

**ESSAYS**  
IN  
**LOGOS AND GNOSIS**

MAINLY IN RELATION TO  
THE NEO-BUDDHIST THEOSOPHY

BY

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*Πίστις καὶ λόγος καὶ γνώσις*

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## PREFACE

**T**HIS little book consists mainly of two dissertations or theses submitted at Oxford for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity. Some chapters are prefixed in the hope that the book may not merely be a contribution to Christian Apologetics in a direction where Apologetics are needed, but also may stimulate some of its possible readers to examine the weapons and the work required for successful dealing with the revival of what may conveniently be called Gnosticism. As in the earlier centuries, this takes many forms, and the task of dealing with it is very complicated. For the Gnostic, both ancient and modern, takes his stand on things that he has seen. And he has seen certain things which to him and to all others who have studied them, indicate the existence of occult forces which are subject-matter for Gnosis. Now a Christian may admit with perfect safety that Gnosis is possible of attain-

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ment. But he will need Logos or mental equipment if he is to deal with this Gnosis, and will have to take note of what is available, and be very careful to use the right sort. For it will become apparent that much confusion is caused at the present time by a failure to understand that the Logos of Law, the Deductive Logic of Discipline, cannot be safely applied to matters of Fact, nor, vice versa, can the Inductive Logic of Scientific Investigation be allowed to interfere too much with Discipline. The trouble, from the days of the Pharisees to our own, has been that the searcher after Truth has found Discipline a hindrance and has regarded the syllogism as a *petitio principii*. Also that those responsible for discipline have regarded the searcher after Truth as an impertinent person who thinks all too lightly of the sacred law that his new knowledge threatens to overthrow.

How these two most necessary départements of Christian work may be harmonized in every case cannot be shown in so brief a work.

Nor is any attempt made to do more than put together a few illustrations.

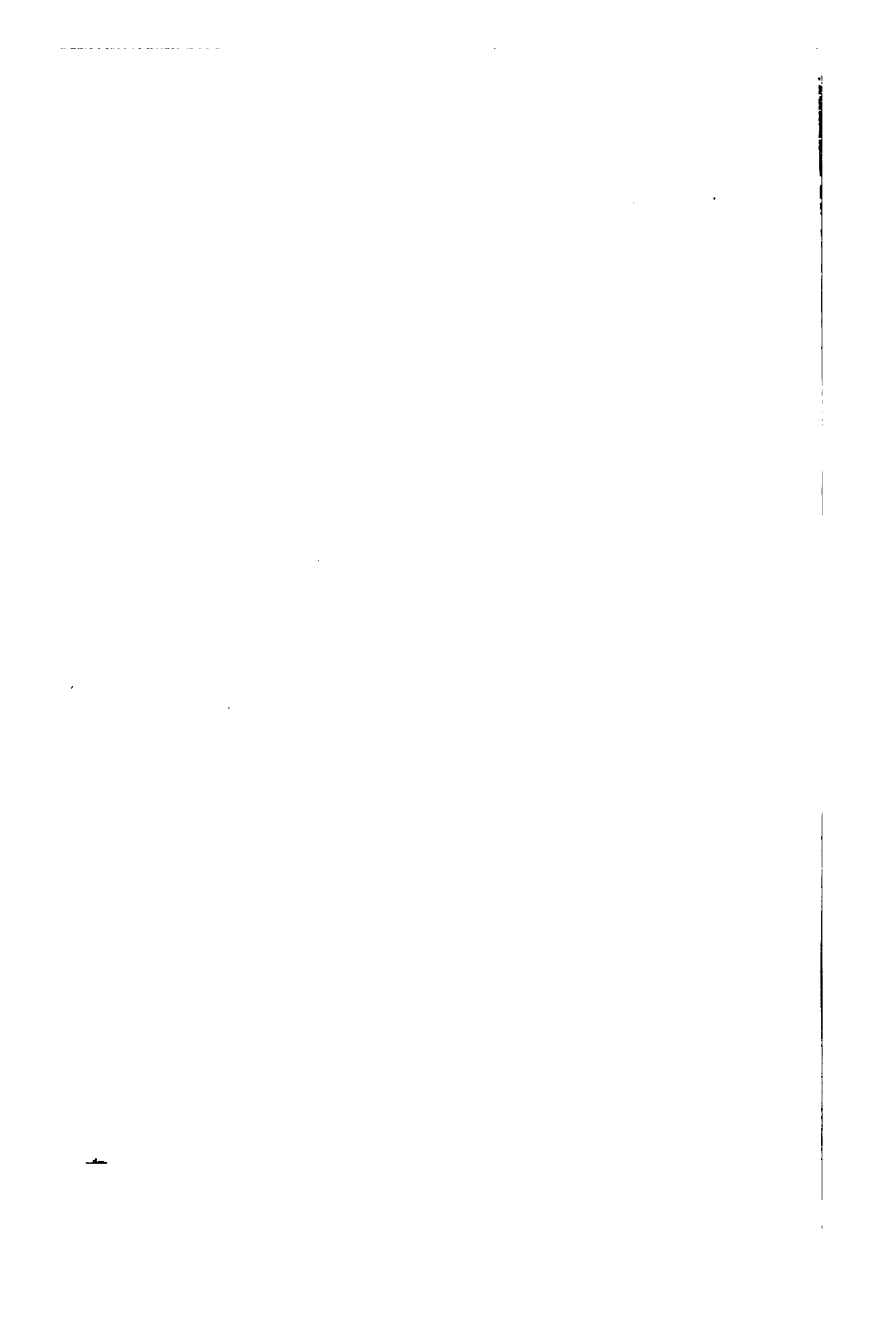
But while the Church is engaged over problems of discipline and is being urged to revoke some of the decrees which have transgressed the limits which can be safely allowed to Deductive Logic, other bodies, and notably the Theosophical Society, are usurping the office of Teacher. And these must be met with an answer which should be couched in the Logos of Inductive Science, and not be a mere disciplinary negative, such as the struggling Church had to use against the Gnostics of the earlier centuries. Gnosis must be met by Gnosis. And yet one word more: The Logos of the public education of this land is now inductive, and, as at Pentecost, the Word must be spoken in the tongue wherein, so to speak, the hearers were born.

T. S. LEA.

LECK VICARAGE,

KIRKBY LONSDALE,

*September, 1905.*



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## ILLUSTRATION

SPIROGYRA IN CONJUGATION. (From Micro-photographs  
by the Author, Tedstone Delamere, Aug. 1893.)

*Between pp. 68 and 69*





# I

## CONCERNING TERMS

THERE are certain matters of immediate importance to Christians of the present time, and especially to the ministry, to which this little book ventures to call attention. Few of those who study the theological situation at the present time can fail to be conscious of a certain atmosphere of muddle and misunderstanding. There is Knowledge, there is Power, there is great capacity for its expression and organization, but somehow the expression is obscure and the organization chaotic. And one cause, perhaps the chief immediate cause, may be thus described as it were in parable. The trumpet gives an uncertain sound. Now that may be owing to more than one cause. Perhaps the instrument is out of tune or damaged. Perhaps the calls are not easily distinguishable. Perhaps the code of signals has been changed without proper intimation having been given to all concerned. All which possibilities must

be taken into consideration before either the capacity or the honesty of the trumpeter need be called in question. Nevertheless, such uncertainty is extremely dangerous, and though the action of the old Scotch captain who flung the signal-book on the deck and gave the order to 'Gang into the middle of it,' is often the best under circumstances of doubt, it is not always expedient to trust to happy inspirations at the moment of emergency. Now a signal is, of course, in itself purely conventional. It is something agreed upon, and the only question or controversy that can arise about it is one of simple convenience. This will be found to be a sound basis or starting-point for dealing with the conventional side of Theology.

Now words are nothing more than signals, and as the science or art of their use is commonly called Logic, it may be convenient to take the word Logos and employ it as a general term, meaning the whole apparatus of expression by which the Gnosis, or Knowledge of Truth as it is, is made communicable to men. The logician distinguishes a judgement and a proposition, and an untrained

intellect is often at great loss to convert its Gnosis into Logos, its judgements into propositions. The schoolboy finds it so, for he is lamentably deficient in Logos. 'I say, the thingumbob you said was a what-its-name is really a what-you-may-call,' is a sentence replete with unexpressed Gnosis. And the object of those who seek his intellectual welfare *ut sapere et fari possit quae sentiat*, is to cram him with conventional terms, and the rudiments of method, so that he may know what people are saying, and that he may not classify all natural science into the two comprehensive divisions of Bugs and Stinks. Strictly speaking, Logos and Gnosis go together, but it may be convenient to treat of Logos first, following the paradoxical definition of a museum, as 'a good collection of labels illustrated by specimens<sup>1</sup>.' The specimens will have to be selected from Gnosis, but need not be too numerous if well selected. Now the origin of Logos is attributed to Adam. He gave names, and whatever there is recondite about that passage, it has, at least, one simple meaning. If a man wants to be

<sup>1</sup> Author alas forgotten.

understood by his fellows, he must either give a name to a person or thing and cause it to be used by others who wish to speak of that person or thing, or he must acquiesce in names so given, and use them accordingly<sup>1</sup>. There must be an *auctoritas imponens*, whose use of the name is the *norma loquendi* for all others who desire to use it. And it would be well for every modern theologian to obtain some insight into the way in which this rule of nomenclature is worked in the expanding sciences, so that a name can be given at once to any newly discovered substance or species, and accepted, provisionally and pending further discovery, throughout the scientific circles of the civilized world. It is a branch of true international law, and to a large extent is neutralizing the evil of many languages, that confusion of which Babel was the ancient type. A catalogue of British plants will suffice to exhibit the sort of problems involved. For it is very well seen that if confusion of names is to be allowed to arise the work must stop, or be hindered and spoilt

<sup>1</sup> The wilful misuse of a name or other convention is a falsehood or lie. *Absit!*

most grievously. But here comes in the first objection or difficulty that must be faced. One philosopher can invent a word, and perhaps ten can make the public use it. But a hundred cannot prevent its misuse. And unless some effort is made to keep it to its strict interpretation it will shortly become ambiguous and lose its value. In fact, a doubtful word is no use in a syllogism, as it introduces the possibility of a fourth term, and so vitiates the argument. A simple plan is to say to the *profanum vulgus*, '*Favete linguis!*' But the public might not like the designation, and may insist on going on talking as before. And in that case the best must be made of it, and care taken that at least the correct logic be taught to the lasses and lads who are being trained in modern science at modern schools<sup>1</sup>. They, at least, are taught how to use a dictionary, and though a really authoritative theological glossary is probably a practical impossibility, its theoretical expediency can hardly be ques-

<sup>1</sup> '*Odi profanum vulgus et arceo ;  
Favete linguis : carmina non prius  
Audita Musarum sacerdos  
Virginibus puerisque canto.*'—HORACE, *Od.* iii. 1.

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tioned. For the method of thought has to be taken into account as well as the matter. And one effect of this scientific training is that the esteem attached to a name is lessened. Names whether of men or things are less venerated, are less regarded as titles, and sink into mere conveniences, to be continued or suppressed as may seem most suitable at the moment. But the theologian is not prepared for this. His terms are ancient and venerable titles, and as such are claimed and fought for, quite irrespective of their intelligibility or logical use. And great is the reprobation when the untheological world insists on using these terms in its own senses, and, for example, restricts the word Catholic to the Roman Communion or enlarges its scope to include the whole Christian world.

## II

### THE LEGAL SYLLOGISM

If terms may be regarded as arbitrary, the propositions which are formed of terms connected by the copula 'is' or 'are' may be regarded as arbitrary also, provided that a proper distinction is made between the copula and the verb of existence. Whether that distinction can always be maintained is duly discussed in the logical textbooks. But most often the word 'is' may be taken to mean 'may be classified as.' Then the syllogism or the simplest formal mediate inference may be regarded as an exercise in classification, and as such it is the form of reasoning adopted by authority. The simple disciplinary syllogism is the logical process in every court of justice. The judge declares the major premiss or the law, the jury the minor premiss or the facts, and unless either the major or the minor premiss can be set aside the conclusion is inevitable. And the dignity of authority is very jealous of its major premisses. They cannot be set aside. No

doubt about their correctness can be admitted. A judge is reported once to have said, 'I am here to administer the Common Law of England, and I know nothing about abstract Justice.' The minor premiss can alone be discussed. Thus: take the syllogism, 'All persons committing the misdemeanour described in the indictment are punishable according to law. The prisoner committed the misdemeanour described in the indictment. The prisoner is punishable according to law.' The only way of escape is to deny the minor premiss, in which case the syllogism becomes formally invalid, and no conclusion can be arrived at<sup>1</sup>.

Now the judicial syllogism well exhibits both the strength and the weakness of that form of argument. Where the terms are easily definable, where the major premiss admits no sort of doubt, there the deductive method will reign supreme. But where these are not

<sup>1</sup> A good story may be stated syllogistically thus:—

All receivers of stolen goods are punishable.

But The Thief is not the Receiver.

The Prisoner is the Thief.

∴ The Prisoner is not the Receiver.

Verdict: Not guilty. And the Prisoner left the Court without a stain on his character!



so the deductive method is not applicable, and its attempted use is simply disastrous.

The strength of the syllogism is that for a special purpose the power to make and define a class is a granted postulate. What is stated or denied concerning the class is stated or denied of every member of it. And as long as the classes are purely and admittedly artificial all goes quite smoothly. The law lays down in a purely arbitrary and artificial fashion exactly what sort of an act it chooses to classify as a felony, and with the aid of evidence classifies any given prisoner as guilty or not guilty of the act so classified. And the whole process is so obviously correct that the glamour of it has extended far beyond the realm of law in its arbitrary sense, and the syllogism has consequently been used both in religion and science, where classification is far less possible. For the postulate that a class can be formed does not imply that the class when formed has a real existence. It may exist solely in the mind of the classifier, and be created simply for the purpose of giving a name or forming a convenient index. A per-

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fect example is the Bertillon system of identifying criminals: All persons whose heads are longer than the standard go into one group, all whose heads are not longer go into the other, and each is subdivided on the same sort of plan until the individual is reached. The system is brief, arbitrary, authoritative, but absolutely artificial.

It may be well to give one or two further instances of the value of the syllogism in artificial and arbitrary matters, such as nomenclature. The universal, 'All chemical names ending in *-um* are names of metals,' might be a convenient convention to retain. It is of course arbitrary in any case. But if it be alleged that the name Helium is the name of a non-metal, the universal would be destroyed by a contradictory opposition. Some name ending in *-um* is the name of a non-metal. And then, if worth while to take any step at all, either the universal could be abandoned, or the name Helium altered to bring it into harmony with the rule. Anyhow no one would make it a matter of conscience, or even suppose that there was any real connexion between the Latin neuter termination *-um* and a metal.

### III

## NOMOS AND GNOSIS

THUS far the syllogistic logic is supreme, but as soon as it passes beyond the domain of convention it is open to grave objection. From the scientific side the attack was first put into words by Bacon. Whether his ideas were original or whether he merely voiced the thought of his time is immaterial, but what he said was this : That the deductive logic of the schools was incapable of discovering new truth<sup>1</sup>. That it tended rather to the establishment of error and tied a man to his words, or fastened down the assent of a disputant rather than the matter in dispute.

And from the religious side the very same thing had been already said by One far greater than Bacon in words that ought to have warned His disciples of the danger which they would incur. He denounced a

<sup>1</sup> 'Logica, quae in usu est, ad errores (qui in notionibus vulgaribus fundantur) stabiliendos et figendos valet, potius quam ad inquisitionem veritatis; ut magis damnosa sit, quam utilis.' *Novum Organum*, Lib. I. Aph. xii.

'Assensum itaque constringit non rea.' Aph. xiii.

woe on the lawyers who took away (*or hid*) the key of the Gnosis and entered not in themselves and hindered them that were entering in<sup>1</sup>. It will be necessary to look very carefully into the legalist or Pharisee position as described in the New Testament. Commonly the Pharisees' sin is supposed to have been hypocrisy, but that was rather a symptom than the disease itself. In reality their error was a logical one, and this the Church, either failing to see or being obliged to ignore, has copied disastrously. To a legalist the syllogism is absolutely necessary, it is a part of his being. To one who is seeking after knowledge the legal syllogism can only be a hindrance. For the seeker after truth requires something that is new to him. And there can be nothing in the conclusion of a syllogism that was not already stated in the premisses. And if by any mischance the premisses are wrong, the conclusion only leads to worse and worse error.

It will be well to note the Pharisee standpoint. On the one side they were *Nomici* or legalists, but they were also *Gnostici* or

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke xi. 52, MS. 'D.'

claimants to knowledge. Theirs was a state of very unstable equilibrium, which accounts for their very hesitating conduct at more than one crisis in the history of the early Church, and for much that may be observed in the life of St. Paul.

Nicodemus is the first instance. As a ruler he is bound by *rómos*, as a Gnostic he knows that our Lord is a teacher come from God. And our Lord assumes that he has knowledge of highly spiritual matters or that he ought to have it. And so throughout our Lord's ministry, the Pharisee difficulty is that One so apparently disobedient to the Law should possess powers that indicated nothing less than a high commission from God or communion with God in a spiritual life.

And in apostolic days Gamaliel the Pharisee counsels caution and delay, fearing to fight against God. Nay, even when anti-Christian prejudice ran high, there was some sort of reaction in St. Paul's favour when he claimed to be a champion of the Pharisee doctrine of Resurrection. St. Paul himself is an example. The legalist persecutor comes face to face with Gnosis, and bows before its revelation.

Now in the New Testament  $\delta \nu\acute{o}\mu\omicron\varsigma$  is the Law of Moses, actual or traditional, and  $\eta \gamma\nu\acute{\omega}\sigma\iota\varsigma$  stands for spiritual knowledge real or imagined.

And the situation with which St. Paul found himself confronted in all stages of his apostleship was this: That while it was obvious that the old religious Nomos must be relaxed in deference to the new Gnosis, the limit to which this could be allowed was a matter for very serious consideration. What parts of the Law were divine and unalterable, what parts might be regarded as ready to vanish away, seemed quite unsettled. The mere coupling of 'fornication' with 'things strangled' and the problem of the  $\epsilon\iota\delta\omega\lambda\acute{o}\theta\upsilon\tau\alpha$  shows this. The extreme forms of what came to be called Gnosticism made conduct indifferent, or at least so it would appear from the accounts of Cainites, &c. But we only hear of the Gnostics from their enemies, and their anti-nomianism may have been no more than the carrying to an extreme logical conclusion of the principle on which our Lord ordered the man to carry his bed on the sabbath. For, astounding though the statement appears,

every pure Gnostic is also purely Anarchist in the ultimate results of his speculations.

But before showing how the unstable equilibrium may be brought into stability, a somewhat wider view must be taken than that afforded by the contemplation of Early Christian affairs. For though these were the local or temporary circumstances of the antithesis at that time, the same antagonism is found at different periods of history. At all crises there is apt to be friction between the types to which the names Nomicus and Gnosticus may be given. And the tension becomes acute whenever the Nomici have a large force of sentiment or religion behind them. In Russia at the present day the trouble lies between the orthodox ecclesiastical imperialists and the Intellectual party. Even in France, though so republican and scientific in theory, the old hierarchic spirit showed itself in the Dreyfus case. The facts proved contrary to the decision of those in power, but there were many who felt that it was necessary to subordinate facts to the exigencies of discipline. The attitude of the mediaeval Inquisition was the same. It seemed necessary at all cost

to save the authority and discipline of the Church. In brief the Nomicus has opposed the Gnosticus in every field in which law, custom, and established order has felt itself threatened by new or unwelcome truth. And Law and Discipline are as important in their sphere as Knowledge is in its own. And any one who has the spiritual or even the material welfare of mankind at heart will do his best to relegate each to its proper place, and so avoid the clash of unprofitable disputation. Nevertheless, if the syllogistic logic is to be thrown aside it will be necessary to make a very grave change in our views on the position of the Church as an authority in controversies of faith, and on the use of Holy Scripture by the Church. But, looking back on past controversies and anticipating new ones, it seems essential for the Church to adopt the same logical standpoint as that taken by the thinkers of the world.

In days when facts were few and opinions strong a universal proposition was a brief and authoritative way of teaching. It stated roundly that all or none of a certain set of people or things belonged to a class or group.



So far so good. So does modern science. But the system was carried so far that the authoritative universal and its terms became a sort of sacred entity which it was sacrilegious to impugn. But a universal is never very secure. At any moment some new particular fact may be brought up which destroys its universality and meets it in 'contradictory opposition,' as it is called. Now at the present time there is a vast amount of particular knowledge current in the world and a deductive logician is very liable to be tripped up by what is, or appears to be, a contradictory instance. The whole history of the Bible and Science controversy of the last century is simply a record of these contradictories and of the desperate efforts of deductive logic of the Church—the only logic the Church knew—to defend its universals. Formerly it had been possible to argue:—All portions of the Bible are true. This passage is a portion of the Bible. This passage is true. But as text after text was called in question the particular negative grew in strength, 'Some texts of the Bible are not true.' The famous epigram:

'The hare, says Moses, chews the cud.  
It don't, says Owen. Now, my Lud.'

is a good instance. So minute, trivial, and easily explained an error could not damage the Christian faith, but its discovery did damage the reputation of the defenders of the faith. So did the continuous and futile efforts to make the first chapter of Genesis square with the ever-increasing facts and successive theories of geological discovery. And not only did this kind of logic damage the reputation of the defenders, but it gave a spurious moral advantage to the attackers. Their innumerable minute dialectic victories made the vulgar herd think that the course of the war was unfavourable to the Church. And as the universals crumbled away and yet were still apparently subscribed to by those who had to sign the Church's formularies on attaining to office, a sense of doubt as to sincerity was added to the sting of the attack. Then, as all the discovery was on the one side, and all the stubbornness on the other, room was given for such outbursts as the fierce retort of Professor Huxley to the Bishop of Oxford, 'I had rather be descended from a monkey than from one who set authority above truth.'

However, the storm passed and a strange and fateful silence has succeeded to it—there is now no open controversy between men of knowledge and men of religion. And we look for what is to follow, wherefore we come to the question of what the new logic is to be. And turning to the Scriptures,—lo, the new logic is not new, and the old is very old. Who argued in strict syllogistic form about carrying a bed on the sabbath, about gnats in drinking water, and such-like trifles<sup>1</sup>? And Who, on the other hand, turned aside the wretched logic and taught by parable and example, from particulars to particulars, and brought new truth to light thereby, speaking with an authority that was not that of the schools of the scribes, but of Man in direct union with God? He used the Scriptures, quoted them freely and fearlessly, but surely we do not study His words to get logical premisses for the exact location of Sheba, or to settle a microscopic point as to the high priesthood of Abiathar<sup>2</sup>. But not to spend too long over this it may be said generally that it is

<sup>1</sup> John v. 8, &c.; Matt. xxiii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xii. 42; Luke xi. 31; Mark ii. 26.

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very noteworthy how often our Lord avoided giving answers that could be used as syllogistic premisses, and how often He answered a question by a parable or otherwise indirectly. One cannot help thinking He knew the danger of the unqualified universal, and knew also that, however clear His insight might be, He was compelled to use ordinary language with its known imperfections, and must take His chance of being interpreted according to strict logic, and of being held to that interpretation.

## IV

### THE SPHERE OF AUTHORITY

BUT the argument now embarks on an effort to show how a very great deal of time may be saved from unprofitable use, and it may be best to give a sort of abstract before proceeding to amplification and details. It will be necessary to distinguish sharply between matters of fact and matters of convention, between truth and its expression, and a good example of this will be found in the tacit concordat under which ordinary science submits to the discipline of authority, and avails itself of the invaluable service that authority can render. It will then be possible to see how a similar plan can be made effective in religious matters, and produce similar results of continuous and safe progress.

To any one who studies the course of instruction in a modern scheme of education it will be apparent that by far the greater part of the work of teaching consists in im-

parting such knowledge of conventions as will enable a man to understand and be understood by his fellows.

The word used by our Lord concerning the tribute may be adopted, and these conventions might be classed as *νομίσματα*—things ordained by *νόμος*, language, coinage, measures; and even laws of conduct, from the simplest rules up to grave moral precepts, and all that is made by man for man, all the ordinances to which one submits for the sake of human convenience. Now the one grand characteristic of all these is that they are in their essence alterable, and all but a very few of them are in a perpetual state of alteration. Nevertheless, while they stand they must be observed on pain of an equally arbitrary or conventional sanction or penalty which has a positive and a negative use. Its exaction deters from transgressions, and its non-exaction indicates the virtual repeal of the law. *Cadente sanctione cadit ipsa lex.*

And in education the main business is for the most part to teach these *νομίσματα* and their uses. They are illustrated by facts—a few well-selected facts or even fictions go

a long way; indeed, it is not well to overload the mind with them at first. One explains the main principles of zoological science by means of a well-written book on the Crayfish, and so on. Now nobody quarrels much over this sort of convention. Authority settles it all, and is admittedly supreme in that department. Nor is even the source of authority very closely examined or regarded with jealousy. For what it ordains is for man's convenience, and at the dictates of man's convenience the law can be altered, and will be altered.

Thus, as long as its sphere of action is confined to matters of pure convention, *Nomos* will be undisputed. And, strictly speaking, its sphere should be confined to conventions, and should not deal with matters of fact which belong to *Gnosis*. But it does trespass across the limit to a certain extent, and assumes and enforces the acceptance of matters of alleged fact.

And here begins the trouble. A fact is a fact, and is what it is independently of any act of any authority whether civil or religious. And in 'modern science,' as it is called, the

distinction between fact and convention is usually quite clear, and the facts are easily ascertained and verified, so that the law has no difficulty. And because there is no difficulty felt, and because all is so clear, there is a strong tendency to regard this 'science' as a sort of perfect model to which all knowledge should be conformed. And certainly it has many points to commend it as such.

But can theology or Christian Gnosis be put on that sort of footing? The dangerous ground is now reached. From the Apostolic age onward to the present day the Church has faced the Gnostic peril by authoritative assertions on matters of fact, and by arbitrary penalties enforced against those who denied either the assertions or the competence of the authority that made them. Private judgement, liberty of prophesying and such-like phrases have seemed to savour of impiety. Here we have the Christian *νομικός* taking away the key of the Gnosis. For the sake of a semblance of unity, for the sake of uniformity of discipline, a great branch of Christian activity was remorselessly suppressed. One example may suffice. The



exorcist does indeed remain as one of the minor orders, but curiously enough in our own canons there is a distinct prohibition to the clergy to cast out devils by fasting or prayer without the licence of the Bishop. That the temptation was great will be clearly enough seen when the pseudonymous Gnosis of the present day is studied. But that a religion which started with the possession of so much Gnosis, which called its founder *Διδάσκαλε*, should have entrenched itself behind a formal orthodoxy and a ceremonial law is a phenomenon of no small import.

But an age of Science demands that we should meet Gnosis with Gnosis. The Bampton Lecturer of this year has spoken of a Gnostic Revival. If we have anything to teach, the demand is that it shall be taught on scientific lines; that, while full liberty is given to frame conventions such as terms and signs for the avoiding of confusion, yet on the other hand there shall be an equal liberty to verify matters of fact, and no reproach if former errors have to be corrected.

## V

### METHOD AND ATTITUDE

It remains to review the actual state of the Gnosis in our own time.

In the forefront of the inquiry may come St. Paul's word of exhortation: Keep the deposit—that which is committed to us<sup>1</sup>. Presumably this means what is called the *depositum fidei*, and also the broad lines of ecclesiastical discipline. This the Church has endeavoured to keep, but our method has been to put it into words and fix it by law. Or, to turn it back into our Lord's metaphor—we have locked up the safe and hidden or even lost the key, but we have taken great care to preserve a correct and authoritative index of the contents of the safe, and even that, though we have honestly produced it (at last!), we hesitate to place in critical hands. But the miracles: How were they performed? What is demoniacal possession? What is it that the disciples called Peter's angel<sup>2</sup>? What have the angels to do with the uncovered

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xii. 15.

head of a woman at prayer<sup>1</sup>? These and a host of other questions belong to the Gnosis. The statements made in Scripture are not to be accepted merely because they are in Scripture, but because, like the statements in a modern science primer, they can be verified independently. But we take no pains to verify them.

But it is fair to give warning that other groups of explorers are at work as they were in the Apostles' days. We shall meet Elymas and the woman with a spirit of Python. We shall meet Simon Magus (whose money is a very small part of his equipment) and Apollonius of Tyana. Each has some part of the Gnosis, and will have added somewhat that is not Gnosis. We shall also meet with the Agnostic, or one who calls himself such, though he is really a Gnostic with limited liability, for he will not submit to authority in matters of fact either within or beyond the limits of knowledge he fixes for himself. There is the Psychotherapeutic and the Faith-healer. There is the critical explorer in Psychical Research. There is the Spiritualist

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 10.

with his dealings with doubtfully clean familiar spirits or whatever they are. There is the extraordinary phenomenon of the persistent survival of Astrology. All these are matters to which the theologian may be presumed to devote some attention, at least, as far as to acquire sufficient knowledge of them to account for their origin and existence on some reasonable supposition and in accordance with the main outlines of the faith. An attitude of mere negation gives a very undesirable impression of rudeness, besides being dangerous to him who adopts it. There are portions of truth embedded in every system, however unsound it may be in its totality, and these must be duly reserved in the general condemnation. It may be said that such a task would be very great. That is true, and it must be undertaken little by little. No *omnium gatherum* of a council such as was attempted by Julian the Apostate of old, and is suggested even now by some in America, would be the least use. The method adopted here is this: Partly for the sake of the logic, partly as an object in itself, an examination of the doctrines of one

group of modern Gnostics may be undertaken. And the choice may fall on the learned and earnest thinkers whose visible centre is the Theosophical Society, and the Gnosis they teach, which is as strongly opposed to both materialism and all forms of black magic as ever a Christian could desire, and yet has its basis in a doctrine which no Christian can accept. But even when face to face with serious heresy, the duty of Christian meekness and forbearance must not be forgotten. In the course of reading Theosophical literature, there is a sore temptation to snatch up the blue pencil and underscore blunders. But even the rules of inductive logic counsel caution here, and there are a few points to be remembered always. One is, that an *obiter dictum* does not bind the utterer. St. Stephen's argument is not vitiated by his doubtful statement concerning the sepulture of the Twelve Patriarchs. Another point concerns collateral evidence. The non-acceptance of an example does not invalidate a hypothesis, and in inductive logic one has to exercise great restraint. A good safe rule will be to follow the outlines that guide a lawyer in

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cases of perjury. No misstatement need be seriously dealt with, unless it is material to the point at issue. Certainly no effort shall be made here to discredit any opponent by pointing out blunders that do not matter. And in many cases, where it is quite conceivable that ancient authors spoke mystically, one should be very careful not to discourage brilliant suggestions of interpretations. In a modern school an examiner will often give marks for errors that display a thoughtful mind.

## VI

### AN EXAMPLE—ATLANTIS

‘THERE is no religion higher than truth.’ This is the motto of the Theosophical Society, and the Gnostic standpoint in all ages. ‘Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’ So said our Lord, and no Christian can afford to ignore truth in any form. Nevertheless, those who know the truth may have on occasions to subordinate even truth to considerations of charity, and allow our liberty to be judged of another man’s conscience. Wherefore, while claiming liberty to explore all regions of truth, the Christian must be prepared to make certain concessions to those who demand discipline, concessions such as the payment of the Half-shekel, lest we should scandalize any, and must submit to the old Paedagogus with its carnal ordinances. But having thus paid tribute for conscience’ sake, and having shown that we also walk orderly and keep the law, further concessions are needless, and even

wrong, and the Gentiles may be fairly met on common ground, even of their own choosing.

Here, then, is an alleged modern revelation of a doctrine which is undeniably believed over wide tracts of the East, and which is restated with enlargements, including a frank recognition of the discoveries of modern science, and in a way which is quite in accord with the ordinary methods of teaching in Europe and America.

An instance may be taken almost at hazard from the writings of the Theosophical School. It may be stated by way of introduction that the doctrine of reincarnation requires an enormous extension of the human period on the earth in the past, and in order to show the possibility, not to say the actuality, of this the secrets of geology must be unveiled and harmonized with the hypothesis.

Now, let a punctilious scholar shudder at her mistranslations of Herodotus, if he will, but no one can read Madame Blavatsky or her followers without some admiration for the brilliant audacity which accepts the traditional Atlantis and the hypothetical Lemuria,



and incorporates both into the ancient history of the human race.

Undeterred by the distinct inconvenience that Christian theology experienced from its adoption of historic or scientific beliefs belonging to some age or stage of discovery, the Theosophical writers seem not to hesitate to lay themselves open to that sort of attack which concentrates its effort on a weak spot, and trusts in that way to discredit the whole system, nor to leave their highly mystical and widely believed doctrine of reincarnation open to disparagement in the case of an ordinary scientific hypothesis proving unsound. It is worth while to review this theory in some detail, not so much with a view to refuting it as to show how enormous an area of science must be explored before any certainty can be obtained as to the origin of the human race on the earth and its development up to the dawn of history. For this has a religious importance apart from its scientific interest.

The mention by Plato in the *Timæus* and elsewhere of a powerful dominant and civilized race with a centre in a large island west of the Spanish coast, demands a certain amount

of attention from any student of oceanic physiography. A warning at the commencement of the inquiry must be given, that it is quite possible that Atlantis was a mere fiction of Plato's own, a mere embellishment of a philosophic dialogue, but assuming it to have been a genuine legend, it will be well to see how it might fit in with modern theory. Now the most widely accepted view of the past life of the earth is that the great ocean floors have been permanently in their present positions throughout the geological periods. Shallow seas may have changed their configuration, but the abysmal depths over 2,000 fathoms have not been at the surface at any time. Islands such as the British Isles, standing on the 'continental shelf,' as it is called, are virtually parts of the adjacent continent, and have practically the same geological conformation and fauna and flora. But islands separated from the nearest land by very deep water are, in the first place, entirely volcanic or coralline, and in the second place, their fauna and flora, not merely terrestrial but also littoral, are so strikingly different from those of the nearest or

any continent that the most reasonable interpretation is that they simply represent the results of accidental immigration during an indefinitely long period. Nevertheless, the Atlantic chain of volcanoes from Iceland and the Faröe by the British Isles to the Azores, Madeira, Cape de Verd, Ascension and Saint Helena, is submarine, while the belt that girdles the Pacific is continental. There is also the Dolphin Bank, the interpretation of which is still obscure. But there are historical or prehistorical considerations which claim some attention. The glacial period is too well marked to need much description or proof here, but the period of its close is a matter of doubt. Recent speculation, founded partly on the rate of the recession of Niagara Falls, assigns a comparatively recent period, say 7000 B. C. And certainly the general appearance of the Norwegian fiords and the ice scratches barely covered with thin turf in Welsh valleys, point to no very distant epoch. It is also surmised that the glacial period ended rather suddenly at the last.

Now the effect of a large Atlantic island in the latitude of Spain would undoubtedly be

to check the drift of warm water from the south-west, and its disappearance would produce the present conditions. And it is worth noting that Plato's date, some 9,000 years before his time, is within reasonable distance of the hypothetical date of the amelioration of the conditions of North Europe. But, in any case, it would be only one factor in the problem. Behind the glacial period are the Miocene and the Eocene, reaching back through the times when the mammoth could find sustenance in the Tundras of Siberia, to an age when there were forests in Spitzbergen within  $12^{\circ}$  of the Pole, and consequently a climate which was warm enough to allow the prolonged daylight of the summer to compensate for the low altitude of the sun and the long night of an arctic winter.

What changes took place to the eastward, where the great Russian plain was probably submerged, and the Aral, Caspian, and Black Seas formed with it one great sheet of water, perhaps communicating with the Indian Ocean, is yet another factor. Add, further, the probable Sahara Sea, and the undoubted habitability of the Gobi Desert within the

human period, and it will quite suffice to indicate the enormous extent and complexity of the climatic problem alone. And it is simply piling up the agony to mention the coralline problem and the enormous masses of limestone in the world, all deposited from aqueous solution by the agency of living organisms. The failure to bore the atoll has deferred hope yet longer, and the problem of the bed rock on which the coral built is as far from solution as ever.

Now to bring all this into a system of cosmogony to be used for religious purposes is an act of very great boldness, and commands at least respectful attention<sup>1</sup>. The doctrine of reincarnation will require very careful handling, and even at the risk of literary crudity it may be best to reprint in full a thesis or dissertation accepted for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity at Oxford, and therefore possessing some sort of guarantee of being fairly free from serious heterodoxy.

<sup>1</sup> Especially perhaps from such a one as the writer, who, though he has no claim to be regarded as an authority on the subject, has at least aided in the exploration of the natural history of an Atlantic island when he was at Fernando de Noronha in 1887 with Mr. H. N. Ridley's expedition. (See Linnean Society's Transactions.)

## VII

### SOME HEADS OF A CHRISTIAN ANSWER TO THE NEO-BUDDHIST THEOSOPHY

INDULGENCE and kindly criticism of this thesis is claimed by the writer on the ground of the circumstances of its origin. Nevertheless it is put forward with considerable hesitation, lest perchance the grave questions with which it deals should be weakly treated, and thereby such harm should accrue to the Church as an unworthy advocate may bring on a good cause.

An old college acquaintance, who now holds a canonry and is in charge of an important parish, mentioned that the propaganda of the Theosophical Society were exciting some interest and having certain influence among his people. He produced the two recent pamphlets of the Society, one the lecture by Mrs. Besant, on the *Necessity for Reincarnation*, at which the Rev. A. L. Lilley was forbidden

by the Bishop of London to preside (May, 1904), and the other, Mrs. Besant's rejoinder or explanation, *Is Theosophy Anti-Christian?* Asked what he knew on the subject, the writer promised to put what he could on paper; and, as it seemed to grow into more than could be dealt with in a sermon, and to involve the reopening of questions usually regarded as settled parts of the Christian doctrine, it seemed safest to adopt the present course and to submit it to them that are of repute.

If further excuse be needed it may be remembered that at the last Lambeth Conference the Anglican Episcopate passed the following resolution:—'15. That the tendency of many English-speaking Christians to entertain an exaggerated opinion of the excellences of Hinduism and Buddhism and to ignore the fact that Jesus Christ alone has been constituted Saviour and King of mankind, should be vigorously corrected' (p. 36, Lambeth Conference, 1897.)

There is no need to apologize for the prompt and peremptory action of the Bishop of London in preventing a clergyman from

compromising himself and his fellow ministers by countenancing a doctrine which, however cloaked in fair seeming speech and adorned by the blameless moral lives of its professors, does deny the Remission of Sins and the Resurrection of the Body as preached in the Christian Church from the beginning. Nevertheless within the Church some attention must be given to it, as the Lambeth Conference clearly indicates.

The doctrine put forward by the Neo-Buddhist Theosophy trenches on grounds covered by Christian theology, and is obviously contrary to the generally accepted teaching of the Church. The claim made is that the current theology does not represent what our Lord and His disciples held and taught, and various items of evidence are adduced to make out a *prima facie* case. It would not be a difficult task to criticize the lecture, but it would be merely an affair of outposts to do so. It would scarcely touch the main position of the Theosophical Society, and would give little scope for the development of the full strength of the Christian argument.



It is an ancient controversy. It is inevitable that questions should be asked both about the prenatal and post-mortem condition of men, and even of animals and plants. An answer of some sort is demanded from every system of theology, though man is on the whole more interested in learning what will happen to him in the future, than in speculations as to what his past history might have been.

Two answers have been given, which may be roughly called the Western answer and the Eastern answer. A glance at the map of the Eurasian Continent will suffice to show that if a good broad streak be drawn down the 63rd meridian of east longitude it will divide the Nearer East from the Farther East, and not only geographically and politically, but the complexion of religion on either side of it will be also markedly different. It will divide Ahuramazda from Brahma; and though the bold conjecture that the gods of Persia are the devils of India, Asura and Ahura being the same word, must stand on its own merits, it is quite clear that the two great branches of the Aryan race divide

geographically in that land of mountainous desert, across which communication has always been difficult and often interrupted altogether, especially when the Red Sea and Persian Gulf have had no fleets afloat. On the Western side the idea of the divinity was monarchical. On the Eastern side it was pantheistic. And, while admitting that such a statement is far too broad for perfect accuracy, it will indicate very fairly the general principles of ordinary belief.

In the West the divinity is creator and king. He is lord of heaven and of the powers therein, and of earth and man. It is of course true, or at least apparent, that there may be and are rebellious creatures both in heaven and earth who may oppose and even frustrate the king's will. The ugly suggestion crops up occasionally that he would destroy these if he could, and because he does not, therefore he cannot do so. But for the most part there is faith in his strength and goodness that he can and will eventually conquer as a king should conquer, and the imagery used to describe his conquest is such as might be used of an earthly king in those regions. Conse-

quently the Western idea of the origin and future of man is simple. The king made him, he serves the king. If he serves the king well he will enjoy the royal favour. If he rebels he will be punished on earth probably, and certainly will find himself, along with the king's spiritual foes in the future, locked up in a blazing prison with all sorts of torment superadded, while the king and his servants sit serenely aloft in unimagined bliss. This is very crude; but it is the general idea of the West, and is the ordinary interpretation of the New Testament.

Far different is the conception of the divinity in the pantheistic East. Again, it is necessary to be somewhat crude in description. Gods and kings there are both in heaven and earth. The gods are very high, very powerful, their existence is incalculable in any measure of time used by man. But there is an awful Something or Nothing which is all things and more. In this all things are. They change, they rise, they fall, but the highest only differs from the lowest in rank, power, and other attributes, not in essence. Under such a system man was not

created, he became. Who knows when he joined the everlasting movement? How shall he ever leave it?

And thus we find the world at the dawn of history. In the West the active king, acknowledging his deity above, keeping touch with heaven through his priests on earth, hoping to join the gods when his work is over. In the East the passive devotee, striving for unity with the Infinite God, esteeming this higher than earthly royalty or pleasure, to whom kings looked as one above themselves. The inhospitable north, the wild regions of Afghanistan and Baluchistan, the broad harbourless Indian Ocean kept these apart. Nevertheless at times they mingled to a certain extent. Of the moves from West to East there is little that need be said. Islam was later than the period which must be chiefly studied, and the European wave of our own time has not reached flood-mark. The extent of Buddhist missionary enterprise is more important. For 600 years B.C. the Buddhist theosophy had been propagated, and should traces of it be found west of the Euphrates about the time of the Christian

era it will be no matter for marvel. Nay, the wonder is that there are not more traces than there are. To speak by parable: if the remains of a prehistoric camp-fire are found, the prudent explorer will be careful to examine any fragment of charcoal or unburnt wood. He will infer that the trees from which that wood was derived grew in the vicinity, but the hypothesis of driftwood from a great distance cannot be ignored. So likewise when Mrs. Besant finds traces in Christian writings of pantheistic teaching, or of the doctrine of reincarnation, it will be expedient to see how far these may be accounted for as sporadic traces of the Buddhist propaganda before assuming that they are an integral or important part of the Gospel delivered to the Apostles. And as Buddha grafted his teaching on an earlier theosophy still, there are probably further complications. Buddha emphatically taught a knowledge or Gnosis. And when in the Bruce Papyrus the Apostles are made to say that they had left royal greatness to follow the Living Jesus and learn a Gnosis, that is much more the position of Ananda than of the Gospel fisher-

men. In the Gospel the Apostles clearly seek to share a kingdom, not a philosophy. And if the Terebinthus of the *Archelai et Manetis Disputatio* regards himself as a Buddha (the passage is doubtful), he has at any rate indicated the source of his teaching, bad Buddhism though it is<sup>1</sup>. It is an obscure subject, and the writer has made shift to explore it without hope of much reward, though some key may be found to the interpretation of such books as the *Pistis Sophia* and the Bruce Papyrus, and may show a blending of Eastern and Western doctrine—or more probably a mere breccia of fragments near the junction of the systems.

In the Gospel itself there are not many traces of any such admixture. It might also be said that there are none, but a negative is difficult to prove. The curious similarities between the infancy stories of Buddha and those in the Gospel, and especially in the apocryphal gospels, cannot be made to prove much. The Gospel account of our Lord's birth

<sup>1</sup> *Reliquiae Sacrae*, vol. v. p. 188: 'Dicens se omni sapientia Aegyptiorum repletum, et vocari non iam Terebinthum sed alium Buddam nomine.'

has hardly any points in common with the current story of the birth of Buddha, and the apocryphal additions to both may arise from some miracle-finding tendency that besets all heroic narrative.

The clumsy question asked by our Lord's disciples as to the man born blind<sup>1</sup> can be much more readily explained by a reference to Ezekiel. Starting with the assumption that the blindness was the effect of sin, it followed that if that sin were not the man's parents' it must needs be his own<sup>2</sup>. According to the reincarnation hypothesis it would be his own sin—doubtless—but our Lord says it was not.

More difficult is the problem of the reappearance of Elijah as John the Baptist<sup>3</sup>. Here our Lord says very plainly that if we will receive it, this is Elijah that was for to come. And it would be rather a bold interpreter who could say that this means that John the Baptist was not Elijah. It is not quite easy even to dissociate the spirit and power of Elijah from the prophet himself<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> St. John ix.

<sup>3</sup> St. Matt. vii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. xviii.

<sup>4</sup> St. Luke i. 17.

And *prima facie*, the prophet who vanished might be expected to reappear, especially if carried up to heaven in a whirlwind with a chariot of fire and horses of fire as accompaniment. It will not be inexpedient to examine the whole history of these two, and to see whether there is any ground for supposing that the idea of their identity can have presented itself to those who heard our Lord's words. And, though at some risk, the full strength of this view must be clearly set forth so that no possible argument may be left unexamined. It is needless to do more than recapitulate the history of Elijah in the books of Kings. His appearance and garb is that of St. John. His mission to call Israel to repentance is the same, though the circumstances of the Sidonian Baalism do not reappear in the case of St. John's work. But the weak king, the masterful wife, the daughter<sup>1</sup> also, seem to be the same characters in each case. Elijah fails in his mission. He flees, is instructed to appoint his successor, and is then carried off. That his earthly body was buried in the drift of the whirlwind seems

<sup>1</sup> Athaliah.



indicated as quite possible in the story. That he ought to have stood his ground and faced death seems also indicated. But the one great difference between the two is, that while Elijah is freely credited with miracles, St. John does none<sup>1</sup>. And this, to any one spiritually minded, is perhaps one of the strongest arguments for their identity. The cause of Elijah's failure, as also of the failure of Moses, is that each did call in a miracle to prove his divine mission. Elijah did tempt God on Mount Carmel exactly as Moses had tempted Him in Massah<sup>2</sup>. It was a sore temptation, such as only can assail those nearest to God. Our Lord resisted it on the pinnacle of the Temple, and again in Herod's palace. Moses and Elijah both yielded to it. The disastrous effects of an appeal to the occult world for phenomena to convince the sceptical are well known to all who have looked into the subject, and that the new Elijah should shrink from such a test is what one would expect of one who was aware by bitter experience of its futility<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> St. John x. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. vi. 16.

<sup>3</sup> At this point it will be well to say that the whole question of miracles or occult phenomena has been

Outside the Gospels there is little reference to St. John except as a sort of initial epoch-marker of the preaching of the Way. But the *Pistis Sophia* has a remarkable passage<sup>1</sup> in which our Lord is made to say that He found the soul of Elijah in the aeons of the sphere, and put it, with certain added powers, into the womb of Elisabeth, quoting certain of the well-known Gospel passages. But if this is a case of a reincarnate soul, it is the only one in Scripture. It is also a very exceptional case, but it must not be said that it is thereby precluded from taking its place in an argu-

purposely omitted from this thesis as not pertaining to the subject. That such phenomena do occur, and that they are *σημεία* or *τέρατα* at least, is admitted by both Christians and the Theosophical writers. A Christian also knows from our Lord's words that false prophets can do signs and wonders (St. Matt. xxiv. 24; St. Mark xiii. 22; Rev. xiii. 13; 2 Thess. ii. 9). Such phenomena therefore, even if genuine, prove nothing except their possibility, which is granted. But, whosoever tempts the Lord his God, or puts Him to a test, is very likely to fall into some snare of the devil, as deceiver or deceived. Fraudulent miracles have been detected even among Christians, and the truth has suffered proportionately. Wherefore, in order to avoid side issues, no notice can be taken here of the questions between the Society for Psychical Research and the founders of the Theosophical Society.

<sup>1</sup> p. 12.

ment, for the equally solitary and exceptional case of our Lord's Resurrection is the very foundation of the apostolic preaching, and of our faith. And, while perhaps admitting provisionally and tentatively that St. John may have been the reincarnate Elijah (though not recognized on the Mount of the Transfiguration), such an occurrence can hardly be regarded as the normal destiny of all men. Nor does it show the least trace of being intended to indicate that such reincarnation was indefinitely repeated over and over again in every life of man, or beast, or even plant. Silence in such a case is not merely non-affirmative, but directly and powerfully negative of any such doctrine as that put forward by the members of the Theosophical Society. Even in the *Pistis Sophia*, though hints are thrown out that just souls who have not received enlightenment shall be placed in just bodies so that they may inherit the mysteries of light, the warning is strongly given<sup>1</sup> that postponement of effort, or neglect of opportunity, is very hazardous on account of the approaching completion of the number of the elect (*ἀριθμὸς*

<sup>1</sup> P. 317.

ψυχῶν τελείων), after which there will be no admission to the mysteries. This is not in accordance with the opinions under consideration<sup>1</sup>.

And these considerations, taken in conjunction with the numerous direct and indirect statements in the Gospel on which the current Christian doctrine has been built, that the results of this life are final as determining the future of a soul, seem to make it very plain that the Buddhist doctrine of the succession of lives had very little effect or influence on early Christian thought. Nay, rather from the Bruce Papyrus one would gather that the doctrine of remission of sins—mere Lord's Prayer elementary Christianity—took firm hold on minds which shuddered away from the almost endless Karma of the Buddhist doctrine.

Further, though the course of argument

<sup>1</sup> It may be necessary to mention one other possible case in Scripture, which might be thought to bear on reincarnation—the threatened reappearance of the Beast in the Apocalypse. But in any case the Beast is represented as not really dead, and he is best referred to Nero, who was thought to be yet alive and likely to reoccupy the principate with yet more terrible consequences to the Church.

will now drift away from direct quotation into a survey of tendencies and even of prejudices, a notable distinction exists between Eastern and Western thought which may be stated thus: the contemplation of the infinite attracts the East and repels the West. While the Hindoo rejoices in the multiplication of immensities, the Western mind insists on having everything of importance within reach. The logical conception of the necessity of infinitude is admitted when stated, but is practically ignored. Mount Meru and Mount Kailasa have no counterparts in the Christian mystic doctrine. It quite sufficed for the idea of our Lord's Ascension that a cloud should receive Him. The Gnostic, imbued with the ideas of the East, might modify this and make each aeon of the heavenless appear as a grain of dust from the one above, and make the Lord ascend from hierarchy to hierarchy, the archons of the gates of each opening wide their portals to let Him through<sup>1</sup>. But for the most part no such idea penetrated Christian symbolism. For St. Stephen it seemed as if the heavens above him opened, and there

<sup>1</sup> *Pistis Sophia*, p. 21.

stood the Lord—quite near. And certainly in later days the almost unreasoning resentment with which the revelation of astronomic distances and geological time was received by Christians, shows most strikingly how an age saturated with Bible reading regarded an extension of its horizon of knowledge. It is true that the phrases *αἰῶνες τῶν αἰώνων*, *saecula saeculorum*, were in common use, but they meant no more than that the end of a Christian was endless bliss, with no measure of time to calculate it by. Even the new Jerusalem is strictly finite in its measurement<sup>1</sup>. It may therefore appear in a high degree improbable that any doctrine of continuous reincarnations was held by the apostolic disciples of the early Church.

The references to a Christian Gnosis are indeed too numerous to be ignored<sup>2</sup>, and it is possible that much of that Gnosis may have been suppressed or discouraged in the vital struggle through which the Church emerged into Catholicity, and became a world power;

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xxi. 16.

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke xi. 52; 1 Cor. xii. 8; 1 Cor. xiii. *σπάνον τὴν γνῶσιν.*

but reincarnation took a very subsidiary place in the systems even of those who held it, and was very little known or discussed. It was strongly opposed to the accepted doctrine of the imminent Parousia of Christ, and the destruction of the world which was to follow. A Christian apologist may therefore confidently submit that no such doctrine as reincarnation was preached by authorized official Christians during the critical portion of the first century A.D. It must, however, be acknowledged that this argument does not meet the whole contention of the Theosophical Society. A theory extensively set forth by the Society submits that, while undoubtedly the exoteric or Catholic Church taught its worldly converts the doctrines ordinarily accepted, there was always an inner, esoteric, or mystic Church which held the true Gnosis, though for various reasons it did not publish it abroad, but only taught it to a select initiate few after due preparation. Now this is a doctrine which it is easier to state than to rebut. Proof or disproof in the full sense of the words may be impossible, but a certain amount of argument may be brought

forward subject to further investigation. Discussion, however, must be strictly limited to the matter in hand. If there was any such teaching at all, did the doctrine of reincarnations form part of it? It is not safe to deny the existence of a quasi-secret Christian doctrine supplementary to that which was taught publicly. The discourses of our Lord after His Resurrection are not published in the Gospel. Both St. Paul and St. John heard words which were not to be uttered<sup>1</sup>. The gifts of healing were presumably accompanied by a certain amount of knowledge of the method or conditions of their exercise. The same may be said of the prevision of the future, and of the 'tongues.' Further, there are indications of mystic experiences. St. Paul refers to such as took their stand on what they had seen<sup>2</sup>. He speaks of all the mysteries and all the knowledge. He refers to angelic orders, and to such existences as the power of the air<sup>3</sup>. There are indirect allusions to crystal gazing<sup>4</sup>, to curious arts,

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 4; Rev. x. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Col. ii. 18, R.V.; 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Col. i. 16; Rom. viii. 38; Eph. ii. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph seems to divine by his cup (Gen. xlv. 2, &c.),



and other matters on which there was certainly knowledge of some kind<sup>1</sup>. But though various publications issued under the auspices of the Theosophical Society have made the most of all that indicates the existence of black magic—against which, to their credit be it said, they have issued most insistent and salutary warnings—and have shown that in all true religion there must be a true knowledge of things pertaining to the soul of man, no part of this knowledge appears inconsistent with the usual orthodox view, and there seems no link by which the doctrine of reincarnation can be coupled up with the Christian Gnosis.

On the contrary the frequent description of death as sleep, and such phrases as 'the trumpet shall sound'<sup>2</sup>, indicate plainly enough that between the sleeping and waking there was little to be looked for except passive existence, unconscious probably, possibly receptive, but not active, and not corporeal.

and the references in the New Testament seem to indicate that, though a man casually looking into a mirror will see his own face and no more, yet if he gazes steadfastly he will see more.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 12 ; St. Jas. i. 23-25 ; 2 Cor. iii. 18 ; Acts xix. 19.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 52.

Thus far can one deal with Scripture, and thus far the balance of argument may be claimed for the orthodox view. But it is clear that as soon as the capture of Jerusalem had passed without any further signs of the Parousia the idea that the advent of Christ was imminent faded from the minds of Christians. The doctrine still stood that the Advent was an ultimate certainty, but the condition of the departed meanwhile became a matter of greater interest. The time was, however, longer than had been expected. The dead awaited judgement in a state of greater or less felicity. The theory of purgatory developed. A doctrine of psycho-pannuchia, or all-night sleep of the soul, was rejected. Origen's ideas were condemned; possibly they were misunderstood, certainly they were against the spirit of the times. But in dealing with the Theosophical doctrine care must be taken not to beg the whole question in this mere assertion that the Church did not hold the reincarnation theory. For the contention is that the Church, all but a secret few, was wrong; and as it had been undoubtedly in error on the matter of the immediate Parousia,

an error which had the effect of postponing discussion on the condition of the dead prior to resurrection, some allowance must be made for those who hold that the question is still open. And as nothing can be gained by opposing assertion to negation, especially in times when every doctrine is submitted to the fierce ordeal of inductive methods, and every universal proposition must stand or fall according as it can hold its own or not among seemingly contradictory particulars, the next step is to take the doctrine of reincarnations on its own merits, and to see whether it accounts for the phenomena of life as we know it. This is no easy task, and in dealing with it indulgence must be asked for a few axioms and definitions which will be assumed or required. As far as possible a common ground must be found, and if the two contrasted doctrines have any basis in common it will be best to assume that basis as agreed upon, at least as far as the present discussion is concerned. And again, if identical terms for agreed facts can be used, it will be a great safeguard from confusion. Howbeit the most obvious axioms have sometimes to be withdrawn

and the best scientific language has to be revised.

Now it so happens that the Theosophical Society's publications, notably the *Key to Theosophy*, have set forth an elaborate and carefully worded analysis of man's nature; and this can be set in diagrammatic form against the Christian analysis as used by St. Paul and the other New Testament writers<sup>1</sup>.

*Theosophical.**Christian.*

<i>Rupa</i> ,	χοῦς (LXX) 1 Cor. xv. 47,
Physical body.	Earth, dust of the earth.
<i>Prana</i> ,	ψυχή ζῶσα,
Life or Vital principle.	Living Soul (used also of the animals).
<i>Linga Sharira</i> ,	Not used, but specific forms
Astral body.	are recognized <sup>2</sup> .
	φάντασμα, Matt. xiv. 26, and
	ἄγγελος in Acts xii. 15 may
	represent the idea.
<i>Kama Rupa</i> ,	σάρξ, the flesh, that which
Animal desires and passions.	lusteth against the Spirit.

All these are, under both systems, allowed to be mortal. That is, they are cast off at

<sup>1</sup> See also Sinnett, *Growth of the Soul*, p. 156.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 68.

death, and do not follow their possessor into the next life, or only partially and temporarily. More must be said about these, especially from the standpoint of biological science, but it will be convenient to pass to the rest of the analysis first.

<i>Theosophical.</i>	<i>Christian.</i>
<i>Manas,</i>	<i>νοῦς</i> or <i>φρόνημα,</i>
Mind. Higher Intelligence: a dual principle.	Either carnal mind ( <i>φρόνημα σαρκός</i> ), or spiritual mind ( <i>φρόνημα πνεύματος</i> ) <sup>1</sup> .
<i>Buddhi,</i>	<i>πνεῦμα,</i>
Spiritual soul.	Spirit of man.
<i>Atma,</i>	<i>τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον</i> <sup>2</sup> ,
Spirit.	God.

In this 'Upper Triad,' as distinct from the 'Lower Quaternary,' resided the immortal part of man. Overlapping the junction is the *Manas*, or mind. If this is drawn towards the fleshly side it is drawn towards death; if we live after the flesh we shall die, and if we are led by the Spirit we live. It is therefore intelligible to speak of the lower part as

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vii. 25; viii. 6; Col. ii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. viii. 16.

the flesh, and the higher as the Spirit; the intellectual, thinking, acting man being at the intermediate point between the two.

And here it may be remarked that the word 'soul' is so loosely used, so difficult to attach to a definition, that it is best to put it aside altogether as ambiguous and misleading. It is a pity to have to dethrone a popular word, but there seems no help for it; as a translation of *ψυχή* it means bodily life as common to animals and men, or again its adjective *ψυχικός* stands for a 'natural' carnal type in those whose thoughts are centred in the *ψυχή*<sup>1</sup>. And yet the word is adopted also for the immortal part of man, and utter confusion between things which it is important to keep separate is inevitable<sup>2</sup>. What is required is a term which shall indisputably mean that part of man which alike in the Christian Church and in Theosophical circles is held to be immortal. Provisionally let it be called the individuality of each man. And this, both Theosophists and Christians must distinguish from what may provisionally be called the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 14; xv. 44-46; Jas. iii. 15; Jude 19.

<sup>2</sup> e. g. Matt. x. 28, where it is opposed to *σῶμα*.

personality, or that congeries of habits, tastes, peculiarities, &c., which commonly serves to differentiate one man from another in the ordinary life of the world. And such provisional definition has the advantage of coinciding with the Theosophical terminology, so that there can be no doubt as to what is denoted by the words used, even if there be controversy as to the nature of the hypotheses or realities signified. If an example from Scripture is needed it may be found in that *locus classicus* 1 Cor. xv. 37, 38, 'Thou sowest not that body that shall be . . . but God giveth it a body. . . .' When one thinks of the personality of Paul, bodily presence weak and speech contemptible<sup>1</sup>, one can be sure that the risen Paul is not to be a half-blind tent-maker.

But having thus prepared the way by arriving provisionally at some rudiments of a terminology the main question can be tentatively approached. A Christian professes his belief in the resurrection of the dead and the life of the æon to come. He sometimes varies the phrase and states his belief in the resurrection of the flesh, or body, and the life eternal

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. x. 10.

or everlasting. He also may say that all men shall rise again with their bodies. It is noteworthy that an attempt was once made to write into the Latin creed *huius* before *carnis resurrectionem*, but that it was not allowed, and no Christian is bound to assume that the body of the resurrection need contain the particular congeries of atoms or materials which constituted his earthly body at the time of death, but only that somehow his individual self will take again a body which will be, in a sense, his own. The Theosophical doctrine is much the same in this respect. The continuing individuality—the individual self—is what goes forward after death to resurrection, according to the Christian doctrine, or to reincarnation, according to the Theosophical doctrine. But these two are not the same, neither can they be made to harmonize, except by the obscuration of the meaning of the terms used, or at least of one of them. As the meaning of the word Resurrection stands it excludes absolutely the meaning attached to the word Reincarnation. And as the whole Christian faith was preached on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, any system



that appears to deny that Resurrection, either to Him or to mankind at large, is *prima facie* anti-Christian, and will probably be liable to be proved so.

But let there be no mistake about the stage in the argument here reached. No doctrine can be proved to be anti-Christian unless it can be proved to be false, materially false in itself, and not merely in verbal opposition to formulated creeds or doctrines. No mere dialectic victory will suffice. And to rest on authority merely brings on a clash of assertions and denials, and no progress. It is simply *petitio principii*, for the sum of the contention on either side is that the authorities of the other are wrong. And when authority is denied it must submit to verification. And if Pilate's question must be asked an answer can be found. Truth is actual fact, correctly ascertained, and stated in clearly understood conventions mutually agreed to and rigidly observed. Of these conventions words are the most important, then figures, numbers, and all kinds of measurement. But outside the domain of pure mathematics and pure deductive logic a perfect proof is difficult to reach, and

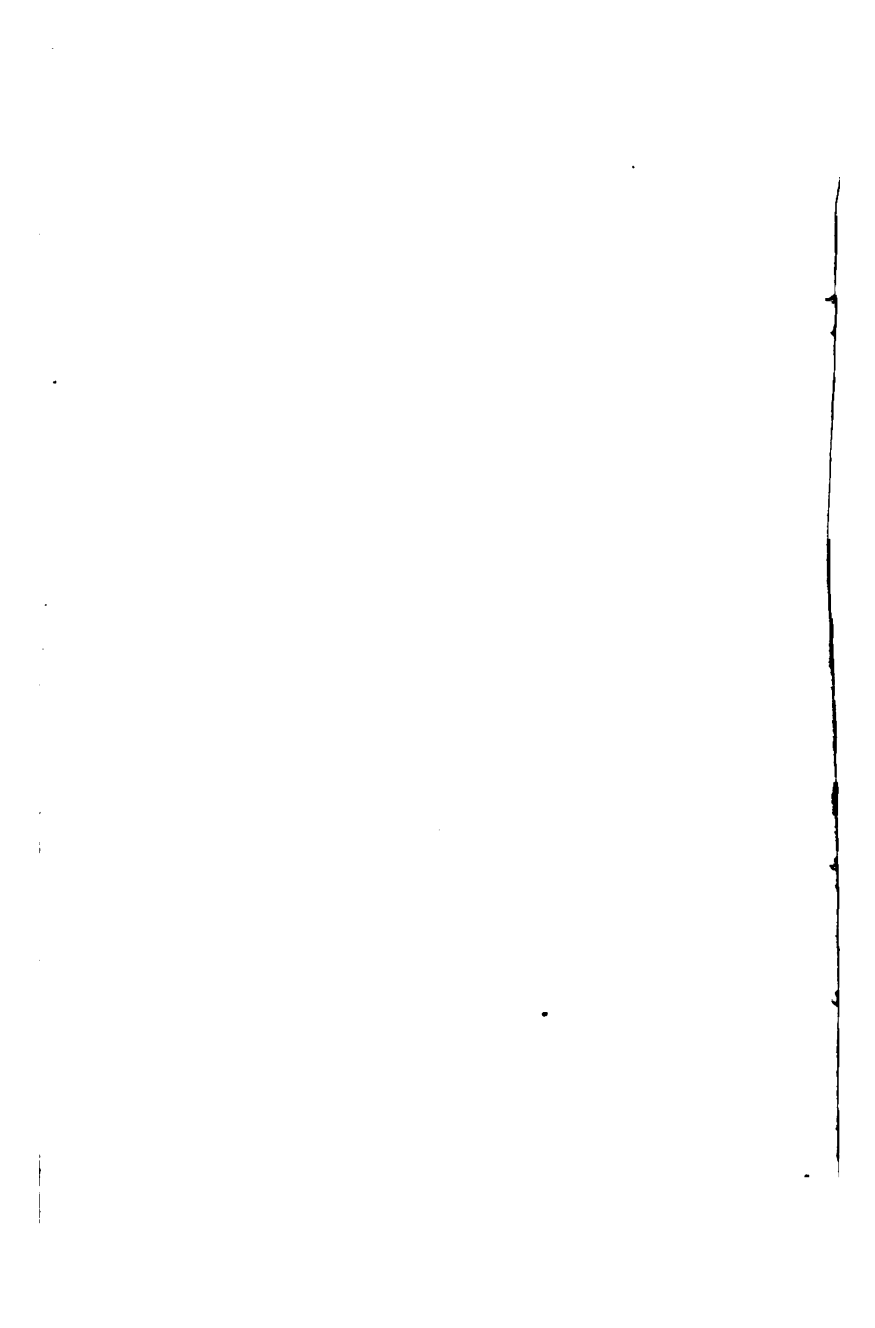
most investigators have to be content with a high inductive probability. And especially is this the case in the domain of biology, and the still more recondite interactions of the 'occult' forces, in both which the ascertaining of facts is an extremely difficult process, becoming more and more so as the student advances. At the outset it will be well to return to the provisionally accepted septenary constitution of man. Visible man is in the first place *χοικός*, of the dust of the earth, or rather of the soil. It can be shown that his body arises from, and can be reduced to, certain chemical elements and their compounds. The eternity or indestructibility of these, once held to be axiomatic, is now seriously doubted, so that there seems no finality *a parte ante* here. And even assuming the chemical atoms to be the units of man's body there is no starting-point until these come together in very complicated combination. And if the atoms are, as seems likely, themselves highly complex, the resulting complexity in the simplest combination is yet more complex. And even if there is trace of any individuality here the law seems plain that the individual, to

attain power or even the prospect of it, must merge its individuality in a combination.

Passing, however, at a bound to the next stage (for the bridge from the inorganic to the living has not yet been built to man's knowledge), the minute protozoon, which may be assumed to exist, has little more individuality than a drop of water. It can grow, and when it grows it splits, and becomes indeed two or more particles, but of such apparent uniformity that there is no difference between them except in identity, and such relationship as that of parent to child is inapplicable. Whether this kind of life exists actually or is only hypothetical may be doubted. Nothing lower than Amoeba is known, for Bathybius proved to be inorganic. All life seems to manifest itself as cells, whether independent, as in unicellular bodies, or in bodies compounded of cells in indefinite number and more or less differentiated. And these cells, or life units, like the atoms, seem obliged to merge their individuality (if they have it) in a compound body if they are to form anything that is progressive.

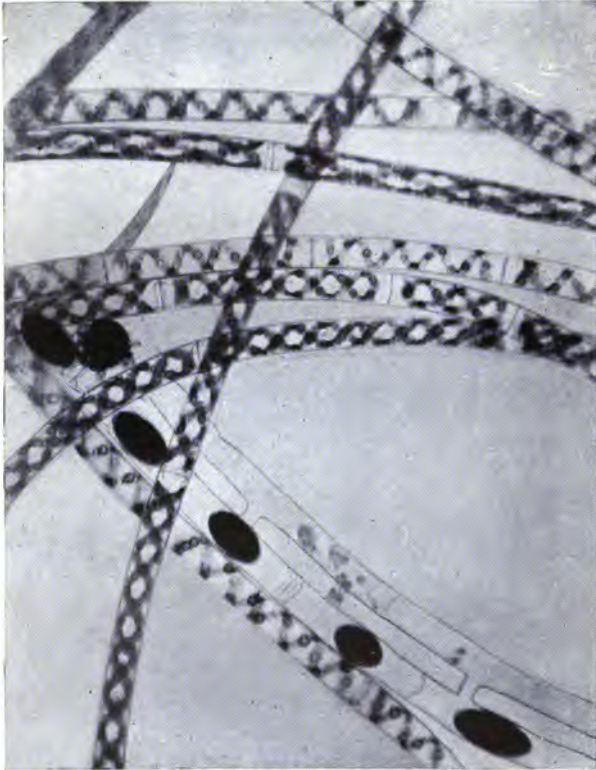
The process can be readily observed by any

one at the seaside with a low-power microscope and a few bits of glass. A green pond will probably give access to higher mysteries still. The little Alga plants will be seen adding cell to cell lengthwise to form threads, or broadwise to form films, or again more cunningly to form stem and leaf-like structures. The plant is a federal aggregate of cells disposed after some particular type or form. A unicellular plant may indeed be sufficiently distinct from others to be referred to a species and classed under a genus, but a multicellular plant has specific form in a far more marked degree. It has obviously a third principle, even though it may tend to revert to unicellular habits. And this may or may not be the same as the Theosophists call *Linga Sharira*. An instance out of a green pond will exhibit this. The green in the water may be found to consist of the long threads of an Alga of the genus *Spirogyra*. These under the microscope resolve themselves into strings of elongated cells, each containing a sort of twist of green living matter enclosed by a transparent skin. One of these may lie alongside another, and the whole contents of one



# SPIROGYRA IN

(FROM MICRO-PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUT

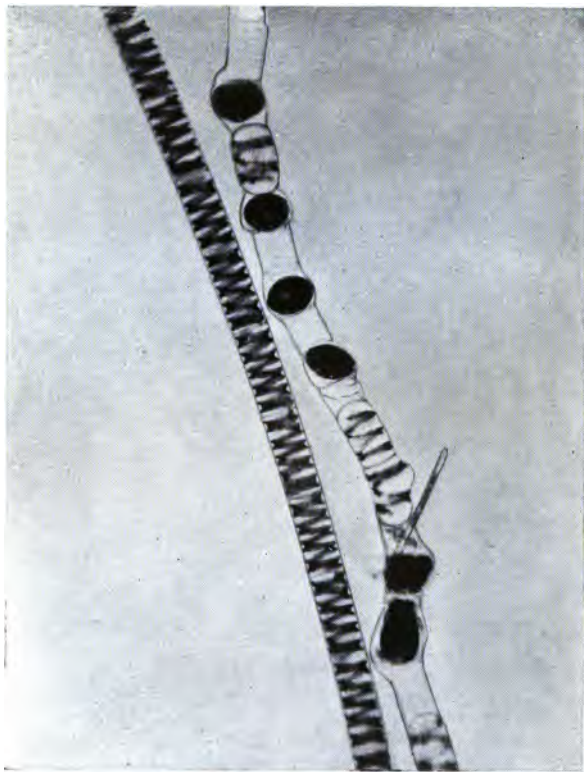


*a.* Separate threads conjugating.

*To come between pp. 68 and 69.]*

# CONJUGATION

HOR, TEDSTONE DELAMERE, AUG. 1893)



*b.* Conjugation in a single thread.





cell may be seen to pass into the one adjacent. Sometimes this happens in the same thread. The twain become one flesh. It is not a case of eating; there is no digestion; neither cell dies, but both live together, and from them the plant is reproduced. The two cells leave their skins behind and secede. The rest of the plant seems nothing to them; they revolt<sup>1</sup>.

It seems hard to suppose that these cells, complicated though they be, should have any permanent individuality, if only because they thus become so completely associated with others of a similar constitution. And if they are not the incarnations of individuals it is difficult to say when incarnation begins. What becomes apparent as plants of more complex development are studied is the huge aggregation and specialization of cells, apart from those that have any share in reproduction. The specific form becomes more fixed, though usually growth is by indefinite multiplication of similar parts, such as the leaves and buds

<sup>1</sup> In this matter of reversion to unicellular habits, it is worth noting that the very latest discovery relating to cancer seems to show that even in the mammalian body-cells may conjugate, with disastrous effects on the organs involved. (See *The Times* leading article, Dec. 2, 1904.)

of a tree; and the plant may still be regarded as an aggregate, but an aggregate of aggregates, prodigal in its sacrifice of cells.

And another problem now apparent is the inevitable destruction of the immature, the 'infant mortality' among seeds and seedlings. If there is any individuality incarnate in a seed it must be potentially that of a full plant, but without possibility of attainment except in a very few exceptional cases. And when, as frequently occurs, a species becomes extinct there is no possibility on this earth for the multitudes of perished seedlings to reincarnate as members of that species. If they contain nothing that can reincarnate at all, if they perish utterly as individuals, the theory of reincarnation breaks down rather badly. Plato saw the objection, but ignored it (Vision of Er). The Theosophical theory allows it, but accounts for it in a rather striking way, which has, however, the disadvantage of not lending itself to proof. The existence of other worlds is postulated, in a sequence round which the individualities move in rotation<sup>1</sup>. As far as ordinary scientific specula-

<sup>1</sup> Not on this 'plane.'

tion can reach it is improbable that terrestrial species of high organization could live in any world in which the force of gravity differs much from that prevalent here, even if the conditions of temperature and the supply of air and water were approximately equal. Beyond a probability that things which live and move under the influence of gravitation will be bilaterally symmetrical and will have a front and a rear, little can be guessed.

From plants the next step is to animals, and here the fourth principle is reached, that which the Theosophical Society calls *Kama Rupa*, and the Christian doctrine recognizes as the lust of the flesh, 'the body of this death.' The minimum difference between a plant and an animal is the possession of a definite mouth, at least at some period of its life history. Other noteworthy differences are that an animal cannot subsist on inorganic food, and is consequently dependent directly or indirectly on the vegetable kingdom. As a rule it has more volition than a plant, is much more highly organized, and is less inclined to mere indefinite multiplication of similar parts—it has in fact more specific

form. And instead of being a federal aggregate of cells, its body is the organ of a central government, though there are subsidiary centres also. The animal does indeed originate in the union of two cells which proceed at first by fission, but merge and differentiate with a degree of complexity which renders the tracing of development extremely difficult. Further, the whole is nourished by blood, which is a fluid conveying quasi-independent organisms of at least two kinds to every part of the body. Dust of the earth there must be, but yet more highly compounded. The life<sup>1</sup> is mainly in the blood, on which all else depends. The specific form is maintained with wonderful steadfastness throughout life and in all offspring, and the senses are acutely susceptible to pain and pleasure; and in the higher orders a mind, capable of at least elementary reasoning, and beautifully co-ordinated with the voluntary muscles, is displayed. Here, then, is the *ψυχὴ ζῶσα* complete with a good deal of *φρόνημα σαρκός*.

At the head of the animal kingdom is Man, animal in part, but even there exhibiting

<sup>1</sup> *ψυχή*.

characteristics which mark him off from other animals. It may be well to specify some of these, especially those that seem most important in estimating the probable origin of man's body *secundum carnem*. One is the presumed assumption of the upright attitude by man, a necessary step in any theory of evolution. This first released the fore limbs (*manus*) from locomotive functions, and made them available for other uses, the most important of which was probably the holding of the young, as will be seen. The grasping of weapons, and the increased brain power that their use demanded, seem rather a result of this than a separate effect of the upright attitude. But the upright attitude at once exposed the abdominal region and its organs—so carefully protected in the normal mammal. Alone of animals man moves broadside foremost. The loss of body-hair was a distinct advantage in regard to external parasites, and saved the time spent by animals in dealing with them. Clothes compensate for the loss, and afford the protection necessary. But, without going into anatomical details, it is sufficiently acknowledged that the upright attitude is

prejudicial to parturition ; nor does the 'sorrow' end there. There are instances enough of helpless infancy among animals and of parental care, but in every case but man's the tendency is to shorten, for safety's sake, the period of infancy, and to bring the powers of the infant into exercise as soon as possible. Nest and lair are dangerous places, especially in the absence of the parents ; and, as Mrs. Besant points out, the attack on the young may result in the death of the parents also, though she fails to see that on the whole the defence must be usually successful, and even when unsuccessful, not necessarily fatal to the parents. Primitive man could escape with his young, he could carry them, and by this means the young were in no need of that early specialization of parts, and consequent concentration of mind, which is so serious a factor in the arresting of progress. Of course it involved much trouble and patience to secure this, but when secured the brain and hand did the rest, and the gregarious, house-building, weapon-carrying, fire-using animal was already many stages above the next below him <sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The writer by no means commits himself to this

But at this point there must be another pause in the argument, and it is a moment for recapitulation. The formation of matter itself—the dust of the ground, and the air and waters—was a creation, not necessarily ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων, but ἐξ οὐ φαινόμενων. Its unit is the atom. Next, life is a step, a creation, a series of creations possibly, though one might suffice. The unit of this is the cell. Next, the union of cells into a specific form is a step, a creation, more obviously multiple, and unlike the last (as far as the last is known) this creation still continues; new species arising, often rather suddenly, out of previous ones. The unit here is the specimen. Next, very closely connected with the last (the Christian system hardly divides them), is the personality or body of lusts of the flesh, making the specimen in some degree more individual, and as it were constituting an ἀντίμιμον πνεύματος, as in the *Pistis Sophia*. Next follows mind or

theory, which is beset with enormous difficulties. He is impelled to assume that the development of man must have been one of the examples, which occur occasionally, of the sudden advent of a species, the *Pithecanthropus erectus* being as imaginary in the past, as was the use of him by the British in the recent war!

λογικῇ ψυχῇ, completing carnal man, and raising him to the 'dominion' over other living creatures. But in the Christian doctrine, up to this point all is mortal, nothing goes far beyond the present life. And, if any part does survive beyond physical death, it is only up to a further death which awaits it. The phrase 'Immortality of the Soul' is not in the Christian creed. Nor does our ordinary scientific knowledge point to any different conclusion. If any part survives it is not these lower manifestations of the life power, but something further, which provisionally may be described in St. Paul's words<sup>1</sup> as *καὶνὴ κτίσις*, not *χοικῆ* or *ψυχικῆ*, but something for which the word *πνεῦμα* is made to stand. It is this which governs the mind, attracting it Godward; it is this into which the *Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον* enters. It will be desirable to see how this new creation reveals itself, and to what it leads; but first it will be best to show why the *φρόνημα σαρκός* (and all below it) is death—that is, not of immortal nature.

One reason has been already mentioned. The enormous sacrifice of immature life, both

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. v. 17.



vegetable and animal, must be reckoned with ; for the acorn that grows into the oak can have nothing in its constitution different from the myriads of other acorns with the same potentiality. And still more is this evident in the case of the millions of fertilized fish eggs, which are potentially vertebrate animals of one species only, according to parentage. If acorn or fish egg reincarnate at all, they must at least be dependent on the duration of their species on this earth for finding new bodies of their present kind. And further, the sudden destruction of former species, and the almost equally sudden appearance of new varieties, such as the ancon ram<sup>1</sup> and the brown rat (phenomena which occur, though rarely), tend to show that the direct lines of progress end in blind alleys, and that changes are determined at a comparatively early stage in the life history of specimens. Take such a case as that of the thick-skinned and nearly brainless reptiles known as Dinosaurs. Morosaurus perished in his foolishness, thinking, if he ever thought, that a hide that no tooth could penetrate, spread on a

<sup>1</sup> Lyell, *Principles of Geology*, ii. 314.

gigantic skeleton, would save him. That such a biological failure should be regarded as on the upward road through a series of reincarnations, when his bodily form was verging towards extinction as a penalty of over-specialization, seems unlikely. Moreover, in the case of the higher apes the shape of the skull and body generally becomes more simian as age advances, so that progress is again in the wrong direction, pointing to the ultimate extinction of the species<sup>1</sup>. The same holds good with man's body to some extent. The early closing of the sutures of the skull in the negro race seems to be the physical concomitant of the early arrest of intellectual development that is so noticeable in *Homo Afer*, and is one of the characters which impel certain naturalists to classify him as a distinct species. It is this tendency towards decadent senility which seems the best modern confirmation of the words of our Lord, 'Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.' It is the young body on which new influences can work, and the

<sup>1</sup> See diagrams, *British Museum Guide to Mammalia*.

greater the difference that is to be made the further and further back must the influence begin to work. *Ἄνωθεν* seems a key-word, and another is *καινή κτίσις*. The carnal life of animal man having reached a certain stage, the new or spiritual life can appear. And when it does appear it may be expected to be as entirely new as the change from inorganic chemistry to life, or (*ἄνωθεν* again) from plant cell to plant, or again from a cell to animals and the *ψυχῆ ζῶσα*. And yet, though new, its exact commencement will probably be as difficult to locate as the commencement of specific form or voluntary motion, whether in the history of the race or of the specimen. And though for conventional purposes it may be necessary to fix an arbitrary point, and assume that a child who has breathed is admissible to baptism before death and to Christian burial afterward (just as eight years is arbitrarily assumed as the age of subjection to law and twenty-one years as the age of full responsibility), these arbitrary points cannot be made binding on theologians. For though the Church may draw a sharp distinction between *foetus* and *natus* and

ignore the life *in utero* and its loss before or during parturition<sup>1</sup>, the human life of our Lord has been almost universally dated from the Annunciation. It would not be difficult to assign reasons for this, especially in view of the heresy of the later Ebionim, but the fact that the Redeemer is so marked off from the redeemed emphasizes the admission that until there can be said to be opportunity for the new birth, man or potential man is altogether mortal, exactly as was inferred of the fish eggs. But before quitting this part of the subject St. Paul's words<sup>2</sup> about ἀποκαταδοκία must be examined. And more especially because the ματαιότης has been identified by Theosophical writers with *Maya*, or Illusion, and the round of reincarnations. Rather, as it seems, the Apostle saw the waste and loss in creation, and hoped and believed that when the first-fruits of the Spirit had accomplished their work, and the new creation had raised the mortal body of man to glory, then might begin the work of restoring that which God

<sup>1</sup> Except in relation to wilful abortion; but on this subject see the prayer in the *Euchologion*, which contains a strange view.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. viii. 19.

had made so good, and man might again dress and keep the garden of the Lord.

But without fixing any exact epoch, and without debarring those in whom, though they lived before Christ, the Spirit of Christ dwelt<sup>1</sup>, there must be some outward visible proof of the new creation on which the gospel of it can be preached, something convincing to the reason of man. And this must be something absent from nature, and absent, or at best foreshadowed only, in man before Christ, and clearly and visibly present among Christians now. And such a thing exists in the Forgiveness of Sins<sup>2</sup>, and it stands in the forefront of the Gospel, and is our share in bringing the Lord's Prayer to fulfilment.

It is needless to dwell on the rigid sequence of cause and effect in nature. From the lowest right up to carnal man there is no forgiveness. When Cain is cast out he is given the covenant of the Sevenfold Vengeance, and his descendant Lamech demands seventy and sevenfold. And though this may be modified by the Mosaic law of simple retribution, such texts as Exodus xxiii. 21 would go to

<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter i. 11.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 92.

prove the contention that God alone can forgive sins, and that it was blasphemy for man to claim the power. Yet Christ claimed it, and not only claimed it as a right but enforced it as a duty, and promised the registration of human forgiveness in heaven. And without entering on any question of penitential discipline the experience of any Christian man or woman, who from the heart has forgiven a sin, will show the effect produced both on forgiver and forgiven. From the simple pardon granted for some petty accidental injury up to the most formal absolution, from baptism to death-bed, Christian life is full of forgiveness, both given and accepted. Man remits, God remits; man retains, God retains. There are many ways of expressing the doctrine, some having connexion with the word sacrifice, others with words borrowed from the law courts of men. But the result is the same, the clearing of man from the ulterior spiritual consequence of guilt, the immediate earthly consequence being of far less import. But the whole force of the doctrine of reincarnation, the whole idea of Karma, is the refusal to allow that any sin can be pardoned. 'Has

God the right to forgive?' is the question asked in respect of the doctrine of the Atonement in the *Key to Theosophy*. And though it is possible that some rather crude American version of that doctrine has been selected for attack, the negative answer given to the question is too plain to admit of doubt. There is no forgiveness, no free gift, nothing but consequences, whether of good or evil, and though the consequences of good acts certainly create more good, the consequences of evil create more evil. But for those who know what the free gift is, who can dispense it as stewards, official or unofficial, of the mysteries of God, consequences are comparatively immaterial. An account indeed must be rendered, and a very heavy one awaits the sinner, but consequences are finite, and only those who refuse to exercise forgiveness can be regarded as debarred from it. Little need be said of the sacramental grace in Baptism, or of the forgiveness of sins which follows repentance and leads to faith. The new creation makes carnal man a member of Christ. And it may be that just as the cell is the unit of life in a carnal body, so the individual heir of

salvation has a yet more glorious place in the Unity of the Church, the Body of Christ who is man! And if it be objected that to rise again with a body of flesh is to become subject again to the lusts of the flesh, the answer can be given that nothing of the kind necessarily follows. The aqueous chemistry of carbon and nitrogen has nothing inherently evil in it. Many a plant nourishes animal life without death to itself or any lesser harm. So may a tree of life in the Paradise of God; and if the lust of reproduction seems the source of the intolerable competition, whereby the present races of living things are dominated, there are, even in this world, indications of different arrangements, such as might prevail in a world where they neither marry nor are given in marriage. But the argument of this thesis is concluded, and it only remains to sum it up and submit it for judgement. I therefore submit—

I. That there is no evidence in history to show that any doctrine of reincarnation of men in successive lives was taught by our Lord or His Apostles, either openly or secretly.

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II. That the facts made available by the study of the living things on the earth do not point to any such theory, but rather tend to show that these are mortal as units, and even as groups of units, whatever may be their ultimate purpose.

III. That any such doctrine as reincarnation is certainly in opposition to the fundamental, elementary doctrine and practice of the Forgiveness of Sins, which ushered in the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, and which can be experimentally proved to be effectual.

## VIII

### CONCERNING SIN

FACE to face however with Gnosis, whether of the realm of material forces, or of biology, or of things or beings that are invisible, it must be frankly admitted that the attitude of Christians has undergone some very considerable modifications.

Concomitantly with the progress of knowledge the strength of ecclesiastical discipline has declined, and is in danger of complete extinction. In the first place, the 'Erastian' trend of our legislation has slowly but completely abolished the penal jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Courts over the laity in this country. Once a year, on Ash Wednesday, a feeble wish is expressed that the godly discipline of the primitive Church may be restored, but it is scarcely to be expected. The whole jurisdiction of the Courts Christian has passed to the Crown. And further, the application of the legal syllogism to cases of alleged false doctrine among the clergy

seems rapidly passing into desuetude. As to ceremonial the same applies. Ritual represents doctrine, and its vestures and postures are not regarded as matters of pure convention, such as uniform, drill, or etiquette might be. It is hard to draw an exact distinction, so such things may be treated, as they are treated, as being on the same footing as doctrines. And the apparent drift is towards anarchy.

But just as the Crown may be trusted to maintain civil law consistently with the liberty of the subject, so the Church may be well assured that the Spirit of Christ will show the faithful the way of salvation. And it may be that the time has now come for a frank admission that the Church has been hitherto forced into taking up duties which were not part of her mission, and which her Divine Founder expressly refused to exercise. He would not sit in judgement on transgressions. He would not be trapped into statements which could be used as the major premisses of legal syllogisms. He came to save His people from inward Sin which Law was too weak to purge.

It may be a terrible effort to break with the past and throw on the scrap-heap the whole elaborate machinery of forensic theology and canon law, and even to leave in abeyance the claim to judge the tribes and the nations, and to deal with political acts *ratione peccati*. Some apology seems necessary, and when a modern writer undertakes the task of treating of an ancient subject certain apparent obstacles loom large before him. Some of these prove real, others he had better condemn as vain or fallacious. And the latter may be dealt with first, so as to clear the view. And among them is the old enemy, the *argumentum ad verecundiam*. To write at all on such a subject as Original Sin may seem presumptuous. So many, so good men have done it already. Surely it were better to read their works and not spill more ink. And yet, at all risk of a charge of pride or vain confidence, it had better be said at once that a very large portion of what has been written is either actually or virtually waste paper at the present day. And if some confirmation of so audacious an assertion ought to be put forward for the sake

of a semblance of modesty, the following considerations will be seen to have some weight. First, that a large amount that has been written has been controversial matter directed more to prove opponents wrong than to bring the truth to light: and secondly, that even where some of it may be worth reading, yet the time and labour would not bring adequate remuneration<sup>1</sup>. And if by way of surmounting this difficulty any standard of antiquity be sought, the Horatian question arises concerning any given author:

‘Inter quos referendus erit? veteresne poetas,  
An quos et praesens et postera respuat aetas?’

Wherefore, for an attempt of the present kind the best method will probably be to abandon altogether any endeavour to collate or balance opinions ancient or modern, and, at the risk of appearing presumptuous, to start afresh from the Scripture basis which the Church of England regards as at once the maximum and minimum of necessary authority<sup>2</sup>. Other writings may indeed be useful

<sup>1</sup> See *Water Babies* (C. Kingsley), where Tom visits Waste-paper-land.

<sup>2</sup> Art. XX.

as containing additional facts or as examples of good or faulty methods or conclusions. And here a real difficulty is encountered. Since the invention of printing made it possible, an enormous amount of observed facts have been placed on record, and these are the materials with which the new inductive logic builds up modern science. And both the facts and the logic must be taken account of in order to convince modern thinkers, who are apt to brush aside ancient writers as being ill-informed. The starting-point, however, must be the Holy Scriptures, and in them the Gospel rather than the Old Testament. And if the Scriptures are treated as containing statements and hypotheses rather than revelation and dogma, the alteration will be rather verbal than fundamental, a concession to modern methods not an abandonment of ancient truth. Whether an inductive theology is possible, the Church will eventually decide, but if Scripture truth can be confirmed inductively a Christian teacher may fearlessly use the method.

Now the origin of humanity is one subject of inquiry, and our existing state may form

quite another subject. The main inquiry must be that which will enable one to arrive at a true conception of what that human nature was which our Lord assumed at His Incarnation, and in what respects, if any, it differed from the nature of the men to whom He preached and that of those now living from whom His Church Militant is drawn. And here it may be noted that the word *φύσις* is not directly used in Scripture of our Lord. The word *σάρξ* seems preferred, and is the better term, as the past tense can be used of it, whereas *φύσις* is permanent. *Σάρξ* may be taken as the equivalent to *σῶμα ψυχικόν*, which is exchanged at the Resurrection for *σῶμα πνευματικόν*, the *φύσις ἀνθρωπίνη* still subsisting, though not as it was on earth.

Now our Lord's body is described by St. Paul<sup>1</sup> as *ὁμοίωμα σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας*, is as it were the matrix or sphere of action of *ἁμαρτία*, and our Lord's human body was *σάρξ*, but *χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας*<sup>2</sup>. And before proceeding further it may be well to establish a sharp distinction between the terms *ἁμαρτία* and

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. iv. 15.

its plural *ἀμαρτίαι*, and such words as *ἀμάρτημα*, *παράβασις*, *παράπτωμα*. 'Αμαρτία or sin hardly needs the adjective 'original' to emphasize the difference between what is within man and those overt actions which render it manifest. Provisionally then *ἀμαρτία* is sin, and *ἀμαρτίαι* are abstract forms of it regarded separately, irrespective of any particular cases of evil thoughts or actions to which the sin may give rise. And in confirmation of this, attention may be called to certain words and actions of our Lord which do not seem capable of explanation by any other theory. He was born to save His people from their *ἀμαρτίαι*. He preached *ἄφεσις ἀμαρτιῶν*. Incidentally there is *ἄφεσις ἀμαρτημάτων*<sup>1</sup>, but it is quite remarkable how very little of His attention was given to acts of mere wrong-doing. Herod might kill St. John the Baptist<sup>2</sup>, Pilate might massacre Galilaeans in the Temple court<sup>3</sup>, and no word of denunciation is uttered by Christ. A man comes with a *prima facie* claim for justice<sup>4</sup>. He will not say who is

<sup>1</sup> St. Mark iii. 28.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matt. xiv ; St. Mark vi, &c.

<sup>3</sup> St. Luke xiii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> St. Luke xii. 13.



right. Some Samaritans oppose Him, He goes to another village<sup>1</sup>. When a woman is caught in actual adultery<sup>2</sup>, He sees the sin in her and also in her accusers, and makes them see it too, but the mere act seems almost passed over. When He tells His disciples not to resist evil He almost seems to say, 'If your foes wish to do you one injurious act, let them do two<sup>3</sup>.' And, most striking of all, when the awful crime of His own death has been determined on, He makes absolutely no effort to prevent the authors of it from putting their intentions into action. It would, therefore, seem as if He regarded wrong acts as symptoms of an inward *ἀμαρτία*, and that He showed little or no disposition to make clean the outside of the cup while the inside remained unclean as before<sup>4</sup>. And thus *ἀμαρτία* cannot be regarded as the mere abstract quality of all *ἀμαρτήματα* (as colour might be regarded as the abstract quality of coloured objects), but as a definite indwelling something that He found in all men, the

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke ix. 52.

<sup>2</sup> St. John viii. 2 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> St. Matt. v. 41, &c.

<sup>4</sup> See St. Matt. v. 27, where the wish, and not the act merely, is condemned.

*ἀφεσις* of which was no mere judicial pardon, but the elimination of an opposing force from within, thus making the individual fitter for the Kingdom of Heaven<sup>1</sup>.

It will be necessary to remark here that the Latin *peccatum* is a doubtfully satisfactory rendering of *ἀμαρτία*. *Peccatum* is rather *ἀμάρτημα*, and this is a point to be borne in mind: for, though our Lord Himself dealt leniently with *ἀμαρτήματα*, the Church from the days of Ananias and Sapphira onward has dealt sharply with them by judicial methods and on disciplinary grounds<sup>2</sup>.

With the legal-minded Romans the terms *ἀμαρτία* and *ἀμαρτίαι* became merged in *peccatum* and *peccata*, with a loss of theological accuracy and an impetus towards discipline of a kind which provoked the 'Eras-tian' protest. It is true that the 'Seven Deadly Sins' maintained their abstract character, and that the theory of Purgatory acknowledged an infection of nature. But there

<sup>1</sup> The cleansing of the Temple might be quoted as an instance to the contrary, but the scarcely disputed fact that this was twice done shows that the object was protest rather than prevention.

<sup>2</sup> Acts v. 1 sqq. See 1 Cor. v. 5.

has undoubtedly been a certain amount of confusion between *ἀμαρτίαι* and *ἀμαρτήματα*, for which the insistent tendency to attach sin to the human will alone may be partially responsible. *Ἀμαρτία* is associated with the whole *σάρξ*, and from this attachment our Lord's *σάρξ* was *ab initio* and always free.

The next stages of the argument will therefore be to show what *ἀμαρτία* is, and how it obtained entrance or attachment to man. The line suggested will be that *ἀμαρτία* is nothing less than the influence or personal presence of the devil in man. It may be possible to work back to the origin of this, but its actuality must be known first. In an age of inductive reasoning it may seem unsafe, if not arrogant, to rest too much on the old *a priori* logic. But it is fair to assume that *φήμη οὐ τις πάμπαν ἀπόλλυται ἢν τινα πολλοὶ Λαοὶ φημίζουσιν* (Hesiod, *Op.* 760), and that by this rule if the Scriptures habitually attribute the existence of *ἀμαρτία* to a particular agency, it is hardly safe to ignore that agency, or to neglect the indications given as to its nature and operation. To collate all passages in which this agency is mentioned

would practically amount to a rearrangement of the New Testament. It will suffice to mention a few, and the dicta of St. John in his First Epistle will prove a useful preface. The whole epistle is obviously the writing of a very old man accustomed to be listened to, and therefore bold to summarize his faith in a small compass. 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves' (i. 8, &c.). 'He that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil' (iii. 8). It is not very difficult to maintain here the distinction between *ἀμαρτίαι* and *ἀμαρτήματα*, for the *ἀμαρτία* is recognized by its outward expression. And with this the law is concerned (iii. 4), as St. Paul more fully explains. But St. John's concluding words seem to put the seal on the doctrine (v. 18): 'Whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that was begotten of God keepeth him, and the evil one toucheth him not . . . the whole world lieth in the evil one . . . we are in him that is true . . . guard yourselves from idols.' Sins and sin there will be, but neither will deliver

us over to the evil one. The evil one has indeed a kingdom, and will try to claim service or worship to it, wherefore a caution against idols is given; but he cannot lay hold on (*οὐχ ἄντεται*) or pluck one of Christ's own from His hands.

And from this summary it will be well to pass straight to the Gospel story. Our Lord's ministry opens with His Baptism, but immediately after this and before the actual work commences, there comes the Temptation. He is led or driven into the wilderness that He may face the evil one in contemplation; apart, that is, from such conditions as He afterwards faced in the world of men. The Temptation is clearly not from within, but from without. It is not our Lord's hungry body that tempts Him, but the devil. It is not our Lord's worldly ambition that tempts Him, but the devil. It is not for Himself that the idea of putting God to the test arises, but from the same definite external agent. The whole idea is that this external agent was trying to implant *ἀμαρτία* in the *σάρξ* of the Second Adam, that thereby the same dominion might be exercised over Him as over the rest of

mankind. That the effort was renewed again and again throughout our Lord's ministry, either indirectly through the Apostles, or directly as at Gethsemane, and that it culminated in the darkness of Calvary, seems clear from such passages as the address to St. Peter, 'Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat,' &c.<sup>1</sup> 'Deliver us from the evil one<sup>2</sup>.' 'This is your hour, and the power of darkness<sup>3</sup>,' for at the Temptation the devil only departed from Him 'for a season<sup>4</sup>,' and the darkness of Calvary may well be compared with the ninth plague of Egypt, when He sent 'evil angels among them<sup>5</sup>.' But in submitting the problem to the tests of the logic of the present day, it must be carefully noted what the value of such statements is. The one undisputed preliminary fact is that the statements are made. And the simplest induction is, that the statements were intended to be accepted as literal truth by those to whom they were addressed. And another induction almost equally pro-

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke xxii. 31.

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke xxii. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. lxxviii. 49.

<sup>4</sup> St. Matt. vi. 13.

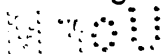
<sup>5</sup> St. Luke iv. 13.

bable is, that there was a certain amount of previous knowledge in the minds of the hearers, and even a terminology in which that knowledge was expressed. And further, that that knowledge was a knowledge of matters now existent, and perhaps better known now than formerly. In fine, that it may be possible to draw together the results of the work of the intensely agnostic and critical age now closing, and bring them to bear on the facts and doctrines of the first century.

And to plunge at once. St. Paul (Eph. ii. 2) speaks of 'the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.' Probably this is one of the synonyms for the devil. Clearly it indicates a sphere, or region, or locus, or limit of the influence of this prince. And the word itself is remarkable. *Ἄήρ* is always the lower air, *coelum nubiferum* at farthest. *Αἰθήρ* is not used in the New Testament. One must not forget the phenomena of the mirage, which perhaps may be regarded as the physical basis of the second temptation, as the desert stones were of the first. But the 'power of

the air' must stand for a great deal more than the control of the impact of waves of luminiferous ether on unequally heated atmospheric strata.

It implies a direct influence on man, and an influence hostile to obedience to God, conveyed through the medium of something that is called the air. For want of a more exact term 'the air' seems to stand for not merely the mechanical and physical atmosphere of the earth, but for all our immediate unseen surroundings. And what these surroundings contain the modern developments of electricity are gradually exhibiting, and no one at present can venture to set limits to the possible results of that research. But it does appear that there are currents, undulations, rays, or whatever the most correct term may be in each case, which can be picked up under certain conditions or by specially prepared instruments, but which ordinarily are obscured by the much more conspicuous presence of other phenomena. A standard instance in science is the existence and potency of the ultra-violet rays of the spectrum of solar light. The spectrum also appears to





afford indications of what may be absolute inhibition of certain rays. A more familiar, and perhaps equally good example, is the effect of general noise in drowning particular sounds.

But the modern investigations which most nearly concern the theological student, are those which have for their subject the phenomena aptly named 'telepathic,' by the Society for Psychological Research. If it is possible to reduce within reasonable compass the enormous volume of badly described experiences and semi-conscious fraud which that society has investigated, the conclusion is that there can be no manner of doubt that mind can, under certain circumstances, communicate with mind without the use of any of the ordinary senses. To effect this communication, some such hypothetical medium as is indicated by St. Paul's phrase has probably to be invoked, though even at the conclusion of the evidence it may have to remain hypothetical.

Some of the conditions under which occult influences manifest themselves may be gathered from Scripture, and may be compared

with conditions under which modern examples have to be investigated. The first is solitude, and usually solitude in a desert place. And it is noteworthy that Moses, Elijah<sup>1</sup>, our Lord, St. Paul<sup>2</sup>, all seem to have gone into Arabia for meditation, a dry climate, far from any crowd of men. It will also be noted that our Lord showed a decided predilection for hill-tops, both for prayer and for such a manifestation as the Transfiguration. He, as St. John the Baptist had done before Him, drew His audiences to quiet places; the Sermon on the Mount, the sermon from the boat, the express withdrawal of His disciples when weary 'with many coming and going<sup>3</sup>,' are instances. For purposes of controversy He must needs enter the Synagogue or the Temple courts, but it is clear that He loved the quiet of the open sky both for His own sake and for the sake of those who came to hear Him. Is there no psychical reason for this? One is here submitted. It is this—that He felt the 'power of the air.' If 'the air' were

<sup>1</sup> Assuming the place of the Temptation to have been Sinai, which is not improbable.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. i. 17.

<sup>3</sup> St. Mark vi. 31.

clear, if the currents therein were few and distinct, His human faculties could pick up what there was, and He was not perturbed by a rush of contrary and hostile thoughts, and even actual forces such as could inhibit His own forces, so that He could do no mighty work<sup>1</sup>. A second condition will therefore be the presence of sympathetic minds, or at least of minds that were open and not actively hostile. For the supposition is that a thought or intention in the human mind or brain is not confined within the periphery of the body. Some curious experiments with regard to the electric eel (*Gymnotus*) led to the discovery that every muscular (and probably every nervous) effort or action is accompanied by an electrical reaction, small but perceptible. The *Gymnotus* has apparently converted energy that might have actuated its muscles into electricity (a big lizard is a very numbing thing to hold when it struggles). Wherefore if this be so, 'the air' in the neighbourhood of an active mind, and to an indefinite distance, may be receptive of currents or modes of force, which again may induce

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xiii. 58 ; St. Mark vi. 5.

currents in other minds<sup>1</sup>. Anyhow, the apparent analogy is worth noting. For it brings the observed phenomena of telepathy into relation with other phenomena. It may explain Elisha's knowledge of Gehazi's absence<sup>2</sup>, and the surprise of the same prophet that he had not learned the Shunammite's trouble<sup>3</sup>. Our Lord's knowledge of St. Peter's answer about the tribute<sup>4</sup>, His knowledge of the death of Lazarus, and of Nathanael under the fig-tree<sup>5</sup>, would likewise be instances.

But in dealing with human powers or faculties not otherwise explicable on some such hypothesis as this, the possibility that the thought currents may be generated by other agents than men must be carefully considered<sup>6</sup>, especially as this, rather than human telepathy, is the problem of *ἀμαρτία*. At the same time it must be borne in mind that a collective telepathy is possible. Such phenomena as a stampede of horses, the sudden rushes of a brood of ducklings, a panic among

<sup>1</sup> 'By the pricking of my thumbs,  
Something wicked this way comes.'

SHAKESPEARE, *Macbeth*.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings v. 26.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Kings iv. 27.

<sup>4</sup> St. Matt. xvii. 24 sqq.

<sup>5</sup> St. John i. 48.

men, the collective cruelty of a crowd, and possibly such instances as the *φήμη* at Mycale or the modern 'Kaffir telegraphy,' may be entirely animal or human, though collective rather than individual. And the new difficulty that the existence of telepathy has raised is that of eliminating the effects of that possible factor, before assigning other causes to phenomena.

Nevertheless, our Lord met with what seems to be *ἀμαρτία* in its most virulent form among those who are called *δαιμονιζόμενοι*, who are always described in terms which point to the occupation of living persons by a hostile power, or powers. These can usually be cast out—ejected from their tenement. There are many particular instances which are instructive; but on one occasion our Lord seems to speak in general terms, as though giving a digest of common experience by way of a parable<sup>1</sup>. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man it passeth through waterless places seeking rest, and, finding none, it returns to its former tenement, which it finds 'empty, swept, and garnished.' Now here,

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xii. 43; St. Luke xi. 24.

besides what can be gathered from the accounts of the *δαιμονιζόμενοι*, are at least two important points. First, that of the desert: it seems as though the spirit can find no abiding place amidst the busy world of men, yet apart from them there is no rest. And, secondly, that there is vacancy in him from whom the spirit has just gone forth. An empty idle mind seems open to external influences<sup>1</sup>. Whether it were that the miserable men who had so suffered were not immediately received again into ordinary society after apparent recovery, or for another reason, the liability to the recurrence of 'possession' is recorded as important. It is known to be the case that a vacant idle mind is specially open to 'suggestion,' and in such cases the will is apt to grow progressively weaker, and the result is a more complete subjugation.

But if the possibility of demonic suggestion or possession is to be entertained, the complication that arises from the obvious simi-

<sup>1</sup> 'In works of labour as of skill,  
I would be busy too,  
For Satan finds some mischief still  
For idle hands to do.'

DR. WATTS, Song 20, vol. iv. p. 304.

larity of some of the effects attributed to it with those of what is called ordinary disease must be admitted and examined. The boy beneath the Mount of Transfiguration<sup>1</sup> has symptoms of close similarity to those of epilepsy, that sudden, startling inhibition of volition, which is so little understood and which seems so strikingly connected with insanity, chronic pauperism, alcoholic propensities, criminality, and other signs of degeneracy<sup>2</sup>.

But here we have only another example of what is frequently asserted in the New Testament of the connexion between sin and disease of all sorts, and the mental aspect of disease is of course quite familiar to our modern schools. The first step towards the healing of the paralysed man is the forgiveness of his sins. The infirmity of the bent woman<sup>3</sup> is attributed to Satan by our Lord Himself, and St. Paul assigns his *σκόλοψ* to the same agency<sup>4</sup>. And his phrase 'to deliver to Satan for the destruction of the flesh' is

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xvii. 14; St. Mark ix. 14; St. Luke ix. 37.

<sup>2</sup> See certain works of the American Society for the Study and Cure of Inebriety.

<sup>3</sup> St. Luke xiii. 11.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 7; 1 Cor. v. 5; 1 Tim. i. 20.

also an indication of the same belief. And the physiological effects of cheerful or depressing surroundings and the direct actions of the wills of others are well known, if not quite fully understood. It is known that bad news (for example) can inhibit digestion; that anger can interfere with the liver; and that strong or fierce people can inspire awe or terror quite out of all proportion to their actual power of doing harm. It would seem therefore that the Satanic or demonic agency is not dissimilar in its effects from known human agency, whether from within or from without the sufferer.

But the matter becomes yet more complex in view of the modern knowledge of the cause of zymotic disease. In the case of leprosy and fever the immediate cause is a bacillus, or other micro-organism. In the notable case of Gehazi the *bacillus leprae* was presumably in the 'changes of raiment,' and the shock of discovery weakened and predisposed Gehazi's body. Miriam and Uzziah are other instances<sup>1</sup>. It may be assumed that, like other disease germs, this particular

<sup>1</sup> Num. xii. 10 ; 2 Chron. xxvi. 19.



species was freely and generally distributed, but did not always find a congenial soil; the healthy body resisting it easily, and the cure consisting of the triumph (aided or unaided) of the cells of the body and the ejection of the pest. The rapidity of infection and cure is still a crux, but it is a matter of degree rather than of kind. At any rate, even in cases of zymotic disease the power of the will is not without its influence.

And this brings the inquiry to the extreme verge of our physiological knowledge. It is fairly certain that the bodies of men are influenced by human minds in human bodies external to themselves. It can be shown that some at least of the alleged effects of demonic agency are similar to such diseases as are known to be partly subject to the human will. It remains to consider the balance of evidence, if any, from which the action of other agents can be inferred.

It will be first both useful and safe to remember the epithet habitually applied to these agents, *ἀκάθαρτα πνεύματα*, unclean spirits. It is a word of warning and much needed. If it is necessary to grope in a spiritual Ge-

henna where the fire and the worm have not done their work as yet, it will be as well to adopt certain precautions. These terms are of course mere parable, but they have an interpretation. Just as we have in the organic world certain lower forms of life, which draw their sustenance from decaying or dead organisms and are highly prejudicial to living organisms, so in the spiritual world the existence of some such inferior forms may be looked for. And these will not manifest themselves in normal conditions of spiritual health, but only in cases of abnormal weakness or injury. And if one may carry the parable further, the connexion between physical, physiological, psychical and spiritual uncleanness may be better understood. Returning to Scripture, the ordinary sanitary rules are clear enough; so is the distinction (rough and ready, but sound on the whole) between clean and unclean meats. But there are two prohibitions which have a special reference to the present question.

The first is that relating to blood. The blood is not to be eaten. Animals, when killed for food, are to be killed either actually

'before the Lord,' or under careful rules and restrictions. The blood is said to be 'the life': *πλὴν κρέας ἐν αἵματι ψυχῆς οὐ φάγεσθε*, Gen. ix. 4; *οὐ βρωθήσεται ψυχὴ μετὰ τῶν κρεῶν*, Deut. xii. 23. Now the prime reason for this is apparently to mitigate the extreme fierceness that characterizes the eaters of raw meat. The Zulu impis were modern examples—fed exclusively on meat for that very purpose. This in itself is remarkable; but the prohibition of blood must be considered in relation to other factors in the problem. 'Cuttings in the flesh'<sup>1</sup> are forbidden, and such a display as that of the prophets of Baal on Carmel indicates the reason<sup>2</sup>. This purpose was magical; at least there is every reason for believing it to have been so. They hoped to show the required sign from heaven, and they went their usual way to obtain it. Balaam's enchantments and the sacrifice of Abraham (Gen. xv. 9) may be recalled, and the sacrifices in high places on which the later prophets and the Jerusalem priests looked with such disfavour.

The second prohibition is that relating to

<sup>1</sup> Lev. xix. 28; xxi. 5.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings xviii.

uncleanness arising from the dead. As far as this refers to merely sanitary matters there is little to be said. But the offerings of, or for, the dead (Deut. xxvi. 14; Ps. cvi. 28) are strictly denounced; sepulchres are unclean places (Num. xix. 16) where one must not lodge (Isa. lxv. 4), though the demoniacs did (possibly of course from lack of other shelter). Now taking these two prohibitions together, and bearing in mind the existence of a vast mass of beliefs and ceremonies in all parts of the world relating to blood and necromancy, it will be well to look into the matter a little closer.

A standard classical instance is the action of Odysseus in *Od.* xi, where the shades come to drink the sacrificial blood. Such customs as *incubatio* or sleeping on the skins of sacrificial animals (Virg. *Aen.* vii. 87), and the general notion throughout the world that it was possible to get into communion with the unseen gods above or below by means of blood, probably have a certain foundation in reality. The effect of blood on the higher animals is noteworthy also. It excites them seriously. Memory or instinct may connect

the sight or smell of it with danger, but the effect is not altogether that of fear. Yet it is difficult to arrive at a conclusion. To all appearance blood is simply a fluid part of the body, which has a convenient and useful habit or property of coagulating over a wound (if not severe) and preventing the ingress of microbes, and at the same time forming a shield behind which damaged tissues have time to reconstruct themselves. But microscopically it is more than this. The corpuscles have a quasi-independent life of their own, and that life is of a very intense kind, taking up oxygen in the lungs and parting with hydrogen and carbon to a corresponding extent with remarkable rapidity, and performing nutrient functions of a very complex order. But if the blood be shed its death supervenes after a very few moments. Something is rapidly dissipated. To the mere matter-of-fact senses it may be nothing but a smell. But smell is one of the most acute senses, and can detect the imponderable, or what is now, since the discovery of radium, believed to be the broken-up constituents of atoms. Indeed, it is fairly true to say that

nothing is known about smell, and still less about smells, or things smelt. And it is open to any one to hold that what takes place when a blood-corpuscule dies may have other effects besides a smell, and not less wonderful. The old necromantic theory of the *Odyssey* that the shade was dumb till it had been reinforced by blood, seems to be somewhat analogous to that mentioned in the couplet, 'Corpus terra tenet, tumulum circumvolat Umbra, Orcus habet Manes, Spiritus astra petit<sup>1</sup>.' The umbra or shade, not the dead, but some shadowy relics of his thoughts or personality, might, if reinforced, give information, though usually of an unsatisfactory kind. This would come within the description of an unclean spirit, and if this type of thing can reinforce itself from living  $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$  it may certainly be reckoned as one external source of  $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha$ . Some reference might here be made to the extraordinary theory of vampire corpses current in Russia and Eastern Europe, and lately set forth in a particularly nasty novel. One may also wonder why Baal-zebub of Ekron<sup>2</sup>, lord of flies, was in-

<sup>1</sup> The writer quotes from memory.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings i.

quired after as to sickness, but this would take one into regions certainly unclean and probably unprofitable. Anyhow, necromantic 'spiritualism' is not a matter in which it is safe to meddle. And, whatever may have been said in the first of these theses against the Neo-Buddhist Theosophy, the views put forward by the Theosophical Society on this subject are gladly acknowledged to be very safe, if not also sound; for the aspirant to knowledge is fairly warned to have nothing to do with anything of the sort.

But before dismissing this part of the subject it may be well to note that the practice of sacrifice of blood is rapidly disappearing from the earth. The disappearance has been progressive throughout history, and at the present time there is less than ever. Ashanti was the last notable instance. It may be that sacrifice of that sort has been found less and less effective as a matter of fact, and that the cause will be found to be the gradual passing of the *ἐνεστῶτος αἰῶνος πονηροῦ*<sup>1</sup>. But of that there is more to be said later. With regard to agents of a non-

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Gal. i. 4.

human nature or origin, such as the *πνεῦμα Πύθωνος*<sup>1</sup> or the 'devils,' 'gods many and lords many,' to which St. Paul alludes<sup>2</sup>, it is extremely difficult to say much owing to inability to isolate them. They may, however, be grouped with Satan, not quite perhaps so crudely as Milton groups them, but for all purposes of inquiry. And in dealing with the existence of Satan the common idea is largely drawn from Milton's poem, or Milton's poem from the common idea. And that is largely, perhaps irretrievably, tainted with Arianism. Instead of God the Son being *πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων*<sup>3</sup>, Milton makes Him posterior to Satan; in fact, *ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν*. It makes a fictitious grievance for Satan, which may be good poetry, but is certainly bad theology<sup>4</sup>. But the *ἀρχῶν τοῦ κόσμου τούτου*<sup>5</sup>, the *κοσμοκράτορας τοῦ σκότους τούτου* — *τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις* cannot possibly be ignored, though they cannot be placed anywhere near the divinity of God. Eventually these will be judged and condemned, not merely by God,

<sup>1</sup> Πύθωνα R.V. ; Acts xvi. 16.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. viii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Creed of Nicaea.

<sup>4</sup> St. John xii. 31 ; xiv. 30 ; xvi. 11.      <sup>5</sup> Eph. vi. 12.



but by man, and the end of spiritual wickedness is the abyss of powerlessness, virtual, if not actual, destruction.

But for a view of the present condition of these forces it will be well to study St. Paul's retrospect of human history in the Epistle to the Romans; not that more than the barest abstract can be attempted here. His three periods are:—the present period of grace; the period of the Law; and the period before the Law, up to Adam, whom he accepts as the starting-point of man. The Apostle's argument turns on the meaning of the words *δίκαιος*, *δικαιοῦν*, to which, however, a plain grammatical meaning may be provisionally given. *Δίκαιος* means 'just' or 'law-abiding'; it is the epithet applied to Zacharias and Elisabeth in St. Luke<sup>1</sup>, and is there defined. *Δικαιοῦν* is 'to make just,' or to make a man such that the epithet *δίκαιος* can be applied to him. And it appears that there was a Rabbinic theory that punishment, especially the 'forty stripes save one', and formal stoning, did extinguish sin and make the victim again *δίκαιος*<sup>2</sup>, wherefore the doctrine runs that sin,

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke i. 6.

<sup>2</sup> See Farrar's Excursus, *St. Paul*.

*ἁμαρτία*, entered the world by means of Adam's *παράβασις* or *παράπτωμα*, though St. Paul does not here say much that can be interpreted to imply infection. But the consequences of the *παράπτωμα* were felt even in the case of those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam's *παράβασις*, for Adam had a command to keep, and therefore could commit an act of transgression, which his immediate descendants, not having any law, could not do. Wherefore, down to the proclamation of the Law, *ἁμαρτία* was in absolute possession of man; and, with *ἁμαρτία*, its consequence, death, was king. Nevertheless when the penalty of death was paid *ἁμαρτία* ceased (vi. 7), *ὁ γὰρ ἀποθανὼν δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας*, and the man might be called *δίκαιος*, for his sin could not be reckoned against him, there being no law. In the middle stage, however, the Law came in and emphasized *ἁμαρτία*, making it visible in the concrete form of *παράβασις* and providing no way of escape. And though thus matters were made apparently worse they were really better, for the Law showed up *ἁμαρτία* in its true light, as *καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἁμαρτωλός*. It

is not however any part of this thesis to state fully the Doctrine of the Atonement, or the effect of the death of Christ on the sin-tainted race of man, collectively and as individuals. It will suffice for the present purpose to regard the effect of that victory as having put a new creation into man, in addition to the *σὰρξ ἁμαρτίας*, which will eventually destroy the *ἁμαρτία* and enable man to take a Resurrection body free from that taint and immune to Satan's attack. Such at least is the promise, and signs of its present potency and ultimate fulfilment may be seen by those who will look for them. And on the assumption of this hypothesis it will now be possible to examine the facts available, and see how far they support or weaken the position adopted.

Whatever theory may be held as to the actual origin of the story of the Fall of Man as told in Genesis, it is accepted in the New Testament as far at least as this: that the serpent, an external agent, beguiled man, and thenceforward the trouble began. Now the serpent is more subtle than any beast; it has to a greater extent the psychic or hypnotic

power of fascination. The less that any one looks at a serpent's eye the safer he is. Through being influenced by an external force the inward ruling power is weakened; something new is introduced as ruler. Now it seems from all accounts of savage tribes, and from the study of the weaker members of more civilized communities, that early man was particularly sensitive to external impressions. But as he advances in reasoning power the susceptibility declines very rapidly. The sense of smell has already been alluded to. It is remarkably acute in some savages and in animals, and is certainly declining or deficient in intellectual man. So are various kinds of intuitional knowledge—senses of direction, of distance, and so forth. 'Dowsing,' or water finding, is one of these which has been before the public of late. Whether this kind of faculty is vestigial rather than rudimentary, the relic of a less perfect stage rather than the earnest of future development, is a question raised by Mr. F. Podmore in *Apparitions and Thought Transference* (p. 393). That cautious author requires more facts, but the proposition or suggestion here

made is that while receptivity may be vestigial, power is rudimentary, and that where power is actively exercised mere passive receptivity of influences, other than ordinary knowledge conveyed through the senses, declines. It is highly probable that early man was of weak will and of high receptivity, and did fall largely under the prince of the power of the air, who even now works among 'the children of disobedience,' that is, among those who have not firm rule within and strength to pursue sturdily the path of discipline and obedience.

The theory then of original sin which is tentatively propounded in this thesis is: that primitive psychic man was indeed at first innocent of *ἀμαρτία* up to the point at which moral responsibility began. But that innocence of this kind is in very unstable equilibrium, and being subject to the *στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου* and assailed by an evil agency from without, man fell under the domination of *ἀμαρτία*, which as a strong man armed kept his hall until the stronger than he came upon him<sup>1</sup>. The total inability of psychic humanity

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke xi. 21.

to rise above the *φρόνημα σαρκός*, and the arrival of man at or near that stage of his history and development which was the utmost limit to which the *φρόνημα σαρκός* could bring him, together constituted the conditions of the 'fulness of time'.<sup>1</sup> And the first-fruits of the Spirit or of the new creation began to become manifest when the fulness of time had brought the Incarnation. Yet the infection remains even among them that are regenerate. Its elimination from our nature is a matter of time, and the process gradual, and the end difficult to foresee. Howbeit there are certain indications which may be valuable as determining the general tendency.

The Genesis story certainly implies that a knowledge of good and evil determined the first stage of humanity. St. Paul, adopting this, saw that this brought man under a penalty. The consequence of this knowledge was death, the absence of power being the weakness, rather than the possession of the knowledge. And the serpent was well chosen as a type of the enemy. Theoretically its

<sup>1</sup> Gal. iv. 4.

fascination is perfectly resistible by anything possessed of a will. Practically resistance breaks down, and with every breakdown the power to resist decreases. Now throughout the Gospel the idea is that Christ gives power—power from on high. He sees Satan as lightning fall from heaven<sup>1</sup>. Nothing is impossible. He rejoices that His Apostles have shown the power visibly to themselves and to others. The mere works that they had done were signs of it, and the power was to be increased after His ascension.

But subsequent history seems at first sight disappointing. The wonder-working power ceased, or at any rate was only exercised sporadically, though it was known to exist and never denied. But the Holy Spirit had other work on hand, which will be seen clearly enough if the examination of history is not too microscopic. Thus—it was necessary to found the Catholic Church. And to do this, Gnosis, which was only attainable by the few, was for a while discouraged. Knowledge is not amenable to discipline, and discipline was necessary. Hence the reign of dogma. And

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke ix. 18.

with all due allowance for the horrors and dangers of religious persecution, for Byzantine interference with religion and Roman intervention in politics, it remains probable that nothing but dogma could have tided the Church over the troubles of the barbarian incursions. The instrument of dogma was the deductive logic, the key of jurisprudence, which on the fall of the Empire was taken over by the Church. 'Utriusque iuris peritus' was the style of the complete Christian lawyer, alike versed in the Canon Law and the Civil Law. And even when the New Learning dawned the syllogism held its place. For even Francis Bacon, in spite of the vigorous attack he instituted or voiced against the logic of his day, was guilty of the tremendous universal '*Natura non nisi parendo vincitur,*' a proposition of which every exercise of such power as our Lord used and conferred is a particular negative. For if man, instead of being the helpless recipient of suggestions on which ignorance or lust virtually compel him to act, can exercise power both within and without his own organism, that Baconian assertion must fall. Nevertheless



here again the use of this proposition and of its more modern and equally erroneous companion, 'All atoms are indestructible,' has brought about a rigid, sceptical, careful attitude, which will be, and is already, of enormous value in assuring the certainty of whatever is submitted to its crucial tests. For already men of high scientific attainments are investigating phenomena which until lately were regarded as belonging to a region which it was impious to enter; and up to the present the existence of occult forces has become more rather than less certain, and indeed is approaching that stage of high probability which amounts to practical certainty.

Wherefore in conclusion I venture to submit that the old Christian doctrine of the infection of man's nature by agencies or influences from without is not to be rashly laid aside or treated historically as a mere phase of thought. And I submit that it does represent actual truth, which may, when stated in such terms as the grouping of the facts in evidence may suggest, be treated with the respect due to truth in process of discovery. And I submit that it is not too much to

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expect of theologians that they should be in the forefront of inductive discovery in their own department, and so enlarge their domain that Theology should indeed be *summa scientiarum*.

THE END.