

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

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

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



Buy me a coffee

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



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_jtvi-01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jtvi-01.php)

JOURNAL OF  
THE TRANSACTIONS  
OF  
The Victoria Institute,  
OR,  
Philosophical Society of Great Britain.

---

GENERAL SECRETARY:  
E. J. SEWELL.

LECTURE SECRETARY:  
E. WALTER MAUNDER, F.R.A.S.

---

VOL. L.



LONDON:

(Published by the Institute, 1, Central Buildings, Westminster, S.W. 1.)

---

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

1918.

## 601ST ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,  
WESTMINSTER, ON MONDAY, JUNE 3<sup>RD</sup>, 1918, AT 4.30 P.M.

The Chair was taken by Professor H. LANGHORNE ORCHARD, M.A., B.Sc., who explained the absence of Professor Margoliouth, and that the Council had requested him to take the Chair instead of Professor Margoliouth.

The Minutes of the Meeting held on May 13th, 1918, were read, confirmed, and signed.

The CHAIRMAN explained that, though Chancellor Lias was present, the paper would be read by Mr. F. J. Lias, son of the Chancellor.

---

“*GERMANISM.*” By the Rev. Chancellor LIAS, M.A.

I HAVE asked leave of the Council to read a paper on Germanism generally. I do not propose to make it altogether a scientific paper, but largely a literary one. That is to say, I shall not aim throughout at a categorical proof of what I say, but simply give some general impressions of the facts drawn from a long experience and not a little study.

I have long felt that the way in which Germany has, during my own recollection, been elbowed, or has elbowed herself, into the front rank, and her taking the place in literature which, in my younger days, was given to Italy, has not been altogether a gain, and demands some explanation. I could not but feel that the country of Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, Ariosto, Boccaccio, and others too numerous to mention, could boast of a language and literature far superior to that of Germany, though I have not, unfortunately for myself, been able to give so much attention to Italian as to German literature.

I ought not to leave the subject without mentioning the vast superiority of Dante, in breadth of thought, in intense religious and moral tone, in knowledge of history and fact, in power of imaginative detail, combined with wondrous simplicity of language, and in thorough independence of spirit, to any German author I have come across. Tasso, again, although coming

far behind Dante in intellectual power, has so finished a style, and so keen an appreciation of beauty, that he cannot be denied a very high place in literature. Even Boccaccio, offensive in moral principle as he often is, has great literary merits, and a strong sense of humour. In ability, however, though not in the moral sense, he must, I think, be held to surpass even Cervantes. I cannot deny that the predominance which Italian music enjoyed over German music in my younger days was not merited, and that the superiority of German music over that of every other nation cannot for a moment be disputed. The favourites of my youth, Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, Verdi, were frivolous when compared with Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, and even Meyerbeer, to say nothing of the most recent idol, Wagner. In the sister arts of painting and sculpture, France and England have, I must think, unquestionably surpassed Germany more even than Germany has surpassed them in music.

For a good many years I could not at all understand the substitution of German for Italian literature in the estimation of the inhabitants of this country. But attention has lately been called to the fact that it was chiefly due to Carlyle, who first "boomed," as the Americans say, German literature into the first rank, and then, having influenced English opinion in that direction by his *Hero Worship*, elevated the most morally contemptible and unprincipled of the great men of the world, Frederick the Great—for he really *was* a great man as a soldier and a statesman—into the first rank of the world's heroes. I must say that Carlyle never carried me away by his enthusiasm. I remained in the same mind as I was when I read, as a boy, Canning's *Rovers of Weimar*, and felt not a little contempt for German sentiment and German intellect as there burlesqued. Carlyle's earlier style, a clear and manly English one, was much superior—at least so I thought—to the artificial mannerisms into which his German proclivities led him. I did not like his heroes very much, and when I embarked in his *Life of Frederick the Great*, I fairly stuck fast. I could appreciate Greek history, or Latin history, or English history, or French history, because they are written by and for reasonable beings. But I absolutely failed to tolerate the eccentric style in which Carlyle's *Frederick the Great* was written, though I must admit that Ranke, Mommsen, and Neander are a triad of historians of whom any nation might be proud. As to Jean Paul Richter,

and other men of his stamp whom Carlyle tried hard to "boom," I must confess that, even as depicted by Carlyle himself, they appeared to me to be rather "dull dogs."

One other country threatened for a time to wrest literary supremacy even from England herself, and might have done so, were it not for Shakespeare, whose superiority in knowledge of mankind seems to me greater every year I live. Cervantes and Lope de Vega, in the sixteenth century, reached a high level, from which the former can never be deposed; yet I have, I confess, always doubted whether Cervantes intended to express sorrow for the disappearance of knight-errantry from the world, or whether he only meant to cover with the most felicitous ridicule the disappearance of what he regarded as an exaggerated and false moral and spiritual ideal. But Spain lost her literary predominance contemporaneously with her political and martial supremacy of late years, and has made no attempt to regain it.

Of France, in the matter of literature, not much need be said. Her literature is not so much the literature of thought, as of expression. The institution of the French Academy has compelled French authors to express themselves clearly and in scholarly fashion, and to take great care to use words in their proper senses, and to construct their sentences according to laws laid down by authority. Germany, on the other hand, has sanctioned sentences of the most involved character, and has cultivated a style, or an absence of style, which obscures the author's meaning, and often leads him to mistake slovenliness and unintelligibility for profundity. Unfortunately for ourselves, we are just now parting with the natural grace and elegance of our own diction, without adding any strength to our powers of expression. The involved sentences of the German, the slang and cant expressions of the American, the haste with which we think and study, and the still greater haste with which we compose, make too many articles and books of the day a strange conglomeration of false concords, of ungrammatical treatment of words derived from other languages, and of the imposition of an altogether new sense on words with which we have long been familiar.

But this by the way. German literature is generally supposed to be superior in depth of thought to that of other countries, and Germany to be the home of science and the parent of research. That the German is wondrously industrious and ingenious, cannot be disputed. But that the scientists of Germany are superior to

those of other countries, is simply not the fact. Germany, indeed, comes decidedly behind other countries in many branches of science. Kepler, for instance, guessed the true meaning of the periodic times of the planets of our system, but Newton *proved the laws* which governed their motions. Millions of calculations based on his discoveries have been made, and proved correct. And in many branches of research, medical science in particular, Germany has speculated and theorised, while England and other countries have made discoveries. Of Germany as the home of metaphysics, I shall speak presently. I will now briefly conclude my review of her claims to superiority in literature.

As I have already said, we have only to point to Shakespeare to make it clear that our literature is second to none. And intellectual giants such as Milton, Dryden, Gray, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley in the domain of poetry and philosophy, support our claim to the first place in modern literature. In the novel, Walter Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot have no superiors, and, I must think, few equals, in foreign countries, and some of Bulwer Lytton's works are quite on a level with the best productions of those already named. I have not met with any German name worthy to be mentioned beside theirs. And they are supported by a crowd of poets, historians, orators, and general thinkers, which may also claim the first place in their respective spheres. Goethe and Schiller are the most prominent writers in German literature. The *Faust* of the former stands first among his works. I fear I can scarcely accord to him so high a place as he has of late occupied in English eyes. That sin has been the unsuspected cause of all the higher morality of mankind, by necessitating resistance to temptation and triumph over evil, and by enhancing the glory of sacrifice, is, I think, undoubted. Yet I have always felt that, though the sin which is the leading feature in *Faust* must be included in the general law just enunciated, it is about the very worst instance of that law which could be selected for illustration. To corrupt the virtue of a trustful young girl is about the basest form of sin which can be conceived, especially when it is the work of a man of experience. And the second part of *Faust* has always seemed to me a welter of confusion. That, however, may be my own fault. I have *read*, but I confess I have not *studied* it. *Wilhelm Meister* filled me with disgust at the cold-blooded and cynical indifference to morality displayed by the hero, as well as the childish imbecility of some of the

details to which the author allows himself to descend. *Egmont* is not a bad play by any means. But to provide a father of a family with a *fiancée*, as Goethe does, in violation of history, is simply a confession of failure. One feels how Shakespeare would have risen to the level of his hero, and provided us with another portraiture, rivalling, if not excelling, his *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, and *Lear*. As to Schiller, he does not seem to me to rise to a high dramatic level. There is something theatrical rather than dramatic about his heroes, and Max and Thekla, in particular, are sentiment personified. The *Lager* seems to me far the best in the Wallenstein trilogy. It is truly a wondrous photograph, if I may so say, of war and its evils and miseries.

It is, however, to her philosophy that Germany owes her pre-eminence. The long list of philosophers she can produce far outweighs those of any other country. And yet, though I shall be accused of prejudice in saying so, I must believe that her credit in this sphere has been very seriously over-rated. Metaphysics has been called a science, but I contend that, strictly speaking, it has no right to that appellation. Only those forms of research which can be tested by observation and experience—or experiments—deserve the name of "science," because the correspondence between theory and fact, displayed in endless successions of applied tests, enables the inquirer to arrive at practical certainty that his theory is true. But metaphysical investigation does not conform to this rule. A *philosophy* it may fairly be termed, because it is, no doubt, a genuine search after truth. But a science, I believe, it is not, *because there is no testing of results*. Its postulates may be true, or they may not; but there is no certainty about the matter. Sometimes these postulates approach very near the truth, but still they are only guesses. The ancient philosophers could only speculate more or less wisely. Some of them *did* speculate, very wisely and very well. Plato especially. Aristotle did even accumulate facts; but he did not test his theories by comparison with results. His explanations of facts were therefore arbitrary, and not infrequently absurd. Modern psychology may some day grow into a science. But it is as yet little more than a philosophy. Only when its theories arise out of the facts, and are systematically tested by comparison with facts, can they be regarded as demonstrated. One blemish among German metaphysicians is the habit of glorifying formulæ of classification into living realities.

They have revived the Realists of the Middle Ages, who contended for the actual existence of abstract ideas. Their opponents, the Nominalists, contended that abstract ideas were simply formulæ of classification—attempts of thinkers, that is, to distinguish between one class of phenomena or ideas and another. So the Germans and their followers began to talk pompously about the True, the Ideal, the Beautiful, and the like, and clever young Englishmen like Bulwer Lytton were carried away by the fascination of novelty, and plentifully besprinkled their pages with these abstract formulæ. Thackeray (I think it was), on the other hand, made very merry with these would-be philosophers, with their “the Beautiful, with a big B,” “the True, with a big T,” and “the Good, with a big G.” It was often little more than a cheap way of gaining a reputation for intellect. Meanwhile, our English philosophers, the Cambridge Platonists, Hobbes, Locke, and our great Bishop Butler, plodded on their weary way trying to arrange and co-ordinate simple facts in matters purely intellectual or spiritual, and deduce from them a system, without any attempt to soar into an empyrean of metaphysics. Bacon, too, laid the foundations of physical—indeed of *all*—science, and Newton and the mathematicians built on them. From his day to our own, physical science has been making one long stride in its translation of the unknown into the sphere of the known, which we call science. Berkeley avoided falling into one inconsistency by falling into another. He denied the existence of matter, and argued that ideas, and ideas alone, had a real existence. But he overlooked the fact that the word *matter* as much involved one set of phenomena as *mind* did another.

But to return to German metaphysics. That it did lead to some advance in our conceptions of facts outside the realm of nature, cannot be denied. But the value of its contributions to that end have been much exaggerated. When it pretends to arrive at conclusions by isolating phenomena instead of relating them, and imagines that by so doing it adds to our knowledge of things unseen, it makes a serious mistake. And so the speculations of the various German leaders of philosophic thought, as well as their various definitions, were quite as often barriers to progress as they were progress itself. In theology this is very evident. God, we were told, was “the Infinite,” “the Absolute,” and “the Unconditioned.” Now, each of these statements is directly contrary to fact. They strip the God of Scripture and



of the Christian, not of His Attributes and His Prerogatives, but of His Personality, and propound bare negations instead of Him. The God in Whom we Christians believe cannot be "the Infinite," because *no evil whatever* is included in His Being. He cannot be "the Absolute," because the word in its exact sense means that which has *no connexion with anything else*, and we are only able to conceive of God as our Creator and Preserver, and can know of Him only through His relations to His creatures. Once more, He is not "the Unconditioned," because in that case He could have no Attributes of any kind, but merely such negatives as have been mentioned, which make one shiver, and which are utterly irreconcilable with the Love which the Christian scheme represents as the first and greatest Attribute of Deity. Imagine yourself asked to love and adore "the Infinite," the Absolute," or "the Unconditioned," or all three together! And if He be "all three together," then "there be three gods or three lords." Surely any rational conception of God involves the fact that He lives under conditions necessary to His Being. Not only Christianity, but even some other religions and philosophies, have believed Him to be Greatness, Goodness, Wisdom, Knowledge, Life, and Love, or at least Beneficence. The belief of the Christian regards Him as conditioned in these and many other ways. There is, to put it mildly, a very great deal to be said in favour of that belief. And if German philosophy offers us no better solution of the Universe than one which demands the denial of the first conditions of a Creator and Preserver of all things, the sooner we dismiss German metaphysics and German theology the better.

It is true, no doubt, that some metaphysicians—Dean Mansel, for instance, explained "the Absolute" as that which had "no necessary relation" with other beings or ideas.\* But that was only an attempt to wriggle out of a difficulty, and a very unsuccessful one withal. For "Absolute" either means unrelated or it has no definite meaning whatever. That the God we worship is neither "the Infinite," "the Unconditioned," nor "the Absolute" has already been shown. I was rather blamed years ago, at a meeting of this Institute, for speaking with approval of Dean Mansel's Bampton Lectures, which adopt these conceptions. I defended myself in my paper of 1883, just referred to. I will, therefore, only point out now that Dean Mansel, great

\* I must refer to my paper read on February 5th, 1883, for my authorities.

thinker though he was, was involved in a serious inconsistency by the deference he paid to the German metaphysicians, and that Mr. Herbert Spencer made use of that inconsistency to bolster up his proof that God was "unthinkable" and "unknowable." Yet some of Dean Mansel's points in his Bampton Lectures were incontrovertible, and magnificently put. The fact, however unfortunate, that his undue deference to German metaphysicians enabled Mr. Spencer to make use of him as a champion of Agnosticism, does not destroy the value of his other work. It is on this ground that I was able to rescue his memory from that reproach in my paper of 1883. For Mr. Spencer not only showed that, on the abstract idea principle, God was "unthinkable," but he delivered himself up to be smitten "hip and thigh" by his antagonists by adding that a "First Cause," and not only a First Cause, but space, time, matter, motion, force, and consciousness, were also "unthinkable." It is quite clear that, whether all these ideas are "unthinkable" or not, we *do* "think" a good deal about them, and should be madmen if we did not do so. Nor is it difficult to show that it is not unreasonable to think about things of which we do not know *everything*. Though we do not know everything about a great many things, it is still absolute folly to refuse to know as much about them as we can. Moreover, what Mr. Spencer meant was, not that his category of facts was altogether "unthinkable," but only *ultimately* unthinkable, which is a very different thing. So I ventured to point out that, as with space, time, matter, motion, and the rest, if we could not know *all* about them, we could at least know *something*. And if we cannot know all about God, we can at least know enough about Him, to enable us to honour and obey Him; and this is a good deal. I further suggested that the reason why all these other facts were ultimately unthinkable was because each of them, if pursued to its source, ran up into the mystery which enshrouds the Ultimate Being of Him Who created them.\* Dean

---

\* I did not fall in, until much later than my papers to which I have referred, with a passage from that wise, honest, and far-seeing Divine of the fifth century A.D., Theodoret, who sums up the whole Agnostic controversy in a few lines. "Do you know God?" says the Anomœan to the Orthodox. "Yes," replies the Orthodox. The dialogue goes on. "A.—Do you know Him as He knows Himself? O.—No. A.—Then you do not know Him. O.—I know Him as it is possible for one in the nature of man to know Him. A.—Then you know Him in one way and He knows

Mansel also stirred up the indignation of my old master, F. D. Maurice, whose lectures on English Literature and Modern History I attended for three years at King's College, London. Mr. Maurice showed unusual warmth in this controversy, doubtless because Dean Mansel had substituted a colourless metaphysical abstraction for the God Whose first attribute is Love, whom Maurice, with all the intensity of his being, had made the centre of his religious belief. To turn the God of the Bible, the Creator and Preserver of the Universe and all that is in it, the All Father, Whose surname is Love, into a mass of negatives, which included sin, crime and folly within their scope, would have been, in my old preceptor's eyes, to have deprived him and all the rest of mankind of the only belief which makes life worth living.

I will not go through the various phases of Immanuel Kant's metaphysics. Enough has been said already to show what absurdities it includes, and I may touch on one or two which are marked by a slovenliness which is the very opposite of the careful, precise, if very often narrow-minded and one-sided methods which usually characterise German philosophical thought. He regards the primal conception of God as *ens originarium* and *ens summum*. He confesses that his definition does not involve a determination of the relation of this Being to other beings, and therefore “leaves us in perfect ignorance as to the existence of a Being of such superlative excellence.” And he goes on to say that “the concept of God, in its transcendental sense, is the concept of the highest reality as one, simple, all-sufficient, eternal, *et cætera*.”\* Surely this is a very unsatisfactory way of treating the greatest of all subjects! On another failure of Kant's metaphysics I have said some severe things in my paper of 1902. His attempt to reduce all speculative ideas to abstract conceptions is inadmissible. I have already shown how utterly such an attempt fails when applied to the Being of God, Who enfolds so many qualities and so many facts within His all-embracing Personality. I may point out also how both Mind and Matter reject the abstract method of investigation. Apply it to Mind, and you find endless conceptions which are multiform, not simple.

---

Himself in another way. O.—Certainly.” Some have doubted whether the dialogue is Theodoret's, but at least it shows the same clearness of vision as enabled him to steer his way through the intricacies of the Nestorian and Monophysite controversies.

\* I have quoted from Dr. Max Müller's Translation, Part 2, pp. 498, 499.

Apply it to Matter, and again you are confronted with complex substances whose various characteristics you must take into account. Even the adjectives Objective and Subjective, so often used by persons entirely unacquainted with their meaning, were, I believe, originally used in precisely the opposite senses to those which they now bear, so that what we now call Objective meant what Subjective now means, and *vice versa*. Nor, so far as I am aware, has any reason been given for preferring one form of expression to the other. For a discussion of the *ding an sich* I must refer the reader to what I have said in my 1883 paper, on the attempt to reduce *composite* conceptions to abstract ones. I might fill pages with the enumeration of the slovenliness and ineptitude of Kant's metaphysics. The worst of them all is his neglect of definitions, which deprives his philosophy, useful as it is in the way of suggestion, of the title to belong to the exact sciences.\*

To pass to other philosophers: the erratic treatment of the first of all subjects is to be found in Fichte's representation of God as the "moral order of the universe and nothing more," and as "beyond origin" and therefore non-existent, because "existence implies origin." Schelling again says that the "Unconditioned," by which he means God—a very large assumption surely—"can be found neither in the subject nor the object, but only in the Absolute Ich." This, he goes on to say, "is conceived of because it is conceived of," and adds that His existence is as incapable of being proved as our own.† This reminds me of the story told of our own Browning, that when asked what he meant by a certain passage, replied that when it was written there were two who knew what it meant, the Almighty and Robert Browning, but that now only God Almighty knew. Hegel is famous for his supposed discovery that to be and not to be are identical. But it is not generally known that he was anticipated in this discovery by the Gnostic Basilides, who lived early in the second century A.D., and taught that "pure being was pure nothing."‡ I once (in 1856) met a Prussian gentleman who corrected my ideas about Hegel's teaching. "By identical," he said, "Hegel did not mean

\* If I mistake not, Schiller, his friend and pupil, complained of his carelessness in philosophical inquiry.

† For reference, see my 1883 paper.

‡ He taught that God was absolute non-existence, because "all idea of Being involved limitation."

‘the same,’ but simply ‘*in the same category.*’” But Hegel goes further than this, and even when he laid down his postulate, he was either talking downright nonsense or enunciating the simplest of truisms. I may leave this part of my paper by saying that, if this is the best German philosophy can give us on the most important and most fundamental of all subjects, what security can we feel in its power to touch the heart and guide the conscience on any subject whatever?

The real truth is that if we take German criticism and German theology for generations past, we find no real breadth of view, no genuine discovery, but only one-sided research and negative theology.\* The true scientific critic of Scripture must *start with facts*. He must admit, for example, that the Bible, though written by many authors, and at various times, is, and has long been, the Book of all books. No other can approach it, far less surpass it. Its literary merits are as varied and remarkable as its moral power, and only the extreme dexterity with which the German critic can divert his readers from these facts, by throwing dust into his neighbours’ eyes, can keep him above water any longer. Nor can he prevent us from seeing, if we care to look for it, the fact that there is *one message* throughout

\* Mr. Harold Wiener, whose voice has been heard in our discussions, has lately said, “The documentary and evolutionary theories of German criticism,”—he is speaking of the Old Testament—“were based on three main props, indifference to the facts of textual history, the scantiness of the archæological materials, and absence of the most rudimentary training in legal methods.” The one point bearing on religion in which Germans have done their best work has been the textual criticism of the New Testament. It is just the point where German unwearied patience and minute attention to detail is likely to tell. But even there, Tischendorf’s partiality for the MS. which he himself discovered, as well as the craving for novelty in which the German Professor so often indulges, has injured his reputation. The “Western text,” which he and his followers brought into vogue, is now thought over here to have been the text generally accepted throughout the world, until a new departure took place about the time of the Nicene controversy. It will be found, I believe, that at both the Ancient Universities a considerable, though by no means slavish, reaction is taking place in the direction of the *Textus Receptus*. It is only fair to add that philology owes Grimm’s Law to the care and diligence of the Germans in matters of detail. What was mere guess work, and as such ridiculed by the wits, became, after this discovery of the wearing down of certain consonants in language through long periods of time, a science, because it was compared with the facts, and found to correspond with them. This is an instance where attention to detail was not inconsistent with principles capable of broad application. It is in a *clear insight into principles* that Germans are so often at fault.

its pages, ever growing in moral and spiritual intensity, until He came, in Whom it all centres. Neither can we fail to see that there is a marked difference between the Bible and all the other religious books of the world. Even now, its contents strike in quite unique fashion the heart of all who are striving to "find out God," as the records of the Bible Society prove to this very hour. In spite of the mistakes of Christian believers, in spite of the bitterness of religious controversy, the influence of the Bible is still growing, its empire wider than ever. The German critic, unlike David, goes out with his weapons unproved. He has never tested his powers of dividing his authors into "sources," by inquiring whether his canons will work when applied, for instance, to Beaumont and Fletcher, Shakespeare and Fletcher, Dickens and Wilkie Collins, Ereckmann and Chatrian. The Baconian theory of Shakesperean authorship, though run on German lines, has broken down. For German methods are essentially one-sided, and have to be revised according to the object the critic proposes to himself.\* All the learned and honest treatises on the Evidences of Religion and the genuineness of the Scriptures are flung aside by the Germans as mere trash, and all the interesting, and to most minds convincing, arguments from undesigned coincidences are similarly treated. The argument from prophecy, especially unfulfilled prophecy—far more irresistible still—is never confuted, is not even approached. It is thought sufficient to treat with contempt the astounding correspondence between prophecy and fulfilment. Yet the manifold attempts of the German school to attach any rational meaning to the passages which, from Genesis iii to Malachi, have testified throughout the ages to the Promised Redeemer, are not worth the paper on which they are written.†

And what is the result? The entire disappearance from Germany, not only of belief in revealed religion, but of the most elementary morality of Western nations. Crimes so atrocious that not only Christian but heathen nations have emphatically condemned them, are systematically practised, without the

---

\* Thus, when the Priestly Code (P) becomes the latest instead of the earliest of the "sources," all Knobel's careful and ingenious division of Deuteronomy between "JE" and "P" has to be thoroughly revised.

† Germanized Oxford has published text-books in which the whole argument from prophecy sanctioned by the Lord and His Apostles has been systematically ignored.

slightest condemnation, even from ministers of religion.\* We are apt to think Homer's Achilles was a downright brute, but what would he, or any other of the Homeric heroes, have thought of the dastardly cowardice and refinement of cruelty combined in sending women, children, old men, and captives in war to go before their valiant (!) soldiers as a cover from the enemy's weapons? What would they have thought of aeroplane expeditions to undefended towns, and the slaughter of defenceless persons and even babies in their cots? What would they have thought of sinking unarmed vessels, full of unarmed men, women, and children, and leaving the helpless creatures to struggle for hours in the benumbing waters? What would they have thought of sinking hospital ships, full, not only of wounded soldiers, but of doctors and nurses ministering to their needs? And, to go no further in the hideous catalogue of horrors, what would the Homeric champions have thought of cutting down the fruit trees in the land out of which they were about to be flung, and which they ought never to have entered, in order to revenge themselves on the poorer class of inhabitants who had never done them any harm? Has not the Creator of heaven and earth warned us that “a tree is known by its fruits”? Yes, this terrific demoralization of what was once, with all its faults, a great people; this degradation, in time of war, of the methods of conducting it for centuries by peoples calling themselves Christian; this appalling downward plunge, even in times of peace, into depths of vice and crime long unheard of, which Germany has undeniably experienced—all this, and more beside, is due to the belittling

---

\* The Professors of Theology at Berlin, Munich, Halle, Hamburg, Göttingen, Frankfort, and elsewhere (including the famous Professor Harnack, so long idolized by our Germanizers here, and before whose unproved *dicta* English scholars have for some years been content to prostrate themselves) have addressed a document to “Evangelical Christians” which defends the atrocious and indescribably inhuman conduct displayed by the Kaiser and his minions toward those under their heels. The organ of the Swiss “Old Catholics,” some little time back, quoted a Roman Catholic publication in England, which insisted that “the Kaiserism and Militarism of Prussia stands in open hostility to the Spirit of Christ,” that “the German method of carrying on warfare is in direct opposition to the teaching of Christ,” and that “its philosophy directly springs from the divisive tendencies of the teaching of Luther.” Unfortunately, Austria, now the “eldest son of the Church,” is as much concerned in this anti-Christian outbreak as Germany, and the Pope himself dare not contradict the savage ethics of the German Kaiser.

of the historical, intellectual, moral and spiritual authority of the one Book, a practice which originated in Germany, but has found far too many advocates in our own country. Let us be warned in time. German critical methods undoubtedly display great ingenuity and great industry; but they have neither solid foundation, nor sense of proportion, nor *common* sense; and they attain their end by the critic resolutely shutting his eyes to what he does not want to see. A German professor must in these days obtain his position by saying something which nobody has ever said before; and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, to say what is new at this stage of the world's history is to say what is not true. Historical research confirms former discoveries: it does not ridicule them. And it never rejects them without giving reasons for doing so. Physical science corrects, but never ignores them.

Among other illustrations of the character of German thought may be mentioned the emphasis it at one time laid on the *Zeitgeist*, or spirit of the age. The progressive advance of mankind in knowledge and morality, from this point of view, was not supposed to result from the building on the foundations laid for us by the discoveries rather than the mistakes of our forefathers, but on the flinging aside in each age of the conclusions of the last, and starting afresh on the road to perfection. Fifty years ago our submissive English followers of German Kultur were prattling merrily about the *Zeitgeist* and the duty of listening to its voice. Mr. Matthew Arnold was among the foremost of these, and he was unsparing of his ridicule of those silly Bishops of the Church of England who imagined that God was a Person, and in his admiration of the criticism which had "conclusively proved" that St. John's Gospel was compiled "by the yard" out of writings of Philo by a Christian writer of the second half of the second century. This conclusion has been abandoned by the German critics of to-day, and Professor Harnack, the most famous among them, has candidly owned that the Fourth Gospel was written either during the lifetime of St. John, or within ten years of his decease. While, as to the *Zeitgeist*, the recognised Christian teachers of Matthew Arnold's day, and for many years afterwards, were almost unanimous in their warnings against the anti-Christian teaching prevalent in their time. But their warnings were disregarded, and the present century opened with a chorus of Germanizers who greeted its coming with a pæan of rejoicing over the new era, which was to cast behind it



all the worn-out ideas of their ignorant and bigoted forefathers, especially in matters of religion, and to inaugurate the new era by flinging aside all the first principles which Christians had revered before, and in laying down a new set of them of which those same ignorant and bigoted forefathers had never heard!

In conclusion, I will add one or two specimens of the above-mentioned “first principles” of Christian evidence, which the Christian Churches of the past agreed to recognise, but which the German critics and their English admirers believe themselves justified in ignoring altogether. They may be multiplied to an indefinite extent.

1. The German critics have represented the book of Deuteronomy as having been written by some unknown person, who—he must have been very sanguine—left his book about in the Temple in the hope that it might some day be found in the Temple, and be supposed to be the work of Moses. But Deuteronomy betrays none of the anxious effort of the forger to make it evident that it was what it represented itself to be. I may appeal to any man of impartial mind as to whether it does not ring with truth all the way through.\* No writer of the Old Testament but Isaiah displays such splendid touches of eloquence, anxiety, and deep feeling. No man in the position of a forger could have written so well or so freely. He would have feared detection dogging his steps every moment, and would display embarrassment at every turn. And as for his book being “found” in the Temple, it was doubtless built into its fabric. Such has been recently discovered to be the Egyptian custom in the age of Moses and before it, and the tone is most emphatically that of a man who has set a very high and holy standard of conduct before a nation, and fears their defection from it. Deuteronomy, moreover, like Genesis, betrays an acquaintance with Egyptian literature, which suggests a Mosaic origin for both books.†

2. The Germanizing critic assigns certain passages of the Pentateuch to the “Priestly Code,” a work assumed to be written either during the Captivity or after the Return. He gives no proof for this, but practically lays claim to an infallible instinct. But there is by no means agreement enough among

---

\* Note also the occasional annotations of a later writer which occur are distinct proofs of its antiquity. See chapters ii-iv.

† I have shown this elsewhere.

the critics to justify this claim.\* The "conservative" critic maintains that this Priestly Code displays a miraculous insight into the Divine Scheme of Propitiation, as revealed by the Saviour in His Redeeming work. As the "Code" in question was demonstrably not written later than the Crucifixion, it is certainly for the Germanizing critic to explain the marvellous prevision of its author. The prevision was shown in the fact that the sacrifices appointed were (1) An offering of the *whole victim* (Lev. i), typifying an offering of the whole life and being of One consumed by a Divine Power of Love; (2) (Lev. iii) of a peace or thanksgiving sacrifice in which only a part of the victim was offered and which was partaken of by the offerer; (3) (Lev. iv-vii, 10) of a sin or trespass offering, one peculiar feature of which was the burning of the body of the victim outside the camp, typifying the *destruction* of the sin to be atoned for; (4) (Exod. xii) the sacrifice of a lamb without blemish and eating the flesh of the sacrifice; (5) (Lev. ii) a meal offering, which seems to indicate that sacrifices were either acceptable to God, or necessary, or both, which *did not involve the death of a victim*. *All these various views of the Sacrifice of Propitiation offered by their Master, are found combined in the writings of the contemporary disciples of the Lord, and included in the authoritative books handed down in the Church from the beginning.*

3. In the *second* of two letters addressed by St. Paul to the first Church to which he ever wrote, the following words occur: † "But we ought to thank God always about you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God took you from the beginning unto salvation (or, *safety*), in sanctification of spirit (or, the Spirit), and faith of truth (which may mean trust that the Apostle's message was true), unto which he also called us through our Gospel, unto an acquisition (Gr., anything *acquired by a process*) of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Well, then, brethren, stand, and hold fast the traditions which ye were taught, either by word or our Epistle; but may the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God our Father, Who loved us and gave us eternal encouragement and a good hope in favour (*i.e.*, the favour in which the genuine members of the visible Church

---

\* See Professor Orr, *The Bible Under Trial*, IV. "Settled Results" in Criticism.

† I translate them from the original, as they are so remarkable there.

stand by virtue of the calling which God and Christ have been pleased to give them), encourage your hearts and establish you in every good work and word."\*

This passage was written to a body of persons with whom the Apostle St. Paul had been staying for about three weeks. It can hardly be denied that the words are quite astonishing, and that they could hardly have been written unless under the conviction that some very great and mysterious power lay behind them. This conviction has proved to be well founded. When we add that some 1850 years have taken place since these words were written, and that a congregation of persons still exists at the place who claim that the passage refers as completely to them as to those to whom they were originally addressed, the fact seems still more significant. If we add the further fact that for some four or five centuries Thessalonica, or as we now call it, Salonica, was conquered and held by a heathen nation, and that it only returned to a Christian ruler about four years ago, the tone of confidence displayed by the author of the Epistle in his extraordinary statement seems more significant still.

The chief point in each of these lines of argument is this. The proofs are *scientific*; and in spite of many—too many by a great deal—asseverations to the contrary, by the German School, the German methods are *not* scientific. As we have seen, the three requisites of scientific discovery are (1) that the hypotheses used to discover a law should be suggested by observation; (2) that the results of the hypotheses should be compared with observed facts; and (3) that if, and *only* if, they agree with the observed facts they may be regarded as truths.

The first case involves a psychological problem. Can the German School present us with a single instance of a deliberate forgery which is so glowing with moral energy, so full of the deepest conviction, so replete with moral excellence, and so thoroughly permeated by holy desires and purposes, as is the book of Deuteronomy throughout? If there is little *direct* evidence that Deuteronomy was written by Moses, there is none whatever against it. But we have also the direct evidence that the book of Deuteronomy has been regarded as the work of Moses for at least 2500 years, and possibly for nearly a thousand years more. There is also another difficulty to be overcome, the

---

\* 2 Thess. ii, 13-15. Many copies have "word and work."

demonstrably great difficulty of grafting a new religion on an old one.

The second and third cases involve a complete scientific demonstration. The Mosaic Law, whether given to the world five or fifteen hundred years before Christ, contained a system of sacrifices *every single idea in which* is developed in the Christian Scriptures, which, from the first century of the Christian era to the twentieth, have been handed down in the whole Christian congregation—to quote the words of one of the writers—as the work of “eye-witnesses and ministers of the word.”\* Such testimony, *in such a society*, may be easily pooh-pooed, no doubt; but with intelligent men it is not easily invalidated. In the second case we have in the rites of a religion professedly preparatory for another, the adumbration of a great and necessary Truth—that of Propitiation; as well as the acceptance of its principles when the religion so clearly prophesied and foreshadowed actually appeared. These characteristics of the Lord’s Atonement have remained a striking feature in the Christian system for nearly two thousand years. In the third case, we have the most prominent propagator of a new religion speaking with the utmost confidence at a very early period of his ministry, yet in language which—humanly speaking—it was quite impossible to expect those to whom he had proclaimed the religion of his Master either to understand or believe. Yet this congregation has subsisted from the first century of Christianity to the twentieth; has passed through some most painful and prolonged experiences and persecutions, and has, some three or four years ago, become once more a part of a Christian nation. Surely a reasonable man has a right to infer that a religion so long hoped for and prepared for before it was revealed—so long an embodiment of the truths proclaimed by its Master—must have come down, as it claims to have come down, from the Lord in heaven. Nor must we forget that not merely these three instances of an abiding fact, but one hundred times as many,

---

\* The fact that there were doubts in regard to one or two of them does not materially affect this general statement. The Christian advocate has been too sensitive about objections. In cases similar to this the general consent of the whole community would be regarded as evidence enough. Nor is the objection that the Apostolic age was an “uncritical” age, a sound one. That age was one of high civilization, and no more inclined to credulity than the age of the German critic.

or even more than that, can be found by a careful study of the Scriptures of the Old and New Covenants.

One thing I cannot help saying before I conclude. It is rather a serious reproach on our Christianity that interest in Christian Evidence is so slight. Christians in all ages have been attracted to the religion of Christ from different standpoints. Some have been drawn to it from its emotional or spiritual side, which appeals to the affections. Others are influenced by its lofty tone of morality, which appeals to their consciences. Others, again, are most drawn to it by its evidences. These last, in early days, were supposed to consist chiefly of miracles. Nicodemus, for instance (John iii, 2), seems to have been most struck by these. In later days the argument from miracles retires into the background, and the steady growth of Christianity and the moral elevation attained by Christian communities has largely taken its place. We hardly pay sufficient attention to the fact that Christian societies, in proportion to the purity of their Christian teaching, are a "power which makes for righteousness" greater than any other the world has ever known. The third class of believers has not received the help which it ought to have received from the other two classes. The study of Christian Evidence has therefore become an expensive luxury, which men and women of an inquiring mind cannot always afford. Books *against* Christianity are eagerly bought by persons desirous of novelty. Books and other publications in its defence are not sought after save by Christians who have the time, the inclination, and the means to study them. But the Christians who are such, by their home training, or from attraction to the beauty of Christ's character, or the soundness of his moral teaching, should take care that their less fortunate brethren are not debarred from the study of the Evidences of Christianity. Books on those Evidences, and for the genuineness of the accounts of God's dealings with mankind as contained in the Scriptures do not sell, because in these days few people ever hear of them or recommend them. And no serial publications at present exist in this country devoted to the study of Christian Evidence, or to the support of the authority of its credentials. Even this Institute, which has for more than half a century done such yeoman service for our holy religion, has been forced seriously to contract its work for Christ and His people, ever since this terrible and most anti-Christian war began.

Is it too much to hope that, at least at the conclusion of this

desolating plague in our midst, we shall see believers of every type vying with each other in the great work of enabling every Christian, whatever his station and opportunities, to "give a *reason* for the hope that is in him" ? Scepticism has for some time been gaining ground among us. It is not a time for us to neglect any means of furthering the cause of our holy religion. It is our duty to maintain Institutes such as this, and any other of the aids which we need in order to "fight the good fight of faith" in the way the Christian Church ought to fight it, until the voice of detraction against the grandest of all books is reduced to silence. It is forty years ago since I read my first paper here. I am not likely to contribute another. I shall be pleased if my last-recorded words in its Proceedings are a plea for the hearty support of an Association which has done so much to maintain the ascendancy of Christianity in an age of astounding discoveries and much unsettlement of men's faith.

#### DISCUSSION.

Lieut.-Colonel ALVES : We should all be grateful to Chancellor Lias for helping to tear away from Germanism the mask which has for so long and by so many been considered as a revelation of Deity. For an idea to be German was quite enough : it was certainly the best, and probably the only good one.

Germany has undoubtedly produced some very great musical composers, though Haydn, Mozart (of Jewish origin), and Schubert were Austrians. But it must never be forgotten that in the formation of the great classical school in which all, up to and including Beethoven, were trained, Germany had no hand : it was Anglo-Italian. Moreover, Handel and Haydn received their great training in Italy itself. Beethoven, trained in this school, was the first, and incomparably the greatest, of the romantic, or sentimental school.

Musical decadence began in Germany. Owing to his classical training, Beethoven never could have sunk to its greatest depth.

Adverting to p. 141 of the paper, I ask : What are metaphysics ? Is not Christianity *the* great metaphysical science ? and is it not emphasized in Scripture, and borne out by early Church history, that Christian life and Christian brotherly love were evidences to the scientific nature of what we may call "Christian metaphysics" or

“the life science” ? Christian evidences (see p. 155) are generally too abstruse for the hard-worked “man in the street,” not over-trained to reason ; and such faculties as he has are too often paralyzed by conventional theology.

Mr. THEODORE ROBERTS : We must be careful that patriotism does not bias our judgment ; but, after making every allowance for this, I think it must be admitted that never since the civilised world was Christianized, has there been such a lack of morality in the conduct of any war. It must be remembered that in Germany Professors hold a much more important place in public opinion than they do in this country, and the dictum of a Professor is on a par with the judgment of a High Court Judge here. It is recorded that Lord Palmerston once outraged Queen Victoria’s feelings by saying that Prussia was a land of damned Professors, and I think that in this, his blunt common-sense instinctively led him to a right judgment.

In countries like Spain and France the priests have in the past kept the Bible from the people, but it is a much more serious thing to suggest that it is worthless—the outcome of the Higher Critical method. One is to poison a man’s food, while the other is merely to keep it from him. If the authority of the Scriptures be destroyed in the minds of the people, there is no restraint left, as it is only by the Bible that we have any definite voice from God.

The Rev. Prebendary Fox said that a peculiar feature of the mentality of German criticism, and that of those elsewhere who followed it, was its one-sidedness. Too often facts which stood in the way of their conclusions were ignored or “re-interpreted” to fit in with the results said to be already assured. In illustration of the pseudo-critical treatment of Deuteronomy, he referred to the disregard of evidence given to its authority in the record of the Temptation of Jesus Christ, the historic character of which is not seriously disputed by any competent and impartial scholar. Had that book been a pious fraud, as commonly asserted, no being on earth was less likely to be ignorant of such a fact, or less likely to lose the advantage of his knowledge, than the Tempter. The only escape of the hostile critic from the dilemma is, to shut his eyes, as he is accustomed, to the evidence which conflicts with his theories.

Some remarks having been made by Dr. Schofield, Rev. J. Tuckwell, and Mr. S. Collett,

The CHAIRMAN said : We recognise in the Paper, not only ability, thoughtfulness, learning, but also a real endeavour to be fair to that great nation with whom we are unhappily at war. There is no reasonable doubt as to Germany's high place in music and history. To music and history should be added philosophy. Kant (the German Plato) has a three-fold claim upon our gratitude by (a) his *ethical* proof of GOD's existence as our moral Governor and Judge ; (b) his insistence on the *supreme* authority of conscience ; (c) his doctrine that the moral *end* is the production of the good *will* ; thus rightly placing morality upon a religious basis.

With regard to the question : " Can we describe GOD as ' The Absolute,' ' The Infinite,' ' The Unconditioned,' without destroying ' His Personality,' and propounding ' bare negations,' the reader of page 143 of the Paper may perhaps be unconvinced by the argument employed, or may be disposed to think that the terms are not used in their usual sense. But we shall thoroughly agree with the Author's masterly demolition, on page 144 of Spencer's " unthinkable " argument, and with his splendid criticism of the dominant school of the Germanizing Higher Critics. By undermining the faith of many in the authority of the Bible, these critics prepared the way for Nietzscheism, which undermined the authority of Conscience, so leading to the atrocities and horrors of War.

Votes of thanks having been accorded, the meeting closed at 6.10 p.m.