in the personal comparison between "the founders" of Christianity and Islam, wherein the inferiority of the "Prophet of Arabia" to the "Prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee" can be so plainly established as to show the utter inadequacy of Muhammadanism as a substitute for Christianity, and the impropriety of regarding it as a pioneer of Christianity in the mission field.

The historical position of Muhammad is later, his alleged claims are less, his personal character is lower, and the actual revelation of God's nature and purposes through him is *nil*, as compared with the position, the claims, the character, and the revelation of Christ.

I. *Originality*.—Muhammad never professed to be an original teacher. "I am no apostle of new doctrines," he represented himself as commanded to say, and he frequently poses, so to speak, as one who merely attests the preceding scriptures. In answer to the taunt that the Koran was "an old lying legend," it is said, "Before the Koran was the book of Moses, a rule and a mercy; and this book confirmeth it in the Arabic tongue."<sup>1</sup> Again, "This Koran could not have been devised by any but God; but it confirmeth what was revealed before it, and is a clearing up of the Scriptures, there is no doubt thereof, from the Lord of all creatures" (S. x. 38).

<sup>1</sup> Sura xlv. 2. In quoting the Koran I use Rodwell's translation; but cite the Suras according to the old numeration.

In another place, "The book which Moses brought" is called "a light and guidance to man." And in the Sura, entitled "Counsel" (S. xlii. 11), there occurs this notable passage: "To you hath He prescribed the faith which He commanded unto Noah, and which we (*i.e.*, God) have revealed unto thee, and which we commanded unto Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus, saying, Observe this faith, and be not divided into sects therein. Intolerable to those who worship idols jointly with God."

It is, indeed, evident from a perusal of the Koran that the religious doctrines which Muhammad promulgates are entirely dependent upon what he had gathered from his intercourse with Jews and Christians, and from "the theological words and phrases" which were to some extent current in Arabia by reason of what Sir W. Muir calls "the naturalization of Judaism and Christianity" in that country.

This consideration deposes Muhammad from any solid pretension to the independent position which must belong to the founder of a new religion which is to rival, or be the substitute for, Christianity. Jesus Christ came, indeed, to fulfil "preceding Scriptures," "the law and the prophets," but He added such a further and original revelation of God's nature and purposes as had never before been made, and so established an essentially "*new covenant*," which disannulled the foregoing dispensation and brought in a better hope. The older Judaism is rightly regarded as "a pioneer of Christianity." Moses and the prophets prepared for and proclaimed the Coming One. In that older religion were the antecedent conditions from which, by a divinely providential evolution, was to be developed, although not without a special supernatural interposition, the universal religion for mankind in the person and work of the Messiah.

But Muhammadanism, by reason of its later historical position, must either supersede Christianity or concede its superior claims. Muhammad himself, in the Koran, regards Jesus as a prophet divinely sent and commissioned; yet, from ignorance of His real teaching and claims, he in effect repudiates the essential verities of Christ's Divine Sonship and atoning death, and proclaims himself as THE prophet of the one God.

Those who will be at the pains to collect the various passages in the Koran where mention is made of Jesus will perceive what a very limited knowledge Muhammad possessed of Christ's teaching; whilst they will also perceive that a distinct impression of reverence for Jesus had been made upon Muhammad's mind, even by the distorted narratives and fragmentary traditions, through which the Arabian reformer had

acquired his information concerning one whom he calls "El Messih, Isa ben Mariam," "illustrious in this world and the next," to whom the *Injil* (Evangel) had been given, and who was to be an apostle to the children of Israel. It is quite an exaggeration to say, as Washington Irving does, that Muhammad "had drunk deep of the living waters of Christianity"; but the reverence with which he regards the position of Jesus is certainly remarkable.

In one passage of the Koran (Sura lxi. 6) Muhammad seeks support for his own mission in an alleged prediction by Jesus, which is thus stated: "Remember when Jesus, the Son of Mary, said, O children of Israel, of a truth I am God's apostle to confirm the law which was given before me, and to announce an apostle that shall come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad." This assertion, which exhibits at once the ignorance of the prophet concerning the words of Christ, and his desire to be connected with the regard paid to the Messiah of the Jews, seems to have originated in a misunderstanding of the term *Paracletos* applied to the Holy Spirit, which was taken as if it were *Periclytus*, and meant "praised" or "illustrious," which is the meaning of Muhammad.

Muhammad claims to be the successor of former prophets and of Jesus. If he had stood in the same relation to Jesus as Jesus did to Moses, then the later date of the Arabian prophet would be no bar to his claim to be a special apostle of God; but it is historically and palpably evident that the special truths which Jesus proclaimed about God are a vast advance upon what Moses taught; are unique in the history of all religious thought and teaching; and were unknown to Muhammad, whilst the truths which Muhammad proclaims about God are old truths known already to Jews and Christians, which could not in any respect be regarded as superseding what had been already taught, and were not supplemented by any new revelations or development of revelation, through Muhammad, such as were adapted to bring God nearer to men, or men nearer to God. Muhammad's claims to consideration as "the prophet of God" must therefore fall to the ground when once men recognise the fact that, coming after Christ and professing to be His successor, he advances no new doctrine, and is ignorant of the essentials of the Christian faith, although (and it is a noteworthy fact) he commends as divine revelations the Jewish and Christian Scriptures.<sup>1</sup> Muhammad was neither a *forerunner* like Moses

<sup>1</sup> Sir W. Muir has done excellent service to the cause of Christianity, and to missionaries who desire to convert Moslems to the purer faith, by his careful collection of testimonies from the Koran to the reverence and respect which Muhammad both felt and enjoined for the Scriptures.



or Elijah or John the Baptist, nor was he a *fulfiller* like Christ, in the sense of bringing out the deeper meaning of former revelations, nor was he a *revealer* of new truths communicated through him by God to mankind. His historical position as a spiritual teacher is an entirely dependent one, and his gross ignorance of the law and gospel, which he commended as divinely authoritative, manifests his incompetency to be regarded as a trustworthy guide.

II. *Authority*.—The contrast between the credentials and claims of Christ and those of Muhammad is a very striking one.

“There is no position more satisfactorily established by the Corân,” says Sir W. Muir, “than that Mahomet did not in any part of his career perform miracles, or pretend to perform them.” After Muhammad’s death his followers attributed many miraculous acts to him, but the prophet himself never ventured to assert the power of working miracles; and passages in the Koran occur which are obviously inserted to explain the absence of these credentials to a divine mission. The Koran is pointed out as a sufficient miracle to convince gainsayers who were not hardened by unbelief. The following passage (S. xvii. 90-95) is worth quoting:

Say: verily, were men and Djinn assembled to produce the like of this Koran, they would not produce its like, though the one should help the other. And of a truth, we have set out to men every kind of similitude in this Koran, but most men have refused everything except unbelief. And they say, “By no means will we believe on thee till thou cause a fountain to gush forth for us from the earth; or, till thou have a garden of palm-trees and grapes, and thou cause forth-gushing rivers to gush forth in its midst; or thou make the heavens to fall on us, as thou hast given out, in pieces; or thou bring God and the angels to vouch for thee; or thou mount up into heaven; nor will we believe in thy mounting up, till thou send down to us a book which we may read.” Say: Praise be to my Lord! Am I more than a man, an apostle?

Muhammad was, then, confessedly without these proofs of an extraordinary mission from God, which he alleges as evidential of the mission of Moses and of Jesus. He performed no miracles. Nor did he directly assert any divine prerogative. He confessed himself to be a sinner, needing God’s pardoning mercy for “earlier and later” faults. He made no promises in his own name, nor did he direct men to believe in himself as one able to forgive sins, to refresh souls, to send from heaven the Spirit of God, or as one who was Himself, personally, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

The self-assertion of Christ was a mysterious, constant, and astonishing feature in a life of humiliation and self-sacrifice.

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of the Jew and the Christian. (These testimonies, first published in 1853, have been brought out again in a convenient form in the S.P.C.K. series of books on “Non-Christian Religious Systems,” with a useful preface containing some account of “The Corân” itself.)

The nature of Muhammad's self-assertion is totally different. It was not calm nor consistent. It was at first, perhaps, the product of a conscientious conviction that he had found the truth, and was prepared to teach it at all hazards. He asserted himself as an enthusiast, and as one who, to some extent, felt empowered to proclaim truth in an authoritative manner. But this enthusiastic self-assertion became mingled with worldly and selfish impulses, when he had gained a position in which the power of the sword, and the command of warriors, combined with his pretensions to be the Prophet of God, enabled him to act as a despotic chief: and then, it was as a ruler of adherents—not as an all-sufficient Saviour, the object of faith and worship—that he claimed and accepted the homage which men paid rather to the success of his arms than to the spiritual pretensions of his mission.

The claims of Jesus Christ were self-consistent, spiritual, sublime. They never wavered; were never tainted with earthly ambition; and were corroborated by the miracles which He performed, and by the supernatural close of His career upon earth. Jesus distinctly alleged the mighty works which He did as credentials of His mission from God (John x. 37-38, xiv. 11, xv. 24). He sent forth His disciples to proclaim Him as the central object of the revelations made in "the Scriptures" of old, and as One in whose Name repentance and remission of sins were to be preached among all nations. The resurrection from the grave, and subsequent ascension of Christ into heaven, were the crowning proofs of the claims which Christ made; and the resurrection, together with the ascension, formed the fundamental basis of the earliest Christian preaching, which recognised and proclaimed, in the risen and ascended Jesus, Him whom God did "exalt to be a Prince and Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins."

Of these claims by Jesus, Muhammad seems to have known nothing accurately, or in the way of actual history. In the Koran the Crucifixion is represented as not being the crucifixion of Christ, but of someone in "His likeness"<sup>1</sup> (S. iv. 156),

<sup>1</sup> This is apparently a "docetic" legend derived from some apocryphal document, and is again referred to in S. iii. 47; where the verse, "And the Jews plotted, and God plotted. But of those who plot, God is best," is supposed to allude to some substitution by God of another person in the place of Jesus at the time of the crucifixion. See an interesting note *ad loc.*, in Sale, which gives various details as to this "crucifixion *in effigy*." Rodwell in a note on the same verse says, "It would seem also from Sura. xix. 34, that Muhammad supposed Jesus to have died a natural death, though it is nowhere said how long he continued in that state. The Muhammadans believe that Jesus, on his return to earth at the end of the world, will slay the Antichrist, die and be raised again. A vacant place is reserved for his body in the Prophet's tomb at Medina."

and nothing about the resurrection or ascension of Jesus is mentioned that can be traced to the actual accounts of these events in the Gospels.

Jesus is, according to the Koran, only a servant of God, and not the Son of God; a "favoured" servant, but nothing more. His Divine claims are ridiculed and denied, as in the two following passages from the Koran: "The Jews say, 'Ezra is a son of God'; and the Christians say, 'The Messiah is a son of God.' Such are the sayings in their mouths. They resemble the sayings of the infidels of old! God do battle with them! How are they misguided! They take their teachers, and their monks, and the Messiah, son of Mary, for Lords beside God, though bidden to worship God only. There is no God but He! Far from His glory be what they associate with Him!" (S. ix. 30, 31). Again: "It beseemeth not a man that God should give him the Scriptures, and the wisdom, and the gift of prophecy, and that then he should say to his followers, 'Be ye worshippers of me as well as of God'; but rather, 'Be ye perfect in things pertaining to God, since ye know the Scriptures, and have studied deep.' God doth not command you to take the angels or prophets as *lords*" (*i.e.*, to call them by the title which is only due to God) (S. iii. 73, 74).

Regarding Jesus as a former prophet, to whom God had granted signs, and whom He strengthened with "the Holy Spirit" (by this term perhaps meaning the angel Gabriel), Muhammad is yet entirely ignorant of the New Testament account of Christ, and claims to be a successor of Jesus, as of other apostles, "who have passed away." "Muhammad is no more than an apostle," says one verse of the Koran. "Other apostles have already passed away before him; if he die, therefore, or be slain, will ye turn upon your heels?"

Muhammad alleged no miraculous credentials; he put forward no Divine claims; he gained no conquest over the power of death; he did not assert any pretension to be the viceroy of Divine Providence unto the end of the world, or to be the judge of the quick and the dead: yet Christ made all these claims; and Muhammad, who says that God sent him to clear up previous revelations, is so ignorant of the authority claimed by Christ, that he can venture to put himself forward as THE Teacher to be obeyed, and to say, "Whoso believe and do things that are right, and believe in what hath been sent down to Muhammad—for it is the truth from their Lord—their sins will He cancel and dispose their hearts aright" (S. xlvii. 2). He calls upon men to "obey God and His Apostle," and to substitute for all other religious creeds the simple assertion, "There is no God but God, and Muhammad is the Apostle of God."

Upon what authority, then, do Muhammad's claims rest? Upon the sole fact whether he taught the truth from God or not, and this, it is historically evident from the comparison with the New Testament, he did not do; while it is still more evident from the character and the composition of the Koran that he did not hesitate to ascribe to God what he himself wished people to believe as truth. 'The *ipse dixit* of Muhammad is a poor foundation on which to build up a religion for the world! This "Prophet" is to be admired for his enthusiasm, pitied for his ignorance, and blamed for his arrogance: he certainly cannot be followed as God's Apostle! "*Sans autorité,*" says Pascal; "il faudrait donc que ses raisons fussent bien puissantes n'ayant que leur propre force. Que dit-il donc? *Qu'il faut le croire.*" Believe him? Where are his credentials? He is erring, fallible, inconsistent, ignorant of the very revelations which he professes to confirm and seal. We shall be assuredly right in refusing to let this man reign over us.

III. *Character.*—On the point of character much need not be said, for the contrast between Christ and Muhammad is obvious and undeniable. Christ's character, even in the judgment of non-believers, is perfect and blameless. Muhammad's character is, taken at its best, imperfect and sinful.

Without going back to any of the bitter expressions of former controversial writers against Muhammadanism, or to the misconception of the Prophet of Mecca as "a wicked impostor" from the beginning, we are yet constrained by any careful consideration of the facts of the case to assent to the view that Muhammad was "led away by the demon of spiritual pride and ambition" to mar the earlier enthusiasm of his reforming career by the haughty arrogance, and lust, and cruel treachery which occasionally show themselves in his acts and pretended revelations at Medina. It is undoubtedly true that "the course at Medina proves that Mahomet was not led by the Spirit of God." So writes Sir W. Muir; and all writers agree that, after the Hegira, a change came across the character of Muhammad. The persuasive, earnest enthusiast for a purer form of religion becomes the imperious, dogmatic, and crafty chieftain. Instead of our being led to contemplate with sympathy the conscientious reformer of his countrymen's idolatrous worship, as he exhibits deep mental struggles, and passionately promulgates what he believes to be highest truth, and steadfastly encounters persecution and opposition for conscience' sake, we have to look, with a growing sense of disappointment and repulsion, on the picture of a character which degenerates as outward prosperity increases. We see the man yielding to baser earthly influences, and coming down

from the heights of moral conviction to the lowly lands of selfish expediency; and thus, instead of strenuous efforts to persuade and teach better truths, we have "the life of rule, and rapine, and indulgence" which characterised the Medina portion of Muhammad's career.

The utmost that apologists can do for him is to extenuate his wrong acts, either by ingenious pleas (as those advanced by Syed Ameer Ali in his chapter on "The Marriages of the Prophet"), or by appealing to the known infirmity of human nature. Muhammad's conduct in the matter of Zeinab and of Mary the Copt has been recognised even by eulogists of the prophet as an "indelible stain" upon his memory.

There was a saying prevalent among the early Moslems that "the character" of Muhammad "was the Koran." And in its mixture of enthusiasm and petulance; its incoherence and passion; its strength of assertions concerning God; and the intellectual feebleness exhibited in some of the legendary portions of the book; its blended utterances of fierce vindictiveness and broad tolerance, of poetic fervour and oracular dogmatism, of pious aspirations and politic denunciations; it does indeed reflect a strange composite character, in which faith, fanaticism, self-will, self-deception and craftiness are wonderfully interwoven.

If the absence of proper credentials be a reason why Muhammad's claims should be repudiated, this exhibition of unsatisfactory and inconsistent character renders his requirement of allegiance, as a religious teacher, still weaker and more unreliable; and it renders him utterly unworthy of being placed by the side of Christ, as entitled to the esteem and obedience of those who are seeking for the truth of God.

Christ's conduct was throughout true and sincere, and consistent, and unworldly: Muhammad's career began, we may scarcely doubt, with honest earnestness, but it became soon characterized by "culpable self-deception;" and the employment of deceit and treachery for the accomplishment of worldly purposes, and the use of violent measures in the name of religion and with the pretext of forwarding it, show that he who began as a true prophet ended by being a false one.

Christ's standard and pattern of purity, and love, and self-sacrifice are generally recognised as the *ne plus ultra* of ethical ideal. But Muhammad's life and teaching are, in many instances, admitted to be blameworthy, or, at any rate, to require such vindictory excuses as effectually preclude us from looking up to the professed religious teacher as the example of religious life.

This should not, indeed, prevent us from giving him all the

credit due to the enthusiasm for truth as it was known to him, and to the bravery, or kindness, or patience which are recorded of him. We are not precluded from considering him to be, in relation to the circumstances in which he was placed, a great man, and a great reformer: but we are precluded from proffering him moral allegiance, and we are constrained to put him upon a moral level so very far below Jesus of Nazareth, as to deprive him of all the authority due to a consistently holy life, and of all the corroborative support which such a life affords to the doctrines which the man who lives it inculcates.

IV. *Revelation*.—We have somewhat anticipated discussion as to whether Muhammad can be esteemed a *revealer* of Divine truth, in what has been already said about his dependence for his religious doctrines upon the truths which he had gleaned from intercourse with Jews and Christians. But it is worth while to lay distinct emphasis not only upon the general fact that the religion of Muhammad was entirely wanting in originality, but also upon the specific fact that the Koran, though alleged to be a Divine revelation, is in truth nothing of the sort. It is, and has been clearly shown to be, a *fabrication* by Muhammad, and not a *revelation* from God.

The careful study of it is a very effectual confutation of its claims to be considered as a Divine revelation "from the Lord of the worlds," "a glorious Koran written on a preserved table" [*i.e.*, in heaven]. It professes to be the very words of God throughout, and stands, therefore, on a very different ground from that upon which the Old and New Testament Scriptures stand. The Koran is found to be a fictitious collection of pretended divine oracles. It is unhistorical. In the books of the Bible we have a progressive course of history, in the development of which we have records of divine messages and divine interpositions; but the Suras of the Koran were delivered by one man, during some twenty-three years, in portions of different lengths, "smaller or greater as the case required;" and, although God is said to be the speaker throughout, contain palpable mistakes, puerilities, confusions, and childish fables, which are mingled with the nobler poetic sections and the more prosaic, dogmatic and juridical utterances.

We have already remarked upon Muhammad's ignorance of the New Testament. The knowledge of Old Testament events and persons which he possessed was also very fragmentary and confused. He mixes up names in a curious order, as in the following passage: God is made to say, "We gave unto him [*i.e.*, Abraham] Isaac and Jacob, and guided both aright; and we had before guided Noah; and among the

descendants, David and Solomon, and Job and Joseph, and Moses and Aaron; thus do we recompense the righteous: and Zachariah, John, Jesus, and Elias: all were just persons, and Ismael and Elisha, and Jonas and Lot: all these were favoured above mankind" (S. vi. 84-86).

Nor is it ignorance alone that is exhibited in this alleged revelation. Contradictory passages occur which are clumsily harmonized by the convenient doctrine of abrogation, which is thus expressed in one of the earliest Medina Suras (ii. 100), "Whatever verses we cancel, or cause thee to forget, we bring a better or its like. Knowest thou not that God hath power over all things?"<sup>1</sup>

To ignorance and inconsistency, another and a baser feature must be added as the result of an analytical criticism of the Koran. It is made a vehicle of personal invective against enemies, and of providing "authority" for what would have been otherwise shameful and unlawful acts on the part of the prophet in reference to women.

As a literary composition, the Koran has undoubted merits, when viewed in relation to its author and his circumstances; and "its literary merit is of course magnified by the extraordinary disadvantages under which it was composed." As reflecting the varying phases of Muhammad's enthusiastic and eager impulses, and the religious tendencies which at first shaped his own career, and were then by him moulded into an instrument of rule and warfare,—such as astonished the world, and affected its whole history—the Koran is worthy both of study and of wonder. But as "a revelation," it is *nil*. To the Arabians, indeed, it was, as has been remarked by Mr. Rodwell, "an unquestionable blessing" in some respects, and to them it was "an accession of truth." To the Jew and the Christian, the Koran stands self-condemned, both by its contents and by its pretensions, as an imposture and an impertinence, when it is put forth as the Word of God.

Admire it we may: reverence it we cannot. There is poetry and passion in it; and its denunciations against idolators, and its conceptions of the might and majesty of God, and some of its precepts and rules, may command a measure of respect. But the method of its promulgation stamps it with the stigma of deception; and the ignorance displayed in it of the very Scriptures which it pretends to confirm refutes the Arabian prophet, so to speak, out of his own mouth, and convicts him of falsehood.

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<sup>1</sup> In this same Sura a divine command is produced, by which "the sacred Mosque" of Mecca is made the "Kebla" to which worshippers should turn when they pray, instead of to Jerusalem, which was the first "Kebla," enjoined by Muhammad for the purpose of ingratiating the Jews.

Marvellous as a compilation of Muhammad's energy and cleverness, and a testimony to a considerable amount of moral earnestness, it contains no revelation of God's line of promise and purpose, save the fragmentary and distorted reflections of what may be found, authentically and *in situ*, in the Old and New Testaments. It does not, like the Old Testament, contain any historical development of divine revelation; nor does it, like the New Testament, present an historical revelation of God.

The profound doctrine of the Trinity as emerging from the fact of the Incarnation of the Divine Word; the significance of the Incarnation itself, and that atoning death of the Christ of God which the Incarnation involved, with all the wondrous consequent issues of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, and of the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the first band of Christ's disciples; and the superstructure upon these revelations of God, which is the Church of Christ—are inconsistent with Islam, and are repudiated by the followers of Muhammad. What is there in the Koran to compare with them or to compensate for their absence? or to give men a right to supersede these "former revelations?"

We have now suggested four lines of comparison whereby the relative claims of Christianity and Islam upon the reason and conscience of men may be fairly estimated.

Other arguments, which are of validity as against the religion of the Koran, are supplied by the character of Moslem conquest and rule; by the inelasticity of the legalism which is based upon the Koran; by the virtual support which the Muhammadan system gives to polygamy and slavery; by the low view of women which it encourages by the incompleteness of its moral standard; and by the absence of any satisfying truths concerning mediation and reconciliation between man as sinful and God as holy. But the four points of comparison already set forth are quite sufficient to settle the original question raised. If these be fairly considered, men will have enough both of historical and logical argument to convince them that Islam should rather be regarded as a strange "heresy," than as an independent religious doctrine. It is, therefore, not a rival claimant, with merits of its own, to be considered; but it is a distinct antagonist to Christianity, so far as it falls short of, misconceives, or traduces, the real historical doctrine of the Jesus whom Muhammad professed to reverence, and yet in reality did not understand.

All action in relation to missionary effort among non-Christians must ultimately rest upon the settlement of the question, "To WHOM shall we go for the words of eternal life?"

It is not enough to compare the philosophical or ethical



aspects of one and another system of religion. It is a mistake to treat of civilization as if it could be treated independently of evangelization concerning God, and to regard material prosperity as the sole gauge of true success. It is not enough to point to conquered cities, and realms subdued, and large range of empire. The only warrant of true elevation and progress is the possession of real knowledge concerning the Eternal God as in relation to human history, and to the deepest springs of human action. Whence, save from the Christian's creed, and where, more satisfactorily than in the Christian's creed, can such knowledge be obtained? WHO has revealed God, and the things of God, most and best?

Jesus Christ of Nazareth claimed to be the Teacher sent from God, before whom all others should rightly yield place. He claimed to be in intimate and mysterious union with the Father who sent Him. His life, His works, His teaching, His resurrection and ascension, corroborated the claims which He advanced to be the Revealer of God and the Redeemer of men.

Jesus Christ answered to the predictions which had gone before, among the Jewish people, of a coming Saviour. He announced the glad tidings of God's love for all, and asserted that to Himself had been given all authority in heaven and earth, and that in His Name repentance and remission of sins should be everywhere proclaimed.

Faith in the crucified and risen Jesus grew into a creed, which has, without doubt, effected a vast moral transformation both in individual souls and in society at large. And everything that is most pure, and elevating, and hopeful, and philanthropic in modern civilization can be traced to the working of the spirit of Christianity, which is the Spirit of Christ.

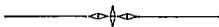
There are no claims, no moral influence, no personal force for good, like those of Jesus Christ; and, best of all, in Him is the living Mediator between God and man, such as the religious spirit in man always yearns for, and can never fully find, save in Him. In Him, *Deus descendit, ut nos assurgamus*.

How can those who have gone unto Him for truth, and have been brought to know and feel that HE has the words of eternal life, recommend to others any Teacher as supreme, any Saviour as sufficient, save Him?

We may, indeed, welcome the *testimonium animæ naturaliter Christianæ*, so far as it appears in the consciences of men. We may welcome all elements of moral and religious truth which may appear in any scheme of philosophy, or any form of worship amongst men. The mystical aspirations which characterize some forms of lyrical poetry, and the sententious maxims which embody, or indicate, the meditative results of the

ethical tendency in the human mind, may be often recognised as allied to the religious truths which we hold most sacred. And, assuredly, we should gladly recognise as common ground whatever there is in Islam of truth concerning God, and of acknowledgments that make for Christianity. But as we cannot put, complacently, in one Pantheon Socrates, and Buddha, and Confucius, and Christ, and honour all alike, so we cannot, without treason to truth, permit Muhammad to be placed before any, even "lower races," as an alternative prophet to the Lord Jesus Christ.

W. SAUMAREZ SMITH.



#### ART. IV.—THE CLERICAL BAGMAN.

**T**O the curate who has rashly given his heart to undowered beauty and worth, who wants to marry, but sees no speedy prospect of a rectory, such an advertisement as the following is not without its attraction :

WANTED immediately by the Society for the Promotion of . . . , etc., a Clerical District Secretary. £300 per annum and travelling expenses.—Apply, with testimonials, to Secretary, 47, Temple Court Square, London.

It is true that the curate may not know much about the Society in question; but, when he makes inquiry, he finds that its objects are excellent, its work is undeniable, and that it has secured the services of many good men, and the support of quite a number of enthusiastic contributors. Fathers of the Church direct its management, Bishops are its patrons, noble and distinguished laymen have occupied its presidential chair. Why should he not master the details of this new work, make this cause his own, and give some good service in return for his wage? So, he sometimes seals his fate, and, by one quick leap out of curatedom, condemns himself to wander for years in that intermediary limbo which lies outside the desired rest of the beneficed.

Not that I would assert that the life of a travelling secretary is for a man a fruitless one. Far from it. It might be sufficient to say that he is doing a necessary work which demands his best efforts. That is in itself enough to ennoble the life of any man. But apart from this, he will be brought into contact with many men, and many modes of religious life. He will have to adapt his voice and style to many buildings and many widely different audiences. He will have opportunities of platform speaking and lecturing such as are not within the reach of the ordinary curate. All this should shape him, if he is shapeable, into a ready and efficient man. The work of a travelling secretary to one of our great Church Societies, if not

prolonged beyond a few years, ought to be a very good second course to the preliminary training of a curate, and an excellent preparation for a Profession which makes more demands upon a man's knowledge of his kind, breadth of sympathy and ready tact, than perhaps any other.

Let not the secretary, however, be too sure that his term of service will be for a few years only. Looking over the lists of any of the great Societies, it will not be difficult to find the names of men who have been travelling preachers during the past ten, fifteen, even thirty years. Think of it, aspiring young man. A possible thirty years spent in speaking and lecturing on the same subject—harping on the one same string. You will probably know your one subject thoroughly by that time; but there is the possibility also that you may by that time be somewhat palled by it! My friend and informant on this matter, whose head is growing gray in the service of a certain London society, solemnly assured me the other day that, had he known——! But, then, we never do know. Why, indeed, should we know whither Duty will lead us? Enough for us that we should take the first step which Duty demands. If a door is clearly opened before you by the Divine Hand, which leads to such a nomad life, fear not; enter in—new experiences are in store for you, which will, in due time, bear their own fruit; but do not indulge in too sanguine expectations that this sudden advancement will bring you to honourable preferment in the Church any sooner, or perhaps so soon, as will patient continuance in the humble and ill-paid path of the curate. If your heart has enlarged itself toward some special field of Home or Foreign Mission work, and you feel that you can happily and profitably spend your whole time and talents in planning and organizing, arguing, demonstrating and begging in behalf of that special field of work, here is a career clearly marked out for you. It is not everyone who combines in himself the business qualifications and the gifts of the ready spokesman which go to make a good "Association Secretary." Let him in whom dwell the germs of these, arise and develop them. Never fear, there is a blessing in it. Only let him take heed how he is thereto moved by other motives. The curate who is tired of serving under a master, may find that he has merely exchanged one dictator for many—a vicar, who at least has a heart that can be moved and a humanity that can be appealed to, for that soulless, conscienceless, and irresponsible thing called a committee. Alas! miserable one, if his nose should be brought up to that grindstone!

Or if, again, he deems himself unknown and unappreciated in his obscure parish—"an oak planted in a flower-pot," as a

certain popular preacher, condemned to a provincial pulpit, indignantly declared himself to be—let him consider that acquaintances and friends are not interchangeable terms; and that it may not be better to be known by many than to be loved by few.

My friend the secretary, from whose stores of experience I have drawn the above sage reflections, tells me that he once received a very severe letter from a country clergyman to whom he had written, asking in the usual way for "Sermons in aid of his Society." This gentleman replied in much the same spirit as Eliab, when his anger was kindled against wandering David. "Why camest thou down hither? With whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle." So did this country shepherd wax indignant as he contemplated the clerical bagman flitting hither and thither like a wandering bee, and collecting from church after church what honey and pollen he might get for the central London hive. He assured my friend with much warmth that society did wrong to encourage the idleness of a race of young men who preferred to gad about the world and live upon their neighbours, rather than to settle down to the drudgery of parish work. Over all this my poor friend could but grimly smile. He had not seen his wife for a week. He had preached three times, taken two whole services, and addressed two Sunday-schools the previous Sunday. During the days that followed he seemed to see himself comically exaggerated into an odd figure—a kind of Waukenphast, with flying coat-tails, a bundle of diagrams under one arm and a carpet-bag on the other, rushing along crowded platforms to catch trains, interviewing vicars, calling upon local secretaries, inspecting public halls and National school-rooms, putting up apparatus, lecturing in hot, bare rooms beneath the glare of gas-jets, shaking hands with old ladies, and answering questions till his head swam, on every conceivable and inconceivable subject which might be supposed to be affected by the work of the Society whose cause he advocated. He was pathetically conscious that, at least he had not been idle. How gladly would he oftentimes, when his nerves were all on edge with the vibration of railway-wheels and the jolting of dog-carts; when he held in his hands four or five letters from different parts of his district, all demanding sermons on the same Sunday; or when—and this was the worst to bear—the numbing thought possessed him that he was but a wandering voice, and would never be allowed to taste the sweet joy of himself gathering in the soul-fruit of his utterances—how gladly, I say, would he have laid down

the carpet-bag and taken up the crook, if some patron could have been found who would have placed one in his hands!

Ah! poor clerical bagman, thou needest to be a man of unusual parts indeed if thou wouldest hope to leave a clear image of thy personality upon the retina of the vicar, canon, archdeacon, or even dean who entertains thee. They see so many of thy kind. And then thy visit is so short. "Like a weaver's shuttle," so thou dartest through life. A few weeks, and thine individuality will be blurred and thine image lost in those of thy successors, who, like thee, came and earnestly stated the cause of such and such a Society as though it demanded precedence of all the hungry charities of the world, preached a "begging sermon" for it, and went—into the whirling crowd of busy black-coats.

The young secretary whose heart is enlarged toward his fellows, and still green enough to put forth buds of expectation, may congratulate himself during the first year of his service that he has made many new friends. Let him be content if he has made a few. Country parsonages are very pleasant resting-places. The clergy are the pink of hospitality. At the hall, or at the wealthy merchant's well-appointed house, you may be received more magnificently; but nowhere are you made more at home than at the parsonage. The secretary will have many a pleasant remembrance of homely "spare rooms," where, at the foot of the white, broad bed, an easy-chair and writing-table, drawn up before a cheerily blazing fire, showed that the house-mistress had not been indifferent to his wants. He will recall many a breakfast-table around which sat fresh-faced boys and girls, and where "Rector, Director, and Miss-directors" all vied in showing him a courteous attention. He will have parted from such families with many a warm hand-shake and well-meant wish that he should return again next year. He hopes that he will neither forget nor be quite forgotten. When next year comes round, he has thus come and gone from, it may be, some hundred such homes. He recommences his round. Again hospitality, kindly greetings, friendliness; but, by-and-by, it will dawn upon him that this is a friendliness which differs widely in degree from that which exists between fellow-workers in the same field, or from that special and most delightful intercourse which exists between the pastor and the people who seek his ministrations. Friends no doubt he will in time make if "he show himself friendly"—even "friends for life;" but not more perhaps than he would have made out of his own rank of life had he remained in his cure; and out of the ranks of the poor, whose love and friendship is so precious, almost none.

My friend the secretary was a very young man when he left

a suburban curacy to join the ranks of the peripatetics and carry his carpet-bag throughout the provinces. He had ventured, after much urging on the part of his friends, to reply to such an advertisement as has been quoted above. Thanks mainly to an enthusiastic description of his oratorical powers by one of the aforesaid who firmly believed that he would not stay his triumphant career until he had attained to an archbishopric, he found himself in what the Scottish call the "leet" of half-a-dozen or so candidates who were chosen from the mass of competitors for final selection. In due time he presented himself at the dull-looking house in Temple Court Square which was the Society's head-quarters. He was asked to sit down in a large, dingy upper room where several clerks were at work, and abide until the committee were ready to see him. It was rather awful. He felt, he says, almost as though he had been whisked back to the old school again, and were once more in the dread antechamber waiting his turn to be caned. By and by came a messenger; so he settled his countenance, smoothed down his emotions with a mental "plums, prunes, and prisms," and advanced with what courage he could muster into the presence of the Board. A long table covered with red baize, around which sat about a score of middle-aged and elderly gentlemen. A chairman with bland smile and gray whiskers, seated at one end of the table, between two clerical secretaries. Forty or more eyes focussed inquiringly upon the curate, who felt himself begin to blush, and over whom came the odd fancy that he was being introduced as a "specimen" to be dissected and lectured upon before a party of naturalists. He was, however, treated with consideration, and, beyond being called upon to answer some rather irrelevant questions, did not suffer much. The object of the interview was, in fact, mainly that the committee might judge of the applicant's appearance and general "form"; of the rest they had satisfied themselves in other ways. Little was said, and that chiefly by one gentleman of rather red face, and with an important pursed-up mouth, who jerked out staccato questions, with intervals of silence. As each of these questions was asked, all the other members of committee gazed expectantly at the curate, some of them turning in their chairs to fix him patiently with eyes sidelong or straight, as the position of each required. Happily the candidate's sense of humour came to his rescue, and he stood the ordeal fairly well, and without showing signs of irritability. After a time he was released, and returned to his bench and his meditations in the dingy room. To him thus cogitating came, about half an hour later, one of the clerical secretaries, who, with sad and sympathetic face, informed him that.

another candidate, "a man of *great* experience," etc., had been selected. At the same time he assured my rejected friend that he had made a decidedly favourable impression upon the directors, and that they would probably communicate with him should another vacancy occur. To this he did not give much heed, thinking that the soft-hearted secretary was probably minded to let him down as easily as possible, and not snuff out all his hopes at once. However, not many weeks after, an offer really did come, and my friend the curate found himself appointed to a certain district, and enrolled among the "Association Secretaries" upon the Society's staff.

I have already said that my friend was a very young man. He had much to learn; fortunately, he was very willing to learn it. Young men mostly hide beneath a certain assumption of self-confidence a vast amount of nervous diffidence and self-doubt. Someone once said that he could not do with shy people, they were so outrageously impudent. On the same principle diffident people, and persons mistrustful of their powers, not unfrequently mask their weakness by a most provoking and intolerable attitude of assurance. Many a perky young man, who is set down, when first seen, as a conceited ass, is in reality only a pitifully frightened creature, morbidly sensitive of ridicule, and horribly conscious of his own limitations. Bear with him patiently, O—not unreasonably—irritated senior; and if thou seest fit to administer a measure of chastisement rather than "precious balms," see that thou smite him friendly. Thou, too, once wast young.

Unhappily all the fathers of the Church are not equally gifted with kindly discrimination. All have not that real love of the human soul which makes the study of the development of a young mind and character one of the most interesting things in the world. The new secretary received his share of snubs from such. He was enough of a philosopher not to let them break his head. Some heads and hearts have been thus broken. But the secretary, whether they were kindly or unkindly meant, rubbed them well in, and tried to profit withal. He soon sadly learned, however, that he must not expect mercy. He was an official, and as such to be pitched into. Whether the committee in Temple Court Square was well posted in his virtues he had no means of ascertaining, but he soon had cause to know that they were kept well acquainted with his failings. One unknown malcontent would complain, when he sent his annual parochial remittance to head-quarters, that the Society's representative preached as though the Gospel was never heard in his parish, and that it might be better if he would confine himself more to his proper function of giving information, etc. Another would ask that a hint might be

given to the secretary to preach the Gospel more, and not weary the ears of the people with dry details which might be gathered from the Society's report. Another, that more secretaries were clearly needed, since the young man never came himself to that parish to preach; and yet another that the funds of the Society were being shamefully wasted in paying secretaries who ran about saying what the vicars themselves could, if they chose, say very much better. One country clergyman even objected to the secretary's moustache, which he thought was of too military a cut. In fact, there was no end to the suggestions which reached the head secretary as to his subordinate's improvement in mien, manners, and methods. It would have been wise, perhaps, to have summarily burned all such letters. Head secretaries, however, do not always adopt that course.

To all this there was a sunny side. The new secretary became, as every true man must become, interested in his work. Friendly congratulations marked an occasional success on platform or in pulpit. Friendly greetings and pressing invitations assured him that he was not considered wholly useless, nor his work altogether badly done. As he gained confidence as a speaker he learned to find pleasure in encountering various audiences, and in adapting his style and arguments to the requirements of sharp-witted artizans, dull-brained labourers, or fastidious frequenters of west-end churches. He felt, too, that his mind was enlarged by contact with many minds. His life as a country curate had run in a very narrow channel. The great world of thinking men which lay outside his duck-pond had been to him as though it was not. He now learnt that there were other standpoints of mental vision than that from which he had taken his own little outlook—that sincere men may differ as to their inductive methods, and yet arrive at the same truths. All this was good for him. He became less opinionative. Some of his angles were rubbed off, and his crudities shaped into form.

With regard to his experiences of life, clerical and lay, the association secretary might have told tales. He had, like the proverbial owl, peeped down many chimney-pots and heard the whisperings of many households. A cleric to whom my friend was once introduced looked at him for a few moments silently, and then said, with a twinkle in his eye, "It must be very funny seeing so much of human nature as you do. What a lot you must have to tell about us parsons if you chose to divulge!" Happily for the peace of society, our secretary is a safe man. Let no one whose skeleton he may have discovered tremble; he will not point out the secret cupboard: at least,



if he should so far forget himself, he shall not use me as his channel of communication with the world.

The conclusion of the whole matter, according to my friend, is that a year or two, or three at the most, may be profitably spent as a travelling preacher and lecturer; but that a longer period, unless the secretary has other occupations than that of a speaker, is fraught with danger both for himself and the cause which he advocates. That which once was fresh to him, and which he therefore spoke of freshly, will cease to be fresh, and must then be pleaded mechanically. Even the evangelist is apt to suffer when he confines himself during several years to the preaching of "mission sermons" and the reiteration of the Gospel Invitation. If once his sentences lose their originality for himself, and, ceasing to be cast and recast in his own mind, become stereotyped, they lose also their power over his audience; he becomes but a machine for the grinding out of commonplaces. It might be well to consider whether mission preachers should be appointed for more than a few consecutive years. But this applies much more to the association secretary. The mould into which his sermons and speeches must be run is a still smaller one. Whatever he says, it *must* relate to one branch of the Church's work, and to the getting of money in support of it. To the test of that money result, moreover, all his work will be inevitably brought. In the long-run that will be apt to affect his estimate of things. He may find that the stater in the fish's mouth has become of greater importance to him than the fish itself. Alas, should he awake to find himself become, not a fisher of men, but only a clerical bagman! Every profession has its special temptation. That will be his. Let him guard against it in the only possible way, by seeing that, while he takes this special part in the "diversities of the Church's operations," in him may ever shine the light of, and burn the fire of, that One and the selfsame Spirit which divideth to every man severally as He will.

Edinburgh.

E. C. DAWSON.



## Review.

*The Infallibility of the Church.* A course of Lectures delivered in the Divinity School of the University of Dublin. By GEORGE SALMON, D.D. London: Murray, 1888. Pp. xxvii., 495.

READERS of "The Historical Introduction to the New Testament" by the same author, will not need much persuasion to induce them to procure the present volume. Like its predecessor, it consists of lectures delivered at Dublin by Dr. Salmon, when he was Regius Professor of Divinity in the University. His promotion to the provostship of Trinity College has put an end to the delivery of any more such lectures. But the publication of these two series leads one to hope that yet others may in time see the light. It would be grievous if the benefit of such instruction were limited to the generation of Dublin students who were privileged to hear it. Not only many other students, but many professors and lecturers, will be glad to have the opportunity of profiting by such lectures as these; and to teachers especially it will be refreshing to have the subjects of their own reading and lecturing gathered up and presented to them in so bright and skilful a way.

The second collection of lectures appeals to a somewhat different circle of readers from that addressed in the "Introduction to the New Testament," and to a smaller circle, although still to a large and perhaps a growing one. Of necessity, the present volume is much more controversial than its predecessor; but, as might be expected from all who know the author, the bitterness of the controversial spirit is absent from it. He can deal as hard blows against the unhistorical assumptions of Romanists, as against the uncritical assumptions of the Tübingen School; but he never hits for the mere sake of inflicting pain. Points which simply distress a Romanist without contributing anything towards a right solution of the question (*e.g.*, the scandalous lives of many of the Popes) are left on one side; and, as will be shown from quotations from the book itself, the argument is not unfrequently enlivened by an illustration, which throws a tone of good humour into the discussion, and sometimes (one would think) might almost make the Roman controversialist enjoy the humour with which his position is treated. But is it worth while writing and publishing twenty-three lectures in order to prove that the English Church can give a very good account of the reasons which prevent her from yielding to Rome's demand for submission? Yes, certainly, if they are such lectures as these. While the rest of Christendom is being drawn closer together, partly by increased knowledge of the points of difference, partly by the pressure of vice and unbelief, Rome still remains haughtily aloof, declining to concede anything, and refusing to discuss any terms other than those of absolute submission to her claims. It is important that other Christians should have the means of judging the grounds upon which this lofty position is assumed; and seeing that few persons, even among the educated, have the opportunity for investigating the questions in detail, a clear and temperate statement of the main point is of great value. If Rome is right on the question of the Infallibility, the fact of her being wrong on numerous other points is of comparatively small moment. On the other hand, if her position respecting this fundamental article is proved to be untenable, then those who have no special interest in other points of issue need not trouble themselves to consider on which side the balance of probability lies in each case. Even if there were no such people as Roman controversialists compassing heaven and earth in order to make proselytes, a consideration

of the main question would be incumbent upon every educated Christian. "For a man to say that he feels no interest in the Roman Catholic controversy, is to say that he thinks some of the most important religious questions that can be raised quite undeserving his attention; that he does not care to know what are the conditions which Christ has appointed for his salvation, and whether union with the Church of Rome be not one of them" (p. 8).

The titles of some of the lectures will give a better idea of the scope of the whole than can be derived from the general title of the volume. Among these may be noticed: "The Cardinal Importance of the Question of Infallibility;" "The Church's Office of Teaching;" "The Church's Sources of Proof;" "The Hesitations of the Infallible Guide;" "The Blunders of the Infallible Guide;" "The Gallican Theory of Infallibility;" "General Councils;" "The Prerogatives of Peter;" "The Infancy and Progress of Roman Supremacy;" "The Infallibility of the Pope."

Where all is so good, it is not easy to make selections; but perhaps there is no lecture in the series more telling than the eleventh, in which Dr. Salmon discusses the question "Does the Church of Rome believe in her own infallibility?" And he gives good reasons for a negative answer to this question. "If conduct may be taken as evidence of belief, then the way in which the Church of Rome has acted during the past thousand years or more is very strong evidence that she herself has very little confidence in the infallibility which she claims to possess. For, first, she has generally been exceedingly reluctant to make use of her alleged infallibility, even when there has been the greatest need for its exercise; secondly, when she has ventured to give a decision, she has frequently been anxious afterwards to explain it away, as having been not an official decision, and therefore not infallible; and, thirdly, she has never, until quite recently, known where this power of infallibility resides—whether in the Church diffusive, or in a Council presided over by the Pope, or in a Council without the Pope, or in the Pope without a Council. Until 1870 all these views were tenable, and all have had their advocates among Roman theologians."

Romanists are very fond of insisting on the *extreme advantage* of having an infallible guide, and the consequent probability that God would grant us such a benefit. Then they demonstrate with abundance of argument that no other Church is infallible, or even claims to be infallible; from which it is supposed to follow that the Church of Rome, which *does* claim to be such, must be the expected infallible guide. Let us pass by the fallacy of assuming that God always gives what seems to us to be greatly to our advantage, and let us examine whether the supposed infallible guide has proved to be a great advantage. When Christians have been in dire perplexity, has it at once come forward and solved their difficulties for them by decisions which experience has proved to be correct? In the many schisms between Pope and Antipope, when each was declaring that to follow the other was to incur eternal damnation, why did not the infallible voice settle the question? When human beings were being burnt as heretics for opinions which are now admitted to be not heretical, why did not infallible authority interfere to set the persecutors right? And then how few of the decisions which have been authoritatively made have been any real help to anyone! They have either come so late that the question had settled itself before the infallible decision was given, or the decision has been proved to be erroneous, and therefore, we are assured, could not have been given with authority; so that, instead of the manifestly enormous advantage of having a guide that would always lead us aright in all our perplexities and difficulties, what we have *got* is a guide who either never gives any information until

we have found out the way for ourselves, or else leads us wrong, and then assures us that his misleading directions were not given officially.

Dr. Salmon aptly compares the wise old man in Bacon who had a great reputation for his success in settling disputes, and when asked to explain the secret of his success, said that he made it a rule never to interfere until the disputants had talked themselves tired, and were glad to have a settlement on any terms. Still more aptly he compares the daughters of the Vicar of Wakefield, whose mother gave them a guinea a-piece on condition that they never changed the guineas. The honour of the family required that they should have money in their pocket; its circumstances required that they should never spend it. "The Pope seems to possess the gift of infallibility on the same terms. The 'honour of the family' requires that he should have it, but obvious considerations of prudence constantly deter him from using it" (pp. 187, 188). This policy finds its extreme expression in the minimizing Romanist who has contended that it is quite true that the Pope is always infallible when he speaks *ex cathedrâ*; but from the days of Peter to the present time no Pope has spoken *ex cathedrâ*, and it is highly probable that no Pope ever will do so.

But the most serious evidence that the Roman Church does not itself believe in the infallibility which it claims to possess lies not in its reluctance to use the power, but in its ignorance as to where the power resides. It is incredible that a Church which really possessed so priceless a gift should for eighteen centuries remain in doubt as to who had charge of it and had the right to use it. This was stated more than fifty years ago with characteristic force by J. H. Newman, seven or eight years before he joined the Roman Church:

This abstract difficulty (how Romanists are to be certain that they have an infallible guide), however, is small compared with that attendant on the seat of the infallibility claimed by Romanism. Little room as there is in the Roman controversy for novelty or surprise, yet it does raise fresh and fresh amazement, the more we think of it, that Romanists should not have been able to agree among themselves where that infallibility is lodged which is the keystone of their system. Archbishop Bramhall reckons no less than six distinct opinions on the subject; some Romanists lodging the gift in the Pope speaking *ex cathedrâ*, others in the Pope in Council of Cardinals, others in the Pope in General or Provincial Council or in the General Council without the Pope, or in the Church Diffusive, that is, the whole company of believers throughout the world.

A little further on this uncertainty as to the seat of the infallibility is thought "providential."

Nothing could be better adapted than it to defeat the counsels of human wisdom, or to show to thoughtful inquirers the hollowness of even the most specious counterfeit of divine truth. The theologians of Romanism have been able dexterously to smooth over a thousand inconsistencies, and to array the heterogeneous precedents of a course of centuries in the semblance of design and harmony. *But they cannot complete their system in its most important and essential point.* They can determine in theory the nature, degree, extent and object of the infallibility which they claim; they cannot agree among themselves where it resides.\*

Since these telling words were written Rome has at last ventured to decide that the infallibility resides in the Pope when speaking *ex cathedrâ*; but it is still as uncertain as ever it was on what occasions, if any, Popes have spoken *ex cathedrâ*. When it is desirable to give a Papal utterance binding authority, it is declared to have been promulgated *ex cathedrâ*. When a Papal bull or brief, which has been delivered with the greatest solemnity and enforced with the severest spiritual sanctions, is found

\* "Rom anism and Popular Protestantism," Oxford, 1897; pp. 148, 150.

highly inconvenient, it is pronounced to have *not* been delivered *ex cathedra*. No intelligible principle has yet been discovered which will show that the Papal decisions which are manifestly untrue or immoral are not *ex cathedra*, and yet leave the remainder untouched. The only safe course is to maintain that since the death of St. Peter no *ex cathedra* utterance has been made.

Let us take Dr. Salmon's illustration, and suppose that one of our universities claimed to be able to give infallible decisions in medicine. Suppose that Oxford for five or six hundred years had made this claim, and that everyone who came to Oxford for infallible advice as to his case was told that it was quite uncertain who could give it, although it was quite certain that it could be given. Some thought that it was the Chancellor who could give it; others said the Chancellor and the Hebdomadal Council; others, the Chancellor in Congregation or Convocation; others, Convocation without the Chancellor; and others, the whole body of graduates throughout the world. Would not those who came to Oxford for infallible medical decisions know what to think of the value of such infallibility? And suppose that after centuries of uncertainty the University at last allowed the Chancellor to decide that in him alone the gift of medical infallibility resided. Those who come for secure medical advice now know to whom to apply. But what is their dismay to find that there are plenty of Chancellors' medical utterances on record which are manifestly and grossly erroneous, although given with the utmost confidence and authority! Will it reinspire them with hope and trust to be told, "Ah, those were not official decisions; they were unofficial opinions"? But they ask, as a forlorn hope, "By what marks may an official decision be known?" And they are told that the greatest uncertainty prevails as to this point. But the one thing which is quite certain and which is most comforting is this, that the Chancellor *has* the power of giving infallible medical decisions. Where is the comfort of such a gift as this?

Archbishop Whateley used to tell a story of a bridge at Bath which was so crazy that an old lady was afraid to walk across; so she got herself carried over in a sedan chair. What she gained by that was just not seeing the danger; but the bridge had to bear her own weight and that of the chair and bearers into the bargain. And so those who, through fear of making wrong decisions, trust themselves to adopt blindfold the decisions of a supposed infallible authority gain nothing but not seeing the risk of the error (pp. 73, 74).

And what has been the tendency of the directions given by the infallible guide? They *ought* to have made the way of salvation more easy by removing old obstacles. On the contrary, they have made it more difficult, by creating new sins. Every Papal definition "closes up some way to heaven which was open before. A couple of hundred years ago, Roman Catholics might believe, without hazard of salvation, that the Virgin Mary either was or was not conceived in sin. Leading men were arrayed on both sides. But since Pius IX., in 1852, promulgated the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, no one can call it in question, on peril of forfeiting his salvation. So, in like manner, of the dogma of the Pope's personal infallibility and a host of other questions" (p. 93). Romanists argue as if God had left mankind in doubt as to a great many doctrines, although a belief in these doctrines is necessary to salvation; and then, as a remedy for this evil, had given an infallible guide who would tell us what beliefs are essential. But the facts are all the other way. What was necessary to salvation was known before any Bishop of Rome ever promulgated a decision of any kind; and the questions which Popes have professed to settle have been fancy questions, which did not affect men's salvation at all, until Papal authority put

a strain upon men's consciences by declaring that one view must be adopted and all other views rejected, on pain of eternal damnation.

In his lecture on the Infancy of the Roman Supremacy, Dr. Salmon goes at some length into the famous question respecting Hippolytus and Callistus. When the newly recovered portion of the "Philosophumena" was published at Oxford in 1851, still under the name of Origen, nearly all scholars came to the conclusion that this "Refutation of all Heresies" was the work of Hippolytus, and Bishop Wordsworth of Lincoln made much controversial use of this vehement attack by a Roman father upon two Bishops of Rome. "Dr. Newman, on the other hand, was so shocked at this libel on Roman Bishops, that he declared nothing would persuade him it could be the work of the saint and martyr Hippolytus. But a far better defence of the credit of the Roman see was made by Von Döllinger, at that time in full credit as an able champion of the Roman Catholic Church. His work, 'Hippolytus and Callistus,' has been translated into English (1876), and I do not know a more interesting and instructive work on early Church history. . . . If Döllinger's hypothesis be well founded, it follows that Christians in the third century, so far from regarding the Bishop of Rome as their master and teacher, regarded the question, who was Bishop of Rome, as one merely of local interest, and troubled themselves little to inquire who the Bishop of Rome was. Rival Bishops might claim the see for years, and one of them, not an obscure person, but the leading divine in the Roman Church of his day, and yet the schism not leave a trace in Church history, and, as far as we can learn, not a single Eastern Christian have heard of its existence. . . . On the whole, I consider that Döllinger has made out so good a case, that I am willing to acquit Zepherinus and Callistus of the charge of heresy; though, as I have pointed out, the theory obliges us to set very low the influence exerted by the Roman Church on the rest of the Christian world at the beginning of the third century' (pp. 387, 388).

In the second of his four noble letters to Monseigneur Deschamps (Paris, 1870) the Père Gratry declares the question of the personal infallibility of the Pope to be "une question totalement gangrenée par la fraude" (p. 72); and by abundant instances he not only demonstrates this, but shows how impossible it is, with the history of the Papacy in our hauds, to maintain that this doctrine can be true. Nevertheless, to the great grief of many of those who knew and loved him, Père Gratry thought it his duty, after the dogma had been proclaimed, to submit and profess his acceptance of it. Yet, after his submission, he told the present writer that it was still his firm conviction that the infallibility of the Pope was "ni séparée, ni absolue, ni personnelle," which is a complete negation of the dogma. For the formal definition of it in the Vatican decrees declares that the Pope, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, "est infallibilitate pollere, quâ divinus Redemptor Ecclesiam suam in definiendâ doctrinâ de fide vel moribus instructam esse voluit; ideoque ejusmodi Romani Pontificis definitiones ex sese, non autem ex consensu Ecclesiæ, irreformabiles esse;" which is a very clear way of stating that the Pope's infallibility is personal, absolute, and separate. Therefore to accept the dogma, and at the same time to believe that no Pope possesses a personal, absolute, and separate infallibility, is to say "Yes," with a mental interpretation that "Yes" means "No." That men of the character of Gratry, Hefele, and Haneberg should be induced to do such violence to their consciences as is involved in their submission is a worthy result of a dogma the development of which is "totalement gangrenée par la fraude."

Of these frauds the reader may learn a good deal from Dr. Salmon's volume, and he will find the Vatican decrees in full in an appendix.

Those who desire more information respecting the long series of forgeries may consult Père Gratry's letters to the Archbishop of Malines (which, even after his submission, he still said were true), or "The Pope and the Council," by Janus, or vol. i. of Professor Friedrich's "Geschichte des Vatikanischen Konzils." But the numerous readers who have no time for research, and yet wish to have clear ideas as to the central question, will find abundant instruction in these twenty-three lectures of the ex-Regius Professor of Divinity at Dublin.

A. PLUMMER.

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## Short Notices.

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*Christ and His People.* Hodder and Stoughton.

IN this volume, printed in large type, are thirteen Sermons and Addresses which have appeared at intervals in the columns of the *Record*. The authors are Canons Hoare and Bardsley, Principal Moule, Rev. G. Everard, Prebendary Edmonds, Rev. Sir Emilius Laurie, Archdeacon Richardson, Dean Fremantle, and Bishop Ryle. The subjects are well-chosen. One of them, "Christ and the Gospel of the Workshop," has a special interest at the present moment.

*The Epistle to the Hebrews.* By T. C. EDWARDS, D.D., Principal of the University College of Wales. Hodder and Stoughton.

Principal Edwards has fittingly conceived and admirably executed his duties, as one of the writers in the series of "The Expositor's Bible." In his preface he states what his aim is; and the whole of his work bears witness to its very complete realization. "I have endeavoured to picture my reader as a thoughtful Christian layman; who has no Greek, and desires only to be assisted in his efforts to come at the real bearing and force of words, and to understand the connection of the sacred author's ideas." The expositions of "The Allegory of Melchizedek" and "The Trial of Abraham's Faith" contain passages of great power, and a certain chastened eloquence, reminding us at times of Dr. Westcott.

*Samuel Crowther, the Slave Boy who became Bishop of the Niger.* By JESSE PAGE, author of "Bishop Patteson, the Martyr of Melanesia." S. W. Partridge and Co.

This interesting little book has an introductory note by Bishop Crowther. It is well written, has illustrations and a map, and is printed in clear type.

*Heroes of Every-day Life.* By LAURA M. LANE. Cassell and Co.

An admirable piece of work; the best of its kind. The "heroes" are colliers, sailors, soldiers, women, and policemen. Every Parish Library should have this little book.

*The King's Daughters.* How Two Girls kept the Faith. By EMILY S. HOLT. Shaw and Co.

An interesting and edifying Tale of the closing days of Queen Mary's reign; a good specimen number of a truly valuable series, in some respects unique.

*Wild Life in the Land of the Giants.* By GORDON STABLES, M.D., C.M., R.N. With eight illustrations. Hodder and Stoughton.

A handsome volume, full of incident and graphic description. The "Land" is Patagonia.

*Birds and Beasts.* By Rev. J. G. WOOD. Shaw and Co.

This is a delightful "Christmas Book." Large illustrations, with pleasant "reading," and a tasteful cover.

*A Short Life of Christ for Old and Young.* By CUNNINGHAM GEIKIE, D.D., Vicar of St. Martin's-at-Palace, Norwich. With fifty illustrations. Hatchards. 1889.

In his Preface, the eminent author says :—" This is a new book, not an abridgment, and is written for the multitudes, older or younger, who, while shrinking from a Life of Christ in two volumes, would be very glad to read and master the amazing story, if presented vividly, and with adequate knowledge, in a moderate compass." The work supplies this much-felt want. We heartily recommend it.

*Houses on Wheels.* A Story for Children. By EMMA MARSHALL. Jas. Nisbet and Co.

A new Tale by this popular writer is always welcome. Many will be greatly pleased with this book about life in vans.

*Blue Lights.* Hot Work in the Soudan. By R. M. BALLANTYNE. With Illustrations. J. Nisbet and Co.

Year after year comes a Tale from Mr. Ballantyne, and we see no sign of falling off. This is a really useful story.

From Messrs. Campbell and Tudhope we have received, as usual about this time, several packets of Cards for Sunday Schools; good and cheap.

From the Church of England Sunday School Institute we have received the Annuals of *The Church Worker*, and *The Boys' and Girls' Companion*.

We have received from Messrs. Nisbet and Co. several good gift-books. *Threefold Praise*, a very tasteful volume, was commended in the November CHURCHMAN. *Dulcibel's Day-Dreams*, by Mrs. Marshall (second edition); *Her Life's Work*, by Lady Dunboyne; *Will it Lift?* or the Story of a London Fog, by J. Jackson Wray—partly about Australia; *The Middy and the Moors*, one of Mr. Ballantyne's lively stories (a reprint from the "Boy's Own Paper"); *Ready, aye Ready*, by Miss Giberne.

We are much pleased with *The Home of a Naturalist* (Nisbet and Co.), by the Rev. Biot Edmondston and his sister Jessie. The "Naturalist" was Dr. Edmondston, their father. This is a deeply interesting book.

*Bishop's Crumworth*, by Mrs. Marshall (Shaw and Co.), is a pleasing picture of life in a country clergyman's family.

*Twice Rescued*, or "The Story of Little Tino," is one of the smaller of the many attractive new books of Messrs. Shaw and Co.

*From Adam to Abraham* is an admirable set of Lessons on Genesis i.-xiv. by the Rev. J. Gurney Hoare, M.A., Vicar of Aylsham. Nisbet and Co.

We have much pleasure in commending the Annuals of the *Child's Companion*, the *Tract Magazine*, and the *Cottager and Artizan*. Also from the Religious Tract Society we have received two charming gift-books for young people: *Our Little Dots*, full of pretty pictures and pleasing stories for little girls and boys; *Talkative Friends in Field, Farm, and Forest*, informing as well as attractive.

*Puff*, with coloured illustrations, is a very tasteful gift-book (S.P.C.K.). *Puff* is a remarkable dog, and young people will be pleased to read about him.



*Jingles and Chimes and Nursery Rhymes* (Shaw and Co.) is capital.

The Annual of *Bo-Peep* is truly termed a "Treasury for the Little Ones." (Cassell and Co.) A charming volume, amazingly cheap.

*Uncle Steve's Locker* is, perhaps, the best of "Brenda's" Tales. It is excellent. (Shaw and Co.) We cordially commend also Miss Giberne's *The Earls of the Village*.

The fourth volume of the *Weekly Pulpit* (Elliot Stock) is full of good stuff.



## THE MONTH.

THE Bishop of Lincoln has issued an address to the clergy and laity of his diocese on the subject of his prosecution. We insert without comment several extracts. His Lordship says :

(1) Leaving the details to be maintained, if need be, by the lawyers, I believe that the Ornaments Rubric is the law of the Church ; I might say of the Prayer-book, and therefore the law of the land also.

(2) To break any law is, no doubt, a serious thing to a thoughtful person, for law ought to be regarded with a special reverence, as there is in truth but one Lawgiver ; and yet we do not and cannot claim absolute obedience to every detail of human law.

(3) The true way of dealing with such lesser infractions of law would seem to be (i) to endeavour to estimate the danger of the result of such infractions, and (ii) to determine the spirit and intention of the law-breakers.

(4) While thus professing true loyalty to the Crown we are compelled to maintain that the experience of history proves the necessity of the Church preserving her own rights and liberties in her relation to the State ; and this duty certainly has not become less urgent at the present time, when Parliament, representing equally the people of the three United Kingdoms, whatever their religious belief, is no longer composed only of members of the Church of England, but of Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, and many Nonconformists ; nay, when the members of our Parliament are no longer required even to be Christians.

(5) Any individual suffering which may arise from this line of thought and action is too insignificant to be mentioned, when our hope is that the people of England may thus be enabled to realize the inestimable blessings which God has provided and preserved for them in the English Church.

One result of recent criticism on the C.M.S. has been an increase of favourable testimony.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Stock's reply to Canon Taylor, as to finance, is excellent.

The result of the London School Board Election is said to be, on the whole, very satisfactory.

The *Guardian* comments on "a very striking sermon preached in Exeter Cathedral (September 30th) by the Rev. W. J. Edmonds, one of its Prebendaries."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *Record* (December 14th) says : The Bishop of Chester (Dr. Stubbs), presiding at the sixty-ninth anniversary of the Chester Association of the Church Missionary Society, spoke of the C.M.S. as that dear old society to which they all of them owed all their first interest in missionary work. There never was a time, he proceeded, at which the necessity for missionary exertion was greater than it was now. He did not for a moment believe the assertion which had been made as to the importance of Mohammedanism as offering a stage towards civilizing and Christianizing, and therefore a thing to be winked at or even applauded in its treatment of African nations.

<sup>2</sup> The *Guardian* says : September 30th is St. Jerome's Day in our Calendar, and some telling sentences are devoted by Mr. Edmonds to the juxtaposition of St. Jerome with St. Michael and All Angels—"the most superhuman of angels, the mightiest in all the hosts of God," and "the most human, the most historical, the most passionate, the most modern of all the Fathers of the Church ;" "the faulty monk next to the flawless archangel." Mr. Edmonds lays out his chief strength, however, upon what he says about the Latin Bible, Jerome's great work, which for a thousand years represented the Word of God to the whole great West of Christendom.